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Sport Development Policy Implementation: The FA's Charter Standard Scheme

By

Jimmy O'Gorman

Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

The degree of PhD of Loughborough University

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Abstract

This thesis explores the process of implementation of the FA's Charter Standard scheme in England. The football development scheme, for schools and clubs, is the first nationally led initiative to attempt instantiate structures and minimum standards of practice at the junior level of football in England. Implementation of the scheme has taken place within the context of New Labour's modernising drive for sport. Moreover, the area of grassroots football has escaped any sustained analysis in academia. Therefore, the thesis aims to provide insights into this area and re-dress the balance somewhat from the pre-occupation of analysing the elite levels of the game. The nature of implementation is complex and multi-faceted, and a primary aim of the study is to identify and analyse the dynamics of implementation in three distinct geographical areas (or clusters) of grassroots football. The study focuses on the meso level of analysis, which centres on the structures and dynamics of relationships between County FA personnel, grassroots football volunteers, teachers and sport development professionals whose responsibility it is to implement the Charter Standard. The macro level of analysis is also briefly considered, where the primary concern is to highlight how such individuals are constrained or facilitated in implementing the Charter Standard, and the relative positions of power they occupy.

A qualitative methodology is utilised to elicit data in respect of implementation, generating themes and issues specific to each of the three case studies (or clusters), allowing for general comparisons. Within the case study approach, the dialectical approach to policy networks is applied to provide a framework in which to analyse and discuss theories and processes of implementation. This has proved useful in highlighting conflict and ambiguity between individuals regarding the ethos, and criteria within, FA Charter Standard criteria. Indeed, it is evident that implementing the Charter Standard is problematic for both professionals and volunteers within the context of modernisation. The study concludes by noting changes in the practice of grassroots football. Volunteers have been drawn into football development work which has altered their experience from a largely spontaneous, leisurely activity of choice, to one in which they are expected to conform to professionalised practices in order to implement, and gain Charter Standard accreditation for their club or school.

Key words: grassroots football; football development; policy implementation; policy networks; Charter Standard; modernisation

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1 Research aims, objectives and context

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the implementation of the Football Association's Charter Standard Scheme, an accreditation programme delivered at the 'grassroots' level of football development, within the broader context of contemporary sport development policy in England. The 'grassroots' of football is a discrete area of concern, a particular sub area of sports development in general, and the sport of football as a whole. It is the area of the game taken to mean the spectrum of organised football outside of the professional game, incorporating three distinct but inter-related levels: youth and junior football (boys and girls under 18), parks football (amateur leagues predominantly reliant upon local authority facilities) and non-league or feeder league football (adult amateur / semi – professional in the football pyramid below professional level). A point of clarification is therefore important here. Throughout the thesis, when the term 'grassroots' is employed, it refers to the non-elite level of youth and junior football in particular, while recognising that developments and processes at this level have implications for the other two levels.

The thesis aims to provide an insight into the political and social processes affecting sport development policy implementation through the example of football development at the grassroots level. To adequately understand implementation of a policy such as the Charter Standard, it is important to locate policy within a macro level context that enables an understanding of how such a policy has been formulated from past socio-political developments and the relationships and dispersal of power between the state and civil society in the current context. This macro level sensitising identifies why certain actors are in a privileged position in the policy process, and in whose interests they serve (cf.Marsh & Stoker 1995), which

in turn provides a greater understanding of a policy from formulation to implementation. A longitudinal understanding of the macro level context allows for a cross sectional in depth analysis of meso and micro level processes (cf. Green 2005; Daugberg & Marsh 1998); essentially the areas in which policy, in this case the Charter Standard, is implemented within a salient conceptualisation of power relations. Such an undertaking provides a more adequate understanding of the processes affecting policy implementation. In order to meet these research aims, a number of more concrete objectives can be outlined.

i) to provide an account of the emergence of sport development policy in general, and to explain the development of sport policy in relation to grassroots sport; in particular football development
ii) to evaluate the utility of different meso level theories of the policy process in helping to understand the process of sport development policy implementation at the micro level
iii) to analyse the processes impacting upon Charter Standard implementation within the sport development policy subsystem/network in relation to endogenous and exogenous factors (i.e. processes occurring within the sub system itself and processes occurring external to the subsystem, which nonetheless have an impact upon it)
iv) And in relation to objective iii), to identify and analyse the roles of the organisations and individuals responsible for and having a concern with 'grassroots' football development

The research was commissioned and sponsored by the Football Association in order to conduct a three year evaluation project of the Charter Standard Scheme. This undertaking reflects the current government approach to evaluation pervading all policy sectors, in terms of gathering 'evidence based policy' upon which to review, audit and improve NGB strategies and programmes (DCMS: 2000) within a broader

modernisation agenda for sport (Deloitte & Touche 2003a, 2003b; Green & Houlihan 2006; Houlihan & Green 2008). Therefore, the research design was developed in order to gather a body of qualitative evidence to account for dual, but interrelated purposes in satisfying both FA objectives and thesis requirements. Although heavily influencing the research design, the FA objectives inform but do not necessarily shape the thesis objectives.

In relation to the substantive content of the thesis, there are two further points that require clarification regarding focus and data collection. Firstly, in evaluating the scheme for the FA and thesis concerns with implementation of the scheme, the Charter Standard steering group deemed that clubs and schools that were not Charter Standard accredited or not committed to working towards accreditation were to be omitted. Although these individuals and organisations may or may not have an opinion and experiences on the merits of implementing the Charter Standard, the FA were interested solely in those clubs and schools that had Charter Standard accreditation in order to evaluate the scheme. Secondly, the thesis is concerned with evaluating the Charter Standard schools and junior clubs awards against the requirements for achieving accreditation in place at the beginning of the data collection process in April 2004[1]. Modifications to the accreditation criteria and Charter Standard scheme manuals have been made during the research period of 2003-2006. Such modifications are based upon recommendations by the researcher to the Charter Standard steering group. Subsequently, the current Charter Standard literature and accreditation criteria required by clubs and schools will differ between the stages of prior data collection for the thesis and present. It should be noted that the Charter Standard has since expanded beyond the junior and youth levels to now incorporate adult (amateur-grassroots), further education colleges and holiday courses (Football in the Community, private soccer schools included). One final

[1] At this time there was also a version of Charter Standard for disability football clubs and schools. However, due to the interests of FA managers, evaluation of the disability aspect of Charter Standard was not of sufficient concern to include them in the research process.

important point must also be made clear. Although the thesis is concerned with sports development, the issues described above in respect of the thesis forming part of a funded project, and the pressures to meet the funding body requirements, have militated against a comparison of other accreditation schemes or contemporary sports development policies with the Charter Standard. It is therefore important to note that the implementation of the Charter Standard is a thorough analysis of one policy within the broader sports policy environment, in which implementation is affected by macro level power relations exacerbated by processes, structures, and culture uniquely peculiar to English grassroots football alone.

1.2 Rationale for investigating grassroots football development

This section provides a rationale for the investigation of the field. Firstly, it is important to note that academic research has tended to neglect the grassroots area of football, despite it being an integral component of England's most popular sport. A contemporary context of grassroots football and the emergence of the Charter Standard in particular is provided in Chapter 2. In doing so, an introduction and overview is provided of the FA's position in the contemporary political environment, and in particular its relationship with government in terms of developing and managing grassroots football. However, such an undertaking is difficult as the FA has, historically, been guarded about its internal wrangling and its often ambivalent relationship with government. This study, whilst focusing upon the implementation of a particular football development policy, is broadly concerned with junior or children's football. Currently, both children and football have enormously high profiles in England, which is reflected in significant media, political and academic interest (Daniel 2004:205). Yet together, children and football are conspicuously assigned to the margins of the FA and government interests. Literature to this effect predominantly takes one of two forms, and is characteristically non academic and often instructional, offering guidance for best

practice in the form of coaching manuals and 'how to' books (c.f. Howie 2004a, 2004;b, Thorpe 2004:225).

Although football-related research is a relatively recent development (Dunning 1975), a brief overview of academic literature and for that matter popular literature on football reveals a pre-occupation with the elite aspects of the sport in both historical and contemporary contexts. Despite the growth of critical academic study of football and its history, the grassroots level has been ignored almost without exception. Recent academic attention regarding the actual 'playing' of the game, arguably spurred by the FA's Charter for Quality (1997), focuses almost entirely upon the elite levels in varying capacities from the structures of youth academies (Stratton et al, 2004; Richardson et al 2005) to the coaching process (Cushion et al 2006; Jones et al 2003, 2004; Holt 2002). Any analysis that does focus on football's relationship with government has been limited to the various explanations of hooliganism, from political (Houlihan 1991), sociological (Dunning et al 1984, 1988), Cultural Studies (Clarke 1973, Critcher 1973, 1974, 1979), Marxist (Taylor 1971, Vinnai 1973), psychological (Marsh 1978) and anthropological (Armstrong 1998) perspectives. Even Giulianotti's (1999) 'Football: A Sociology of the Global Game', purportedly a thorough sociological analysis of all aspects of football, does not address the grassroots level. More recently, academic attention and journalism have turned to football employment law post-Bosman (McArdle 2000), the governance of football (Hamil & Oughton 1999; Hindley 2002; Magee et al 2005), and the role of agents and economics/finance (Bower 2003; Conn 1997, 2004; Magee et al 2005). This literary, media and national governing body pre-occupation with analysing elite level performers and the governance of the elite end of the game, reflects a relative neglect of analytical interest in the grassroots level of football. This may be due largely to its ubiquity and historical simplicity. For instance the football historian, Walvin (2001), depicts illustratively both the importance of grassroots football and reasons for its neglect and lack of sustained analysis and attention. It is

worth quoting Walvin (2001:215-216) at length as he captures the cultural significance of the grassroots level of football in England

> ...there is another football story to tell; about ordinary, run-of-the-mill football, about boys in the park, schoolchildren driven to games by parents, older men (long past their prime) struggling on bleary-eyed Sunday mornings to recapture their footballing best, and millions more simply kicking a ball against a back wall. It is generally untold because it is part and parcel of the world we live in. We see it, know it, have taken part in it, as children, parents, as players or as spectators. At this level football is just another feature of life's weekly routines and scarcely warrants a passing thought. Yet it is this massive, incalculable substratum of popular football that sustains the professional game; the millions of ordinary players who nurture the national (and global) interest in the high-powered, commercially driven world of successful professional soccer. More than that, this popular attachment to the game takes us right back to the origins of the game itself. This is how football has always been; a simplicity and ease of play embedded deep in the routines and habits of ordinary people. That is why the game of football remains the people's game, however lavish and often absurd the antics of the wealthy minority.

However, in recent times several government-influenced reports have emerged, with the impetus partly generated from New Labour's interest in football as a tool for social policy (The Labour Party 1996; Tacon 2005) and football's place in the wider modernisation programme for sport (Houlihan & Green 2006). The Football Task Force (1999) document, 'Investing in the Community: A submission by the football task force to the minister of sport' and 'Football and its Communities' (Brown et al 2006) funded by the Football Foundation, and the Independent Football Commission's (2004) report on Child Protection have been conducted with substantial sections dedicated to the state of the grassroots game. In work of a more academic nature, Pitchford et al (2004), Daniel (2004), Thorpe (2004) and Brackenridge et al (2004, 2007) focus on the junior element of grassroots football in particular. These authors adopt a child-centred approach where children's thoughts

and opinions on grassroots football are put forward as a basis upon which to alter general aspects of the grassroots game, such as coaching and child protection.

Arguably then, grassroots football is the most important level of the game in England, for without it the professional game would have no foundations upon which to draw in terms of future playing talent and paying supporters. As Tom Pendry, former chairman of the Football Trust and also then chairman of the House of Commons All-Party Sports Group argues, 'a structure that recognises that the professional game is only the apex of a much larger and deeper movement stretching into local communities and grass-roots football' (Pendry in Hamil et al 2001:74) is needed. The infrastructure of the grassroots game is integral to the continual development and maintenance of English football, and to neglect this in terms of fiscal, professional, academic and general interest, potentially undermines the future of the English game. Yet this is precisely what has occurred during the development and increasing commercialisation and professionalization of the elite game. Due to pressures and personal desires (whether they be economic or pride) for success at local, regional, national and international levels, the owners, chairmen/chairwomen and football fans are pre-occupied with achieving almost instantaneous success (Hamil et al 2000; Conn 1997;2005), with little thought given to the foundations of the sport in England and to the consequences this may hold. For example, Conn (1999) argues that the incorporation of professional football clubs into the commercialised leisure and media sectors has diminished the importance of sporting and community objectives, and has shifted the focus of football clubs towards profit-maximisation. In this respect, concerns with the grassroots of football are 'by-passed', as though it is a separate entity to the rest of the game.

This overemphasis on the elite level masks the work and issues occurring at a much lower, but equally important level. The 'grassroots' level of football is the

environment in which children are introduced to the game at school and in junior clubs,[2] and at which many adults continue to play out their leisure time in the evenings and at weekends, producing players for the future from grassroots to elite levels, and also contributing solutions to broader political 'problems' such as social cohesion and public health (DCMS 2002). The Charter Standard is the first nationally-led initiative focusing upon the grassroots to, as one FDO states, 'put the house in order' (FDO Cluster 1 Interview 24 / 3 / 06). More specifically, the Charter Standard is perceived as to 'not only provide the first attempt in this country for a coherent and organised structure of grassroots football by linking clubs and schools together to maximise our resources in the delivery of football, but also…the best structure in the world' (FDO Cluster 3 Interview 21 / 1 / 06).

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This chapter has provided an overview of literature pertaining to football, and briefly detailed the relative neglect of grassroots football in juxtaposition to the seemingly incessant commercialisation and profit maximisation of the elite game. The increasing polarisation between the two interrelated ends of the game is detailed in more depth in Chapter 2, which sets up and contextualises the introduction of the Charter Standard as an initiative aimed at modernising the grassroots game. Here, the importance of contextualising its implementation is highlighted, together with some definitional identification of key terms. Details of the Charter Standard are introduced here, whilst the criteria for accreditation and guidance for implementers is included in Appendices A and B. Chapter 3 is a contextual chapter that historically examines the FAs and government involvement in sport development and grassroots football. New Labour's modernisation agenda for sport is introduced and briefly explored, as this provides much of the context in which the Charter Standard is implemented.

[2] Children are introduced to the basic skills of football at the age of 4 in school (and before that by parents), whereas professional clubs can not introduce any children to their academies or centres of excellence until the age of 8

Chapter 4 outlines the study's analytical framework. Three pertinent meso level frameworks (Sabatier 1999) for analysing sport policy (Houlihan 2005) are assessed as to their utility for analysing Charter Standard implementation in the sub sector of grassroots football. Here, particular emphasis is given to the policy networks approach, as this allows for an investigation of the plurality of interests that characterise a fragmented and contested arena such as grassroots football. More specifically, a dialectical approach to policy networks (Marsh & Smith 2001) is applied, as this allows for endogenous and exogenous factors surrounding a football development policy network to be accounted for, and an analysis of the relationships between those implementing the Charter Standard. To add greater analytical purchase, theories and models of implementation and partnerships are discussed. Whilst it is not the intention to identify one single theoretical perspective on implementation, it is anticipated that elements within each may enhance a theoretical framework for analysis. These follow a brief overview of macro level theories of power, which suggests the concept of governance and the position of neo-pluralism are most suitable for framing the meso level of analysis

Chapter 5 sets out the parameters of the study's research strategy and methods. This includes a discussion of ontological and epistemological positions, which inform a qualitative research design, and methods appropriate for collecting qualitative data.

Chapter 6 employs data generated from documentary analysis and interviews with key actors to provide an analysis of Charter Standard implementation across three clusters of a football development policy network. The relationships between key sport development professionals, volunteers and teachers that both facilitate and constrain implementation are examined in light of the theoretical frameworks highlighted above. Each cluster is dealt with separately, drawing tentative comparisons regarding similar dynamics of implementation. The context of each

cluster is also provided. As such, a differentiated approach to analysing implementation is taken, which highlights how, and why, the Charter Standard is implemented. Themes generated from the data are established, which provide the background for issues within grassroots football that shape implementation of the Charter Standard.

Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, addresses the key theoretical and methodological insights provided in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. More specifically, the first section of the chapter summarises the similarities and differences between the three clusters that emerge from the discussion in Chapter 6. This section is not substantively concerned with the study's theoretical insights, although they are incorporated into the analysis where appropriate. The second and final section of the chapter addresses the meso and to a lesser extent, macro, levels of theorising. An evaluation of the policy networks approach is provided in understanding implementation. Theories of implementation are employed to generate greater analytical purchase of the meso level frameworks. As such, a differentiated account of Charter Standard implementation is provided, which also provides greater insights into the area of grassroots football.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Contextualising the Football Association, football development and the Charter Standard Scheme

Although the ubiquitous pre-occupation with the elite game persists today, in recent years the FA has, for various reasons, become more aware of the need to develop football from grassroots to elite and international level, and has developed a greater involvement in a more systematic and planned way. Briefly, neglect of the grassroots game at the expense of the elite level is not a relatively recent occurrence, but an enduring phenomenon bound up in the tensions between the trajectories of amateurism and professionalism (c.f. Goldblatt 2006: 184-185); exacerbated by the ever widening polarity between the two, and accelerated by the acceptance and surrendering to professionalisation by the FA in the 1960s. The increasing commercialism and panopticonisation of professional football since this time has further marginalised the grassroots game which has continued to be underpinned, to varying degrees, by amateurism and voluntarism. Writing in the early 1950s when players' wages were no higher than a manual labourer's, and before players became national and international celebrities, Geoffrey Green signalled an already established preoccupation with the professional elite levels of the game since the creation and acceptance of the modern rules, despite the FA having a long history as an amateur organisation:

> 'The vast majority of The FA Council members are, and always have been representatives of the amateur game with their gaze turned towards the requirements and problems of amateur football. Yet much of their fine work remains shrouded in anonymity, swamped by the publicity afforded to the professional giants'. (Green 1953: 431)

Captured here are tensions between the professionalization of the elite game and the staunch amateurism of the parochial English Public School administrators who organise and rule the game in England within the FA's byzantine structure, still evident in the contemporary administration of football (Goldblatt 2006).

The Football Association was formed in 1863 and is the governing body for football in England.[1] Originally, it was concerned primarily with unifying a number of factions of the various folk and public schools games into a national codified sport (Mason 1980; Goldblatt 2006), organising and promoting domestic competitions and selecting national teams to play against other countries. As the sport developed, the FA's role and remit has changed and expanded. However, the FA has historically had little involvement or impact upon the grassroots level of football, particularly at junior levels since the formation of the FA itself and the rationalisation of football into a codified game with sets of rules, procedures and culture characteristic of the contemporary game. This lack of involvement has occurred partly due to historical processes, which allowed football to develop as an attractive sport due to its simplicity, a characteristic that has allowed football or variants of the game to be played in almost any environment with the most imaginative rules and objects that resemble the national game (Pitchford 2007). Such diversity within one sport has rendered it difficult for a governing body to provide comprehensive jurisdiction. For instance, those who played football in the playground with jumpers or objects to that effect for goalposts, or in the street or the park, would have no or little interaction with the FA (Pitchford 2007:49), and certainly did not benefit directly from any form of FA intervention. Moreover, in its history, and particularly up until the 1970s, the FA has been characterised by an ongoing tension between amateurism and professionalism within its own organisation. The attempts by those adhering to an amateur and largely voluntary ethos to manage an increasingly

[1] For in depth information on the development of the FA as an organization see Green, G. (1953); Fabian & Green 1960; Young, P. 1968; Dunning & Sheard 1978, 2005; Russell, D. 1997

professional and commercial sport, and the constant inertia of the organisation's own infrastructure, has contributed to an enduring feature of the FA's governance of the game which has been characterised by a sustained and considerable distance from the junior, grassroots game (Pitchford 2007:50).

Today however, the situation is markedly different. The FA now devote resources, policies and initiatives aimed at improving, rationalising and standardising the grassroots game, particularly since it began its own modernisation process in 1997. This in part was prompted by the publication of 'A Charter for Quality' the same year in response to a perceived continued under performance of the English national team at major international tournaments. Incidentally, this was the same year New Labour came to power with its modernising agenda for sport and football in particular (Labour Party 1996; Hudson et al 1999).

In addition to the original roles identified above, the FA is now also concerned with managing major facilities such as Wembley Stadium, the National Football Centre at Burton, and the Premier League in England. The FA is responsible for the England national team, both on and off the field of play, and also takes the lead in providing a structure for organised football, regulating, promoting and developing the game at all levels. However, the FA's relationship with government in developing football is difficult to discern, as this relationship is less than transparent, and is rarely played out in the public eye, due in part to a combination of the historically inward secretive nature regarding the FA's internal organisational processes and outward conservatism (Goldblatt 2006:738). Although government involvement in sport and football in relation to policies to be implemented is discussed at length in Chapter 3, it is appropriate here to note that despite a lack of transparency, football and the FA has arguably been subject to greater intervention from government than any other sport in Britain, generated in part by football being the nation's most popular team

sport in terms of spectators, participants and media interest. In short, it dominates the sporting psyche of the nation.

Such intervention ranges from attempts to control the persistent hooliganism problem, to schemes such as 'Football in the Community'[2], 'Playing for Success'[3] and the 'Kickz project'[4] that seek to capitalise on football's popularity to promote social inclusion, and meet wider social policy and educational goals. Sir Norman Chester, recognised as football's first and most celebrated 'football academic', produced the first substantive report on football (DES 1968), which focused principally on the impact of the game upon spectators and crowd dynamics. However, Chester and his enquiry team made some recommendations to the FA and government regarding the infrastructure of amateur and youth football (essentially the grassroots). Yet, as Ripon (1983) notes, Chester's findings were largely ignored and a further subsequent government-led inquiry on behalf of the Football League in 1983 received little attention from government, which unfortunately has been a frequent feature of government involvement in football over the years.

More recently however, on coming to power in 1997, the New Labour Government established a 'Football Task Force' to investigate a range of issues within the game from the commercialised professional leagues, fans and supporters, and significantly, to the structure and condition of amateur and grassroots levels. This intervention was in line with New Labour's third way politics (Giddens 1998) in that the Task Force was a collaboration of individuals and organisations across the political and social spectrum, each of whom had different views, expertise and stakeholding across football. The Football Task Force was to advise government on the formation and implementation of policies at all levels of the game, in order to modernise the governing and provision of football. The Government appointed

[2] See Brown et al 2006
[3] See Sharp et al 1999, 2001, 2002
[4] See http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/our-schemes/kickz/ for more detail

representatives of various bodies to the Task Force. The Football Association, the FA Premier League, the Football League, the Professional Footballers' Association, the Football Trust, the League Managers' Association, the Association of Premier League and Football League Match Officials, the Football Supporters Association, the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs and the National Association of Disabled Supporters, Sport England, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Local Government Association, were all represented. There were also a number of individuals such as academics and ex-professional players who were consulted, based on their expertise, but who had no official political connection to any of the above groups (Conn 2005:133). In keeping with New Labour's philosophy of formulating policy from evidence based research (Silverman et al 2002), the Task Force undertook a nationwide tour, holding public meetings in ten major cities in each of England's regions, and met or received written submissions from: 73 football supporters groups; 30 professional football clubs; 28 local authorities; 14 "Football in the Community" schemes; 10 community organisations and projects; 10 County Football Associations and, 3 girls' and women's football clubs. Based on the evidence collected, the Task Force submitted three reports to the Minister for Sport: '*Eliminating Racism from Football'* (published on 30 March 1998); '*Improving Facilities for Disabled Supporters'* (29 July 1998); and '*Investing in the Community'* (11 January 1999) (Football Task Force 1999). It is worth highlighting here that the majority of the recommendations in all the reports maintained the historical bias of a heavy focus on the professional and commercialized aspects of the sport. However, *'Investing in the Community'* addressed the issue of redistribution from the economically rich professional game (mainly the Premier League) to amateur football and the grassroots game, emphasising the neglect of the grassroots level and the urgent need for greater redistribution and re-investment. Notably, the Task Force recommended that the FA and FA Premier League could not achieve this without government help, despite the large sums of money being generated by the elite level. Therefore, it is evident that the FA is reliant upon Sport England and

government to some extent for the organization and maintenance of grassroots football. This in part led to the formation of the Football Foundation in 2001, ostensibly a contractual partnership agreement between the FA Premier League and government in which the former was to provide 5 percent of its TV deals to a 'funding pot' to re-develop grassroots facilities, which the latter agreed to match[5].

Despite the role government plays in the development of football being difficult to discern, Sport England claims to have an influential, mainly financial involvement with football, naming it as one of 10 priority sports. As stated in 'The Framework for Sport in England' (Sport England 2004) Sport England provides funding for the FA to support delivery of key aspects of the FA's development plan (FA 2001) and also claims to be working closely with the FA to produce a business plan for the sport. It claims not to fund men's professional football. Football is also involved in the following Sport England initiatives:

- Girls' football, through County Sports Partnerships
- Awards for All - with funding of more than £6,726,625 for various projects at the grassroots level such as equipment grants
- Step into Sport – currently implementing their own (FA's) strategy
- Racial Equity - achieved the preliminary standard
- Club Development Programme – receiving £9.4 million primarily for youth academies

(http://www.sportengland.org/football.pdf accessed 15 / 5 / 05)

[5] The impact of these recommendations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Interestingly, despite claims to the contrary, the last point is focused upon the youth academies of professional clubs which run with the clubs' support, but staff roles are funded through the government. The main influence Sport England has as a funding partner for grassroots football is through The Football Foundation, whose main goals are to:

- develop a new generation of modern facilities in parks, local leagues and schools
- provide investment to increase participation in grass roots football
- strengthen the links between football and the community, harnessing its potential as a force for good in society (Sport England 2004).

Sport England's funding for grassroots football

Previous funding		
Year	National	Community
1995 – 1996	£11,250	£6,226,654
1996 – 1997	£45,000	£9,082,435
1997 – 1998	£45,000	£16,855,978
1998 – 1999	£172,990	£143,561,034
1999 – 2000	£174,025	£12,396,847
2000 – 2001	£132,000	£7,483,498
2001 – 2002	£108,000	£28,891,218
2002 – 2003	£0	£8,422,637
2003 – 2004	£0	£1,128,221

Table 2.1 Sport England (2004) (http://www.sportengland.org/football.pdf)

Table 2.1 highlights the Sport England funding dedicated to 'grassroots' football since the introduction of the National Lottery. Of particular note is the period 1998 – 1999. The declaration of such a vast sum coincides with the FA's publication of 'A Charter for Quality' in 1997 in which government funds are sought by the FA to implement, amongst other things a quality assurance scheme at the grassroots level (The FA 1997). It is interesting to note that Sport England (2004) takes National funding as a total of Exchequer funding and the World Class Programme[6]. Whilst the Community funding indicates large sums of money, particularly in the period 1997-2002, the figures are strangely a total of the following diverse programmes: Community Capital, Safer Sports Grounds, Active Communities Development Fund, all Active Sports Programmes, Community Athletics Refurbishment Programme, Football Youth Development, School Sport Coordinators, Sport Action Zones and Awards for All, of which some unspecified amount has been allocated to grassroots football. Therefore, although figures for funding are established, the mechanisms for distribution remain unclear. The FAs relationship with Sport England in the context of modernisation is hinted at during a press release in 2004 which indicated £500,000 funding for grassroots football investment, which formed a major part of Sport England's fourth wave of transitional funding, freed up as a result of the modernisation programme recently undertaken by the FA as part of its 2001 development strategy (Sport England 2004). However, a breakdown of the exact involvement and financial support provided to football by government remains unclear.

[6] The World Class programme has been established to help national Governing bodies develop a comprehensive system through which talented Athletes can be identified and supported. Interestingly, the structure for developing talent in football is 'outside' that of Olympic sports and has a separate structure. The Sport England Lottery Fund can only support individuals through the governing bodies of sports, which are part of its World Class programme. The funding and the deadlines vary dependant on the sport.

Indeed, the majority of funding allocated to football from Sport England is associated with developing the girls' game (or other traditionally excluded groups such as people with disabilities and ethnic minorities), rather than the game as a whole. Football is unique in this respect which serves to emphasise the importance that government attributes to football as a vehicle for the realisation of broader social policy objectives other than sporting participation and success. However, it is clear that due to its size, scope and financial wealth, compared to other NGBs the FA is relatively autonomous from, and less reliant upon, government intervention, particularly regarding the elite end of the game. For example, in major Olympic sports such as athletics, Green and Houlihan (2006) comment that such NGBs are becoming increasingly reliant on government funding for different levels of their sport, not least the grassroots. Government is expanding influence over Olympic NGBs such as UK Athletics through a 'modernisation' programme, manifest in increasingly contractual arrangements whereby performance targets are set in the form of success (number of medals in the case of Olympic sports) as a condition of grant aid (Green & Houlihan 2006:65). Therefore, such NGBs arguably direct the resources they have towards the elite and performance levels of their particular sports, exacerbating the already relatively marginalised status of the grassroots levels. Indeed, financial assistance for grassroots sport is allocated on the proviso that NGBs develop the grassroots to meet other, social-policy related goals, such as social inclusion, health and community building, rather than developing grassroots sport for sport related purposes.

Although receiving funding from Sport England, grassroots football is distinct from its equivalent in other sports, particularly Olympics sports, as it draws the majority of its funding from its governing body. The FA claims that every year it invests approximately £60 million into football in various guises, in order to ensure the health and longevity of the game (FA 2003e), asserting that all surplus revenue is

redistributed back into the development of the game through a number of initiatives such as the Charter Standard (FA 2001) and government-backed campaigns such as 'kick it out' and 'playing for success'. More recently, the FA claims to be investing £220m in developing the grassroots (Independent 19 / 3 / 2008) over the next five years, £11m a year more than the previous level of investment. The FA chairman, Lord Triesman, claims such funding will be directed towards a coherent strategy 'to halt and reverse the decline in participation; enhance facilities; develop better players; and improve the game's grassroots' administration' representing 'the biggest investment ever made in grass-roots football'. However, the breakdown of funds allocated to the organisation and administration of football throughout England is unclear and is not publicly stated by the FA. Of this total, the Football Foundation invests approximately £15 million per year to improve facilities (Football Foundation 2007). An unspecified amount supports and funds 51 County Football Associations, upon which the structure of the grassroots game is largely dependent. The County FAs are independent bodies affiliated to the FA, responsible for running all aspects of the game at the grassroots level.

Since the late 1990s, there have been major changes in the structure and purpose of County FAs which have modernised under the influence of the FA to primarily administer and support the grassroots game. During this modernisation period, the focus of the County FA has changed from a purely legislative body organised along amateur and voluntarist principles, to a proactive organisation with professional staff delivering nationally led schemes and initiatives such as the Charter Standard, Mini-Soccer, Girls and Women's Football, Disability Football, Coach Education, Child Protection, and Volunteer Support and Education at a regional level. The FA's Development Strategy 2001-2006 states that in each County, the County FA co-ordinates a Local Football Partnership, bringing together football and other partners to create and prioritise football facility and development plans for

the region (http://www.thefa.com/Grassroots/County+FAs/). An integral element of the FAs development plan is the implementation of the Charter Standard Scheme on a national basis. Implementation of the scheme is to be delivered by individual County FAs which in turn have individual development plans addressing strategic needs in their area.

Despite the FAs financial support to County FAs to organise, administrate and meet its objectives, such as assisting an agreed number of schools and clubs to achieve Charter Standard accreditation per year and training professional staff on a local setting, the FA has continually urged the government for investment in the grassroots level (FA 1997; FA 2001; FA 2008). Such requests have prompted government to highlight the relative wealth of the FA in comparison with other NGBs. The large amounts of money paid to professional players and the huge sums of money generated by the top clubs are given as grounds against government investment (House of Commons 2006). In short, government views football as a sport with adequate resources, indeed more than any other governing body, to fund and develop the grassroots level. However, in its Annual Review of 2004/05, the FA highlighted what it views as the need for government investment, justified in several ways. Although the Treasury received £600 million in tax from football in the tax year 2004-2005 (Deloitte & Touche 2006), the Government allocated far less to sport in comparison to other western European countries such as France and Germany (Carter Report 2005). Furthermore, the FA maintains that the scale of the game in England means that external help is required (FA 2004/05). Research undertaken by The FA and the Football Foundation (Football Facilities Survey 2005) identifies a funding deficit of £2 billion in existing facilities, including 45,000 pitches, to be redeveloped to a reasonable standard, in which the FA claims that "level of investment cannot come from the football industry alone" (FA 2004/05), particularly since 75 percent of these facilities are local authority owned. As such, establishing responsibility for developing the grassroots game is problematic given the

organisational and administrative complexity of this aspect of the game. Exacerbating this, is the vast playing membership of the grassroots level.

An overview of the grassroots game reveals a large infrastructure, indeed larger than any other governing body has to preside over in the world. With over 43,000 affiliated clubs in England representing 40 percent of the total number of sports clubs in England (DCMS 2000), the 'grassroots' level of football shows a significant decline in the number of clubs over a two year period to the undertaking of this research in 2003. At this time there were approximately just over 37,500 clubs (9,000 of which are youth), incorporating approximately 4,360,000 junior participants under the age of 16 (FA 2003e).[7] However, research undertaken into youth sport trends over the period 1987-2003 (School Health Education Unit 2004) indicates that the numbers participating in football outside the school setting are increasing in both sexes, especially the participation of girls. This anomaly may in part be explained by the FA's attempts to implement a continental style infrastructure of sustainable multi-team clubs rather than the traditional one team club that has historically been a defining feature of English grassroots football. Furthermore, the DCMS (2004) introduced the 'Community Club Scheme' which at its heart had the same philosophy of establishing large multi-team clubs in all sports. The FA also claims that there are 32,000 schools (19,000 primary) delivering football, thus potentially exposing 5 million pupils to the sport (FA 2003e).[8] Supporting this grassroots infrastructure are 431,000 volunteers (the largest number of volunteers in any sector), with approximately 30,000 qualified coaches and 27,000 qualified referees, the vast majority of which work on a voluntary basis (FA 2003e).

This weighty infrastructure of officers, administrators and volunteers engages in activities such as licensing and regulating commercial, educational and training

[7] The figures for 16-18 year olds were not collated in the report

8 These figures replicate each other to a large degree as the school children recorded will almost certainly include the children participating in clubs

initiatives aimed at organising the sport for adults and children at all levels of the sport, in line with the FA's objectives. These objectives, as part of the modernisation process were published in the FA's Football Development Strategy 2001-2006. This aimed to increase the participation, quality and enjoyment of football through:

- Football for life – providing everyone with a clear lifelong journey in the participation of football
- Opportunities for all – everybody having the opportunity to participate in football
- Football in education – providing children with a quality introduction to football
- Club development – having the best football club structures in the world, providing high quality coaching and development opportunities for all.

(FA 2001:5)

The FA's Charter Standard Scheme for schools (1999) and clubs (2001) as with all FA policies, supposedly adhere to such grand rhetoric (Pitchford 2007:50). The Development Strategy (FA 2001) and the Charter Standard were conceived in a political environment heavily influenced by New Labour's modernisation agenda for public services, although there is no evidence to support any actual government influence on the FA, unlike Olympic sports dependant on government funding (Green 2006; Houlihan & Green 2009). In this respect, public organisations responsible for the development and provision of sport such as The FA, are susceptible to broader socio – political influences. The Chief Executive of the FA at the time of the inception of the Charter Standard, Adam Crozier (FA 2003), emphasised the expected impact of the scheme which resonated with the rhetoric of New Labour's modernisation agenda: 'Clubs who become Charter Standard will be taking part in a genuine grassroots revolution. Every club should be aiming to meet

the Charter Standard'. Parkin, (ibid) extended the emphasis on increasing 'opportunities for all' stating that: 'Clubs will get all the help they need from The FA and their local County FA to meet the requirements. The aim is to raise standards across the country, not to exclude anyone.' Since the inception of the Charter Standard, it has been modified and stratified to reward 'good practice' and a hierarchical structure developed through which schools and clubs can move as they develop their football provision.

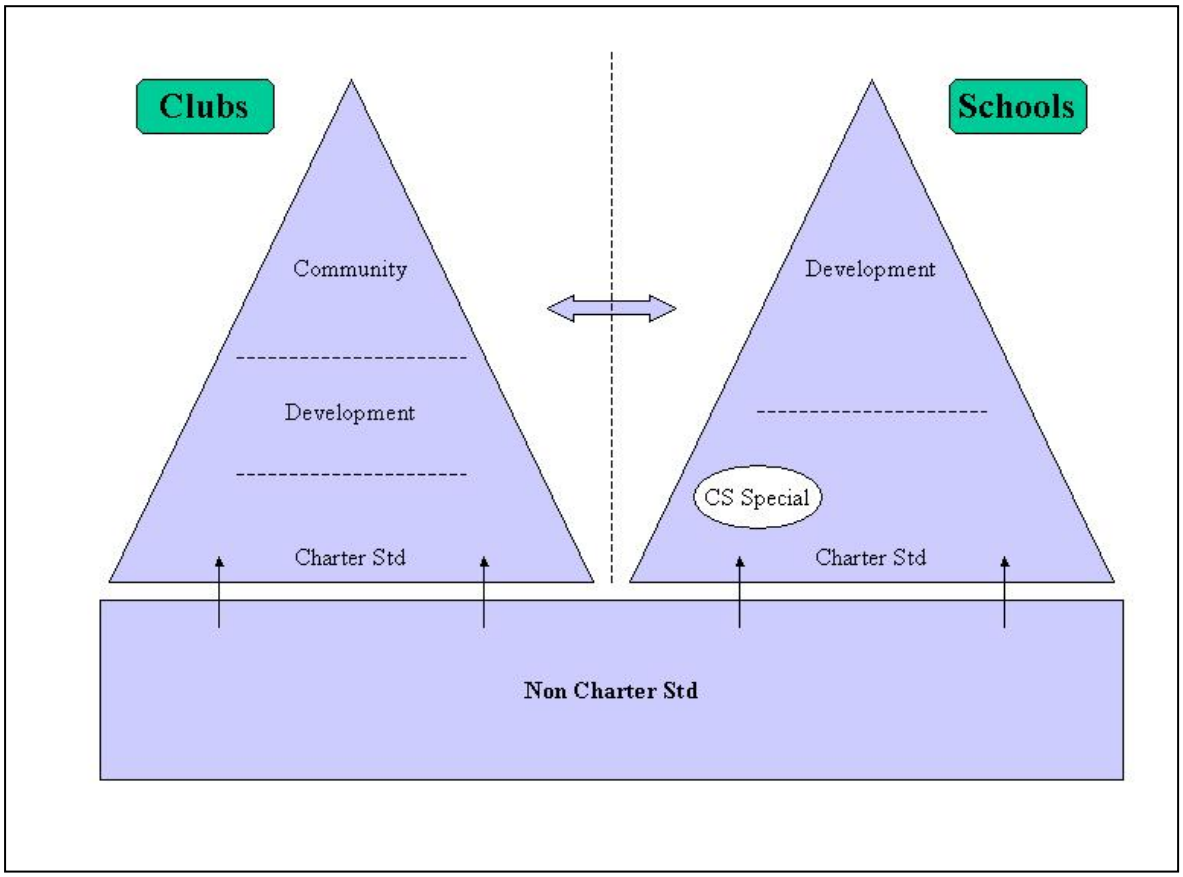


Figure 2.2 The hierarchical structure of the Charter Standard

As figure 2.1 shows, the Charter Standard Club Scheme currently has three award levels: Club, Development Club and Community Club, whereas the Charter Standard Schools Scheme has five levels: Primary, Primary development, Secondary, Secondary development and Special school. The details of each level of attainment for clubs and schools can be found in Appendices A and B. However, a brief comparison between Charter Club and Community Club highlights that a Charter

Club may have only one team which has a level one qualified coach with CRB checked adult members, an FA qualified child protection officer and a code of conduct for the club by which all members abide (with variations on criteria for coaches, parents and children). The Community Club status stipulates that the club must administer at least 10 teams from mini soccer to youth level (16-18) and have a clear structural link to an adult team for both boys and girls. The coach of each team must be at least FA level 2 qualified and all personnel must be CRB checked and suitable to work with children, and adhere to a code of conduct. They must also have structural links with secondary and primary schools. A similar hierarchical structure exists for schools status although the pinnacle for schools is Development status, with teachers expected to gain football-specific qualifications to enhance provision of football within and external to the curriculum and generate links with clubs in the community. Essentially, the greater the accreditation, the more partnerships the club or school is actively engaged in to provide quality and safe football, and the more work they are engaged in their locality/community. School – club links are an integral part and actively encouraged, but only have to be in place at development level for clubs. This research is part of the review process of the scheme which was to be reviewed and re-launched in 2008 as part of the FA's whole sport plan (WSP) 'The National Game Strategy'.

In brief, by implementing the Charter Standard, volunteers and club officials are encouraged to utilise technology such as the internet and FA website to apply and generate their applications. Without wishing to pre-empt the discussion on modernisation in Chapter 3, this practice is in line with New Labour's modernisation project whereby individuals are encouraged to deploy themselves in a way that maximises their output within a given area such as football development through the utilisation of technology where appropriate (Finlayson 1999:86).

In sum, the Charter Standard scheme aims to provide quality assurance through its implementation at the grassroots level of football. The Charter Standard has several key characteristics. Firstly, it is a scheme that requires the forming of partnerships and collaborative activity in order to be implemented, the intention of which is to create an organised infrastructure for grassroots football (see fig 2.2 below).

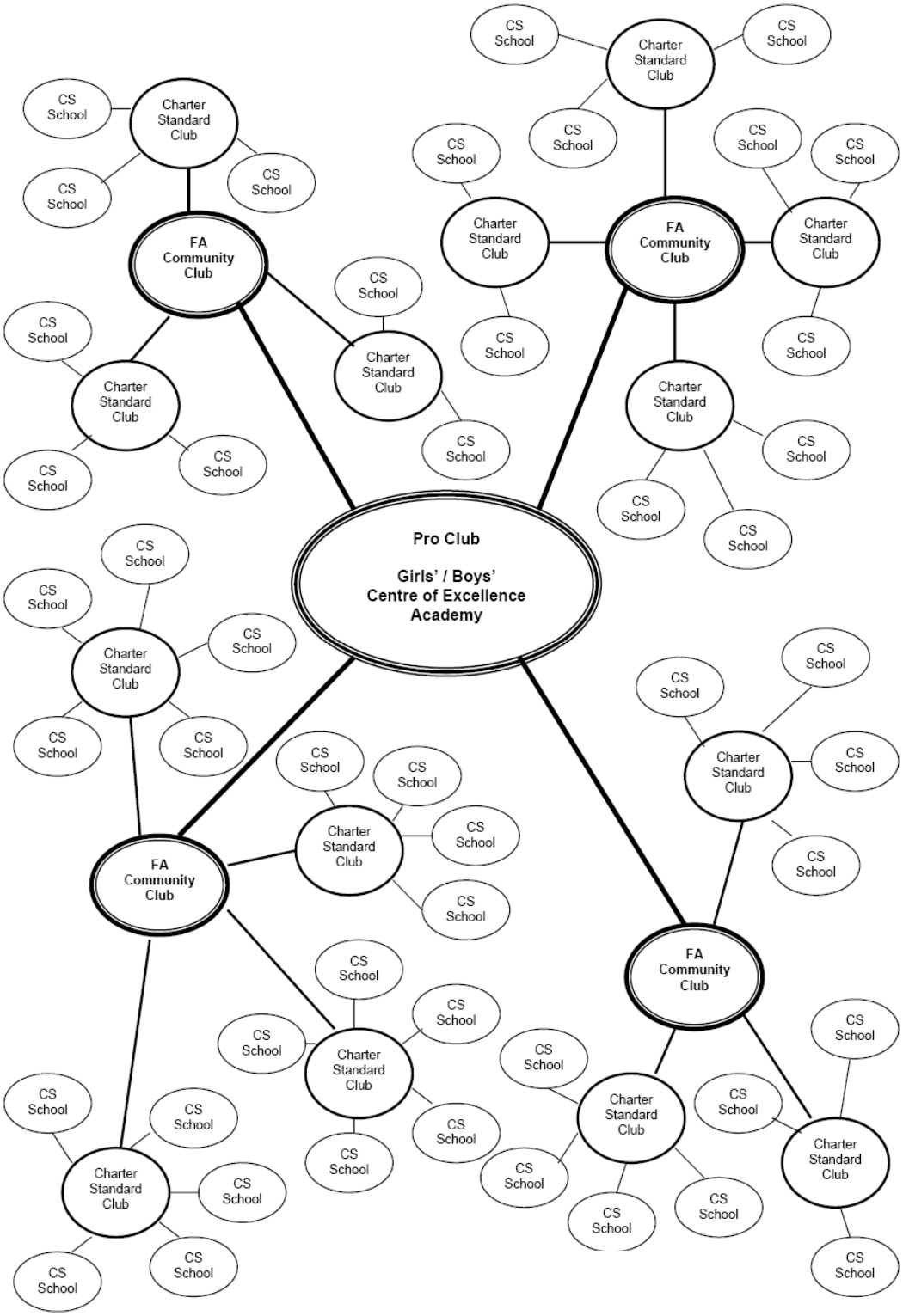


Figure 2.3 The FA's proposed player talent development pathway (2001)

Interestingly, as figure 2.3 shows, initial formulation of the scheme appears to indicate that the Charter Standard was to provide the foundation level for pathways to centres of excellence and professional club academies (FA 2001). This was in line with the then World Class programme and infrastructure adopted by Sport England as a condition of grant aid to draw up development plans subscribing to such a structure. It can also be seen as an attempt on behalf of the FA to acquire government funding for talent development.

Such partnership working to implement the Charter Standard occurs on three distinct but inter-related levels. For instance, at a macro level, the FA works in partnership with commercial enterprises such as McDonald's who sponsor the Charter Standard Scheme, and with government which contributes to the funding pot through the Football Foundation and Sport England in terms of prioritising Charter Standard clubs' funding applications from small equipment grants to large scale facility developments. At a meso level, clubs and schools work in partnership to develop school-club links, an integral part of the scheme, complementing wider government sport policy such as the PESSCL strategy and school sport partnerships, whereby partnership development managers are encouraged to target clubs accredited with the Charter Standard or Clubmark. County FAs work collaboratively with the FA to identify a specified number of clubs and schools to become accredited each year and develop local partnerships with other sports providers within the sport development policy structure to help achieve these aims. It is at this meso level that the implementation of the Charter Standard is to be analysed, with the individuals such as club volunteers or football development officers being viewed as the custodians and gatekeepers of their particular organisations approach to the Charter Standard. Such analysis will also provide insights at the micro level, where individuals interact collaboratively across organisations at a personal level, pooling resources in order to implement the scheme for their school or club.

The second key characteristic of the scheme is based upon providing a quality service for its end users – children and young people participating in football in clubs or schools. This entails the training of volunteers across a range of areas including Child Protection, Emergency aid, coaching, and financial administration to provide what is called 'quality' provision at the club or school. This resonates with New Labour's modernisation agenda whereby volunteers are encouraged to be proactive, utilising their skills and abilities to work collaboratively with professional NGB staff to implement the Charter Standard. One significant characteristic of this is the need to adopt modern business practice (Finlayson 2003a; Green & Houlihan 2006; 2009). For instance, volunteers are required to draw up development plans (FA 2003a) with targets and action plans for the future strategy of their club, in which they are becoming agents fit for partnership with government (Green & Houlihan 2006). As Raco and Imrie (2000:2191) argue, such actions reflect government promotion of individual and institutional conduct consistent with government objectives. The way in which this is achieved is a matter of empirical investigation in Chapter 6. Such characteristics associated with the modernisation project of New Labour have not developed in a vacuum. Indeed, they have emerged through various socio-political processes over time, with government involvement in sport being influential. Although schemes have been developed in the past for various reasons, including attempts to provide some semblance of quality, these have tended to be localised and ad hoc. Schemes such as the Charter Standard and Sport England's Clubmark variants represent a significant shift in the socio-political landscape for policies affecting grassroots sport. Chapter 3 developmentally teases out these processes to provide an understanding of how a scheme such as the Charter Standard emerged with such distinct characteristics within a given socio-political context.

One final but important contextual factor regarding an understanding of grassroots football should be noted. The structure and organisation of football in contemporary times is complex and unwieldy, reflecting the infrastructure of sport as a whole in the UK (cf. DfES/DCMS 2003; Roche 1993), which consists of a mixture of actors and organisations across the public (local authorities, public services), commercial (professional clubs, private soccer schemes/courses, corporate sponsors) and voluntary sectors (grassroots/amateur football clubs). At present, The FA is an association of member clubs, and is a not-for-profit organisation. The FA is comprised of two main bodies: the legislative (the Council and its Committees) and the executive (the Management Team and their division headed by the Chief Executive). The Council comprises 92 elected representatives from the constituent parts of the game, including The FA Premier League, the Football League, County Associations and other bodies, which is separated into several committees responsible for strategy and administration regarding several facets of the FA's work, including the FA Cup through to football development and youth. Major business, strategic and commercial decisions are taken by the Main Board, which comprises six representatives from the professional game and six from the national game (the FA's term for grassroots), plus The FA Chief Executive and The FA Chairman. The Board was established in December 1999 to make the decision-making process more streamlined.

In 1992, the FA initialised structural reform, in large measure to advance its own market position. In doing so, it ceded some power over the administration of the game, to the newly formed FA Premier League. This process skewed power to larger clubs at the elite level, giving them larger representation on the FA Council which allowed them to pursue their own economic interests (Conn 1997; 2005). This notion of the business side of football developing through the newly open markets capitalised upon by satellite television can be explained by a neo pluralist conception of power, whereby power is dispersed amongst many interests with a stakeholding

within the game, but skewed to those who have more influence in the business world (Held 1996; Smith 2006:28). This impacted upon grassroots football, as the FA (whether desiring so or not) was unable to redistribute the increasing amounts of money generated by the FA Premier League to the grassroots. Such large amounts of money remained concentrated within the more successful professional clubs, as it is the Premier League, made up of chairmen of all the top flight clubs, not the FA that negotiates TV revenue, and generates profit from merchandising and ticket sales. Therefore, their money is used for the benefit of Premier League clubs and their suitors (Football Task Force 1999; Conn 2005; Bower 2007). The balance of power between the FA and the FA Premier League in favour of the latter determines the relationship, which in effect determines the economic circumstances that shape the organisation of football. This is a matter of considerable debate, as many commentators misunderstand that although huge sums of money are being generated within football, such wealth is concentrated at the elite level, with the Premier League's interests being far removed from those playing football at a junior level on parks pitches owned by local authorities. Such reasoning is reinforced by the FAs reliance upon, and indeed request for further assistance from Sport England funding for grassroots football indicated earlier.

Following concerns about a spate of controversies at the FA and its management of the game, the government took the unprecedented step of sanctioning a review of the FA by Lord Burns into its structure, management and governance and whether it was fit to serve its purpose. Such an intervention is characteristic of the modernisation rhetoric espoused by New Labour. Burns set out to tackle key problems that had beset the FA for a number of decades, including:

- Potential conflicts of interests among FA board members
- An unrepresentative council
- Lack of confidence in the disciplinary process
- Too much power wielded by the Premier League

- Lack of representation for the grassroots game

The review was critical in several respects, particularly regarding the composition of the Council which was not representative of the diverse interests of the game, and not separate enough from the FA Board. For example, the Board consisted of the Chair of the Council, six representatives of the grassroots game and six representatives of the professional game, which amongst other things, promoted a conflict of interests. For instance, the Chairman of the FA (Geoff Thompson) is currently chairman of the Council and the Board. The proposed changes to the Board sought to resolve such conflicts and dilute the power of the Premier League, with three representatives from the professional game and two independent non-executive directors. Burns suggested that the Council needed to become the "Parliament of football", to represent the whole of football with equal parity and focus. Burns recommended that members of the 'Parliament' should represent the grassroots, including supporters groups, players, managers, coaches and referees, with more coming from the professional and semi-professional games. Its function must be to oversee the board and approve any changes to rules and regulations. Burns also recommended the formation of two new bodies i) The Community Football Alliance to represent grassroots football, promoting participation in the game, giving the grassroots game a formal role in the decision making process for the strategy of football for the first time, and ii) The Professional Football Alliance, which would be much smaller than the Community Football Alliance, but would represent the professional game.

The FA accepted the recommendations laid out in the Burns Report in June 2007, which provides an opportunity for the grassroots game to have a unified voice under one body. Through its representation on the new board, the body may have more power to influence decisions both within the FA and the wider political environment of sport policy to tackle issues affecting grassroots football. Although

Kelso indicates that some of Burns' recommendations have been 'watered down' (*The Guardian* 30th May 2007). The changes, the majority of which came into force in 2007, were intended to further modernise the organisation, aiming specifically at ending the deadlock between the amateur/grassroots and professional factions that has historically hindered the FA's work. The impact of this is yet to emerge, but would indicate that grassroots football is beginning to become an issue for both government and the FA.

2.2 Introduction to Sport Development and Policy Implementation

As the thesis has a central concern with analysing the processes underlying the implementation of a sports development policy, i.e. the Charter Standard Scheme, it is apt to provide a brief discussion of the terms 'sport development' and 'implementation' in order to provide some insight into the importance of analysing these aspects of the policy process.

Sport development is an activity recognised as being an important element of wider work being undertaken by the majority of local authorities and all governing bodies of sport. Although primarily, though not exclusively, being a sub-sector within the broader area of sport policy, it has only been acknowledged as a legitimate and regular focus for government expenditure and policy for just over 35 years (Hylton et al 2001:5; 2008; Houlihan & White 2002:1). Houlihan and White (2002:2) maintain that it is unclear as to whether to define sport development as a concept, an actual government policy, or by the type of work carried out by sport development officers, or a combination of the three. Some characterise sport development solely as an interventionist practice, to target specific groups or areas that suffer social, economic and recreational disadvantage (Sports Council North West 1991:3). Such definitions, whilst highlighting an aspect of sport development in terms of utilising sport to achieve wider social objectives, do little to capture the complexity of sport development and ignore sport as a valid end in itself whether it be at elite or

participation levels. Therefore, this thesis adopts a broader definition put forward by the Sports Council in 1993

> 'Sports development is about ensuring the pathways and structures are in place to enable people to learn basic movement skills, participate in sports of their choice, develop their competence and performance, and reach levels of excellence'

Implicit here is the notion that pathways and structures have to be in place to provide opportunities for people to progress to reach either their desired level, or the level of highest attainment they can reach. Whilst it is the responsibility of sports organisations and sport development professionals such as the FA and FDOs to implement and maintain these structures while encouraging people to participate, and where appropriate to progress, it is important not to view these as simply an instrument of government. Throughout its short history, sport development has been characterised by a large degree of instability irrespective of its role and the objectives it sought to realise, due in large part to its varying salience to governments on different sides of the political spectrum. This has made it difficult to establish the continuity of practice that often provides a public profile for a policy area (Hylton et al 2001).

Sport policy encompasses sport development, which is typically on the margins of government's political concerns, either being less of a priority in comparison to policy areas perceived to be more important such as defence or transport, or otherwise providing a contribution to other areas of government policy agendas such as health and education rather than being given the status of a worthwhile policy area in its own right (Hylton et al 2001). Therefore, it is a policy area less likely to be in the focus of direct lobbying and its salience to government rests on the consequences of changes in related but more politically significant policy areas. Sport development is thus located in a sector of government activity that is crowded

with services that are both relatively resource rich and politically weighty (Houlihan & White 2002:2). As such, it is rather more accurately conceptualised as occupying a policy space in the interstices of other services such as health, education, social services and sport itself. This locational placement has constantly required the delivery and purpose of sport development activities to rely on and foster collaborative activity to formulate and implement policies that are influenced by a range of different organisations for the benefit of numerous political and social purposes. Thus, the use of sport development activity to contribute to wider policy goals drawing on expertise and skills from other policy areas for sport development activity reflects the current Labour Government's strategies of cross cutting agendas, sharing and pooling of resources, and fostering partnerships for common and individual organisational goals (Rhodes 2000; Skelcher 2002). Thus, the evocation of a metaphor of policy implementation occurring within and across networks (Hill & Hupe 2002; O'Toole 2004) with regard to sport development is apparent.

The Charter Standard is a sport development initiative being implemented within this context. Sport policy is affected both in the way in which sport development policy is implemented, and the formulation of its objectives. In summary, sport development can be conceptualised as referring to people not currently engaged with sport as well as those currently active, the general mass participant and also elite and international level performers. Furthermore, as explored in the following section, sport development has varied between reactive and proactive strategies and between objectives specifically regarding social issues, participation, and to those specifically concerning high level performance. As Houlihan and White (2002:4) observe, in policy terms there is a tension between 'development through sport' and 'development of sport', a debate that has characterised sport development and its policy objectives since government interest and intervention in the area began (McIntosh & Charlton 1985). The former has an emphasis on social objectives, with sport as a tool for achieving wider social/political agendas, whereas the latter

emphasises that sport is valued for its own sake and indeed there are others who perceive sport as being equally capable to contribute to both (Hylton et al 2001:2). Although implicitly a combination of both a proactive (in terms of implementing new structures and procedures) and reactive policy (in terms of aiming to address longstanding issues within the current political and social climate), the FA's Charter Standard Scheme is explicitly aimed at the mass participation, grassroots level of youth football.

Implementation inevitably takes different shapes and forms in different cultures and institutional settings. This point is particularly important in an era in which processes of 'government' are perceived by many as being transformed into 'governance' (Bevir & Rhodes 2003; Newman 2001; Rhodes 1997). Briefly, this suggests that a wider range of actors may be involved in implementing government-influenced policies such as the Charter Standard than in the past, and that simplistic hierarchical models of policy analysis from formulation to implementation are being abandoned (Hill & Hupe 2002:2). Hence linking implementation to the wider political and social environment is essential in order to more adequately understand how a policy such as the Charter Standard is implemented.

Broadly put, as an introduction to the term, implementation is to carry out, accomplish, fulfil, produce, complete. However, a verb like 'implement' must have an object like 'policy' (Hill & Hupe 2002:4). There must be something out there prior to implementation; otherwise there would be nothing to move toward, no goal to aim for in the process of implementation. Yet policies such as the Charter Standard, normally contain both goals and the means for achieving them, so a distinction must be made between a policy and its implementation. As Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:11) highlight,

> 'We can work neither with a definition of policy that excludes any implementation nor one that includes all implementation. There must be a

> starting point. If no action is begun, implementation cannot take place. There must be also an end point. Implementation cannot succeed or fail without a goal against which to judge it'.

If implementation presupposes policy, then a definition of policy is required, of which there are many. Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) definition of policy is succinct. The following elements are identified in the use of the term 'public policy'. Though policy is to be distinguished from 'decision', it is less readily distinguishable from 'administration'. Policy involves behaviour as well as intentions, and inaction as well as action. Policies have outcomes that may or may not have been foreseen; that is, outcomes may occur that have been planned, but equally too, unplanned. While policy refers to a purposive course of actions, this does not exclude the possibility that purposes may be defined retrospectively. Policy arises from a process over time, which may involve both intra- and inter-organizational relationships. Public policy involves a key, but not exclusive, role for public agencies, which includes NGBs such as the FA.

Problematically, policy is subjectively defined (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984: 19– 23). That is, individuals may interpret the same substantive policy and means to achieve it in different ways, and moreover, the policy's utility. Hogwood and Gunn summarize this characterization in the following definition:

> Any public policy is subjectively defined by an observer as being such and is usually perceived as comprising a series of patterns of related decisions to which many circumstances and personal, group, and organizational influences have contributed. (pp. 23– 4)

Therefore, it is important to locate a policy such as the Charter Standard, and its implementation within the social and political context within which it has been formulated and implemented. Implementation differs depending upon the context in which a policy was formulated, and the different agencies and individuals

involved in implementing it, which hold various and variable attitudes, beliefs and culture. In order to meet the aims of the thesis and the funding body objectives, analysis of the implementation of the Charter Standard focuses solely on those responsible (of their own volition or as part of their occupation) for implementing the Charter Standard, the implementers (FDOs, grassroots volunteers and teachers amongst others) rather than the end users (children in Charter Standard clubs and schools). That is their actions, behaviours, and beliefs are investigated through empirical research. Moreover, as discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, theory is needed to contextualize such observable behaviour regarding the implementation of the Charter Standard. Adopting a critical realist position, Marsh and Smith (2001: 532) argue that it is impossible to make any sense of the world without some kind of theoretical framework in order to infer the underlying structures of a particular political situation over time (Hay 2002). In this sense, the Charter Standard is said to be 'real'. That is, through the act of implementation, the goals and ends are interpreted in different ways by different actors. Therefore, the consequences of implementation for those actors involved in the implementation process will also differ, but nonetheless will result in perceptions and beliefs held by the actors that can be said to be 'real' to them individually. Moreover, wider than the processes associated with implementation itself, the strategies deployed by actors to implement the Charter Standard have both real intended and unintended consequences, but which are open to the interpretation of the actors implementing the policy within a socio-political context.

Whilst the various debates regarding how the state governs are covered in more detail in Chapter 4, it is pertinent here to re-emphasise that actors external to government have become more involved in delivering and implementing public policy in recent years (Rhodes 2000a; Bevir & Rhodes 2003). In particular, sports volunteers and organisations have become agents of government policy objectives (Nichols et al 2005). However, a theoretical framework is needed to encapsulate this

observable phenomenon, which can incorporate an analysis of implementation. Whilst not wishing to pre-empt the discussion on the various meso level analytical frameworks in Chapter 4, a dialectical policy network approach (Marsh & Smith 2001) allows a specific concern with implementation in analysing the power relations between actors involved in the implementation of the Charter Standard. Here, actors involved in the network help to reinforce or challenge such an environment or context through their actions and perceptions. Moreover, it also allows for an understanding of the political context within which implementation is taking place. Policy networks may be very important for successful or unsuccessful policy formation and implementation and many authors argue governments have sought to foster policy networks and policy communities in different sectors (Rhodes & Marsh 1992; Marsh 1998; Rhodes 1997; Borzel 1998; Bevir & Rhodes 2003). Drawing on Jordan and Richardson (1987), M. J. Smith (1993) identifies four reasons for this: i) policy networks facilitate a consultative style of government; ii) policy networks reduce policy conflict and make it possible to depoliticize issues; iii) policy networks make policy making predictable; iv) policy networks relate well to the departmental organization of government.

The policy network literature has shown little interest in implementation per se, but implicit in much commentary and analysis regarding this subject is a specific suggestion that does not view implementation in terms of the realization or non-realization of hierarchically determined goals (Hill & Hupe 2002:61). Indeed, more adequate ways of analysing implementation have been requested by those working within the fields of policy analysis and implementation (Exworthy & Powell 2004:263), particularly through concepts and models that are capable of both locating implementation in the context of wider models of the policy process, and incorporating multi level governance. That is, organisations and individuals involved at the macro, meso and micro levels of a policy network (Marsh & Smith 1998; Daugbjerg & Marsh 1998). Network analysis thus contributes to a recognition

of the need for new ways to analyse implementation issues and highlights the difficulties of the policy formulation-implementation relationship (Hill & Hupe 2002:67), which goes beyond the traditional 'policy objectives – instructions to carry out' normative observations and rational pre-suppositions that have dogged the 'top down – bottom up' debate in the policy implementation literature (O'Toole 2004). In this connection another point of clarification must be made clear. As noted, particularly from a critical realist perspective (Downward 2005) policy implementation is inherently bound up within the context in which policy has been formulated, not only in the present, but significantly in the past.

In summary, it is necessary to provide a historical account of the developments in grassroots football as an aspect of sport development policy more generally, leading up to the formulation and implementation of the Charter Standard. Such an undertaking provides a deeper understanding of the contemporary socio-political context within which the Charter Standard emerged out of sport development policy more generally, and especially how the Charter Standard has become an integral FA policy. This will provide a foundation on which to analyse the implementation of the Charter Standard.

In this respect, Chapter 3 traces the historical developments in sport policy and sport development policy, integrated with developments at the grassroots level of football where appropriate. The contemporary socio-political context which has shaped the Charter Standard will be presented as a precursor to the analysis of implementation in the following chapters. Such an undertaking is no easy task, as the literature on grassroots football is scarce. Moreover, football development has often been situated in competition to, in conjunction with, or external to, sport development policy. On occasions, the peculiar relationship has been a mixture of all three. As noted, more recently grassroots football has assumed greater salience for, and been affected by, government policy through New Labour's modernisation project. This is due in part

to the FA's constant ambivalence towards grassroots football, which has allowed the government to, a) gain more influence in an under-governed area, and b) while the FA has been wary of government interference at the elite level, it has sought to utilise this intervention at the grassroots level to its benefit. Therefore, the study is divided into periods which represent significant shifts in the socio-political environment that have impacted upon sport and sport development policy as identified by Green (2004a; 2005). In this connection, greater emphasis is placed on the last 10-15 years, particularly since 1997 and the election of New Labour.

Given there is little empirical evidence available to draw upon implementation of sport development policies in the past, Chapter 3 delineates the socio-political context and developments in sport policy over time in order to understand how, and in what context and purpose, sport policy(ies) were developed to 'be' implemented, rather than 'how' it was implemented. Studies that have been conducted to this affect have a) been more recent, influenced in part by the political environment of audits and evidence based policy initiated by New Labour, and b) research projects have tended to focus upon the end users and have rarely addressed the complexities and nuances of the implementation process. The implementation of policy must be explored and located within the contemporary socio-political context (Exworthy & Powell, 2004). Policy commitments do not exist in a political vacuum, and emerge from deeper structural norms, values and belief systems (McDonald 2000:86). This context has increasingly become characterised by the utilisation of partnerships and networks to implement policy (Rhodes 1997; Skelcher 2000; Newman 2001; Newman et al 2004; Glendenning et al 2002; Ling 2002; Sullivan & Skelcher 2002; Exworthy & Powell 2004) within a broad political modernisation project for organisations responsible for the delivery of sport (Deloitte & Touche 2003a, Deloitte & Touche 2003b; Green & Houlihan 2006; Green 2007; Houlihan & Green 2009). Yet, due to its political salience and 'location' amongst other related policies, the implementation of sport policy and the development of grassroots football has almost always required

the collaboration of a multitude of government departments, and a range of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors (Houlihan & White 2002).

CHAPTER 3
Sport/Football Development and Sport Policy

3.1 Motives for Government Involvement in Sport

From the 19th century and into the first half of the 20th century, the development of sport, and the role of government in that development, has been characterised as haphazard and ad hoc (Coghlan 1990; Houlihan 1991, 1997; Roche 1993; Jackson & Nesti 2001; Houlihan & White 2002). Historically, the provision of modern sport forms[1] and physical recreation has been the preserve of unpaid, dedicated volunteers, often without support or assistance from the government (Jackson & Nesti 2001:153), in the context of a piecemeal and reactive approach to sport and recreation at central government level (Houlihan & Green 2006). In short government has traditionally been reluctant to intervene in sporting matters.

Sport has traditionally been of marginal interest in political terms until relatively recently. Since the 1970s in particular, the Conservative and Labour parties began to recognise that sport was not only a legitimate responsibility of government and a potential diplomatic resource (Houlihan 1997), but also a vehicle through which to achieve wider policy objectives. Government interest in sport in the U.K. has usually been motivated through instrumental means (e.g. to improve health, reduce crime, or boost national prestige). Central to successful implementation and a defining characteristic of, public policy in sport has been the relationship and collaborative activity between government departments and agencies and national governing bodies of sport (Green & Houlihan 2006:47).

[1] Government intervened in folk games and other leisure time practices in pre-industrial Britain that are recognised as the precursors to modern sport (See Holt 1989; Russell 1998).

Despite the absence of an explicit and sustained recognition of sport as a distinct area of government interest, clear thematic continuities can be identified between pre and post 1970s that have emerged to characterise the purposes and constituents of, to a greater or lesser extent, contemporary sports development schemes which focus upon youth and junior sport such as the Charter Standard. Houlihan (1997) identifies five such themes: control of sport through prohibition; health; social integration; military preparation; and international prestige. The third, and perhaps most crucial theme in respect of this thesis is the ways in which government has attempted to use sport as a means of social integration with a particular emphasis on youth (Henry 1993:2001). After the Second World War, a series of reports were produced that drew attention to the problem of the increasing amount of leisure time, particularly for the affluent urban working class male. The Crowther Report (1959) and the Albemarle report (1960) both associated the rise of juvenile delinquency with the absence of opportunities for physical recreation in the years immediately following school. The Wolfendon Committee report (1960) reinforced this view, which suggested that there was an association between delinquency and shortage of sports facilities. This concern with youth and social integration remains a pertinent political issue in the 21st Century. Since the creation of the Great Britain Sports Council in the early 1970s, both Conservative and Labour governments have adopted an increasingly interventionist role in the sport policy sector in England (Green 2004a:365; Houlihan & Green 2008).

Such Government intervention into policies for organised sport has traditionally had minimal influence on governing body activity, particularly the relatively wealthier and thus more autonomous NGBs such as the FA. However, Houlihan (1997:147) notes, "as the social, economic and political importance of sport has increased over the past 40 years or so, the triangular relationship between government, the governing bodies (or voluntary sector) and the commercial sector has become more

intense and more significant in shaping the development of sport". In the 21st Century, there are few governing bodies who can afford to ignore government intervention due to economic, social and political pressures (Green & Houlihan 2005; 2006; Houlihan & White 2002:164;). Historically, government has formulated policies to address wider social issues, with little or no direct relationships or influence with national governing bodies of sport (NGBs). NGBs have traditionally formulated ad hoc partnerships with willing and interested organisations to implement their own schemes and initiatives either in response to, or despite government directives. Government's primary influence was through the Sports Councils, whose main role was to set strategic policy and to distribute funding to a wide range of sports through what has been ubiquitously termed as an 'arms length' relationship (Oakley & Green 2001).

During the past decade and particularly since New Labour's election in 1997, government has adopted a more direct and influential role in sport development generally, but most significantly through generating a structured relationship with NGBs (cf. DCMS 2000; Green & Houlihan 2006). Such influence appears to have taken on substantively different forms of motivations and characteristics, particularly at the elite level, and most notably in traditional Olympic sports (Oakley & Green 2001; Green 2004a; Green & Houlihan 2005). This involvement is manifest primarily through the Sports Councils such as Sport England, National Lottery funding and through local authorities. Specific to football, organisations such as Football in the Community, the Football Task Force (up until its dissolution in 2001) the Football Foundation and the Independent Football Commission have been established through government influence. In this respect, the FA's remit over recent years has expanded, through a mixture of different pressures both internally within football, and externally from government. These interventions are indicative of a gradual increase in interest in football for varying political reasons, such as the

achievement of wider social policy goals and the tackling of hooliganism to boosting national pride. Moreover, public funding has been allocated to governing bodies such as the FA for the development of football from grassroots to elite levels in accordance with adherence to government policy requirements (Deloitte & Touche 2003a) that are indicative of New Labour's social investment strategies (Green 2007).

Such strategies are an integral element of New Labour's modernising programme of political and policy reform. Indeed, within the context of New Labour's rhetoric of developing and implementing policy through joined-up thinking that cross-cuts major departmental boundaries, sport policies such as the Charter Standard, whilst having an explicit purpose in their own right, traverse issues such as education, health, crime, social inclusion, social cohesion and citizenship (Collins with Kay 2003). Moreover, such social investment strategies within New Labour's modernisation agenda are characterised by a double-sided nature. On the one hand the Charter Standard is facilitative in encouraging people to take responsibility for their own actions and development. For instance, developing and sustaining a well-structured and maintained junior football club and undertaking the necessary skills and qualifications to perform such roles. However, on the other hand such actions have become regulatory and coercive whereby such individuals have to become more accountable, and measured in the form of targets, checks and conformity to certain regulations (Dobrowolsky 2002). In essence, individuals and organisations may enjoy an illusion of autonomy, but at the same time take on greater responsibility for achieving policy objectives set by central government. The next section explores in more detail when and how government motives in sport have been translated into policy, with particular emphasis upon the trajectory of components of policies targeting and affecting youth; essentially the components that are embedded within the Charter Standard.

3.2 The emergence of sport development as a political concern

The organisation and development of grassroots football as an aspect of sport development is not a new phenomenon. This section provides an account of the evolution of sport politics and policy, and the role of grassroots football within this context in Britain. Prior to the 1970s sport (including football) existed and developed almost free from government intervention. The late 1960s is widely recognised as the period in which government-led policies specifically for sport, constituting what is now known as sport development, began to emerge as a specific political concern (Houlihan 1997; Houlihan & White 2002; Green 2004a; Green 2005), culminating in the formation of the Sports Council in 1972. Such an account serves the function of exploring the historical antecedents and identifying the trajectory of sport policy over time, therefore arriving at an adequate understanding of the processes concerning contemporary sport development policy implementation. In line with the subject matter of the thesis, particular focus is placed on the formulation of policies and initiatives that affected and informed youth/junior grassroots football/sport in particular.

Pre 1970's

Political Context and Selected Illustrative Policy Developments

Historically, the FA had little involvement or impact upon grassroots football, adopting an administrative rather than interventionist role at the junior level since the formation of the FA in 1863. However, a concern with the development of football for juniors and youths at what is the equivalent of today's grassroots level is not new. As noted in Table 3.1, grassroots junior football has been particularly afflicted by the enduring antagonisms between English Schools Football Association (ESFA), and the FA over the control, organisation and utility of competitive football for junior players both within and outside the school setting (Kerrigan 2004; Pitchford 2007). Moreover, friction between the FA and government regarding responsibility for provision of grassroots football has underpinned and exacerbated the lack of clarity regarding its function. That is, whether the grassroots game should be utilised for socially ameliorative intentions such as welfare, education and health, as an arena for talent development, or a mixture of the two.

Key Grassroots Football Development/Event	FA orientation	Implications for Grassroots Football
1800s: Emergence in schools system as codified sport between public schools		Football utilised as educational, socialisation and welfare tool
1863: Formation of FA	Ostensibly piecemeal involvement – fragmented administrative role	Codification of rules under national governing body but wide variation in practice external to school/club fixtures
1906: Formation of ESFA - established body concerned with junior level football	Marginal administrative and legislative position – no part in promoting/encouraging youth or schoolboy football	Provision of regular fixtures between schools adhering to FA rules – some variations in practice. No avenues for continuation of organised participation upon leaving school
1920s: Fledgling County FA infrastructure emerges	Beginning of expansion of administration and legislation to regional and local levels	Football outside school brought under local football association's jurisdiction – FA begin to assert control
1936: Existing County FAs establish junior leagues and county representative teams	Provision for youth demand – paternalistic – organisation and administration rather than technical development	Grassroots provision viewed as integral component in providing elite level professional and amateur clubs a flow of players
1934: FA coaching scheme for boys of school age – extended to boys clubs by end of decade	Assumption that ex players (qualified coaches) would raise standards of play at junior levels, improving quality of players moving into elite levels	Restricted and ad hoc application of scheme, variance in access – public schoolboys main beneficiaries
1950s: Rapid expansion of clubs, players, leagues, competitions and volunteer body organising football	Ambivalence towards grassroots underpinned by ongoing tensions between amateurism and professionalism at elite level	Challenge to school dominance in providing grassroots junior football
1963: FA memorandum on coaching policy	Attempts to develop technical expertise at grassroots in relation to elite level	Grassroots clubs - little aspiration for technical development. Lack of interest from professional clubs & County FAs e.g. professional club's shortcut talented individuals into professional ranks.
1968: DES Report on Football	FA request government assistance	Gov't and FA do not provide for expansion in grassroots football – largely left to run on amateur and voluntarist principles – responsibility avoided

Table 3.1 Characteristics of grassroots football pre 1970s. Adapted from (Goldblatt 2006); Kerrigan (2004); (Walvin 2001); Russell (1997); (Dunning & Sheard 1978); (Keeton 1972); DES (1968); (Fabian & Green 1960); Green (1953).

Table 3.1 highlights a rapid expansion between the 1920s and the advent of the Second World War, (Fabian & Green 1960:159) was driven by enthusiasts such as physical educators, youth organisations and philanthropists. The FA had little influence, which prompted them to report upon the possibility of developing, and indeed controlling football for boys both in and, significantly for the first time, outside school (Fabian & Green 1960:161). The FA recommended administrative and financial support for leagues, competitions and inter county games where appropriate, but strongly suggested that such leagues and competitions should be self supporting as far as possible (Fabian & Green 1960:161). As Table 3.1 further highlights, during the 1930s, the FA began to recognise the junior grassroots level as an important sphere in relation to the elite level. The advent of the Second World War interrupted this brief, emergent period of organised activity.

As Table 3.1 indicates, during the 1950s grassroots football external to the school arena began to challenge, and in some places usurp the school's dominance for providing football to youngsters. Such rapid expansion meant the grassroots game became reliant, but also allowed for, the involvement of volunteers who gave up their increasing leisure time almost entirely without reward (Keeton 1972:113). The FA struggled to cope with organising the game and increasing demands for provision, and was dependent upon the use of recreation centres financed by funds from the state or the football pools. Even at this early stage, the FA sought the collaboration of non sporting bodies to provide for youth football, rather than finance it from resources generated within the game. The expansion and the need for semblance of some form of quality at the grassroots was exacerbated by the increasing popularity of playing football on a Sunday, traditionally a non sporting day and a day of rest in the religious calendar.

Expansion without a supporting infrastructure led to games being played on unsatisfactory playing surfaces, and coaching schemes both for people to become qualified coaches and for youngsters to attend coaching sessions were ad hoc and of variable quality (Fabian & Green 1960:113). Then Vice-Chairman of the FA, Sir Lesley Bowker suggested that schools and organisations providing football should link together more formally to provide quality opportunities. Moreover, Stanley Rous indicated that the work of County FAs should be more than an administrative capacity; they should stimulate the development of football in light of the requirements of the late 1950s and early 1960s in planning for the future.

Government's role and input into the development of sport during this period is characterised as ad hoc and largely reactionary (Coughlan 1990; Houlihan 1991, 1997; Roche 1993). Recurring themes of paternalism, defence of privilege, fitness of the nation's youth, social control and international prestige in light of a decline in Britain's successes in international sport (Houlihan 1991:27) pervaded the sport-politics divide for much of this period (Green 2005). To address this policy vacuum regarding government youth policy during the 1950s, the CCPR (then the CCRPT) established the Wolfenden Committee (Evans 1974:91). The Wolfenden Report was important in two respects. Firstly, it argued for greater state involvement, and secondly, it shaped the context within which public involvement in sport was to be considered (Coghlan & Webb 1990:8). Wolfenden (1960) highlighted four concerns relevant to the implementation of the Charter Standard. First, a lack of opportunities available to young people to take part in sport; second, a distinct weakness in the links between schools and clubs, with each operating on its own accord without due consideration or assistance from the other; third, a lack of clear progression for coaching, training and personal development; and fourth, a lack of co-ordinated approaches between governing bodies of sport and other bodies. Such concerns remain today and the Charter Standard is just one part of a concentrated attempt by

New Labour (through PESSCL and other related policies) to modernise the sport policy sector. The report's conclusions were framed around the notion of a 'gap' between sports and games participation at school and participation in adulthood.

Added to this, a succession of acts (Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937, Education Act 1944, Local Government Act 1958) meant grants were made to local voluntary bodies towards the costs, provision and extension of sports facilities such as playing fields, but only to those that owned facilities or had a long term lease (DES 1968). This ruled out most clubs for grant funding until the introduction of the National Lottery in 1994, given Local Authorities owned over seventy five percent of pitches utilised by grassroots football clubs (FA 2003f).

In 1968, the Department for Education and Science (DES) submitted a report on football at the request of the FA and Football League. As table 3.1 illustrates, the report is significant in highlighting a set of interlocking processes which both established and perpetuated the relative neglect of the grassroots. The DES warned that during this period, the accompanying complexity of layers and levels of administration and voluntary effort was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. Every County FA reported an increase in administrative responsibilities, which became almost entirely reliant upon voluntary effort (Fabian & Green 1960:172). Indeed, the number of clubs affiliated to the County Football Associations had risen from 17,973 in 1948 to 25,217 in 1964 and to 30,862 in 1967, and was played in over 12,000 schools, with three quarters of a million boys, youths and men playing on a weekly basis. Yet both the FA and government could not reach agreement on which party should support such expansion. In this regard, the DES criticised the FA, in particular the suggestion that the FA needed government intervention to address the deteriorating financial position of football from professional to grassroots. Indeed,

the DES recommended that the work carried out by volunteers in administering the game would be more effective and efficient if transferred to paid professional administrators (DES 1968:6). The DES report recommended that; i) the structure of County FAs should be strengthened by the establishment of a network of professionalised regional officers appointed and financed by the FA, and ii) an extension of the coaching scheme over and above the four regional coaching officers, to be funded partly by the DES and Sports Council, but with the FA having to make a considerable contribution (DES (1968:118). The officers were to be responsible for organising coaching schemes on a regional basis; assisting County FAs in training referees and the development of the game in general at the grassroots level in their areas, particularly focusing upon facilities (DES 1968 Para 359). The FA was also criticised for not having a strong executive committee to make forward thinking decisions, and was encouraged to bring in younger personnel with vision for the future, resonating with criticisms that led to the Burns review in 2006.

The FA requested government funding of £75,000 a year for salaried secretaries for County Associations, with a further £30,000 for clerical assistance and £20,000 for office expenses (DES 1968:102). Whilst the DES supported the contention that extra finance was needed to support the grassroots game, especially if the County FAs were to positively develop quality in coaching and facilities, the DES committee maintained that the extra expense could, and should come from within the game itself (DES 1968:102). Specifically, the DES noted that the FA had made surplus profits of £320,000 in 1965 and £460,000 in 1966 excluding the profits from hosting the World Cup in 1966, yet there was no redistribution of this money to County FAs for the support of grassroots football. Citing the FA's greatly improved financial position following the Second World War, the DES held the position that football should finance itself. The DES (1968:6) argued the FA ought to take a much more active role in fostering the game as a whole, by relinquishing responsibility for the

Football League to concentrate more on increasing and sustaining quality at the amateur and grassroots levels. Therefore, the popularity of grassroots football produced a set of circumstances whereby the majority of participation took place on local authority, government owned land without government providing sufficient support for it, and the FA unwilling or unable to offer adequate administrative and economic support reinforcing the need for voluntary effort. In short, an established inertia characterised the approach of both government and FA approaches towards grassroots football.

1970s

Political Context

This period has been characterised by a shift towards increasing central government involvement and away from a 'voluntarist' approach to sport (cf. Coalter et al 1988; Henry 1993, 2001). During the early 1970s sport policy emerged as a public policy concern (Green 2004a:368). The following discussion locates sport policy in light of broader political processes surrounding the maturation of the welfare state, the ideological pre-eminence of social democracy, an economic context of growing affluence and an increasingly politicised, professional and bureaucratised approach to sport (Henry 1992, 2003; Roche 1993; Horne et al 1999; Green 2004a).

Despite the supposed quasi-independent nature of the four Sports Councils emphasising an 'at arm's length' approach (Coghlan and Webb 1990; Pickup 1996; Roche 1993), government financed sport, aimed at ameliorating wider social policy concerns (Green 2004a:369). This arrangement allowed the Sports Council to remain free from state control but simultaneously had the benefits of increased state financial involvement (Coughlan & Webb 1990:66), and constitutionally assured the independence of sport (but heavily influenced by government). The rapid expansion in sports development, was in part fuelled by the building of new sport and leisure facilities, and a growing professional approach to provision (Henry 1993; 2001). The Sports Council's annual reports from the period 1972-1976 show expenditure of £4.7 million in support of a broad range of voluntary sector facilities, with football projects receiving £300,000 (Coghlan & Webb 1990:83). Local Authorities were the predominant providers, grant aided by the Sports Council. Sports clubs, co-ordinated by their governing bodies, were unwilling to relinquish their relationship with the more autonomous CCPR. Government generally viewed sport as a peripheral area of concern, preferring it to be run substantially by voluntary agencies

(Houlihan & White 2002). Thus, it was the CCPR and the collaborative activity of its members to promote and co-ordinate their own interests rather than the Sports Council that played a crucial part in early sports development policy formulation and its subsequent implementation. The recognition of sport as an area of public policy strengthened the relationship of the voluntary sector and the CCPR with the Sports Councils, but also exacerbated the latent tensions between the voluntary sector and the increasingly professionalized and bureaucratic government agencies.

Indeed, the momentum generated by the commitment of local authorities to the building of sports facilities led in part to two government reports, the House of Lords Select committee on Sport and Leisure (Cobham 1973), and the White Paper on Sport and Recreation (Department of the Environment 1975). Recognised as a watershed in sport and leisure policy (Bramham & Henry 1985), the 1975 White Paper endorsed sport and leisure as significant aspects of welfare provision in the context of an increasingly bureaucratic and rationalised society. More significantly, it prompted the government through the GB Sports Council and voluntary and public bodies to work more collaboratively to achieve welfare objectives, recognising that voluntary bodies and their egalitarian principles alone could not achieve policy goals, and that positive state involvement was to be fostered (DoE 1975:3).

This confirmed sport and recreation as a legitimate element of the welfare state, i.e. as 'recreational welfare' (Coalter et al 1988). However, despite the rhetoric of 'Sport for All' and egalitarian principles, policies were targeted at specific groups in society, which required collaboration between public and voluntary organisations to provide for and implement such policies (Coalter et al 1988). Indeed, it has been suggested that 'Sport for All', established in 1972 as the GB Sports Council's endorsement of the Council of Europe's Sport for All campaign, was never more

than a slogan and that government increasingly directed the Council to target its resources to specific groups (Coalter et al 1988; Henry 1993; 2001). Thus, the notion of Sport for All became 'sport for the disadvantaged' and 'sport for the inner city youth' (Houlihan 1991). This period represented the emergence not only of sport development as a public policy concern, but also, due in part to the continued marginal political position of sport, the recognition and encouragement of collaborative activity to implement policies and initiatives at the bequest of government.

Selected Illustrative Policy Developments

The Football Trust, originally set up as a partnership between the FA and government and the Pools companies, took on wider terms of reference in 1978, undertaking grant-aiding of projects formerly the remit of the Sports Council. In short, the Trust became empowered to provide funds for football at all levels to encompass work on football stadia and grassroots facility projects (SNCCFR 1990:60). Richard Faulkner (the Trust's Chair), argued that it provided British football with a necessary financial base that the government came to rely upon when involving itself in football issues. The Football Trust became a widely representative body including members of the Football League, Football Association, football authorities in Scotland, the PFA, the Association of Chief Police Officers, local authorities and the pools companies (SNCCFR 1990:66). Its composition and funding represented a striking resemblance to the recommendations in the DES report of 1968 for a football levy board, with the Trust becoming widely accepted as football's independent voluntary alternative to a state run body with at least as much funding, but significantly, without government interference.

The Trust's remit included assisting young people to play football, providing them with quality facilities and minimum standards of coaching through qualified personnel. The most pertinent example was the Football in the Community Programme. Set up in 1978 to combat football hooliganism, the initial intention was to make professional football clubs and in particular the players and staff, more accessible to surrounding communities (Sports Council 1988:81; Ingham 1983:53). The then Minister for Sport, Dennis Howell, allocated £1million to set up partnerships between local authorities, Sports Councils and football clubs for the use of facilities, management and activity programmes (Sports Council 1988:81). Indeed, local authority personnel highlighted that all those with a stakeholding in recreation or sport were working in a period of great change, with partnerships between multifarious organisations, particularly the private sector becoming not only more fashionable but essential for the delivery of government objectives (Sports Council 1988:82). The football authorities were reliant on the Sports Council for administering grassroots projects, particularly those aimed at improving local authority owned playing facilities (SNCCFR 1990:67).

Concerns to provide 'quality' at the grassroots level centred on the naïve belief that providing better facilities alone would; increase participation levels, the inclusion of minority groups, and improve the quality of experience and talent of youngsters. Significantly, the first football commercial products entered the private sector of sport development in 1978. Influenced in part by the emergent soccer camp culture in the United States, and a generation of British trainee teachers qualified as FA preliminary award holders, the 'Bobby Charlton Soccer Schools' were established (Pitchford 2007:52). These 'schools' or schemes, were the impetus behind growth in the private commercialised soccer schools prevalent in school holidays, which in part expanded rapidly during the 1980s through the Conservative Government's opening-up of different sectors for 'marketisation'.

In sum, several processes are prominent in the 1970s which embedded particular elements within the sport policy area and related subsystems such as sport development. Firstly, the interest of government in sport's utility as an instrument of social policy gathered momentum and continued apace, with the emergence of specific schemes utilising sport to counter specific social problems. Secondly, NGBs were developing a greater enthusiasm and aptitude to effectively plan for the future of their sports. Thirdly, a change in the machinery of government occurred (c.f. Glennerster 1995; 2000) influenced by major national (changes in school curriculum and reform of power for local authorities) and international events which in turn led to the final pertinent issue: the beginning of the breakdown of the welfare state (Green 2004a).

1980s

Political Context

The 1980s witnessed a reshaping of welfare as the Conservative Government introduced legislation which fundamentally reshaped British social policy (Wilding 1997:716; Glennerster 1995). In short, shifts in the ideological, administrative and financial apparatus of welfare provided the context within which sport development initiatives and schemes emerged and which created a trajectory that shaped contemporary sports accreditation schemes such as the Charter Standard. Significantly, the evolution of sports development has in large part been influenced by, and taken root in, the Conservative Government's commitment to a mixed economy of welfare provision of the 1980s (Houlihan & White 2002), emphasising the role that family, private and voluntary sectors should play in provision of welfare. Social policy shifted from a 'dependency' culture in order to 'remoralise' recipients of welfare encouraging greater self-reliance and awareness of an individual's responsibilities in society rather than merely their welfare rights (Deakin 1994). The voluntary sector in particular was supported by an increase in public funding in conjunction with the adoption of private sector management practices such as performance measurement and strategic planning (Exworthy & Powell 2000). Such characteristics have been maintained in contemporary policies and schemes that are the preserve of the voluntary sector such as the Charter Standard and other sport development initiatives that require the mobilisation of volunteers, such as 'Clubmark' (Sport England 2002).

The publication of *'Sport in the Community'* (GB Sports Council 1982) declared that deficiencies in the number of facilities identified in both the Wolfenden and Cobham reports had been overcome. Based upon this, the new strategic focus focused on target groups with an emphasis on participation (McIntosh 1987:120; Sports Council

1982:6-8). As such, in its 1983 annual report, the Council reoriented sports policy by focusing on participation amongst under participating groups such as youth and ethnic minorities that were deemed constitutive of social problems, in which sport could be utilised for its ameliorative function (Nichols 1997) in areas of special need to play a positive role in tackling anti-social issues (Coghlan & Webb 1990). This social and political environment formed the background within which the first notable sports development schemes were formed, either government-led or with its support.

During this period, 'economic realism' brought about by the Thatcher government's fiscal policies, meant individuals working within sport in the public sector had to find imaginative and flexible ways of implementing policy within a tight budget, thus refocusing public sector work to establish and utilise partnerships for programme implementation (Henry 1993:118-120). Many local authorities began to adopt sport development and partnership initiatives as a fundamental part of the public body role in delivering social policy objectives (Sports Council 1991a:31). Moreover, the privatising ethos of the 1980s characterised by the transfer of public assets into private ownership and the externalities of the markets, was usually accompanied by regulatory agencies designed to safeguard the interests of the public. The conditions created in football during this period, however, allowed a small number of businessmen to create their own market (Conn 1997, 2005; Bower 2003; Szymanski & Kuypers 2000), and transform football into big business with no regulation in place (Hamil et al 1999). Such 'interlopers' (Wagg 2004:4) seemed to care little for the heritage of football, with little attention paid to the interests of other constituent groups within the game, further exacerbating the void between the grassroots and elite game. A commercial triumvirate between a small number of rich professional clubs, global corporations and television paid no regard to the grassroots (Walvin 2001:2).

Selected Illustrative Policy Developments

The slogan 'Sport for All' was used to promote participation by the GB Sports Council, which adopted a conceptual continuum from foundation to excellence, providing a context within which policy discussions could be located (Houlihan & White 2002). The continuum also provided a template for which discussions on people's sporting careers and gaps in provision could be framed (See Fig. 3.3).

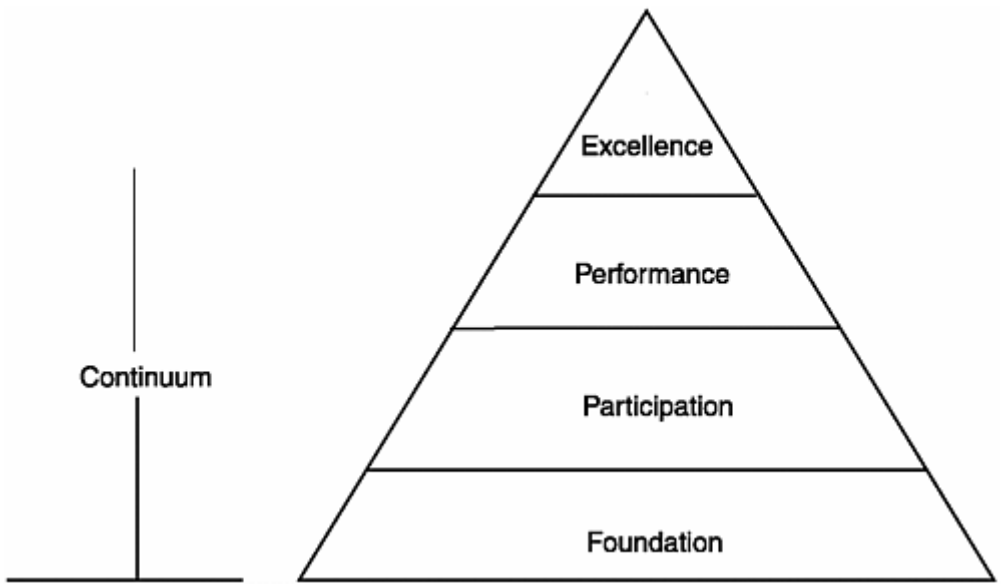


Figure 3.2 **The early model of the sports development continuum.** ***Source*****: Sport England**

The Council operationalised its commitment to Sport For All and its policy on mass participation with two major schemes. First, through the Manpower Services Commission, and by pump-priming the local authorities with £1 million a year from 1982 – 1985, the Council developed an infrastructure of Sport Development Officers (SDOs) to implement the Action Sport programme. Second, in 1984 it launched fifteen National Demonstration Projects (NDPs), which sought to identify strategies to ameliorate the barriers to participation for a range of under-represented groups. Significantly, implementation of the NDPs brought the realisation that sport development projects were hindered by problems associated with the managing of

partnerships, especially with organisations unfamiliar with sport, such as health authorities (Sports Council 1991c:31), and that 'to get the maximum benefits from the partnerships, sports development objectives must try to fit in with the objectives of the partner organisation and not vice versa' (ibid.:31),

The Sports Council and the FA worked in collaboration to utilise football as a vehicle for the Action Sport programmes. In 1984, the FA coaching department and the Sports Council's regional offices encouraged local authorities to either appoint development officers specifically for football or those people employed within local authorities on sports development programmes to give football a far greater priority than it already received. As a precursor to New Labour's modernisation project, targets were set that provided the parameters for job roles of SDOs which were to increase participation and instruction at grassroots level for boys and girls by an agreed number dependent upon local conditions (SNCCFR 1990:74). The Action Sport initiative embedded sports development workers within local authorities, and contributed to broader welfare policies at a local level, providing an identified profession for the implementation of future sport development schemes. For instance, Houlihan and White (2002) estimated that by 1987 there were 300 SDOs and by the beginning of the 1990s there were as many as 2,000.

A discernible shift in the purposes of sport development initiatives that have influenced subsequent policies is clear here. Sport for All was reactive focusing on participation in sport as a source of individual and social welfare, with the role of the SDO to identify low participation groups in meeting their often unexpressed need. Action Sport however, was a successful proactive policy intervention (Houlihan & White 2002:40), publicising and promoting the benefits of sport to target groups, and directly intervening through active consultation on a one-to-one level (McIntosh &

Charlton 1985; Rigg 1986:10). The implementation of sport schemes and policies such as the FA's Charter Standard require a mixture of both strategies, in that an objective of the scheme is to contribute indirectly to increasing participation amongst traditionally underrepresented groups by encouraging clubs to become more equitable, whilst at the same time FDOs are encouraged to be proactive in implementing sustainable structures and partnerships (for example school-club links) for grassroots football.

The implementation of such schemes did not always fulfil what they had originally set out to achieve. The original aims of policy makers had become more diffuse and vague as they travelled from policy formulators to implementers, (Ingham 1983:53), to the extent that the actual forms of provision introduced varied considerably from what was intended (Ingham 1983:54). Football in The Community is a particular example. Whilst the implementation of the scheme did not always attract the social and age groups intended, the opening-up of professional football clubs into the community had the unintended consequence of providing greater opportunities for children of all abilities to take part in structured quality football sessions led by qualified personnel.

The circumstances in which the FITC schemes evolved came at an opportune time for the FA. School football and school sport provision in general was a victim of the Thatcherite policies of the 1980s (Walvin 2001:224). Between 1987 and 1995, five thousand school playing fields had been sold (Walvin 2001:224) negatively impacting upon extracurricular activities in particular, and by the turn of the 21st Century, school provision for football had dissipated (Walvin 2001:225). The traditional fixture for competitive school matches had declined by 70 percent and after school provision by 62 percent (Walvin 2001:225). However, at a time when the

traditional cradle of grassroots football was declining, the club based junior grassroots football infrastructure was expanding, with grassroots clubs assuming provision previously supplied by schools in terms of competition, but without the capacity to develop fundamental skills.

In summary, a number of processes occurred in the 1980s which forced NGBs to formulate and employ a development strategy for their particular sport, and accept sport development as a legitimate and worthwhile activity. The FA's 'Blueprint for the future of football' in 1991 is a case in point. In particular; the decline in school sport alongside the growth of the national PE curriculum, the growth in popularity of new global adventure and American sports forms, and the persistent decline in participation in the school leaver's age group, represented threats to the future of each sport under the jurisdiction of NGBs. Moreover, as Houlihan and White (2002:49) note, three policy themes or approaches emerged that were to have a significant impact upon the type and structure of development schemes in the future: i) young people targeted by a single sport NGB; ii) the promotion of mass participation under a targeted approach of a variety of under-participating groups located within local authorities; and iii) substantially overlapping with the second, a focus on social problems such as crime and poor health but reliant on other agency partners such as the police to deliver.

Of greater significance, the period was important in defining what constituted the practice and aims of sports development. Sports development towards the early 1990s was re-defined as an interventionist strategy, shifting from a passive exercise in the provision of facilities (Houlihan & White 2002:47). In this context, the inception of the first notable sport development 'schemes' and 'initiatives' for target groups, such as Action Sport and the National Demonstration projects were notable.

Sport policy in general drew upon a model of the sports development continuum which exemplified a strategy based on a combination of interventionist strategies to provide for the breadth of opportunity to participate, and pathways for high performance sport (Green 2006). Indeed, the effective bankruptcy of school football, acknowledged as the seed-bed of the game (Walvin 2001:226; FA 1991, 2006; Kerrigan 2004), contrasted starkly with the opulence of the elite, professional clubs and players. The historical refusal by elite clubs to recognise the part played by schools and grassroots football clubs made the contrast even more acute, as they are indebted to such organisations for raw talent in the form of future professional players. Moreover, the ways in which schools and junior clubs cultivate a national attachment to football, without which there would be less interest in the game as a whole, remained under-acknowledged. Successive schemes such as FITC and Coca Cola's 'Soccer Star' concocted and implemented by the FA in conjunction with local authorities and more recently the FA Premier League, served the interests of professional clubs by being a vehicle through which the more talented players were recruited. The rest, those not deemed to have the potential to benefit from professional coaching to make a living and contribution to the game in adulthood, were summarily discarded into the unstructured, ad hoc and unorganised world of grassroots football.

1990 –1997

Political Context

The 1990s began with the legacy of Thatcher's disdain and neglect of sport, yet by the mid-1990s a change in personnel and attitude in government prompted a more positive approach towards sport development. A sympathetic Prime Minister in John Major and a swathe of public and media opinion raised awareness of the importance of international sporting success. The successful hosting of the football European Championships in 1996, and failures such as the poor medal haul at the Atalanta Olympic Games and underachievement of English national teams in major sports of football, rugby and cricket in part exacerbated the need for a more coherent approach to sport policy. The perception that participation in sport yielded wider benefits to society such as community cohesion and health (PAT 10 Report 1999) became embedded as the policy field for sport started to become more of a concern to government. These processes accelerated the debate regarding who, and at what level of sport, organisations and people had responsibility in a period of rapid policy change and innovation.

An increasingly professionalised and strategic approach began to replace the previously unsystematic and 'amateurish' attitude. Sports development became increasingly bifurcated in terms of its objectives and structural organisation between developing and implementing policies at the grassroots and elite levels (c.f. Green 2004a). NGBs became more involved at both ends of the sports development continuum, whilst local government had expanded from an emphasis on community recreation to an emphasis on the development of specific sports in a political environment increasingly dependent upon the mechanisms of the market (Lentell 1993:43-45). Local government focused upon youth sport through policies, whereas NGBs focused on talent identification and development was reinforced by the GB

Sports Council's selective allocation of resources (Green 2004a). There was a perceptible shift to a much greater degree of selectivity (Pickup 1996:20), in which high performance Olympic sports were given a greater share of the Council's resources (Sports Council 1991a:6). Moreover, the Council's corporate plan 1990-1994 declared a switch in emphasis by re-routing resources towards activities at the performance and excellence end of the sport development continuum, and that foundation levels would receive relatively few resources (Pickup 1996:58). In addition, the Council sought to redefine its relationship with NGBs in developing and implementing agreed contracts based upon development plans and performance. In short, grassroots, participation sport became subordinate to the pursuit of elite sport success.

As Rowe and White (1996:123) note, a number of agencies at local, regional and national levels developed and ran programmes and campaigns designed to increase young people's participation in sport, attempting to bridge the gap between physical education in the curriculum and sport outside school. Despite there being many imaginative and innovative schemes, provision was variable and hampered by a lack of a clearly defined shared vision and often poor coordination between relevant agencies. A lack of clarity existed in policy or guidance on the quality of schemes being proposed. The introduction of new public management (a government philosophy to modernise the public sector more based on the premise that market orientation in the public sector will lead to greater cost-efficiency for governments, without having negative side effects on other objectives and considerations Boston et al 1996) provided a focus on quality for the end users of policy in general, and sports development in particular (Robinson 2004). The Charter Standard is a pertinent example of this drive for quality. Indeed, Ogle (1997:216) highlights that the work of public sponsored sports development organisations was characterised by partnerships of coincidence rather than a commitment to agreed objectives. The

emphasis on curing a problem rather than preventing it initially militated against success of schemes based on remedial action. Furthermore, the Council attempted to resource and deliver entire schemes directly from national level. Upon realisation of these problems, there was a shift to preventative policies, which encouraged policy makers to facilitate and enable development initiatives, to be implemented, owned and delivered locally which allowed for variation based upon local circumstance and need (Ogle 1997:217).

Selected Illustrative Policy Developments

The strategy document *'New Horizons'* (Sports Council 1991b), stated individuals were to be provided the rights and opportunities to choose the level, frequency and variety of activity to suit their individual aptitudes and desires (Sports Council 1991b:8-9). The document was premised upon the four pillars of the sports development continuum and, in addition, with protecting the ethical and moral basis of sport (Houlihan & White 2002:62). It also built on the Sports Council's (1991c) *'National Demonstration Projects: Major Issues and Lessons for Sports Development'*, which suggested the adoption of a new sports development model recognising few people start at foundation and progress smoothly through to excellence. Moreover, *'New Horizons'*, implicitly noted that the Council was working towards developing the concept of sports equity, defined as concerning:

> …fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to redress them. It is about changing the structure and culture of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society, whatever their age, race, gender or level of ability. (Sports Council 1991b:4)

A legacy for subsequent sport development policies and initiatives was established , as sports equity was to be applied throughout the sports development continuum, rather than solely amongst target groups (Thomas 2004). Following this, the Council devised policies and strategies for traditional marginal sport groups such as women, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities (Sports Council 1993). Equity processes further shaped contemporary sports development initiatives with the publication of *'Women: Frameworks for Action'* and the Brighton Declaration (Sports Council 1994) which forced NGBs, and particularly the FA, to take a greater role and direct more resources in the development of their sport for women.

The policy statement *'Young People and Sport: Frameworks for Action'* shifted the emphasis of youth sport schemes from countering 'wicked' issues to debates within physical education and sports development networks, and wider policy issues such as health. It also consolidated the GB Sports Council's central position within a series of policy debates on the issue of youth sport policy. It proposed frameworks for action regarding the creation of more highly coordinated structures at local level to enable all young people to participate and realise their potential in offering 'Better Quality Sport for All'. As Houlihan and White (2002:66) argue, it was welcomed by practitioners because it addressed both the quantity and quality of school sport and physical education and emphasised the importance of the foundation stage of the sports development model. The focus of the document was, however, deliberately aimed at sport and not physical education (DNH 1995:7), emphasising the centrality of school sport to broader sport policy. The document was produced within a political context of the marginalisation of local government and an emphasis on traditional team sports within schools that pervaded the debate over the Physical Education curriculum (cf. Evans & Penney, 1995; Gilroy & Clarke 1997; Penney & Evans 1997, 1999). Furthermore, the Council introduced a challenge fund to assist in the development of school-club links. Although the statement explicitly identified

the gap between school and voluntary club sport, mooted by many in the past (DNH 1995:7), such links were central to the development of elite sport development structures and pathways.

In short, the document provided the first real concern with grassroots sports clubs, emphasising opportunities for young people to develop their talent. Yet, the emphasis of the document was elitist, indicating the withdrawal of central government and the Sports Councils from the provision of opportunities for mass participation (Green 2004a:371) to focus upon; i) the development of elite performers and an elite sports academy/institute; ii) developing the role of higher education institutions in fostering the potential of elite athletes; and iii) funding allocations to governing bodies on condition of support for meeting government objectives (Houlihan 1997).

Furthermore, *'Sport: Raising the Game'* provided a model emphasised according to which different stages of the continuum were more closely associated with specific organisations. For example, NGBs, previously encouraged to become more involved in supporting the achievement of community sport objectives, were encouraged to focus upon the elite levels. The implicit assumption being that achievement at elite level would have a demonstrative effect on the population and encourage participation lower down the sports development continuum (Houlihan 2000). This suited NGBs and their traditional ambivalence towards broader community responsibilities in general.

During this period, the GB Sports Council attempted to integrate local authorities into a network of partnerships for young people's sport. A 'Young People and Sport

Task Force' was formed to promote and implement the NJSP, aimed at achieving greater coherence and direction to the existing multitude of schemes, funding streams and providers for the 4-18 year age group that had done much to undermine and replicate previous work (Thomas 2004). The NJSP programme linked major organisations responsible for the development of youth sport, and provided a structure to sustain the links between the foundation, performance and excellence levels of the sport development continuum model. Whilst the programme was successful insofar as providing a foundation for the formation of future partnerships for sport policy, and was the impetus for a number of innovative schemes, the degree of integration which it espoused was variable, and became overshadowed by new developments.

For instance, in 1998, the Active Sport and World Class programmes were launched, the first initiatives for sport introduced under New Labour. The Youth Sport Trust (YST), founded in 1994 was establishing itself as a major powerful organisation within the field of youth sport policy and wider sport policy in general, making its own voice and opinions heard as to the legitimate way to structure and provide youth sport, due in part to the success of a series of TOP schemes. Aimed at improving the quality of physical education teaching in primary schools, generic TOP programmes spawned sports specific schemes which were adopted in partnership with individual NGBs to develop resources to train primary teachers in the delivery of basic skill fundamentals in particular sports. During the period 2001 – 2004, the FA, through County FAs in partnership with a sponsoring body from the commercial sector and the local authority sport development department, committed £3million over three years to be rolled out in schools involved in the TOP programme. Moreover, the YST's objectives and the emerging priority of school sport under John Major's government reflected in *'Sport: Raising the Game'* complemented each other, combined with the ability of YST staff under the policy

entrepreneurship of Sue Campbell (Houlihan & Green 2006) to act on their own initiative to devise and implement innovative and cutting edge programmes.

1997 – 2006: New Labour, Sport Development and modernisation

Political Context and Selected Illustrative Policy Developments

Having traced the historical processes impacting upon the evolution of sports development and grassroots football, this section provides an account of the socio-political context within which the FA's Charter Standard emerged. In this respect, the Charter Standard is identified as being a small but indicative element of New Labour's modernisation programme of reform for public services in general and sport in particular.

New Labour, elected in 1997, came to power at a key juncture in the history, emergence and future of sports development and sport policy in general. Strands of Conservative reform were continued, particularly the emphasis on quality and efficiency and recourse to the tenets of new public management. A key aspect of New Labour's electoral platform was the softening of 'the outright assault on public services' (Newman 2001:52), through which the Conservative administrations had promoted the benefits of competition. In contrast, New Labour emphasised a collaborative approach at policy level under the rhetoric of 'joined up government' and 'Third Way' politics (Giddens 1998), characterised by management and building of partnerships and strategic alliances through networks across the public, private and voluntary sectors. An avalanche of policy reviews and task forces were unleashed, indicating that (although an ideological statement in itself) ideological thinking was abandoned and replaced by 'what counts is what works' (Ludlam 2004:1) in what has become known as 'evidence based policy'. New Labour was

concerned to promote moral, urban and economic regeneration which was reflected in its commitment to tackle social exclusion in supporting economic modernisation and creative excellence. Moreover, education was seen as the main service priority, key to achieving the broader objective of social inclusion. The objectives of social inclusion were built upon 'Third Way' politics, in which New Labour envisaged the state as an enabling partner to tackle social exclusion and promote individual rights and responsibility (Bevir 2005:89), through working in partnership and the formation of networks to implement policies.

The general drive of social policy under New Labour put emphasis on a retreat from the principle of universalism of social provision and benefits and endorsed the language of targeting, selectivity and personal responsibility (Stepney et al 1999:110). This approach to social policy was complemented by New Labour's commitment to the modernisation of local and central government (Bovaird & Martin 2003:17), which permeated through the political infrastructure into fields such as sport policy (Green & Houlihan 2006). As Richards and Smith (2002) argue, New Labour sought to establish a welfare state that provides services, guaranteeing access for all to a minimum standard of quality and permitting a greater freedom of choice. In short, a balance was sought by New Labour between the responsibilities and rights of an increasingly 'active' citizenry, which set a limit on state support for the individual while at the same time ensuring that citizens became stakeholders (Prabhaker 2003; Richards & Smith 2002:235). Such political commitments and strategies both constitute and permeate the context within which New Labour's modernisation programme for sport were to be implemented. In this respect, the Charter Standard Scheme is indicative of the modernisation of sport under New Labour.

During the same period, the FA began to take note of the parlous state of grassroots football. Although elitist in emphasis, and aimed more at advancing the FA's own market position in light of the growing commercialism of professional football, the FA's *'Blueprint for the Future of Football'* devoted a small section to the grassroots game, declaring that a strategy and plan for the development of grassroots football was urgently required (FA 1991:63). Reflecting the incipient modernisation of the FA's approach to football development, in 1997 the FA published *'A Charter for Quality'*, a much more wide-ranging strategy that focused upon the youth and junior football infrastructure, from the grassroots to the elite level (in which the youth academy system for Premier League clubs was proposed and adopted). Significantly, it set out clear objectives with the aim of arresting the decline of schools football and raising the standard of quality in youth football in both grassroots and elite environments. The broad and seemingly simplistic principle underpinning the Charter for Quality was that all children should have the chance to receive qualified coaching and play on decent facilities on a regular basis, at all levels of the game.

In aiming to raise standards of provision in grassroots, particularly junior, football, the Charter for Quality proposed that small-sided football marketed under 'mini soccer' be introduced for under 10s, and that a 'Charter Mark' criteria be developed for clubs (FA 1997:9). In 1993, the FA published *'Mini Soccer: A handbook'*, for children under 11 (Russell 1993), which the FA made policy in September 1999 by stipulating that any club recognised and insured by the FA must conform to mini soccer (FA 2001). The fundamental rationale of this variation of the adult game is that children play a more simple game with fewer rules on smaller pitches and goals and a reduced amount of players. The notion behind it was to create conditions more conducive to the physical and cognitive abilities of children (Thorpe 2004:227). Continuing the historically uneasy relationship between organisation's responsible

for grassroots football, the ESFA objected, and requested that schools be allowed to continue with 11-aside football, citing the restriction on numbers being able to play as an inhibitive move to participation levels. The FA, in exerting its power as the authoritative body for football, rejected the request outright. A number of affiliated renegade schools and clubs defied the FA and continued to play the 11 aside game (Conn 2005), which exposed and reinforced the difficulties the FA has in regulating all aspects of the game. Such circumstances reinforce issues of power and ownership with respect to grassroots football, in which the FA are unable to regulate and enforce its will on all who participate.

In 2001, as part of its 'Football Development Strategy' (FA 2001), the FA launched the Charter Standard Club Scheme[2], an accreditation scheme which adopted the proposals of the 1997 document, in which clubs were to draw up and implement development plans. The proposed criteria included the screening of volunteers in charge of junior teams, the adoption of a code of conduct and a commitment to schools liaison, small-sided games and girl's football. It must also be noted here that the FA have not made it compulsory that all clubs achieve Charter Standard accreditation. Rather, the FA encourages clubs to achieve accreditation by highlighting the proposed benefits which include access to FA training workshops and endorsement for funding applications. It is assumed that those clubs attaining accreditation will become more self-sufficient and sustainable by adopting FA guidelines in organising and managing their respective club. The onus for implementing the scheme in clubs is upon club volunteers and teachers respectively, who are required, amongst other things, to undertake basic training in coaching, child protection and club administration with support from a proactive and professionalised County FA staff in the form of football development officers.

[2] For more information on the criteria for Charter Standard accreditation and on the different levels and variations of the scheme, visit http://www.thefa.com/GrassrootsNew/CharterStandard/

Whilst the FA took the initiative in developing strategies towards creating an organised infrastructure for grassroots football, the socio-political context within which these strategies were formulated and operationalised had a significant influence as to how the Charter Standard Scheme was devised and implemented. More significantly, the context within which the Charter Standard emerged and is being implemented has had considerable bearing upon volunteers undertaking the necessary qualifications and improving club administration in taking their club through the accreditation process. Significantly, the Charter Standard has been influenced by wider public policy in the relationship between government departments and agencies and the FA. In order to provide an adequate understanding of such accreditation schemes and the complexities and nuances associated with implementation, the Charter Standard and other policies directed at grassroots football must be located within this context.

New Labour's modernisation programme for sport (Houlihan & Green 2009), instantiated policy implementation through partnerships and networks. Significantly, this key programme of the New Labour Government (Finlayson 2003; Newman 2001) is concerned with, amongst other things, joined-up policy making, the inclusion of non-governmental groups in both decision making and the delivery of high quality public services, regionalism and devolution (Bevir 2005; Ludlam & Smith 2004; Richards & Smith 2002; Flinders 2002). Newman (2001) argues that New Labour has retained the Conservatives' neo liberal reforms, in which targets and performance indicators are imposed from the centre in the delivery of government policy. Audit and inspection regimes proliferate, and are supported by sanctions imposed on those organisations that fail to meet centrally imposed targets. Moreover, Finlayson (2003) claims that the Labour Government is modernising the

state and its partners, in which modern management is commercial management. NGBs such as the FA are therefore expected to adopt modern business principles in providing its product (football) to its service users (for example, junior players).

Whilst previous government policies for sport had not explicitly addressed the grassroots, New Labour approached sport with a greater range of focus. Programmes and schemes were to be implemented through the principles and strategies of partnership working across sectors, manifested by the implementation of new structures for sport reliant upon collaboration between organisations, individuals and sectors for sustainability. Such processes were within the context of regionalisation of sport through local authority provision and responsibility, and the wider devolution of power to local authorities and NGBs, but within directives from the centre. Whilst the emphasis on partnership and networks to implement policy was relatively new in adjacent policy fields such as health and education which were traditionally exemplified by departmentalism, this was broadly consistent with previous practice in sport policy implementation.

According to Houlihan and White (2002:81), the reliance of the sport policy field on such collaborative activity was ostensibly due to the regionalised Sports Councils and the newly formed DCMS (and its predecessor the DNH) having limited capacity and resources for direct service provision. There was also little in the way of inclination by previous administrations to provide direct service provision, due in part to traditionally utilising resources to stimulate activity through, and relying upon NGBs, clubs, schools and local authorities to provide for sport. Moreover, the position that sport holds as a valuable resource to the majority of central government departments has placed sport policy in a somewhat unique position that is both advantageous and problematic. On the one hand, sport policy can help achieve the

wider social policy goals in: i) health in terms of the well being of the nation's population; ii) education, through schemes highlighted in Chapter 1 which creates a demand and need for sporting expertise both physically and administratively; and iii) social inclusion in terms of being used as a vehicle to introduce disparate groups in society to one another. Moreover, it has assisted in achieving co-operation between departments such as the DCMS and the DfES in relation to schools, and the DETR with its responsibility for local government (Robson 2001) as policies such as PESSCL have mutually exclusive goals for each department with partnership working being rewarded by government.

On the other hand, sport policy remains complex, diluted and a policy field characterised by constant friction, disunity and lack of general direction and consensus, and is a policy area that sits uneasily in the interstices of other more weighty policy fields, in which Houlihan (2000) identifies as a 'crowded policy space', subject to pressure from a range of competing sectoral interests such as education and welfare. However, it is possible to identify three discrete themes of contemporary sport policy reflecting three platforms of organisational responsibility. These are: young people (school sport) through the Youth Sports Trust (YST), participation through Sport England which has been termed 'community sport', and elite sport through UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport. Although there is some overlap between these policy platforms in terms of objectives, the lead organisations and programmes, the extent to which the policies represent an increasingly self-contained cluster of programmes, resources and organisations is striking when compared to the neglect and disarray of the past.

In reflecting the commitment to joined up working for the formulation and implementation of policy, New Labour's '*A Sporting Future For All*' strategy DCMS

(2000) offered 'a modernising partnership with the governing bodies of sport', identifying schools as central in Labour's conceptualisation of sports development. The strategy, built on previous Conservative policy to introduce Specialist Schools. In this regard, Specialist Sports Colleges (SSCs), first designated in 1996, were adopted by New Labour as the hub and impetus behind sport development strategies. '*A Sporting Future For All*', following on from *'Sport: Raising the Game'* provided an unprecedented organisational and administrative framework for the future of sport policy, outlined in a five part plan: i) to rebuild schools sport facilities, ii) to create 110 Specialist Sports Colleges by 2003, iii) encourage and support for extra-curricular and after school sport, iv) the appointment of 600 school sport co-ordinators to link in with SSCs to facilitate sport outside the school curriculum, and v) coaching support for talented youngsters to be delivered through the networks of SSCs and link into the regional centres of the UK Sports Institute to provide a clear pathway for those with talent (DCMS 2000:7).

It is worthy of note that, although these publications are from different sides of the political spectrum, they demonstrate a striking note of unity on the twin emphases of school (youth) sport and elite development, which some commentators suggest that 'a qualitative shift in the sports-participation culture away from the egalitarian and empowering aspirations of community-based sporting activity to a hierarchical and alienating culture of high-performance sport' (McDonald 2000) is occurring. Moreover, Houlihan (2000:175) notes that since 1997, the Labour Government....'has begun to make good its policy commitments in the area of sport, but it is notable that there has been far greater progress in addressing the issues associated with the elite end of the sports continuum', further marginalising the commitment to grassroots sport, except for its function in serving the interests of wider social issues and elite sport development success. Hoey (cited in DCMS 2000:14) highlighted the government's position regarding grassroots sport, in that it contributes to talent identification and the construction of 'pathways' to higher levels of competition.

The publication of *'Game Plan'* (DCMS 2002) reinforced and provided both greater detail for the above plans, and an explicit emphasis upon the symbiotic and overtly instrumental relationship between sport (and increased physical activity in general), education and health policy (DCMS/Strategy Unit 2002). This was to be achieved in the context of the broader devolution agenda of New Labour; the implications of which for sport development were the regionalisation of sport structures through Sport England. Such developments have reinvigorated Sport England's regional offices (Green & Houilhan 2006), and created a plethora of regional/ local bodies with a greater (e.g. Regional Sports Boards, County Sports Partnerships) or lesser (e.g. Regional Assemblies, Regional Development Agencies, Cultural Consortiums) degree of involvement in sport policy (Houlihan & Green 2009). 'Game Plan', in setting the goal of increasing participation levels in sport and physical activity, made clear that if sporting organisations wished to lever funding from government in the future, then the broader social issues of increasing obesity levels, crime and social cohesion were to be addressed. This agenda raised a number of jurisdictional quandaries over which regional and local bodies were responsible for which aspects of sport development, but most significantly in their role in working with NGBs, a role which is even more obscure in relation to football development.

These plans were reinforced in 2003 with the cross-departmental publication, *'Learning through PE and Sport'* (Department for Education & Skills [DfES]/DCMS, 2003), which outlined eight programmes, including plans to increase the number of specialist colleges to 400 and SSCOs to 2,400 by 2005 (DfES/DCMS 2003:2). Considerable resources were allocated to support these policy developments, financed substantially by the Exchequer, with additional funding from the National Lottery's New Opportunities Fund (NOF). The government's PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy (PESSCL), stated that: 'the Government is investing £459 million to transform PE and school sport. This funding is on top of £686 million being

invested to improve school sport facilities across England. Together, this means that over £1 billion is being made available for PE and school sport, and all schools in England will benefit in some way' (DfES/DCMS 2003:1; DCMS 2000:19). The government's partnership with sport aimed to increase investment in grassroots activities through such public sector funding. However, this was on two conditions.

Firstly, that commercially successful sports such as football also contributed to the same pot to invest in grassroots facilities. This was achieved through the formation of the Football Foundation in which the FA Premier League committed to allocating five percent of its TV broadcasting deal towards developing facilities at the grassroots end, which was matched by government. Secondly, in adhering to principles characteristic of the wider modernisation project, that all governing bodies agree to work to a number of clear and agreed targets for the development of their sport (DCMS 2000:19). Funding was to be granted on condition that NGBs had a clear strategy for participation (grassroots sport) and excellence within the emerging structure for English sport (DCMS 2000:20), utilising partnerships to 'modernise' and 'professionalise' the way sport is run. Those NGBs that demonstrate delivery of targets were promised greater responsibility and autonomy, and those that fail to do either were to face a review of their funding arrangements (DCMS 2000:20). To this end, the government aimed to 'create an accreditation scheme for clubs and schools with high quality junior sections' at the grassroots level (DCMS 2000:13), and high quality physical education and out of school hours sport respectively (DCMS 2000:14). Sport England was commissioned to work with NGBs to devise these accreditation schemes leading to a quality mark for junior clubs (DCMS 2000:40) and schools (DCMS 2000:42). Moreover, *'Game Plan'*, declared as the 'blueprint for the structure of sport' (DCMS/Strategy Unit 2002:11), states that NGBs should have clear performance indicators, and be funded on the basis of delivery in which government investment should be utilised to drive modernisation

and wider working with the voluntary and private sectors (DCMS Strategy Unit 2002:162).

It is unclear whether the development of Sport England's accreditation scheme 'Clubmark' influenced the FA's Charter Standard, or the reverse. However, what is clear is that Sport England acting on behalf of the government would have had significant bearing upon the political environment in which the FA was operating. In this respect, the FA was to agree with Sport England a number of Key Performance Indicators regarding the number of clubs and schools expected to gain Charter Standard accreditation each year, based on the principles of clubs adopting good practice in coaching, child protection, club administration and development. Those clubs that gained Charter Standard accreditation were deemed more suitable for FA support in submitting funding bids to the Football Foundation for projects such as facility building, repair or development.

Accreditation schemes such as the Charter Standard are an integral element of creating quality at the grassroots/community level of sports development and have encouraged the increasingly collaborative activity between schools and voluntary junior clubs. For instance, to achieve SSC status, amongst other things, a school must achieve Activemark (primary school), Sportsmark or Sportsmark Gold (secondary school) accreditation. Moreover, PDMs as part of their role in developing and maintaining school sport partnerships within the PESSCL programme seek to develop formal links between schools and clubs with accreditation schemes such as the Charter Standard. Achieving such accreditation signifies to PDMs that the club or school is backed by its particular NGB's standards as an organisation capable of working in partnership and providing a quality experience for youngsters. Indeed, it is desirable for PDMs to work with such clubs,

or assist them with gaining accreditation. However, in terms of talent identification and development within the new sport development structure, football and the Charter Standard remain aloof to general sport policy relative to major Olympic sports, as players are still identified from school and junior teams and removed from the structure into specialist academies run by professional clubs (Pitchford et al 2007).

Broadly adopting the Conservative strategy employed in Charter Mark for public services (Penney 2000:127), Sportsmark for Secondary schools and Activemark for Primary schools were established in 1997 and 1998 respectively, and following those, Clubmark in 2002 for junior clubs, and were adopted under the umbrella of the Active Schools and Active Sports programme (DNH 1995). They aimed to recognise and reward evidence of community involvement (Capel & Piotrowski 2000:183) and were originally intended to be a relatively easy development in the short-term to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of government policy (Capel & Piotrowski 2000:184). Useful statistics generated as a result of this programme identified shortfalls in the areas of: extracurricular provision for young people; competition opportunities for young people (curricular and extracurricular); coaching qualifications of teachers and adults other than teachers (AOTTs); and links with local sports clubs.

These schemes are identified by Sport England (2002) as being 'cross sport quality marks' that aim to provide a 'safe, effective and child-friendly environment' and are quality labels that act as a measuring tool for children and their parents to identify what is deemed good practice by clubs in possession of such awards (De Knop et al 2004). In turn, the achievement of these awards is desirable from a sport club or a schools perspective in order to attract participants and potential funding

opportunities. The result of the Sport England schemes was to provide the impetus for various forms of their schemes across the major sports in the country. The aim of schools and clubs within these schemes is therefore to uphold minimum levels of competence in each of the basic categories of assessment set out by the Activemark, Sportsmark and Clubmark schemes which are; duty of care and safety, quality of coaching and competition, fairness of opportunity, and effective management.

Whilst it is true that going through the process of gaining Charter Standard accreditation is optional, those who choose not to do so are not engaging with the modernisation agenda, and are thus less likely to receive governing body and government support. Those who do become actively involved in the policy network for football development are engaging with the modernisation agenda, and are therefore more able to potentially access government influenced resources such as funding (although this is not guaranteed), and support from sport development professionals such as County FA FDOs. Moreover, those volunteers that do choose to engage with this agenda do so from different positions of power within such policy networks, based upon the resources they bring to the network.

Summary

New Labour's modernisation programme in sport (Green & Houlihan 2006) and in wider policy fields can be located within the focus of much recent academic debate as to the role and nature of 'how the state governs' or 'governing' more generally in wealthy democracies with neo-liberal governments (cf. Bevir 2005; Bevir & Rhodes 2003; Dean 1999; Giddens 1998; Kooiman 1993; Marsh et al 1999; Newman 2001; Rhodes 2000; Rose 1999). Notably, citizens are 'encouraged' to be more active in the delivery of government policy, and have been drawn into complex policy networks. However, the way in which citizens such as football club volunteers are

conceptualised in the power dynamics of such networks is a matter of considerable debate. Green and Houlihan (2006:53) highlight a paradox occurring in and through New Labour's policies, whereby there is a decentralist rhetoric in which individuals and organisations are perceived to be gaining greater autonomy and becoming more active politically, combined with the centralisation of control through the imposition of ever more rigorous targets and systems of performance measurement.

Rhodes (2000) contends that British government has dispersed power throughout the civil sphere of politics through the governance and steering of 'policy networks' whereby individuals and groups not usually associated with the political agenda have been drawn into and gained influence in political debate. In this respect, both the FA and volunteers are playing a more significant and obvious role in delivering policies that meet government's aims for grassroots sport in England. This conception has been termed the 'hollowed out state' whereby power is dispersed through a plurality of agencies, with government providing the lead direction. However, whilst gaining some academic acclaim, this analysis of the pluralistic dispersal of political power has been critiqued from several perspectives, most notably from analysts adopting a neo-Foucauldian analysis of governmentality (Green & Houlihan 2006; Houlihan & Green 2009). From this analytical standpoint, power is acknowledged as the use by governments of forms of persuasive processes of signification and legitimation to work through their desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs. In this connection, Green and Houlihan (2006) highlight that the government ostensibly designs and implements policies for sport that empower and autonomise NGBs and volunteers, while imposing centralised targets, directives and sanctions to achieve the government's desires (Green & Houlihan 2006:49). Sanctions and funding reviews are conducted with the likely outcome that funding allocations will be cut back or withdrawn for failing organisations (Green & Houlihan 2006:49).

Whilst the FA and government have adopted a more rationalised and bureaucratised approach to grassroots football in particular, the provision of football still occurs outside the FA's control and remit. For instance, with roots in FITC schemes of the 1970s, a range of charitable and welfare agencies have sought to utilise football for social interventions contributing to social inclusion objectives, which use football as a 'hook' to meet wider objectives (Pitchford 2007:53). Further complicating this is the proliferation since 2000 (Pitchford 2007:53) of commercial coaching companies. Several organisations have attempted to diversify football coaching and market it in a different fashion to the game organised by the FA. For instance, Simon Clifford's 'Brazilian Soccer Schools' have attempted to cash in on football's global popularity and appeal from other countries. This massive increase in coaching and supervision of children at the grassroots level is impossible for the FA to preside over with blanket cover. Therefore, football for children at the grassroots level is only partly attributable to the FA (Pitchford 2007:54), despite attempts to control it.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the trajectory of sport policy and sport development initiatives within socio-political contexts prior to, and beyond the 1970s to present date. Particular emphasis has been placed upon the period of 1997-2006, the period in which the Charter Standard emerged within the context of New Labour's modernisation agenda within the third way philosophy which encourages the forming and utilisation of partnerships in sport programmes to meet the requirements of its cross cutting objectives.

Generally, from the 1960s until the publication of *Sport: Raising the* Game in 1995, the approach to sport in general, and football in particular is characterised by its fragmented nature and lack of agreement and disharmony amongst many key sporting bodies regarding organisational, administrative and funding matters. Government intervention has been limited until 1972 when the establishment of the Sports Councils signalled an interest in improving the organisational and administrative structure of sport and recreation, largely through the building of facilities and the adoption of the *'Sport For All'* programme to increase participation in sport. Whilst not eradicating fragmentation and disharmony, from this point there has been a concerted effort by central government to provide some form of strategic guidance for the sport policy sector.

Given football and the FAs largely autonomous position from government vis-a-vis other NGBs, and the growth of football as a mammoth commercialised entity, this relationship seemingly suits the football authorities. The FA has been able to be the passive recipient of elements of such intervention and strategic planning by selecting

which programmes and opportunities are suitable for their involvement, such as linking with the NDC projects. Yet, when the grassroots level of football has been highlighted, particularly in the DES report of 1968, and the FAs own policy documents *A Blueprint for the future of football* and *A Charter for Quality*, and more recently their response to the House of Commons Select Committee on Women's football (2007), The FA has continually sought the support of the government, particularly in financial terms. Indeed, it was not until a New Labour government provided a vehicle of mutual redistribution through the Football Foundation did the footballing authorities commit any substantial sums of money to the grassroots levels through the County FAs. Historically the FA, and more recently the FA Premier League (Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport Written Evidence 19th May 2005) have sought government support for the revitalisation of grassroots football facilities, citing that football has relatively successfully delivered on government agendas despite the limited amount of Government investment in sport (The Premier League 2005), and that more money is dedicated to the grass roots than any other league in Europe. In addition, the football industry has generated around £2.5 billion in tax receipts for Government since 1992. Yet re-distribution of public sector funds into grassroots sport by government is limited (Premier League 2005). In 2004, The Football Foundation's Register of English Football Facilities identified 45% of the country's 45,000 pitches as unsuitable to provide for all dimensions of the grassroots game. The Football Foundation noted close to 400 grassroots facility projects worth over £100m were under construction with another £75m of projects in the pipeline. Yet, an estimated £2bn was identified to revitalise facilities at the grassroots level of the national game, a figure recently noted as required to double by the FAs Head of Strategic Investment, Nigel Hargreaves in *The Times* (March 19 2008). The FAs National Game Strategy (2007-2012:3) notes that £340m has been invested in facilities, but that only represents 15% of the estimated amount required. Thus the requirement for financial aid from government and other outside bodies

remains a key concern for the FA "as football alone cannot be expected to meet this need" (Lord Triesman, FA Chairman in the Times 2008).

The responsibility for grassroots football has historically been contested, with a range of organisations and government displaying a large degree of ambivalence. The grassroots game has always been at the periphery of football more generally, organised on an ad hoc basis and at the centre of power struggles over its organisation. The expansion of grassroots football and an increase in participation served to heighten the competitive nature of grassroots football (Keeton 1972). Leagues and cup competitions were organised for junior players outside of the school setting on a regional basis and clubs began to establish reputations in localities for developing skill levels of players who moved onto professional clubs. Such characteristics highlight grassroots football as a contested arena, not only in terms of success on the field of play in winning trophies but also in terms of local pride and reputation as to who has the most kudos in grassroots football (Williams 1994, 1996; Long 2000; Long et al 2000).

Until the 1990s, grassroots football was organised and developed on an amateur basis, with County FAs being made up of voluntary committee members. The recent occurrence and fast paced introduction of professional development staff to implement nationally led strategies imposed upon a field of sport anchored in voluntarism is potentially problematic. The Charter Standard, as one such initiative is central to the change and modernisation of the grassroots game never experienced by its participants on a national scale before.

This study, with the focus on the implementation of one sport development initiative within a salient political context highlights a concomitant strength and limitation. Given the constraints of the study imposed by the sponsoring body (The Football Association) detailed in Chapter 1, and the aims and objectives of the study to provide an in depth account of the implementation process within a field (grassroots football) relatively ignored by the academic community, is that it is constrained to just one initiative amongst a multitude of many within the modernised context. As such, there is no scope to compare and contrast with other initiatives in other sports. Studies in related to sport policy implementation, are rare, and those that do exist seek to measure the outcomes of intended policy criteria. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a nuanced account of the dynamics of Charter Standard implementation. Moreover, in undertaking such an analysis within the area of grassroots football, dynamics, processes and characteristics will be highlighted of a previously neglected area of potential academic study. Having identified the socio-political context in which the Charter Standard was formulated, to understand its implementation requires the application of theories of the policy process. Chapter 4 identifies various theories that can inform an analysis of policy implementation, and in particular, how and in what way, the Charter Standard has been implemented.

CHAPTER 4

Theorising the Policy Process

This chapter provides the theoretical context of the study, with a focus on the development of a pertinent and integrated theoretical framework that links a macro level context with meso and micro levels of theorising and analysis. The study is concerned with the implementation of a particular sport policy (The FA's Charter Standard Scheme), therefore central focus is upon the meso level, with insights provided at the micro/delivery level as this is where the intricacies and nuances of implementation occur (Parsons 1995; Hill 1997; Hill & Hupe 2002). However, the macro level provides the context within which power is dispersed through society, having an impact on the other two levels (Daugberg & Marsh 1998; Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Marsh & Smith 2001; Marsh & Stoker 2002). The chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, an evaluation of the strengths and limitations of three traditional macro level 'theories of the state', known as the 'traditional triumvirate' (Hay et al 2006) is provided: Pluralism, Marxism and Corporatism in relation to the sport policy sector. Beyond this, a discussion of the concept of governance is included here as it provides a narrative of recent government activity which can be explained by a number of competing theories, and also provides a link to meso level analyses. This discussion identifies the criteria by which the macro-level approaches can be judged as most salient to this study, particularly in relation to how power is dispersed in society and the impact such power has on implementation. Secondly, an evaluation of the relative strengths and limitations of meso level approaches to analysing the implementation of sport policy (c.f. Houlihan 2005) is provided. That is, their adequacy in explaining the context and conditions which frame the Charter Standard's implementation, with particular emphasis on how this links to the third micro level 'act' of implementation

4.1 Theories of the state

It is widely acknowledged that for any study of the policy process, it is vital to recognise the role of the state and relate it to the power structure of a society as a whole (Hay & Lister 2006, Daugberg & Marsh 1998, Hill 1997, Marsh 1995). For example, Hill (1997:41) argues that 'policy is the product of the exercise of political influence, determining what the state does and setting limits to what it does'. Given the, albeit small, emphasis on the notion of 'the state' at a macro level influencing the implementation of the Charter Standard, it is important to note the problematic nature in defining or circumscribing the meaning of the term (Hay & Lister 2006:4, Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987:1). Hay (1996) suggests that the contemporary state is somewhat of a paradox. Its utility as a concept can not be taken for granted since it does not have a self-evident material object of reference (Hay & Lister 2006). Such a utility must be demonstrated through a clear understanding of a term of reference. It is generally agreed by theorists of a variety of persuasions that the state is not unified, thus providing parameters for political conflicts between various interests over resource allocation and direction of public policy. The state's interests are difficult to discern because various parts of the state can have conflicting interests (Smith 1993:2). Such an undertaking, while necessary is also problematic. Different theories(ists) view similar phenomena, that is the state and its policies, in different ways, through different 'lenses' (Ball & Millard 1986). Thus, although individuals may agree on what has been observed at an empirical level, different conclusions as to the meaning or impact of such phenomena vary. These different views or theories provide a particular perspective of the world. Hay and Lister (2006:10) insist that behaviour influenced by policies must be conceptualised by two elements in particular relating to the analytical utility of the concept of the state: the first relates to the structural and/or institutional contextualisation of political actors, the second to the historical contextualisation of political behaviour and dynamics.

Pluralism

A common key characteristic of the variants of pluralistic approaches is based upon its epistemological assumption of an opposition to monism, and the view that there can be a single unified and universal body of knowledge. In essence, the position is underpinned by the assumption that the complexity of modern liberal states means that no single group, class or organisation can dominate society (Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987; Held 1996; Smith 1995; 2006). Groups are not necessarily equal in terms of influencing and implementing policy, but no group is absolutely dominant (Dahl 1961). Policy making within the state reflects bargaining between a range of conflicting interests, and is a constant process of negotiation (Dahl 1967). However, an assumption is also made that truth and social facts can be discovered through investigation (Smith 2006).

Pluralists generally argue there is no central source of power. As such, power is viewed as non-cumulative and dispersed, and the relative positions of power occupied by key contributors to policy are constantly in flux. Crucially, decisions are the outcomes of complex relationships and negotiations between groups (Held 1989; Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987; Ball & Millard 1986; Coxall & Robins 1998; Smith 2006). Smith (1995:211) suggests that 'For democratic society to work effectively there has to be a degree of consensus concerning the fundamental values…shared by the competing groups'. The corollary of the classic pluralist argument is that government is not the creation of grand majorities; rather, it is 'the steady appeasement of relatively small groups' (Dahl 1957:145). For all pluralists, group identities and representation are an important element of the political structure. Some suggest that individuals have no independent existence other than through groups (Smith 2006:23). Moreover, pluralism acknowledges the emergence of numerous interest groups in policies, particularly resonant of the political

environment engendered by New Labour emphasising partnerships and joined-up thinking which draws on groups traditionally excluded from the implementation of government policy.

In critiquing pluralism, Lukes contends that pluralist notions of power are ambiguous. For instance, Dahl (1961; 1967) argues that 'A has power over B to the extent that he [sic] can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do' (Dahl 1967, quoted in Smith 1995:213). Therefore the openness and diversity advocated by pluralism is contradicted if power is deployed to restrict decision making to issues deemed acceptable by those in rule. Moreover, individuals and elites may act separately in making politically acceptable decisions, but may either act in concert or fail to act altogether so that issues deemed unacceptable by those ruling can be kept out of politics (Lukes 2005:46). Therefore, such a one-dimensional view of power does not reveal less visible ways of power dispersal. A pertinent observation is the arrangements for Charter Standard implementation. Whilst it has been established that the relationship between government and the FA is difficult to discern, the bargaining and negotiation to generate a vehicle through which mutual funding arrangements can finance the modernisation of grassroots football, i.e. the Football Foundation, is arguably a relatively cheap investment by government to address more politically salient social problems such as improving health through increasing participation levels in sport. Moreover, the enticement of club volunteers into this process, largely through persuasion that implementing the Charter Standard is desirable with incentives such as newly available funding streams suggests a more insidious and invisible mechanism of power that pluralism does not account for.

Plurality must not be mistaken for pluralism. The existence of many groups and policy domains does not indicate that power is dispersed and is open (Marsh 2002;

Smith 2006). At the level of grassroots football, such an observation is readily apparent. The innumerable amount of clubs with diverse motivations and interests for providing football indicates a plurality, but does not necessarily entail a dispersal of equal power amongst them, particularly in such a contested and fragmented arena. Finally, as Bachrach and Baratz (1962) observed, not only does pluralism ignore non-decisions (having the power to decide not to act on a particular situation is in itself a powerful act), ruling class influence in making decisions furthering their own interests is unaccounted for. The significance of class and wealth in determining who has and has not got access to political power is not addressed.

Neo-Pluralism

Neo-pluralism (Held 1989; 1996) holds with the basic pluralist principle that groups have a role within the policy process, but is based upon the premise that business interests are often in a superior position to other groups, and often come to dominate within policy areas (Smith 2006: 28). Smith (2006:45) concurs with Lindblom (1977), that business is in a privileged position vis-a-vis other groups, not just through its ability to lobby from a position of power, but also in terms of structural power. Policy implementation is therefore constrained and shaped by capitalism. However, neo-pluralists also highlight that although business is significant and in a privileged position, it is not all dominating. For example, neo-pluralists explore how pressure groups are organised and resourced, and the tactics they use in attempting to determine the influence a group has in a specific situation. The influence of business within this conceptualisation has to be established empirically by investigating policy decisions. Developments in neo-pluralism have particular resonance for this study. In particular, the significance of neo-pluralism to policy analysis (Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987; Parsons 1995:428), and the acknowledgement that the modern state has grown chiefly as a network of decentralised agencies (Dunleavy & O'Leary

1987:306; Pierre 2000:2). Neo-pluralists envisage the state not as a neutral arbiter of power as in the classic pluralist conception, because business interests wield disproportionate influence over the state (Held 1996).

Relatively recently, government intervention in sport, has coerced NGBs such as the FA into taking greater responsibility for a planned and structured approach to the development of football from grassroots to elite levels through a series of measures and checks (c.f. Houlihan & Green 2006; Deloitte & Touche 2003a). Resonating with neo-pluralism, the FA does not, and can not, monopolise provision of grassroots football. As such, there has occurred a proliferation of soccer schools and training camps aiming to maximise profit from the emotional attachment of grassroots football under the guise of offering a highly specialised coaching service to develop the talent of young people. The inclusion of volunteers in the policy process, adds a milieu of diverse backgrounds, interests, beliefs and characteristics to this process (Nichols et al 2005). Given the premise of neo-pluralist thought, this may favour those who bring skills and knowledge of business to the implementation of the Charter Standard. These aspects of neo-pluralism lend themselves to notions of forms of 'governance' and meso level approaches, and are therefore discussed in detail in the ensuing sections. Rather, the utility of the key features of theoretical neo-pluralism is briefly assessed here.

Firstly, the participation of the state in the policy process is acknowledged. As discussed in Chapter 3, although the responsibility for the genesis of the Charter Standard is unclear, the increasing involvement of government in grassroots sport has increased in recent years (particularly through the modernisation agenda for sport), exemplified by the related 'clubmark' schemes in terms of quality, and the

utilisation of projects and initiatives to achieve wider social objectives such as combating crime.

Secondly, there is an emphasis on groups and multiple interests. For instance, the FA have by default an interest in grassroots football, and is responsible for implementing the Charter Standard, but also has other competing interests, some of which arguably dominate the FA's interests and resources (for example, the England men's national team). Moreover, groups such as volunteers who run clubs, and junior clubs themselves have, to varying degrees, motivations, opinions and interests in implementing the Charter Standard at grassroots level. Third, business interests are most significant. This is exemplified by the continual marginalisation of grassroots football, particularly during the commercialisation of the game during the 1990s in which football became big business, and is now managed in what can be regarded as a more businesslike manner by individuals with significant power within the business world. Their interests therefore are promoted with greater emphasis than those with less economic power such as volunteers and those who run grassroots football. Held suggests that the trajectory of pluralism over time illustrates the complicated nature of what liberal democracies actually are, and normatively what they ought to be, in which questions about the principles and key features of democracy are more open to debate (1996:218). Such an observation is relevant to other macro level theories such as Marxism.

Marxism

It is widely acknowledged, indeed a 'social scientific fact' that there is no single Marxian, far less Marxist, theory of the state (Jessop 1977; 2002, Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987; Miliband 1969; Poulantzas 1978). The traditional Marxist approach to power is based upon the control and ownership of financial capital, with power considered to

be possessed by those who can use their wealth and its attendant class privileges to maintain dominant positions in society. It is premised upon the notion that the state is not neutral or liberal, and that the market economy is not 'free' (Held 1996). Moreover, a doctrine based upon a class struggle between the owners of the means of production (the bourgeoisie), and the working-class (the proletariat) epitomises the classical Marxist tradition (Rigauer 2000).

Gramsci (1971) advanced a more inclusive definition of the state and its power, breaking with the economism and crude reductionism central to the tradition. Gramsci's concept of hegemony extended Marxist thought to include all institutions and practices through which the ruling class maintains its position and consensual subordination over those who it rules (Gramsci 1971, quoted in Hay 2006). The dominant class maintains supremacy by succeeding in presenting its own moral, political and cultural values as societal norms; thereby constructing an ideologically-engendered 'common sense' (Rigauer 2000) with no alternative, so that hegemony not only secures consent, but also resignation (Miliband 1994: 11). In short, Gramsci's contribution maintains that the power of the capitalist class resides in its ability to influence and shape the perceptions of the subordinate classes, convincing them either of the legitimacy of the system itself or of futility of resistance, rather than limited to the repressive apparatus of the state as an instrument of the bourgeoisie (Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987).

With respect to the substantive content of this thesis, i.e. the implementation of the Charter Standard, such reasoning would assume that providing a quality, organised, safe and structured environment for children's football have become 'common sense' by those with less access to positions of power within the football policy network (e.g. club volunteers) to commence assembling a modernised structure for

the grassroots game. It is a matter of empirical investigation to decipher whether such acceptance was based on (or a combination of) consent to, or in resignation of, values espoused by government and the FA. Resistance to the ideas presented in the Charter Standard must also be accounted for, and how power relations and dynamics shape the reasons and motivations for its implementation.

There are two traditional Marxist positions in relation to the conceptualisation of the state. The first, 'structuralism', argues the state and its bureaucratic institutions constitute a source of power which need not be directly controlled by the dominant class. Structuralism asserts the causality of structures over agents' intentions, conceived of as bearers of objective structures over which they have minimal influence (Hay 2006:72). The capitalist state is viewed as a structural system independent of the motivations and intentions of political actors or members or the ruling class. Therefore, the state retains a degree of power independent of the dominant class, and is relatively autonomous (Held 1996: 131). The second position (Hay 1999; 2006, Jessop 2002), 'instrumentalist', crudely implies the state is an instrument controlled by the ruling class for enforcing, guaranteeing and maintaining the stability of class structure (Sweezy 1942, quoted in Hay 2006:61). In these terms, the state is an apparatus through which it functions through the instrumental exercise of power by individuals in strategic positions; through the manipulation of state policies or indirectly through the exercise of pressure on the state (Hay 2006:61).

Jessop offers the 'strategic-relational approach', a dialectical approach to attempt to transcend the structure-agency dichotomy. Structure and agency are held to logically entail one another; hence there can be no analysis of action which is not itself also an analysis of structure. All social and political processes occur through

strategic interaction as strategies collide with and impinge upon the structure of the strategic context within which they were formulated (Hay 2006:75). Their effects transform the context within which future strategies are formulated to be implemented. The state is a dynamic and constantly unfolding system; a strategic site traversed by class struggles, and a specific institution ensemble with multiple boundaries, no fixity and no substantive unity (Jessop 1990; Poulantzas 1978). Its specific form at a given moment in time represents a crystallisation of past processes which privileges certain strategies, political ideologies and actors over others. Contingency and indeterminacy of social and political change are emphasised to the extent that it becomes difficult to provide a coherent theory of the capitalist state (Jessop 1990:44), only theoretically informed accounts. In this connection, it is clear that the paradox bedevilling the Marxist tradition continues, in that Marxist theoretical thinking has come 'full circle' (Hay 2006:76) leading to the question as to whether there actually is a Marxist theory of the state.

Corporatism

Corporatism is an empirical macro level critique of pluralist thought (Schmitter & Lembruch 1979: Keman 2002:143), discussed within an elitist framework (Evans 1995; 2006), Corporatism challenges pluralist assumptions that relations between interest groups and elites in parliament and public administration ought to be/are pluralistic (Keman 2002:145). Corporatist frameworks are limited to a small number of countries and to specific and rare relationships (Smith 1993:37) at particular moments in time (Parsons 1995:260; Held 1996: 230-231). Smith (1993:31) contends that corporatism refers to the meso level, and has been undermined by other, more coherent meso level frameworks for analysing patterns of policy relationships (Richardson & Jordan 1979; Grant 1989:35-6; Parsons 1995:259).

Cawson (1986) identifies three strands of corporatist theory: i) as an alternative economic system (c.f. Winkler 1977); ii) as a distinctive form of the state (c.f. Jessop 1990); and iii) as a mechanism of interest intermediation (c.f. Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987; Schmitter 1974). A common denominator between all three is that they are concerned with the interaction between public and private groups (Marsh & Smith 1992). The third, generally known as 'liberal corporatism' (Smith 1993), concerns an understanding of the relationship between interest groups and government in particular sectors. As Schmitter (1970:93) notes

> 'Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports' (cited in Parsons 1995 pg, 257)

Mature liberal democracies have a propensity for organised interests to have privileged and institutionalised access to policy formulation (Heywood 2000; Hay 2002). Grant (1985:4) suggests that policy agreements are implemented through the collaboration of diverse and conflicting interest organisations and state agencies, and importantly, such organisations' ability and willingness to secure the compliance of their members. Functional representatives of the state conduct the work of political and economic management; that is, by delegates from corporations and branches of the state (Held 1996:228).

Held's assumptions of the consequences of corporatism may have resonance with Olympic sports in the UK, particularly the elite level (cf. Green & Houlihan 2005)

due to the increasingly ubiquitous involvement of multi-national companies in the sponsorship of athletes, and the non-political servants of key quasi-independent sporting agencies such as UK Sport and Sports Councils. Yet football has greater independence economically and authoritatively from the state than other sports, and therefore more power over the state to pursue its own interests. Whilst representatives of the state were involved in writing *'The Blueprint for the future of Football'* (FA 1991), the outcome was the formation of the Premier League serving the interests of elite professional clubs in terms of maximising and retaining surplus capital. However, whilst the FA and the elite professional clubs were able to re-brand and re-position football to their advantage relatively free from state involvement, this process re-inforced the neglect of grassroots football, as interests became even more skewed towards the notions of profit maximisation. This exacerbated the increasing polarisation between the sufficiently resourced professional elite and inadequately resourced amateur grassroots facets of football. Moreover, a power vacuum emerged allowing the state to acquire greater power to force its own interests upon groups such as the FA through the DCMS and Sport England in relation to grassroots football through the modernisation process for sport (see Chapters 2 and 3).

Governance

Governance provides a link between macro level theories and meso level analyses (Kickert et al 1997; Daugberg & Marsh 1998), and describes changes in the nature and role of the state, specifically following public sector reforms of the 1980s and 1990s which established 'new public management' techniques and attempts to infuse networks, collaboration and partnerships in the delivery of public services (Bevir 2007; Newman 2001). So understood, governance can be delineated into two broad overlapping schools of thought. First, the state can be perceived as 'hollowed out'.

Power is viewed as dispersed up to institutions such as the EU and down to networks that involve nongovernmental actors. In short, Government is increasingly dependent on other organizations to secure its intentions, deliver policies, and establish rule; referred to as 'joined-up governance' (1997; Rhodes 2000). Second, the centrality of government in new governance arrangements whereby the state 'enables' as much as it 'directs', (Peters & Pierre 2006: 211) but still retains power and capacity to make choices regarding how it does so. That is, which policies and issues to support or not (Peters & Pierre 2006:214). Generally however, governance refers to styles of governing where boundaries between sectors have become blurred, with mechanisms of governing not solely resting on recourse to the authority and sanctioning of the state (Stoker 2000). Newman (2001; 2006) suggests that although the depth of state power has receded, the breadth of state power has increased. Given that networks and partnerships seem important for aspects of 'governance', theories require a more differentiated approach to account for partnership working and implementation (McDonald 2005). Given the FA and government state they are 'working in partnership' to develop football through the Football Foundation, and that by implementing the Charter Standard schools, clubs and individuals are required to share resources to meet implementation criteria (FA 2003a; FA 2003b), such differentiation may aid analytical purchase.

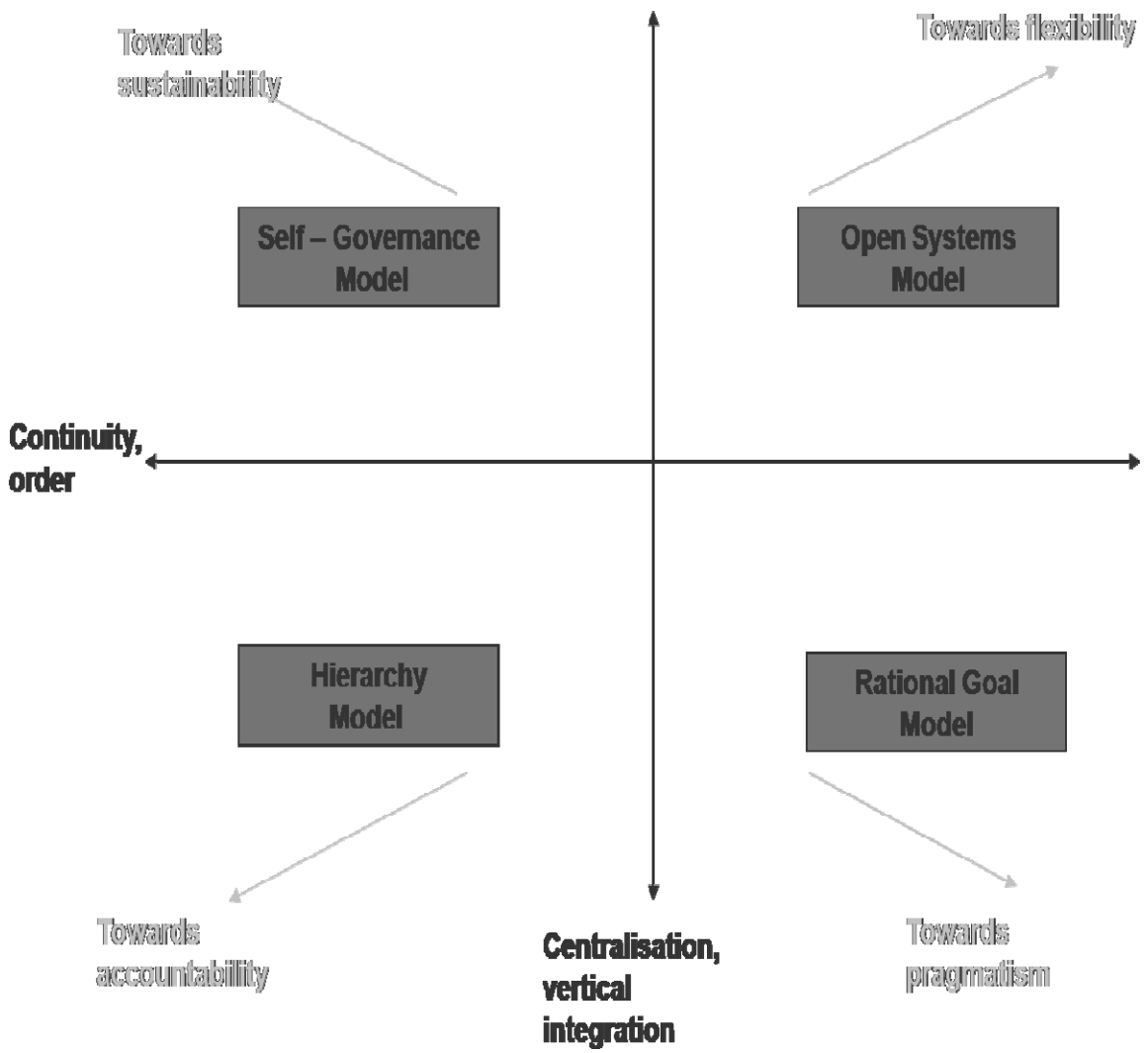


Figure 4.1 Newman's four modes of Governance

Figure 4.1 highlights Newman's (2001) four models of governance through the intersection of two axes: i) vertically, the degree to which power is centralised, and ii) horizontally, the orientation towards change and continuity.

The *hierarchy model* represents clear lines of authority and decision making, characterised by vertical patterns of power relationships conducive to accountability, order, continuity and the minimisation of risk. The *rational goal model* is 'characterised by an emphasis on efficiency, economic rationalism and managerial authority' (Newman, 2001:35), whereby management is devolved to local levels, but

underpinned by a centralisation of power 'with goals and targets cascading from government, against which performance is tightly monitored, inspected and audited' (Newman, 2001:34). The *open systems model,* is characterised by a fluid and dispersed power structure, in which new challenges or demands are met by open and effective communication between interdependent actors 'through the decentralisation of power, enabling experimentation and innovation' (Newman, 2001:35). The *self-governance model* emphasises 'delivering sustainable solutions by developing the capacities of communities to solve their own problems' (Newman, 2001:36). Each of these models is based on a characteristic mode of power, irreducible to a single model of governance, and provides the context for different types of partnership working (McDonald 2005).

Links between governance as a concept and theories relating to the state can be drawn. That is; congruence between governance and pluralism (Pierre 2000), a neo-marxist regulation perspective (Jessop 1995; Larner 2000), or networks as an integrative device between macro and micro level analytical theories (Daugbjerg & Marsh 1998). Clearly, for many UK commentators, governance is closely associated with New Labour's modernisation agenda (See Chapter 2 and Geddes 2006; Bevir 2007). Rather than relying on command and control instruments, governments are using 'softer' instruments to achieve policy goals (Peters & Pierre 2006). For example, the Charter Standard is implemented through co-operative arrangements with partners in the not-for-profit sector that reduce the burden on governments whilst concomitantly reducing the perceived intrusiveness of government. Governance therefore allows for an examination of the context in which collaborative activity between the FA's regional and county departments, schools, Local Authorities, Sport England and grassroots football clubs is undertaken in implementing the Charter Standard.

4.2 Meso-level approaches to policy analysis

This section aims to evaluate the adequacy of a number of meso level approaches to the analysis of policy (cf. Sabatier 1999; 2007) in order to integrate the preferred macro-theoretical position of neo pluralism informed by networked forms of governance outlined earlier, and to assist the understanding of the implementation of the Charter Standard scheme at an applied level. The meso level is best described as the level of national and regional organisations in the structure of society, for example, specific to this study, DCMS, interest groups such as football clubs and NGBs. Parsons (1995) views policy analysis as being placed within the meso level – bigger than individual micro decisions, but smaller than macro social movements. It is at the meso level of policy analysis that much recent theory building and conceptual innovation has taken place both in relation to sport policy (Houlihan 2005) and more traditional areas of policy concern (John 1998; Kickert et al 1997; Marsh 1998; Sabatier 1999; 2007). In relation to sport policy, Houlihan (2005) develops a set of criteria by which he deems appropriate to assess the adequacy of such meso level analytic frameworks, whereby four of these frameworks are assessed for their internal coherence and applicability to the study of sport policy. These criteria are: i) the capacity to explain both policy stability and policy change (John 1998; Sabatier 1999; 2007), taking account of exogenous and endogenous factors; ii) capacity to account for a holistic understanding of the policy process i.e., not just capable of analysis of discrete aspects of the policy process such as policy impact, the role of the state or implementation etc, solely, but can account for all aspects of the policy process[1]. In the context of this study, to enable analysis between macro, meso and micro levels of analysis; iii) applicability across a range of policy areas beyond sport policy, thus giving the framework more credence in

[1] Although this study is specifically concerned with implementation, the analytical framework must have the capacity to be applied to other aspects, especially referring back to macro level processes

analysing policy; iv) that the framework should allow for a historical analysis of policy change[2] over a medium term period of 5-10 years. Here 'change' can be substituted for 'development' or 'modification' of policy considering the specific concerns of this study in terms of a particular FA policy that at the time of writing is little more than 5 years old, and that this study has contributed to the development of that particular policy (Charter Standard). Added to Houlihan's selection here should be a concern and capacity for analysis of power.

The stimulus behind the innovation of analytical frameworks for the purpose of analysing policy at the meso level has been generated by an increasing dissatisfaction amongst analysts of the predominant use of the stages model or 'the stages heuristic' (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier 1993:1) from the 1970's onwards (Houlihan 2005:168; Sabatier 2007). In short, the stages model is based upon the division of the policy process into a series of discrete stages following the rational actor model with the main thrust to simplify the vast range of decisions and forms of behaviour that are typical of contemporary public policy. This study is concerned primarily with implementation, and could therefore be seen to fit in with a stages model. However, this stages framework, with neo positivist/rationalistic assumptions associated with the model imply that the stage of implementation logically follows from policy formulation in a step by step process from a top down view. This study takes the view of implementation not as a discrete moment as such, but an integral micro process in itself that is recursively related to the broader macro level context and meso level analysis. In essence, implementation is continually occurring (Hill & Hupe 2002) from policy inception right up until the termination of the policy itself. Prominent political scientists have concluded that 'the stages heuristic has outlived its usefulness and needs to be replaced' (Sabatier

[2] Whilst this study is concerned with an analysis of a new policy, it is deemed essential that a framework has the capacity to analyse policy change as the policy being analysed here will change as a result of the study and other wider factors. Therefore the framework may also be useful in future.

1999:7). Sabatier (1999; 2007) suggests that there is a need for, and indeed has been, a number of more promising theoretical frameworks that have developed over the past 20 years. In this context and in relation to Houlihan's criteria outlined above, the multiple streams approach, advocacy coalition framework and policy networks are deemed more suitable frameworks for analysis. There are obviously other approaches available in such a diverse field as policy analysis, however, the three highlighted above are chosen for their perceived greater suitability for this study. For a more detailed discussion of further approaches see Houlihan (2005); Ostrom (1999) for a detailed overview of institutional analysis and development framework, and True et al (1999) for a review of punctuated equilibrium theory.

Multiple Streams

The Multiple Streams Framework is based on the work of Kingdon (1995), adapted from the 'garbage can' model developed by Cohen et al (1972), which illuminated the relatively chaotic nature of organisations and the policy process. In stark contrast to the assumptions of actor rationality as assumed in stages models, Kingdon emphasises the ambiguity, complexity and randomness in the policy process (Houlihan 2005:171). Kingdon regards policy formation as the result of a flow of three sets of processes or 'streams': problems, policies and politics. Each is conceptualised as largely separate from the others, with its own dynamics and rules. In a review of Kingdon's multiple streams approach, Houlihan (2005) takes each stream in turn. The problem stream comprises issues which government policy makers have identified as requiring attention or action that may or may not become defined as important. Problems are prompted by events or crises, indicators of a changing scale of the problem (for example, the number or unqualified football coaches teaching children to play football), and feedback on the performance of the current policies in place. The policy stream includes a wide variety of ideas

sponsored by particular policy communities or groups which are floating around in what Zaharidis (1999:76) terms the 'policy primeval soup'. Some ideas survive this initial period unchanged, others become combined into new proposals and rise to the top of the policy agenda, and others disappear. The concept of a policy entrepreneur is important here, whose motivation and skill in proposing workable solutions to problems, mobilising opinions of others and institutions ensuring the idea remains salient to the agenda. Such ideas may be that mobilising the voluntary sector to deliver accreditation programmes such as the Charter Standard may enhance social capital and citizenship (Evidence presented by the FA for the Culture Media and Sport Committee on Community Sport, April 2005). These ideas reach the top of the government agenda if they fulfil a number of criteria such as they are technically feasible and compatible with the dominant values of the community. The political stream consists of three elements including the national mood, organised political forces such as political parties and government, interest groups e.g. CCPR or the media in defining public interest and the potential solutions. John (1998: 174) argues that 'It is the circumstances under which these three streams combine to make a policy happen that is crucial'.

At critical points in time, the streams are 'coupled' i.e. they are brought together as they emerge, by 'policy entrepreneurs' (Kingdon 1995). The combination of all three streams into a single package dramatically enhances the chances of an issue receiving serious attention by policymakers (Zaharidis 1999:76) to create what Kingdon (1995:165) terms a 'policy window'; defined as fleeting 'opportunities for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems'. The window can open predictably, such as the scheduled renewal of a policy. However, they may also be unpredictable, but what characterises them generally is that they are of a short duration (Zaharidis 1999:77). This requires policy entrepreneurs to be skilled at coupling, investing "time, energy, reputation, money-

to promote a position for anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive or solidary benefits" (Kingdon 1995:179), to immediately seize the opportunity to initiate action. Otherwise, the opportunity is lost and policy entrepreneurs must wait for the next window to arrive (Zaharidis 1999:78). The ability of entrepreneurs to attach problems to their solutions and find politicians receptive to their ideas, is enhanced when problems and solutions or solutions and politics are joined. According to John (1998:175), this results in a chaotic style of policy making which seeks to explain how ideas emerge by their adoption and rejection by the various decision makers involved. Ideas are acknowledged as an important ingredient which emerge from contingent and often contradictory selections within the policy process. Successful ideas that are incorporated into policies have a ripple effect through the political system by 'spilling over' into other policy fields (John 1998:175). In specific relation to sport, Houlihan (2005) identifies the concept of 'spillover' of policy implications to other sectors is of potential value due to the apparent vulnerability of the sport policy sector to manipulation by other sectoral interests such as health.

This framework is a persuasive critique of rational and normative models of decision making such as the stages model. Zaharidis suggests that the multiple streams framework 'is particularly useful because it integrates policy communities with broader events' which in turn 'are connected to narrow sectoral developments in specific ways' (1999:78). In this respect, it has the potential to link the macro, meso and micro levels of analysis. However, there are general characteristics of the model that may be strengths in terms of studies identifying policy change (cf Green 2003, Green & Houlihan 2005 & Houlihan & Green 2006) and policy entrepreneurship that are not applicable to this study. Research into sport policy highlights the lack of a clear position of sport in national policy systems (Houlihan & White 2002). Here, the concept of the policy entrepreneur is attractive in explicitly giving due attention to

agency in a policy area such as sport where institutionalisation of influence is weak (Houlihan 2000:8). However, the concept is also assumptive. In an unexplored area such as football development, only empirical investigation will identify if such agents can or do manifest themselves. Moreover, with specific reference to Houlihan's (2005) criteria highlighted earlier, the framework has drawbacks for this study on the first two criterion that directly relate to the concept of the policy entrepreneur. It fails on the first criteria because although it draws attention to chance and the actions of influential individuals, 'it does so through a relative myopia towards structural factors and institutionalized power' (Houlihan 2005:172). Therefore, the notion that the actions of actors are purely or mainly affected by structural factors undermines the complexities involved in the implementation process and does not recognise the wide range of issues existing in a fragmented, often contested and uncoordinated environment such as grassroots football. The second criteria are where the framework is weakest. The framework is primarily concerned with the 'agenda setting' stage of the policy process and how policy change is initiated by actions of policy entrepreneurs in taking advantage of windows of opportunity (Kingdon 1995; Sabatier 1993). The concept does not account for individual actions of people in putting policy into practice and there is therefore, a relative neglect of other stages, specifically implementation. For the concept of policy entrepreneurs to have use for this study, the focus upon such influential individuals should be shifted from agenda setting in terms of formulating ideas and opportunism to focus upon their negotiative, persuasive characteristics and abilities 'to get things done'.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework

Of the meso level analytical frameworks to policy analysis discussed in this chapter, the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) has increasingly been utilised and subjected to rigorous empirical and theoretical examination and consequently subtle revisions to a greater degree than any other in the area of sport policy. The protagonists of this application are; Green (2003); Green and Houlihan (2005); Houlihan and Green (2006) and Houlihan and White (2002), who empirically identified the existence of advocacy coalitions in the UK policy system and simultaneously confirmed, as did Parrish (2003), the broad utility of the framework as a tool for analysis[3]. The ACF, initially developed by Sabatier (1987) was an attempt to overcome the problems of policy analysis reflected in the stages models, and has undergone a number of revisions since the initial version was developed[4]. It is recognised by many as the most developed alternative to the traditional mode of policy analysis in the paradigm of political science (Parsons 1995:195).

Sabatier (1999: 261-272) maintains that a more comprehensive and testable theory of the policy process that brings together a number of approaches and frameworks to develop a better theory in order to predict policy change is required. The framework is considered here because it shows a desire to blend the key features of the 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to policy implementation and give significant attention to technical knowledge. The attractive feature of the ACF for this study is its attempt to emphasise a holistic perspective of the policy process. An advocacy coalition has been described as:

> "people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers) who (1) share a particular belief system – i.e. set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions – and

[3] It must be noted here too that weaknesses were identified which led the authors to propose revisions of the ACF in order to increase its utility for the future analysis of sports policy

[4] See Sabatier (1998); Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999) for more detail

> who (2) show a non-trivial degree of co-ordination over time." (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999:138)

Houlihan (2005:173) summarises the ACF as based upon five key assumptions. Firstly, a time perspective of a decade is required for the analysis of policy change. This notion is based upon Weiss' (1977) argument that concentration upon short term decision making underestimates the effect of policy analysis. According to Weiss, policy analysis has a long term 'enlightenment' function whereby policy analysis gradually alters the arguments surrounding policy problems. Therefore, new data and conceptual innovation that may occur as a result of research such as this may change policymakers' strategies and beliefs in a policy area. Here, a concern with 'policy oriented learning' is advanced within the ACF. Secondly, there is a focus upon policy sub-systems/policy communities, and that the policy process as a whole may be understood in this context. Thirdly, these sub-systems involve actors from different levels of government and society recognised by networked governance theorists, and increasingly actors from international organisations and other countries recognised in theories of globalisation. Fourthly, the possession and use of technical knowledge is important and, fifthly, implicit in a policy are sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realise them (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier 1994: 178, quoted in Houlihan 2005). The logic of the ACF supposes that policy change over time is a function of three sets of processes (See figure 4.4).

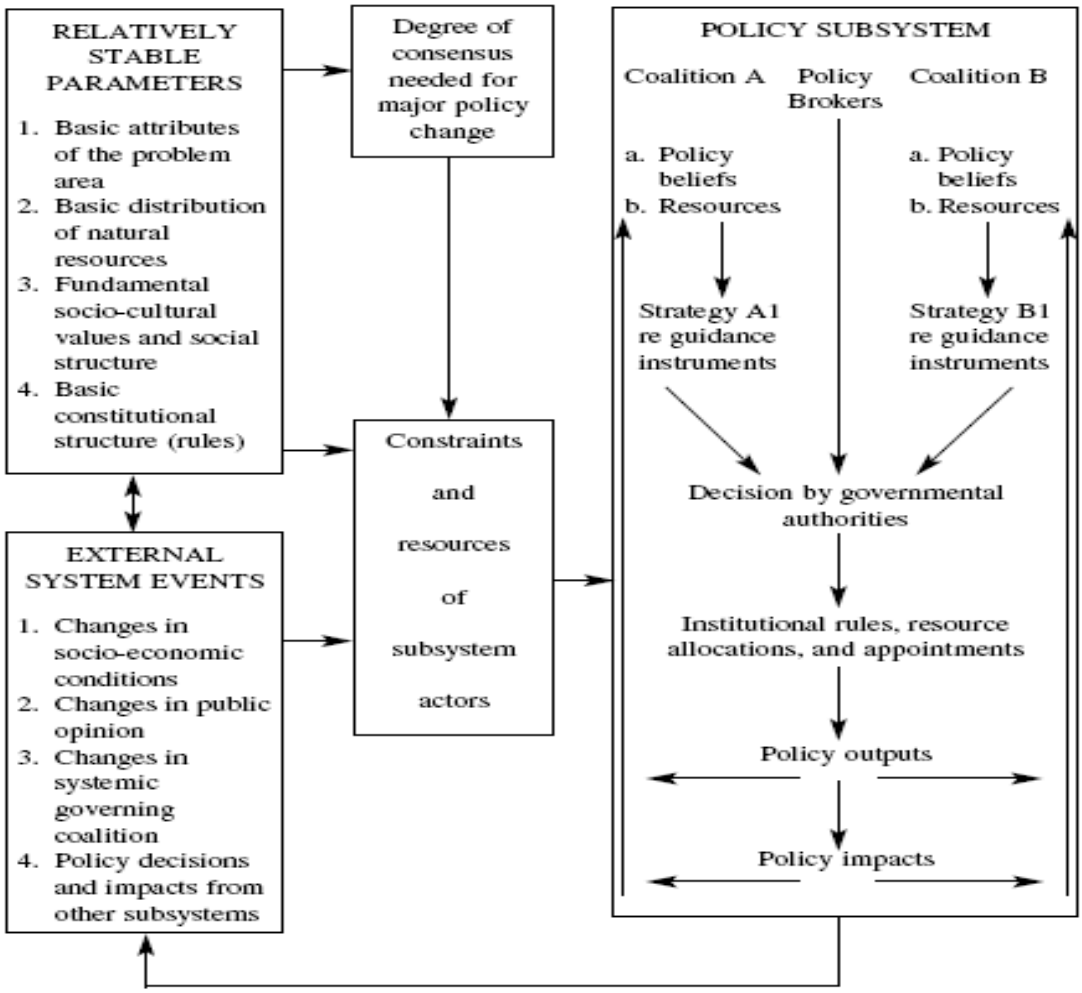


Figure 4.2 The Advocacy Coalition Framework. Source: Sabatier and Jenkins-smith (1999:149)

The first process concerns the interaction of competing advocacy coalitions within a policy sub-system. Based upon empirical evidence, Houlihan (2005) notes that policy sub-systems normally comprise between two and four coalitions competing for influence, although one might be dominant. A sub-system consists of 'those actors from a variety of public and private organisations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue' and further 'seek to influence public policy in that domain' (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:119). Thus within the sub-system a number of discrete coalitions will emerge as actors pursue their own interests and beliefs. In relation to this study, people with an interest and expertise in football development at the mass participation level, may have a general policy concern i.e. the Charter

Standard, but how this is pursued, what it should stand for and for what ends it is implemented may differ amongst different coalitions. Belief systems are the source of cohesion within coalitions, disaggregated into three levels: 'deep core', 'policy core' and 'secondary aspects'. Each level is assumed as decreasingly resistant to change respectively. Deep core beliefs involve basic values regarding, for example, what age children should be playing 11-a-side football. Policy core beliefs represent a coalition's basic normative commitments within the sub-system, for example the relative importance of developing football players to their full potential. Secondary aspects refer to more routine and narrow aspects of policy for example, resource allocation within the sub-system. Conflicts between coalitions are deemed as a major source of policy change (Houlihan & Green 2006:79), which are often mediated by a 'policy broker'. Similar to the concept of policy entrepreneur in the MSF, a policy broker may find a reasonable compromise that will reduce conflict in the sub-system in relation to conflicting strategies and beliefs in different coalitions (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:122). This mediation and conflict within the sub-system is a source of policy outputs and policy change. However, change can also occur through 'policy oriented learning' (Sabatier 1998:104) due to medium to long term changes in beliefs resulting from experience or in the light of new information. However, Sabatier also recognises that coalitions will resist with greater determination the acceptance of information that challenges deep core beliefs, but argues for the essential rationality of coalition behaviour. In short, the first process focuses upon processes within the sub-system, whereas the further two processes are concerned with exogenous processes; those occurring more widely than sub-system level that effect the sub-system itself. The ACF assumes greater susceptibility to exogenous processes over a decade or more and are a critical pre-requisite for major policy change (Green 2004b:391). Exogenous processes to the sub-system relate to changes in:

- Socio-economic conditions and technology, for example in football development, the inception of the football foundation in 2000 and government's commitment to matching the Premier Leagues donation of 5% of T.V. revenue for distribution to grassroots causes. Plus, developments in sports science, psychology and physiology.
- Public opinion, for example the growing realisation and concern of child protection issues in sport.
- The systemic governing coalition's beliefs or changes within it, for example, John Major becoming Prime Minister in 1990 has been widely acknowledged as a significant event due to his personal interest in sport, producing an increase in attention and a more supportive political environment for sport in general.
- Policy decisions and impacts from other sub-systems that provide opportunities or obstacles to competing coalitions. For example, health policy being concerned with promoting sport, or education and welfare policy using schemes such as 'playing for success' to integrate problem pupils into education through football.

In summary, the ACF seems to provide a rigorous framework for the analysis of the impact of ideas on policy, the capacity of interest groups to exert influence through membership of advocacy coalitions and the role of individuals as policy brokers. Furthermore, the underlying assumptions of the ACF underpin critical realist assumptions at an ontological level, and an interpretative epistemology in giving equal premise to structure and agency. Also, pertinent to this study and in line with arguments for a more dynamic dialectical approach by policy analysts (Hay 2002, Marsh & Smith 2000), is the recognition of both endogenous and exogenous factors affecting the policy process For instance, the Charter Standard has partly been

formulated as a reaction to longstanding problems within grassroots football (and sport in general for that matter, 'clubmark' for example) such as the level of coaching and child protection and New Labour's modernisation agenda for sport. As will become evident in the following discussion on another important meso level framework, the ACF has parallels with the policy network approach of Rhodes and Marsh, but is also an attempt to encompass a broader set of processes than the network metaphor (John 1998). In relation to Houlihan's (2005) criterion outlined at the beginning of this section, the ACF stands up to rigorous examination. With regard to the second and third criterions, the ACF is successful in at least offering a framework capable of a holistic analysis of the policy process, and has been applied across a range of areas. Also, the framework is explicit in requiring a medium to long term period of analysis before drawing conclusions about the nature of the policy process.

However, there are general conceptual weaknesses of the framework which are exposed when subjected against Houlihan's (2005) first criterion. Although explicitly attempting to address policy stability and change, the framework relies upon instrumental rationality and exogenous events to explain these. It is implied that membership of a coalition is open, with little supporting empirical evidence. What constitutes a membership of coalitions is only vaguely explained, as too are the relationships between members. There is little if any, conceptualisation of power, due in part to the underlying rationalist assumptions that in the medium term, evidence from policy learning will result in policy change. Power is implicitly associated as a property of ideas rather than resources and skill of actors. Associated with this is a concern to 'predict' policy change. Such an undertaking, whilst worthy of pursuit, is not compatible with the current research problem, which seeks to explain and understand, rather than predict, implementation.

Moreover, there are general drawbacks to employing the framework for this study at both theoretical and empirical levels. The ACF is predominantly concerned with policy 'change' over a decade or more. Here there are two evident issues for the use of the framework for this study. Firstly, the interest in policy change for this study is in terms of how accreditation schemes such as the Charter Standard entered the political agenda, probably from 'spillover' from other policy areas and interest groups combined with interest within the sport policy area itself. However, this is at a less significant level than in the interest of implementation processes. Secondly, and in relation to the first drawback, the ACF's focus on policy analysis of a decade or more renders the framework incompatible with this research, as the Charter Standard itself is little more than 5 years of age at the time of writing. However, it may be applicable in terms of advocacy coalitions that may be forming or emerging due to policies such as the Charter Standard and therefore may be a starting point for future/further analysis.

Policy Networks

The literature on policy networks has varied disciplinary origins and proliferating terminology with mutually exclusive definitions and varying levels of analysis (Rhodes & Marsh 1992:18; Marsh 1998). The concept emerged with a strong influence from inter-organisational theory (Benson 1982; Scharpf 1978; Aldrich 1979), which stresses that actors are dependent on each other's resources to achieve their goals (Adam & Kriesi 2007). At the same time, a virtually independent development occurred in political science, where the concept of policy networks grew out of the research on interest groups and agenda setting within political institutions (Dowding 1995; Kickert et al 1997; Marsh 1998; Thatcher 1998; Marsh & Smith 2000). This development occurred due to a shift in political scientists concern with the

limitations of standard approaches to the study of policy in liberal democracies, and in particular to counter a static snap-shot account of policy from the study of visible politics of parliaments and manifestos to the often informal and hidden processes of policy making and outcomes (Jordan (1990:293; Richardson 2000:1006).

Policy networks represent an intuitively comprehensible metaphor: regular communication and frequent exchange of information lead to the establishment of stable relationships between actors and to the coordination of their interests (Adam & Kriesi 2007:129). However, difficulties emerge with the definition of policy networks and the multitude of uses by different authors from different schools of thought who use the concept in widely different ways (Adam & Kriesi 2003). Indeed, it is difficult to find a common agreement on what policy networks actually are, and whether they constitute a mere metaphor, method, analytical tool or a theory in their own right. This has led to a plethora of uses, differing applications, and terminology that has done more to confuse and conflate than to clarify the concept. As Marsh and Rhodes (1992:18) point out, "The literature on policy networks has varied disciplinary origins, proliferating terminology, mutually exclusive definitions and, especially, varying levels of analysis". Such debate has hindered the network approach by creating a Babylonian conceptual chaos (Borzel 1998).

However, there is general agreement that policy networks are a meso level concept that link between the micro level of analysis, i.e., interests and individual actions in relation to particular policy decisions such as implementation, and the macro level of analysis which is concerned with the distribution of power within society (Daugbjerg & Marsh 1998). Classic models of policy network analysis have emerged such as policy communities sub-governments and iron triangles in the U.S (Heclo

1978:102) and British (Richardson & Jordan 1979:41; Marsh & Rhodes 1992:8) literature, as a critique of, expansion, and alternative to, pluralist and corporatist views of the world (Smith 1993; Marsh & Rhodes 1992, Rhodes 1997, Marsh 1998) through empirical testing at national and international levels (c.f. Marsh 1998). More recent developments in the policy network literature modify and update these various approaches, and have brought the insights of such models within the now generic policy network label (see especially Marsh & Rhodes 1992, Jordan & Schubert 1992, VanWaarden 1992, Borzel 1998; Marsh 1998) with the most recent and ambitious developments by Marsh and Smith (2000 & 2001), Evans (2001), Raab (2001) and Toke & Marsh (2003). Smith (1993) suggests that 'network' concepts were developed due to recognition that pluralist views of the world were problematic (c.f Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Marsh 1998 for in depth discussion on American and British literature preceding). In particular, pluralist and corporatist approaches failed to capture levels of complexity, specialisation and fragmentation across a wide range of policy sectors that came to resemble the advent of post-fordism. Models accounting for interdependent actors operating in distinct policy sub sectors, recognising power of actors and their potential agency of autonomy as integral to policy analysis were more adequate. Such a distinction is an important element of the analysis of agent centred implementation. A major advantage of the policy network approach in this respect is its emphasis upon the need to disaggregate the policy process, that is, to recognise that relations between governments and interest groups can vary significantly between policy sectors.

Furthermore, the approach can be adopted by researchers operating within differing models of the distribution of power within society. Particularly, the focus on policy networks can also highlight the changing role of the state to a greater extent. For instance, sport policy in general is directed by government through its agencies such as the DCMS and Sport England. However, the methods and strategies for

implementation are largely the preserve of the governing body, such as the FA in relation to the Charter Standard. Policy networks therefore allow for the recognition that responsibility is devolved and captures the 'arms length' nature of governments to the delivery of sport policy.

Definitions and typologies of policy networks

This focus on definitions and typologies reflects the broad usage of the concept through its applicability to a large range of policy styles, whilst simultaneously the focus and obsession with terminology has too often been at the expense of the more interesting questions of whether and how policy networks impact on the policy process (Bressers et al 1994:1; 1998:397). A useful generic definition encompassing differing conceptions of policy networks grounded in different theoretical perspectives and theories of power is Borzel's (1998:254) 'continental'[5] view:

> "a set of relatively stable relationships which are of non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of actors, who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests acknowledging that cooperation is the best way to achieve common goals"

Adam & Kriesi (2007) suggest that it is possible to broadly distinguish between three approaches to using the network concept. That is i) as a new form of governance, ii) generically to encompass a wide range of typologies, and iii) formal network

[5] The policy network literature has developed differently in different countries. Borzel resides in a continental approach to networks that has historically viewed networks as non-hierarchical and without the state institutions relations with interest groups being the unit of analysis. Instead, networks were viewed as closer to Rhodes 1997 conception of networks as governance, and not utilised as interest intermediation as in Marsh and Rhodes 1992 publication.

analysis (Laumann & Knoke 1987). The first two approaches, to different extents, view policy networks as a potentially useful variable in empirical investigation (Marsh & Smith 2000; Adam & Kriesi 2007).

Firstly, policy networks can be viewed as not only an analytical framework, but also an empirical political phenomena which are 'managed' or directed by governments. This form of governance is characterised by the predominance of informal, decentralised and horizontal relations (Kenis & Schneider 1991; Klijn & Koppenan 1997). The policy process is viewed as not completely structured by formal institutional hierarchies. In brief, such analysis observes an increasing scope, sectoralisation, decentralisation, fragmentation, informationisation, and transnationalisation of policy making (Adam & Kriesi 2007:132). Such conceptions have important connections to the analysis of policy implementation as a multitude of actors from ministers and public servants to volunteers in grassroots football clubs are deemed to have influence over the policy process (Klijn & Teisman 2000). In this perspective, policy networks constitute 'more or less stable patterns of social relations between interdependent actors, which take shape around policy problems and/or policy programmes' (Kickert et al 1997), as actors require each other's resources to achieve goals (Scharpf 1978; Benson 1982; Rhodes 1988). Therefore, policy networks form a context within which actors act strategically (Hill & Hupe 2002:77). Government agents do not occupy a dominant position, and are unable to unilaterally impose their desired protocols and outcomes, but can attempt to manage such interdependent relations between actors to promote joint problem solving in the policy process (Kickert et al 1997). In other words, steering is sought by initiating and facilitating interaction processes by brokering and mediating conflicts, and by shaping network structures (Kickert & Koppenjan 1997:46-53).

Network management in this sense is dependent upon a number of conditions (Kickert & Koppenjan 1997:53-58) such as; the number of actors involved in interaction processes; the extent to which networks are self referential; and a lack of conflict of interest. For example, those involved in a hypothetical football development policy network potentially include a multitude of actors, which increase the complexity and number of options available to successful implementation of the Charter Standard. Moreover, such a network may not be highly self referential, long established or powerful, and therefore opportunities for intervention from outside groups may be likely.

Secondly, policy networks are considered as conceptually generic (Bressers et al 1995; Adam & Kriesi 2007:133), encompassing a range of more precise definitions (Jordan & Schubert 1992:10; Rhodes 1997:43). The term policy network can in this way be used to reflect a broad range of models used to describe state-interest group relations, therefore encompassing various types of pluralist and corporatist models, as well as the policy communities, issue networks, sub governments (c.f. Richardson & Jordan 1979; Marsh & Smith 1992; Smith 2006) and iron triangles. Policy networks have consistently been deemed as useful in studying interest group intermediation (Rhodes 1997:29) which is a more modest claim than the usage of policy networks as a new form of governance. This focus on interest intermediation has in turn, provided the impetus for the development of various generic typologies identifying discrete key dimensions, in order to differentiate types of policy network (Jordan and Schubert 1992:12; Van warden 1992:32; Adam & Kriesi 2007), which have been difficult to apply empirically (Thatcher 1998:396). The most commonly used has been that developed by Marsh and Rhodes in the British literature[6]. Marsh and

[6] It is important to acknowledge that during the 1980's two ESCR funded initiatives took place utilising policy network and policy community concepts which led to two differing typologies adding to the debate about typologies and definitions. The IGR (intergovernmental relations initiative) utilised a model by Rhodes 1981, whilst the GIR initiative (government industry relations initiative utilised a model developed by Wilkes and

Rhodes introduced the idea of a continuum of policy network types (See Table 4.5), ranging from a corporatist style policy community to a pluralist style issue network (Marsh & Rhodes 1992).

Type of Network	Characteristics of Network
Policy Community	Stability, highly restricted membership, vertical interdependence, limited horizontal articulation
Professional Network	Stability, highly restricted membership, vertical interdependence, limited horizontal articulation, serves interests of profession
Inter – Governmental Network	Limited membership, limited vertical interdependence, extensive horizontal articulation
Producer Network	Fluctuating membership, limited vertical interdependence, serves interests of producer
Issue Network	Unstable, large number of members, limited vertical interdependence

Table 4.3 The Marsh and Rhodes Policy network model 1992

These types of policy networks are differentiated according to several key dimensions. At one end of the continuum is a highly integrated policy community where membership is limited, if not exclusive, membership values and outcomes are persistent over time, and all participants share basic values and accept the legitimacy of policy outcomes. At the opposite end are loosely integrated issue networks which are less stable, non-exclusive and have easier more accessible points of entry into a particular policy(ies). However, empirical testing of this model (Marsh & Rhodes 1992), noted policy communities and issue networks at opposite ends of the continuum are easy to conceptualise, it is difficult to support the identification of the other three progressive points along the continuum (Rhodes 1992). Smith (1993) concluded that empirical investigations into policy networks did not display all the

Wright 1987. For the alternative model see Wilkes and Wright 1987. The Rhodes model is discussed here as it has been the most commonly used and debated.

described characteristics of either a policy community or issue network. Moreover, members of that community were also noted as being involved in an issue network regarding a separate policy area, and therefore, coterminous (Read 1992). Read (1992) concluded that the growth and use of technological knowledge in other adjacent networks had a profound effect on the policy network in question, leading to change within the network itself. Therefore, the political agenda and policy process can be influenced from outside a particular network, prompting the notion that more attention should be given to the external environment within which the network is located.

Dimension	Policy Community	Issue Network
Membership		
Number of Participants	Very limited number, some groups consciously excluded.	Large
Type of interest	Economic and / or professional interests dominate	Encompasses range of affected interests
Integration		
Frequency of interaction	Frequent, high-quality, interaction of all groups on all matters related to policy issues	Contacts fluctuate in frequency and interaction
Continuity	Membership, values and outcomes persistent over time	Access fluctuates significantly
Consensus	All participants share basic values and accept the legitimacy of the outcomes	Some agreement exists, but conflict is ever present
Resources		
Distribution of resources (in network)	All participants have resources. Basic relationship is an exchange relationship.	Some participants may have resources, but they are limited basic.
Internal Distribution	Hierarchical; leaders can deliver members	Varied, variable distribution and capacity to regulate members.
Power		
Power	There is a balance of power amongst members. Although one group may dominate, it must be a positive sum game if community is to persist	Unequal powers, reflecting unequal resources and unequal access – zero-sum game.

Table 4.4. Types and Characteristics of Policy Networks Source : Adapted from Marsh & Rhodes (1992:251)

As Table 4.4 shows, the Marsh and Rhodes model of 1992 continued to usefully conceptualise types of policy networks existing on a continuum, but was refined to describe five dimensions along which communities may vary: membership, interdependence, insulation, and resource dependency and members' interests. Whilst members' interests may be governmental, economic or professional at any point along the continuum, the first four of these will change incrementally along the

continuum. At one end a policy community is viewed as a type of policy network characterised by limited and restricted membership, a high degree of integration (i.e. frequent interaction), between members, a fairly even distribution of resources within the network, and accordingly a balance of power between members. By contrast, an issue network is a type of policy network characterised by much more open membership, a looser, less integrated structure, more varied distribution of resources within the network and therefore an unequal balance of power between network members (Marsh 1998:16).

Although the policy network approach has potential utility for analysing the implementation of the Charter Standard, several criticisms are withstanding. Both Marsh and Rhodes' models (see Fig's 4.5 & 4.6) emphasise structural concerns over agency, neglecting scope for interpersonal relations and perceptions of individuals within networks. Also absent is the capacity for analysis at the sub sectoral level. Specific to this research, such modelling and conceptualisation focusing on structural constraints alone, although important, at the expense of agency does not provide a framework within which complexities and dynamics of implementation of the Charter Standard can be analysed.

Those emphasising structural relations (c.f. Rhodes & Marsh 1992; Rhodes 1997; 2000b) between actors rather than their individual actions tend to reify networks (Hay 1998:112) neglecting contextual factors and the dynamics of interaction which is important for the analysis of implementation (O'Toole 2004; Hill & Hupe 2002). The explanatory power of such models is questioned in terms of analysing the policy process (Adam & Kriesi 2007). Critics argue advocates conflate theory and description claiming a new theory has emerged (Hay 1998) offering nothing more than an "analytical toolbox" rather than a theory (Adam & Kriesi 2007:146; Scott

2000:37; Wasserman & Faust 1994:17; Borzel 1998:254) and "metaphorical heuristics" (Dowding 1995:157: Peters 1998). Indeed, Dowding (1995; 2001) advocates a more agent centred analysis, and asserts that in order to develop explanatory power, the policy network approach needs to focus upon characteristics of actors who comprise the networks[7]. In other words, for Dowding at least, 'the policy network approach is driven by properties of the actors' (1995:150) and so the categorisation of different types of network structure as explicated by Marsh and Rhodes explains nothing.

More recently, a 'dialectical' approach to policy networks has been advocated in order to embellish more explanatory power and encompass a wider set of factors (Marsh 1998: Marsh & Smith 2001, 2001; Toke & Marsh 2003). In this sense, a dialectical[8] approach is viewed as an interactive relationship between two variables in which each has bearing on the other in a continuing iterative process (Marsh & Smith 2000). Marsh and Smith (2001) identify three distinct but inter related dualisms that need to be transcended, those of; structure and agency, network and context and, networks and outcomes. Significant to implementation, the interplay of structure and agency is accounted for, where an actor brings strategic knowledge to a structured context and both that strategic knowledge and structured context help shape, but not solely determine the agent's action.

[7] Dowding suggests applying a bargaining model or game theory to achieve this

[8] There may be further confusion as 'dialectic is a controversial and differing meaningful word ranging from Plato's 'art of defining ideas'. Fichte's 'thesis, antithesis and synthesis' or Marx's 'progressive unification through the contradiction of opposites'. Marx did not use the term dialectic himself, rather the notion of dialectical materialism originates from the work of Engels

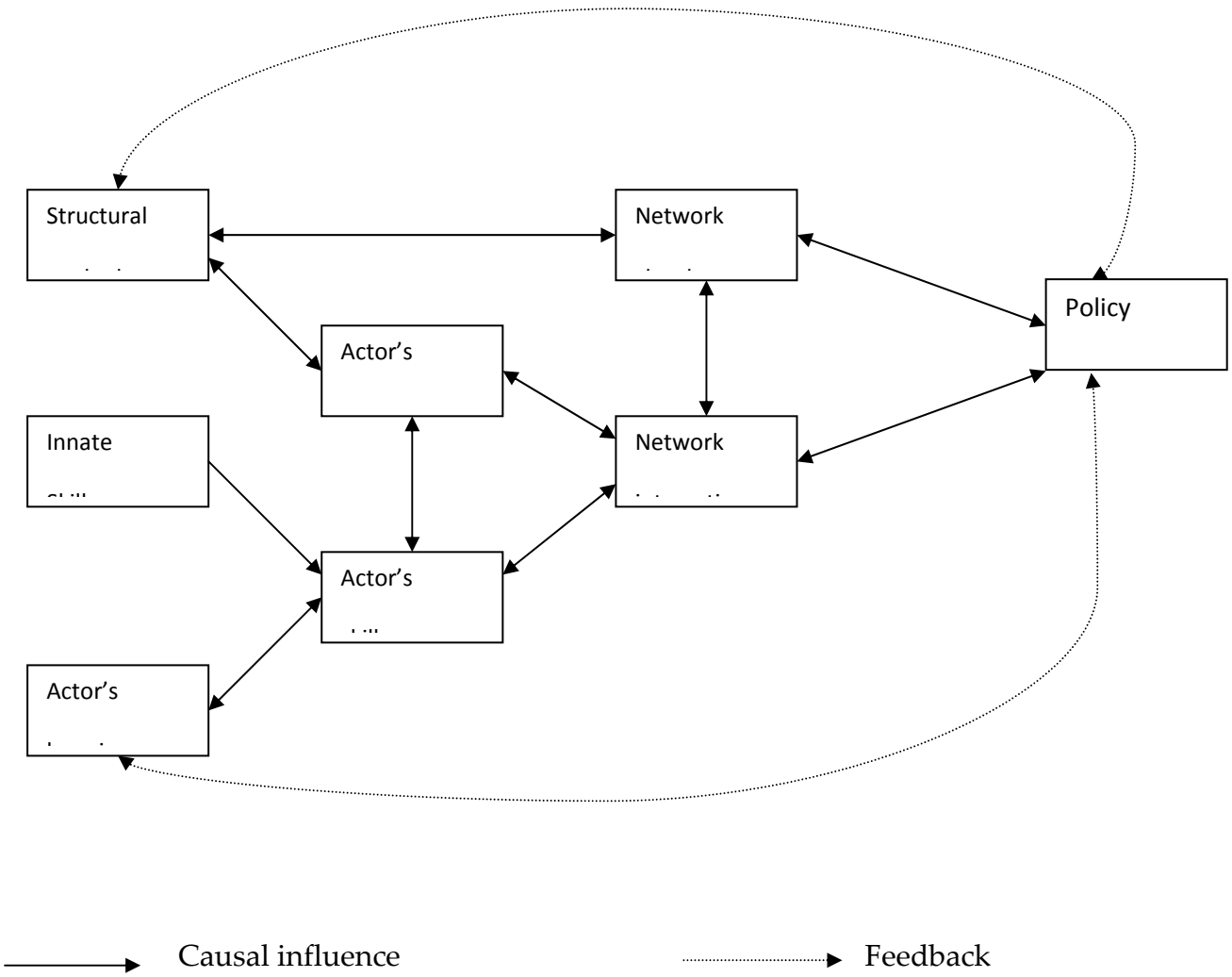


Figure 4.5 Policy Networks and Policy Outcomes: A dialectical Approach. Source: Marsh and Smith (2000)

Marsh and Stoker (1995:293) state that 'networks are political structures which constrain and facilitate, but do not determine policy outcomes'. Within these structures, it is the interaction between network members that are believed to determine policy outcomes (Daugbjerg & Marsh, 1998; Lewis, 2002). Marsh and Smith add a dynamic in that relationships are not unidirectional. In this way, for example, the model allows for policy outcomes and agents within networks to recursively influence the structure of the network. Furthermore, the model suggests that the wider structural context influences the structure of networks, the agencies within them and, as a result, the policy outcomes shaped through these networks. Recognising such relationships is not, in itself, new, Daugbjerg and Marsh (1998), go

further suggesting that, not only do policy networks reflect structured inequalities in society, they also have a direct influence on policy outcomes. Marsh and Smith (2000) claim that by highlighting and formalising these relationships in a model, the concept of policy networks is advanced as an analytical tool.

The strength of policy network approaches in relation to analysing implementation is the recognition that participation in the policy process is not restricted to interest groups. As such, network approaches 'leave open to empirical research the question of which societal actors, possessed of which institutional properties, participate in a given policy domain' (Atkinson & Coleman 1992:162). Rhodes (1997; 2000b) identifies that actors have resources and knowledge, and therefore are potentially crucial participants in the implementation process. Moreover, in relation to particular levels of analysis, and an integrated framework for this study, the utility of the networks approach is clear from Smith's suggestion that 'policy networks is a meso level concept...concerned with explaining the behaviour within particular sections of the state or particular policy areas' (1993:7). This approach does not assume the nature of state/group relations and suggests that the state is fragmented rather than unified. In relation to the specific criteria of the Charter Standard which requires clubs, schools and individuals working collaboratively to meet mutually exclusive and beneficial goals, policy networks also imply that cooperation is necessary for successful implementation (Hill & Hupe 2002:78). Moreover, the framework allows for explanations such as how aware actors are of their mutual interdependence, that actors within networks will have their own agendas and objectives for implementing the Charter Standard, and the degree to which interactions are balanced favourably or unfavourably with perceived outcomes. The extent to which structural factors shape implementation, such as the degree to which actors possess veto power because of indispensable resources is also accounted for (Hill & Hupe 2002:78). Therefore, in relation to Houlihan's (2005) criteria, the policy

network approach can be viewed as having potential utility in relation to each criterion. The extent to which the dialectical approach can illuminate the implementation process in relation to the Charter Standard in accounting for endogenous and exogenous factors to grassroots football is a matter of empirical investigation. However, the approach does embody an iterative and interactive relationship between exogenous and endogenous factors. For example, the formulation of programmes such as Clubmark by Sport England to be implemented by individual NGBs, in this case the FA and the Charter Standard, and an increasing salience of grassroots football as an important aspect of the FA's development work (FA Annual Report 2003/04, FA Annual Report 2004/05) combined with the motivations and desires of the actors involved within the grassroots football domain. Adding weight to the approach is the overcoming of the static bias or reification (Hay 1998). The introduction of questions relating to political change and the impact of networks on outcomes and processes with external factors such as institutions, ideas, values, strategies and technologies are taken into account as independent determinants of network structures (Adam & Kriesi 2007:131). Marsh and Toke (2003) indicate that the approach is adaptable to a variety of policy areas and allows for a deeper understanding of particular aspects such as implementation, because of the frameworks capability to allow for a multitude of contextual macro level factors impacting upon a micro level setting. In this respect, it is possible to empirically identify the way in which each actor implements the Charter Standard, and more particularly, how and why they do so, and under what conditions. That is, what tools and resources do they possess, hold or withhold, and for what reasons within the grassroots football policy arena.

4.3 Delivery analysis

As proponents of network approaches to the policy process have noted, new metaphors are required to explain the dynamics of policy formulation and implementation in a more complex 'post-modern' society. It is against these ideas that the study of the 'output' or implementation side of policy analysis must be viewed in contemporary society (Parsons 1995:461). As alluded to throughout this Chapter, collaborative activity has become increasingly common in the delivery of public policies, particularly in the modernisation agenda and has manifested itself clearly in sport policies (Green & Houilhan 2006). Therefore, key concepts and theoretical models of partnerships and collaboration are presented here to inform the analysis of implementation within a policy network framework. This precludes a fuller review of the literature on partnerships and collaboration generally.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Collaboration usually refers to situations in which people are working together across organisational boundaries (c.f. Sullivan & Skelcher 2002) towards an agreed end (Huxham & Vangen 2005:30). Within New Labour's modernisation context, collaboration is central to the way in which policy is made and implemented, and is a way of working with others on a joint project where there is a shared interest in positive outcomes (Glendenning 2002). For instance, a key criterion of the Charter Standard aimed at providing opportunities and pathways for children to participate in football is for schools and clubs to work in partnership to provide such opportunities by forming 'school-club links'. Two points of conceptual clarification are important here. First, 'collaboration' or 'partnerships' refer to relationships between organisations such as schools, clubs local football associations and local authority sport development bodies. The views of individuals interviewed in terms of analysing delivery of the Charter Standard are deemed representatives of their

organisation's views. Second, partnerships can be viewed as a formal organisation as an attempt by government to reign in policy networks to manipulate them towards its own ends (Skelcher 2000; Sullivan & Skelcher 2002; Skelcher, Mathur & Smith 2005). Rather than policy networks being aligned with, or overseen by partnerships, this study views partnerships as a form of collaborative activity that occurs *within* policy networks between the individuals and organisations responsible for the implementation of the Charter Standard. As such, partnerships and collaboration are subject to policy network analyses.

With particular reference to this research, the mobilisation of the voluntary sector in the form of grassroots football clubs to implement the Charter Standard in order to provide equitable and quality opportunities for all to participate in football resonates with Lewis' line of argument (2005:122) in that the idea of partnership signals a new approach by government to voluntary organisations in their role as service providers and as mediating institutions. In short, the voluntary sector has been 'mainstreamed' onto the UK policy agenda (Glennerster 1995; Kendall 2003), often from a subordinate position to the statutory sector (Billis & Glennerster 1998; Nicholls 2005). The co-ordination of different and unequal interest groups raises the important question of differential power relations in collaborative work. In terms of the Charter Standard then, it is important to account for the collaborative arrangements that come to exist to implement the scheme. This, it is claimed, ensures that the views and expertise of a wider constituency are incorporated into policy implementation (Milbourne et al 2003:22).

At a general level, Huxham and Vangen's (2005:31) notions of 'collaborative inertia' and 'collaborative advantage' provide useful insights. They identify a number of common bases for collaboration, which are not reducible, including: access to

resources; shared risk; efficiency; coordination; learning and moral imperatives. They conclude that common themes have been inductively generated such as; common aims, communication, commitment and determination, compromise, agreed processes, democracy and equality, resources, trust and power. Where a negligible output in practice is identified (Huxham & Vangen 2005:60), 'collaborative inertia' (Huxham 1996; Huxham & Vangen; 2005) occurs. Usually, this is due to a variety of organisations prioritising their own agenda which renders reaching agreed outcomes difficult. Organisations bring to bear different resources and expertise, which creates the potential for 'collaborative advantage' (Huxham 1996), yet organisations have different motives for being involved and seek to achieve different outputs from their involvement. Moreover, the motivations for involvement can have an impact upon the structure, dynamics and outcomes as organisations become involved in collaboration reactively rather than proactively, sometimes stemming from coercion or conditions imposed by government (Huxham & Vangen 2005:126).

Partnerships pervade the discourse of, and have become, a key mechanism of service delivery for sport policy (McDonald 2005:593). At the level of theory, partnership working has been presented as a critique of both market and state-led forms of governance, while in policy discourse McDonald (2005) distinguishes between a critical pragmatist or structuralist approach. The former presents partnerships normatively; offering the potential for a more resource efficient, outcome-effective and inclusive-progressive form of policy implementation; or latterly, as discursive constructs designed to nullify opposition to dominant interests. In this sense, partnerships may be implicated in governmental strategies to secure hegemonic influence precisely through the relinquishing of some forms of direct control to further an extension of statist bureaucratic control (Davies 2002). Indeed, Rummery

implicates partnerships in the reproduction of existing inequalities and power relations:

> Partnership working does not benefit users…significantly – in some cases it makes it worse. Partnerships reinforce power inequalities that are already in existence, placing central government in a relatively powerful position vis-`a-vis local government, the private sector in a relatively powerful position vis-`a-vis the public sector and the public sector in a relatively powerful position vis-`a-vis the voluntary and community sector. They divert resources…and…do relatively little to empower users of local communities. Yet who could possibly object to partnership as a concept? (Rummery 2002: 243)

While both approaches reveal important aspects of partnerships, neither succeeds in fully grasping the differentiated nature of partnerships so that in some circumstances they may offer progressive forms of governance, but in other contexts they may be ideological fig leaves for dominant powers (McDonald 2005:580). As McDonald (2005:583), following Newman (2001: 123) succinctly notes, partnerships could as readily be characterised by 'instrumentalism, bargaining and pragmatic compliance' as 'trust, equality and reciprocity'. Research into partnerships remains theoretically undeveloped McDonald (2005), with very little identification of the actual mechanics involved (Powell & Dowling 2006:305).

Collaborative and partnership arrangements have been classified by their role and / or form (Snape & Stewart 1996; Reitan 1998; Bailey & Koney 2000; Ling 2002; Challis et al 1988) which give rise to a number of models or types of partnerships, which have not been subjected to rigorous academic or theoretical examination (Powell & Dowling 2006). Models developed by Mackintosh (1992) and Hastings (1996) have been more commonly used (for example, see Elander 2002; Ruane 2002; Powell &

Glendenning 2002; Powell & Exworthy 2002). In short, such models emphasise the production of; synergy from complementary assets, skills and powers; and transformation grounded in power relations affecting changes in the aim and cultures of partners. Where partners are more equal, there may be bilateral changes; where one organisation has more power, there may be takeover, isomorphism or virtual integration on the terms of the more powerful (Powell & Dowling 2006:306). Further, 'policy synergy' combines different perspectives of partners to produce new perspectives and original solutions, with original differences in culture and objectives between the partners maintained (Hastings 1996). Sullivan & Skelcher's (2002:24) typology of partnerships situates partnerships in their social and political contexts which allows for relations of power to be consistently and explicitly addressed, is regarded as fairly accurate (Powell & Dowling 2006; Young 2006; Taylor 2006). However, there is a tendency to concede theoretically to a governmental agenda in which partnerships are presented in self-evidently positive terms which does not permit their rejection. Invariably, such approaches do not examine the deep structures of power (McDonald 2005:582).

McDonald (2005), draws on Newman's (2001) conception of governance and Habermasian concepts of social action to offer a framework that intends to unpack partnerships according to their context and logic of social action, and argues for a distinction between what he terms *'strategic'* partnerships and *'communicative'* partnerships. Strategic partnerships are most closely associated with contextual parameters of Newman's (2001) rational goal model of governance (see Fig 4.1 pg 105 this chapter), which provides the conditions to form partnerships based upon the maximisation of outputs in implementing policies using financially prudent means. Partnerships that reflect this model of governance tend to be horizontal, short-term, non paternalistic and pragmatic, with collaboration viewed as a means of competing effectively and efficiently for resources (Pratt *et al.*, 1998: 7). Goals for

the partnership are criteria driven, clearly defined, almost prescriptive, with the means of achieving these derived by the more powerful actors over those less powerful based on managerial authority. Thus, social action within such partnerships tends to be based on a centralisation of power as the most effective way of securing the achievement of goals, reducing the chances of implementation of policies realising 'undesirable' outcomes.

Communicative partnerships are most closely associated with Newman's (2001) self-governance model (see Fig 4.1 pg 105 this chapter), based upon more diffuse and democratic structures. Emphasis is placed on process rather than outcomes and the trajectory of partnerships are noted as less pre-determined (McDonald 2005:593). Such reasoning allows for implementation of policies to be undertaken in various ways and for various motives, as it is the active agents involved in a cooperative process in the partnership who are noted as the most powerful. Such reasoning is based on the notion that partners will co-design means of implementation for a shared purpose. In relation to the Charter Standard, a community achieved consensus regarding how and why to implement the Charter Standard based upon more intangible benefits i.e., for the good of the grassroots game and the end users would be more common, rather than forming partnerships to implement policies for more tangible benefits such as positions of power or financial gain. Sustainability and community capacity building are predicated on a genuinely empowering form of partnership in which less powerful community and voluntary groups can engage with more powerful groups in an equitable manner, based on the assumption that such groups have unique valuable expertise and knowledge at a localised community level. Relations of power are more likely to be devolved, interdependence is likely to be greater and, crucially, working in partnership becomes the goal of social action rather than the means, opening up the possibility for a communicatively agreed consensus (McDonald 2005:594).

McDonald (2005) also notes that partnerships exhibiting a combination of communicative and strategic components are also possible, which relate to Newman's open system model of governance (see Fig 4.1 pg 105 this chapter). In short, such reasoning represents 'a deliberate effort in horizontal network-building . . . more relevant to the needs of the locality' (Healey, 1997: 235), in which Co-operation is the behavioural norm. Unlike competitive behaviour characteristic of strategic partnerships in the rational goal model of governance, co-operation is premised on the acknowledgement that agents achieve their goals more effectively by working with other agents. Therefore partnerships based on the open systems model have a contingent relationship to strategic and communicative forms of social action, depending on the balance they strike between dynamism and change on the one hand and accountability and sustainability on the other. However, dominant power relations tended to be reproduced in such partnerships (Newman et al 2004). Such reasoning highlights the dynamic and multi faceted nature of partnerships in general and that the models of governance presented by Newman are by no means deterministic. Further, Grimshaw (2001) observes that it is more often the groups traditionally excluded in society such as women and ethnic minorities who tend to be excluded from decision-making processes.

Where there is a gap in the partnership literature is in the interface between these two areas, namely how does the nature of a partnership influence the processes that take place within it? The concept of policy networks may offer a framework for such an analysis in examining the ways in which policy networks may affect policy outcomes. (Peters 1998; Marsh & Stoker 1995; Smith 1993; Daugbjerg & Marsh 1998) Policy networks therefore, can be used as a theoretical tool by which collaborative arrangements can be analysed. Such theoretical considerations provide a framework

in which to capture and analyse collaborative activity in implementation of the Charter Standard, and allows the researcher to draw upon partnership typologies and models to gain greater analytical purchase on implementation. Moreover, such an analysis can be mapped onto modes of governance such as explicated by Newman (2001), which can further be informed by macro level theories of power.

Implementation

This section highlights the major theoretical positions/advancements in implementation theory. A thorough literature review of implementation is not deemed necessary, as the abundance of literature is very broad across diverse academic fields. Moreover, the application of implementation theory to practice is rare, and disputes among different proponents of different perspectives are commonplace (O'Toole 2004:309). Therefore, this discussion centres on the contribution of the literature on implementation in relation to the analysis of collaborative activity within policy networks and governance.[9] For instance, different groups or organisations at different levels of government or a football development policy network (national, regional and local), are involved in implementing the Charter Standard, each with its own interests, ambitions and traditions that affect the implementation process and its outcomes (Bardach 1977; Elmore 1978). Within this, it must be noted that whilst authoritative decision makers such as government and FA officials at a national level remain a significant force in the implementation stage of the policy process, they are joined at this stage by additional members of relevant policy subsystems, which have various political, economic and cultural resources which affect the implementation process (Montgomery 2000). Powerful groups affected by a policy can condition the character of its implementation.

[9] See Hill and Hupe (2002) for a thorough review of implementation literature

The focus on implementation here is to locate implementation within this study and the purpose it serves, reflecting on different types and approaches which can be drawn upon to enhance the understanding of how and why the Charter Standard is implemented. No one view is adhered to, and the intention is for this study to empirically investigate grassroots football development policy within a policy network framework, in order to examine which type or types of implementation is/are evident (c.f. Parsons 1995:489).

Simply put, examination of implementation is 'what happens between policy expectations and (perceived) policy results (DeLeon 1999a:134). A more in-depth definition is provided by Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989:20) that will be adopted for the purposes of this study and is worth quoting at length:

> 'Implementation is the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders... Ideally, that decision identifies the problems to be addressed, stipulates the objectives to be pursued, and in a variety of ways, structures the implementation process. The process normally runs through a number of stages beginning with passage of the basic statute followed by the policy outputs (decisions) of the implementing agencies, the compliance of target groups with those decisions, the actual impacts – both intended and unintended – of those outputs, the perceived impacts of agency decisions, and finally, important revisions (or attempted revisions) in the basic statute'.

Implementation by its very definition is a complicated process. The potential for policy to be implemented differently than is conceived and prescribed is great. In terms of the assumptions that new forms of governance generate and encourage

increasingly specialised policy networks in order to implement policy, the chain of causality and the more numerous reciprocal relationships between actors and bureaucratic layers, the more complex implementation becomes (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984:22). Essentially, the greater the number of actors involved in the policy process, and the greater the number of bureaucratic levels within which policy permeates, the more difficult it is to discern what is actually taking place.

Concern with the Charter Standard for this thesis requires a focus upon the implementers (or street level bureaucrats in Lipsky's terms) rather than the end users, and how they implement the scheme in relation to guidance and criteria they must meet in order to achieve accreditation. In this context, the volunteers and sports development professionals dealing with such an accreditation scheme have a significant impact upon the way in which the Charter Standard scheme is implemented. What happens here is crucial to whether the Charter Standard designed by FA policy makers within the salient political context of modernisation, joined-up thinking and partnership working, is delivered as prescribed, or whether volunteers and football development officers modify or manipulate the policy by their strategic or unintentional actions or inactions.

Traditionally, within the implementation literature, two distinctive schools of thought or approaches have generated a longstanding debate which has inhibited development of implementation theories and concepts. 'Top down' theorists argue that there can be perfect implementation if those responsible for implementation are compliant, whereas 'Bottom up' theorists claim that it is inevitable that implementers will have an impact, indeed *the* major impact on how policy is implemented. This debate has been heavily influenced by the question of how to separate implementation from policy formation, which in turn is part of a wider

problem about how to identify the features of a very complex process, occurring across time and space, and involving multiple actors. More recent additions to the literature take account of network and governance theories which provide a new direction and emphasis on implementation, suggesting that the top down/bottom up paradigm has been superseded by a new agenda which considers the operation and management of networks as a crucial factor in determining implementation which requires a more sophisticated analysis (Hill & Hupe 2002). The difficulties with either approach (highlighted below), have influenced an alternative view that systematization and generalization of a specific policy to another are impossible, and that the only approach possible is to provide an accurate account of specific implementation processes (Hill & Hupe 2002:44). Pertinent to this study, implementation is a key moment of the policy process which is often overlooked in literature related to sport policy in general. Implementation as a process has a significant impact on the way the Charter Standard is delivered and maintained in relation to actors' relations with each other, and their strategic actions and inactions; therefore linking with the meso level concepts described previously that link with macro level theorising is important to provide a more rounded account of the football development policy network and the policy processes within it. A constant source of debilitation here is whether the 'top – down' or 'bottom – up' approaches constitute the practice of implementation, or how implementation is analysed, or whether it is a mixture of both.

The Top down and Bottom up paradigm debate

At the risk of simplifying and generalising, 'top down' approaches (or scientific administration) tend to exemplify characteristics from the classical Weberian paradigm which sought to order society via a rationalistic bureaucratic hierarchy (Cantelon and Ingham 2002:71-72). In short, Weber's view was quintessentially the

'top down' version of the policy process and how complex societies should be organised and disciplined (Weber 1949), and is essentially normative in character. This approach assumes that the policy process can be viewed as a series of chains of command where political leaders articulate a clear policy preference which is then carried out at increasing levels of specificity as it goes through the administrative machinery. In setting out managerial and organisational design principles, a maximisation between political intent and administrative action are expected to generate optimal results. Such principles are expected to find and execute the one best way for implementers to implement a policy.

The notion that policy makers can simply issue commands to those below them with a guaranteed successful outcome in a classic notion of a 'top down' Weberian bureaucracy is naïve (Hill & Hupe 2002:41). Such a view assumes homogenous rationality amongst policy implementers that does not take account of the multifarious nature of the policy process. Pressman and Wildavky's (1973) infamous (Parsons 1995) 'top – down' analysis of an urban regeneration project focused on the point of delivery in relation to prescribed criteria based on the notion that the policy process was rational, and therefore amenable to intelligent management. They highlighted that implementation was inhibited by a lack of coordination between collaborative agencies involved. The authors suggested that it was necessary to establish clear lines of communication, provision of adequate funding and to ensure effective management of the scheme. Their findings triggered a debate about the conditions necessary for successful implementation of a policy. The orientation of research concerned with implementation focused upon how to improve delivery, the underlying assumption being that if it was faulty or unsuccessful in some way it was the result of deficiencies in how the project was put into practice. In many policy areas, and in particular those requiring the participation of a wide variety of organisations and agencies which the

contemporary sport policy area exemplifies, the problems of inter-agency collaboration have often been cited as contributing to difficulties with implementation (Tait 2000), thus apparently encouraging the need for a top down approach (Hogwood & Gunn 1984). Based upon assumptions of rational and normative behaviour by implementers, Hogwood and Gunn (1984), list ten 'best practice' conditions, which could result in 'perfect' implementation by eliminating and minimising potential problems. Hogwood and Gunn (1984:207) recognise that these pre-conditions are unlikely to be achieved in practice, but they retain a measure of sympathy with the top down view. Matland, as do others (O'Toole 1986; 2000; 2004, Barrett 2004; Exworthy & Powell 2004) note that a literature with three hundred critical variables doesn't need more variables: It needs structure (Matland, 1995: 146).

Dunsire (1990) listed conditions by which policy implementation failed, drawing attention to human agency rather than the structures in policy implementation strategy. For Dunsire, if implementation was not achieved or was achieved in a differing way to the original conception of policy, it was due to a failure in rationality, because the personnel involved did not comply with instructions or those managing the policy made mistakes in its design. According to top down theorists, a breakdown in the delivery of a policy or the failure to implement is due to human fallibility in agency, and stricter enforcement and control of the administrative apparatus within which policy is made and implemented is required. Elmore (1978 & 1979), offers the concept of 'sub-optimisation', which suggests that although a strong top down structure is required, in complex organisations (e.g., the FA – see Chapter 1), it is necessary for there to be devolution of authority. Resonant of forms of networked governance at a macro level discussed in Chapter 3, government devolves power to an ever increasing active citizenry to take ownership and responsibility for policy making and delivery. This is reflected in the work of

the FA. The Charter Standard formulated with government influence through Sport England, has engaged the active voluntary sector within football that was previously taken for granted and rarely consulted on FA matters pre Charter for Quality (1997). This document instigated the spawning of football development officers, a new role with the overall jurisdiction to work with and for volunteers in developing football at the grassroots level. The concept of sub-optimisation gives significant areas of discretion to people working on particular tasks within the overall structure of an organisation or policy, and who broadly accept the strategic direction of the organisation's goals. However, in enforcing top – down rationality to ensure implementation is consistent with predetermined outcomes, Elmore suggests devolution requires boundaries to be defined around areas of discretion, monitoring the performance of suboptimal units to deal with 'spill-over' effects and mistakes. Thus, almost reflecting a Gramscian hegemonic view of organisations, people lower down the system or scale of implementation within an organisation such as FDOs or volunteers have free will. Yet this needs to be psychologically attuned to perform in accordance with the central decision makers' aims. According to Elmore, failure in implementation is a failure to identify weaknesses and lapses in the performance of subordinates.

In short, 'top down' approaches and models of policy implementation, perceive the process of delivering schemes such as the Charter Standard as being 'handed down' by policy makers as a rational set of sequences to be followed systematically in order to meet specified criteria in achieving what is deemed a successful outcome. Such approaches have been criticised for being too mechanistic and simplistic to achieve solutions in complex dynamic environments (Parsons 1995:466-467). The shift with policy makers concerns and outcomes was concurrent with the growth of new public management and the concept of governance in the way in which the state governs and the formation of networks in an increasing incorporation of the voluntary sector

into policy implementation (Parsons 1995:458). Such approaches neglect the role of individuals or organisations delivering policy(ies) or the diversity of local conditions on implementation. The top down approach fails to take account of the variety and importance of other actors involved in policy implementation.

Few situations are ever simplistic, rationalistic and prescriptive. Dunisre (1996:372) notes that effective implementation is more likely to be a function of street-level adjustment than of perfect policy design. Implementers (FDOs, club volunteers etc), may exercise discretion, and operationalise available resources within culturally informed structured contexts which shape policy outcomes that may be very different from those intended by policy makers. Proponents of a bottom up approach argue that the reality of policy implementation is:

> "Not of imperfect control, but of action as a continuous process of interaction with a *changing and changeable policy, a complex interaction structure,* an *outside world which must interfere* with implementation because government action impinges upon it, and implementing actors who are *inherently difficult to control"* (Hill 1997:139) [italics in original]

Top down approaches stress the creation of implementation deficiency, the bottom up view is a flip side of the same coin and stresses the re-creation of policy. Lipsky's (1976) key contribution (cited in Parsons 1995), empirically identified the lack of rationality in much of the decision making process of local 'street level bureaucrats', who exerted considerable and decisive influence over what happened on the ground. Implementation was defined as a process, not an end product of a normative cycle of events; and that those people involved in front line delivery can and do have a major impact on the outcome despite the prescriptive instructions and demands of policy makers. Wetherly and Lipsky (1977) established that rational models are not effective in practice, or convincing in theory, and that attempting to control people to act in a rational prescribed manner to achieve policy outcomes did

not ensure effective implementation. Lipsky observed a paradox in which street level professionals operating inside complex bureaucracies, felt "themselves to be doing the best they can under adverse circumstances" (Lipsky 1980:12), but also having a significant degree of discretion. Furthermore, Lipsky argues that "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out" (Lipsky *ibid*). Lipsky (1980:10) advances

> "People often enter public employment with at least some commitment to service. Yet the very nature of this work prevents them from coming close to the ideal conception of their jobs. Large classes or huge caseloads and inadequate resources combine with the uncertainties of method and the unpredictability of clients to defeat their aspirations as service workers"

Thus Lipsky handles one of the paradoxes of street level work (Hill 1997:143). Such workers see themselves as cogs in a system, as oppressed by the bureaucracy within which they work. Yet they often seem to have a great deal of discretionary freedom and autonomy. The street level bureaucrat's role is viewed as an 'alienating' one, stressing such classic features of alienation as the work that is only on 'segments of the product' that there are no controls over outcomes and pace of work. This notion in a sense relates to Marx and his notion that 'Man makes his own history, even though he does not do so under conditions of his own choosing'. Street level bureaucrats face uncertainty about what personal resources are necessary to implement policy.

Elmore (1979) argues the concept of 'backward mapping' is more realistic and would produce more achievable policy objectives, suggesting that the lowest level of the implementation process should be the starting point, i.e. those responsible for delivery on the ground such as club volunteers. Policy at this extreme level of

bottom up theorising is best defined as what happens during implementation. The idea of backward mapping is to begin at the phase when policy reaches its end point, then analyse and organise policy from the patterns of behaviour and conflict which exist, eliminating the identified problems and issues. Bottom up models view implementation as mediated by negotiation and consensus building within the political environment in which they are working, and the skills, abilities and culture of organisations and their actors (Parsons 1995:469). Furthermore, Dunleavy (1991) argues that professionals have a key role in ensuring the performance of a policy. In this respect, as has been mentioned, sports development professionals such as SDOs, PDMs, FDOs and teachers, all have some input into the implementation of the Charter Standard to a greater or lesser extent. These professionals have the opportunity according to Dunleavy, to shape and control policy implementation as they see fit, and that the policy formulation process may be skewed by policy implementers. For example, these sport development professionals may develop ways of implementing the Charter Standard which result in outcomes that are very different to those intended or desired by the FA.

'Bottom up' approaches typify Foucault's constructionist conception of the dispersal of power in society. Foucault argues that traditional models of governance are inadequate for understanding contemporary society and forms of social organisations. Foucault viewed these as characterised by a fragmented and discontinuous series of transformations supported and augmented by a multiplicity of different 'knowledge's, practices and truths' operating at ground level rather than being imposed from above such as by governments. He argued that power

> 'comes from below; that there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between rulers and rules at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix – no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more limited groups to the very depths of the social body' (Foucault 1980:119)

In relation to sport, Tait (2000:12) argues that 'bottom up' approaches are appropriate in evaluating sport policies because local sporting networks can assist implementation and highly effective charismatic individuals are more influential and potentially have a greater impact on implementation direction.

Barrett and Fudge (1981) propose a 'policy – action' continuum, whereby power is a central dynamic, particularly when centred on controls over resources, with bargaining and negotiation as key features. Policy and action are dynamically related in an interactive and negotiative process over time between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends (Barrett & Fudge 1981:25). Hence, policy is not regarded as constant. It is mediated by actors who may be operating with different assumptive worlds and subjective opinions than those formulating the policy. So too, are those affected by the outcomes and processes of implementation. Barrett and Fudge argue that policy is an agency centred property which inevitably undergoes interpretation and modification and in some cases subversion (1981:251). Furthermore, they contend that there is a tendency to depoliticize the policy-action relationship. Their view suggests a continual political process occurring throughout implementation which effectively suggests that implementation and policy formation are difficult to separate, and is a continual iterative process whereby policy is constantly being made through implementation. The normative assumption embedded in the top down approach is rejected if implementation is viewed as "getting something done", then performance rather than conformance is the main objective (Barrett & Fudge 1981:258). The authors do not address explicitly methodological concerns with implementation; however, do endorse Hjern's methodological approach to network analysis. However, as Hill and Hupe (2002:54) suggest, if it is not possible to separate policy

formation from implementation, there is a difficulty in setting the limits for an implementation study such as this. For example, if this reasoning is followed, the Charter Standard would be continually being reformulated at the point of delivery. It would then be virtually impossible to ascertain what is actually being implemented as the various individuals interviewed for data collection would all have a different policy than that to which they originally aspired to through the guidance of the FA.

In short, 'Bottom up' models recognise the mediating influences of policy deliverers and the social environmental settings within which implementation occurs. Professionals can exert strong influence on how programmes are experienced or delivered, and equally, the lack of expertise of some implementers mean that policy can be implemented out of line with the intention. This influence can be directly related to the extent of their discretion in interpreting policy and guidelines as to how to implement it. The thrust of the argument is people interpret policy in different ways leading to varying subtle differences in implementation. Penney and Evans (1999) highlight power struggles in policy making whereby professionals seek to gain more influence in directing policy, but often lacked a unified voice. 'Top down' approaches to policy analysis and implementation by their orientation would fail to account for such processes and power struggles. This reinforces the notion of examining the policy context in great detail to understand implementation adequately. Policies are delivered for and by people across different sites, making implementation complex, dynamic and diverse. Thus, frameworks or models of analysis of outcomes need to cope with complex local situations and the individual perspectives of deliverers.

Evidently, there are strengths and weaknesses in both rational (top down) and incremental (bottom up) approaches as normative models of implementation. Whilst incrementalism may provide a more accurate picture of what happens in real world policy implementation, the notion of rationalism retains some of its appeal and authority. There is therefore a conflict between the "desirability of a prescriptive approach and the reality of the need to recognise that implementation involves a continuation of the complex processes of bargaining, negotiation, and interaction which characterise the policy making process" (Hill 1993:112)

This reinforces the need noted in the discussion on policy networks to explore inter-organisational relationships and local circumstances in policy implementation and evaluation. Few policies fall within the remit of a single agency or set of individuals and football is no exception, particularly in the contemporary political context of joined up thinking and sharing of resources across sectors to achieve government goals. Accounting for power and resource dependencies shaping policy delivery reinforces the value of the networks approach to understanding how policy is implemented. The dialectical approach to analysing policy networks is a suitable device to help understand implementation in synthesising both the top down and bottom up approaches as it allows for the fact that there are a multitude of policy actors involved in the delivery of the Charter Standard scheme at varying levels with different emphases on delivery, and who have different pressures exerted upon them both within and outside the policy context that affects the delivery.

In sum, the polarised top down – bottom up debate was important for implementation research in a number of respects. First, empirical research highlighted there was a temporal dimension to policy implementation; in other words, implementation took place over time, involving multiple actors (Pitts 2007;

Hill & Hupe 2002:43). Secondly, the assumption that perfect implementation was achievable, and the realisation this was rarely achieved, invariably led authors to suggest models to account for all variables, or removal of key dependant variables required to achieve it. Indeed, O'Toole (1986) examined 100 studies in implementation that formulated over 300 'key' variables in research. Rather than seeking to generate an all encompassing coherent theory of policy implementation, generalisation and systematisation are recognised as impossible, and that the most suitable approach to policy implementation research is to provide an accurate account of specific cases of implementation processes (Hill & Hupe 2002:43; Schofield 2004; O'Toole 200; 2004). Such a distinction supports the methodology and research design for this thesis: an in depth analysis of the Charter Standard, a specific football development scheme.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:190), observers noted that the two approaches were not contradictory, but complementary (Sabatier 1993). Briefly, the top-down approach invariably starts with decisions of the government, examines the extent to which administrators carry out or fail to carry out these decisions, and seeks to find the reasons underlying the extent of the implementation. The bottom-up approach merely begins at the other end of the implementation chain of command and urges the activities of street level implementers to be fully accounted for. Moreover, much of the debate between these approaches is methodological, regarding the most suitable way to analyse implementation activities, and over the best means to develop testable hypotheses about the nature of the implementation process and the factors that influence success and failure. For instance, models of implementation such as top-down approaches are more aligned with normative and predictive roles of implementation. Similarly, bottom-up approaches tend to focus more closely on policy networks, often in multi agency settings. The key issue here is that the perceived role of implementation has had a considerable effect upon how the various implementation models within the

literature have been formulated (Schofield 2004:288). Together, the top-down and bottom-up approaches provide more insightful analyses of the dynamics and complexities of the implementation process than either do on their own (Fox 1990; Sabatier 1986; 1993, O'Toole 2004).

Synthesising top down and bottom up approaches

A 'Third Generation' of implementation research (Hill & Hupe 2002), seeks to synthesise elements of the top-down and bottom-up approaches, and focus upon the dialectics of the relationship between the structure of a policy and the actions of implementers (Barrett 2004:256). It is arguable that the use and application of any model in researching policy implementation should depend upon the subject and its context. However, it must be acknowledged that although the top-down/bottom-up debate has been superseded (Hill & Hupe 2002:102), the number of approaches to synthesis remains limited, in which the obsession with identifying and analysing numerous diverse variables remains. As such, much of the literature is concerned with the refinement, refutation, and construction of artificial debates (Hogwood 1995:70). Yet observers recognise the multi-dimensional character of the object of implementation theory and research (O'Toole 2000:265). This third generation of implementation research has given rise to a number of models (c.f. Hill & Hupe 2002).

In both top-down and bottom-up case studies, gaps between legislative or political intent and administrative practice are noted as a major reason for implementation failure, or an implementation gap. Implementation scholars offer numerous explanations which focus on social problems, design of policy, governance systems and organizational arrangements in which policy must operate, and the will or

capacity of the people charged with implementing policy (Spillane et al 2002). Many explanations are premised on principal–agent (Braun & Guston 20033; Waterman & Meier 1998) and rational choice (O'Toole 1995; Sabatier 2007) theories, in which the principal requires the assistance of an agent to achieve a particular outcome. The agent's decisions are guided by rational choice ideas in which utility maximization is the guiding principle for human behaviour. Both the principal and the agent are viewed as motivated by self-interest; which requires an external mechanism in the form of appropriate incentives and monitoring systems if principals are to have their way.

Conversely, other explanations for implementation failure focus on the inability of principals to formulate clear policy outcomes or to adequately supervise the implementation of their goals. The inability of state policymakers to craft clear and consistent directives with respect to the behaviours desired from implementing agents and agencies can undermine local implementation (Mazmanian & Sabatier 1981; Pressman & Wildavsky 1973; Van Meter & Van Horn 1975; Wetherly & Lipsky 1977). In this connection, governance systems or organisational arrangements that involve a number of agencies signifies implementation increasingly taking place in complex, inter-organisational contexts. As such, issues of co-ordinating implementation efforts exacerbate principal-agent dilemmas (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:191). By assuming that implementing agents understand what policymakers are asking them to do, most conventional theories fail to take account of the complexity of human sense-making (Schofield 2004; Spillane et al 2002). In these accounts, implementing agents are portrayed, either implicitly or explicitly, as intentionally interpreting policy to fit their own agendas, interests, and resources. Consistent with their rational-choice foundation, such accounts assume that implementing agents are responding to the ideas intended by policymakers, which they either ignore or modify.

Existing knowledge regarding policy implementation has been developed from research that has focused upon the relationship between the original policy intentions and the resulting policy outcomes. This knowledge has addressed the congruity between policy and outcome (Schofield 2004; O'Toole 2000; 2004); where the outcome differs from the original policy intention it has been suggested that implementation has failed. In an effort to overcome some of the rational choice assumptions made in principal-agent theories, Schofield (2004) proposed a grounded theoretical approach (c.f. Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Locke 2001). Schofield constructs a 'processural model of learned implementation', centring on the idea that those primarily responsible for policy implementation do not automatically know how to convert stated policy intentions into practice. Nonetheless, policy is implemented, so therefore something happens to such implementers to enable them to operationalise policy.

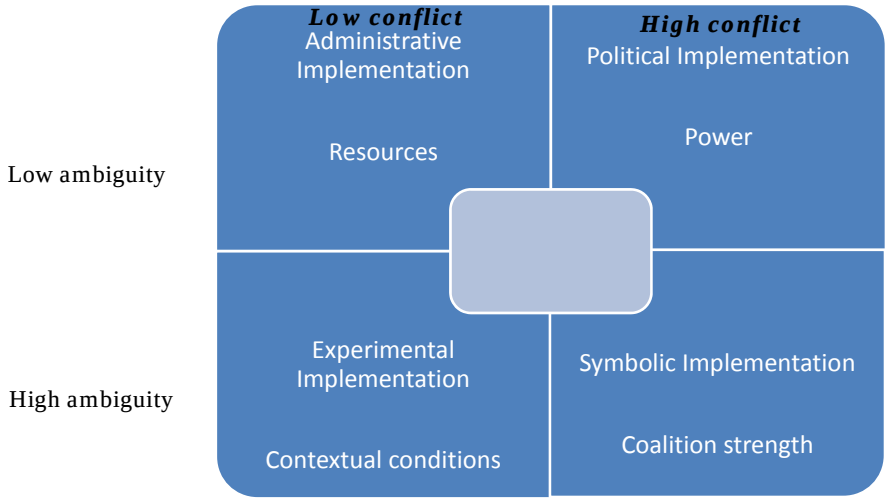
Schofield's method and model is instructive and may complement other approaches to the analysis of implementation processes, particularly given that the model has been developed through the gathering and analysis of empirical data on one specific policy. However, 'testing' the model against the variables presented within it, would contradict the notion put forward by many observers, (Hill & Hupe 2002; O'Toole 1986, 2000, 2004; Howlett & Ramesh 2003) that analysis of policy implementation must recognise the particularity of the policy under investigation, and that the search for dependant and independent variables is a futile one, which must be replaced by the identification and analysis of processes. Therefore, whilst Schofield's model may provide insights into the processes of implementation of the Charter Standard, it would be unwise to 'test' the model against Charter Standard implementation. Rather, an approach is required that can draw upon the models presented in this review of implementation literature. More contemporaneously, the literature has addressed implementation in a post bureaucratic, multi level world of

governance (Hall & O'Toole 2000; Sibeon 2000; O'Toole & Meier 1999; Kickert et al 1997; Schofield 2004) which has superseded the top-down/bottom-up distinction (Hill & Hupe 2002).

Critics of the dichotomised debate of top-down and bottom-up models Matland (1995:146) argue studies that shift away from a specific attention to a policy to a policy field (c.f. Sabatier 1986) warn that a policy field followed over many years can change so radically that it bears little resemblance to its initial form. If implementation research is to retain a meaningful definition, it should be tied to a specific policy rather than to all actions in a policy field (Matland 1995: 152). This line of reasoning, suggests that models such as policy networks and advocacy coalitions may not be suited to the analysis of a specific policy. However, Matland's central argument can complement, rather than usurp the application of network models to policy implementation. Rather than simply producing lists of variables to be taken into account, implementation theorists must specify the conditions under which these variables are important and the reasons we should expect them to be important (Matland 1995:153). Matland suggests that these conditions must be derived from a coherent approach to the concept of successful implementation. That is, to argue that there needs to be a clearly specified dependent variable.

The approach adopted by Matland largely notes a variety of plausible definitions of successful implementation: compliance with statutes/directives; compliance with statutes/goals; achievement of specific success indicators; achievement of locally specified goals; and improvement of the political climate around a programme. Crucial to this argument is the question whether or not policy goals have been explicitly stated in official policy documentation. If this is the case, Matland argues, then, based on democratic theory, the policy designers' values have a superior value. In such instances the correct standard of implementation success is loyalty to the

prescribed goals. When a policy does not have explicitly stated goals, standardisation becomes more difficult, and more general societal norms and values come into play (Matland 1995:155). Matland's central point argues that the distinction between clear and unclear goals is important, in which there is a tendency for top-down theorists to choose relatively clear policies to study whilst bottom-uppers study policies with greater uncertainty inherent in them. This difference is based on two features; ambiguity and conflict. These two concepts tend to interact as intrinsic features of policy rather than as phenomena that policy designers should try to eliminate (Hill 1997). That is, ambiguity and conflict will always occur to varying degrees concerning specific policies, and should be acknowledged as an integral element of implementation research. Matland's ambiguity/conflict model is set out in Figure 4.6



Synthesis of Implementation (Matland 1995)

Figure 4.6

Administrative implementation is based on the prerequisite conditions for a rational decision process (1995:160), the ideal situation for the application of the top-down model. Political implementation centres on outcomes decided by power (Matland 1995:163). In this case, theories that emphasise interactions and policy implementation feedback are particularly applicable, whilst those that stress

decision making at the micro-level are less so. Experimental implementation notes that contextual conditions meaning environmental influences on outcomes are likely to be important. This notion identifies that programme mutations arise as different organisations implement different policies in different environments (Matland 1995:166). There are complex feedback and learning issues to consider in this case, and bottom-up approaches to analysis are particularly likely to be applicable. Symbolic implementation involves high conflict despite the vagueness of policy. The strength of coalitions or networks, particularly at the local level, tends to determine outcomes. Professional values and allegiances may be important for these. While these categories provide a useful analytical typology, they rely on processes of communication, bargaining and the use of power expressed in terms of either coercion or negotiated agreements (Schofield 2004:290). Such gaps in analytical capacity can be complemented by the policy networks framework and collaborative/partnership theories as set out above, particularly given that such frameworks allow analysis to move away from the inhibitive characteristic of policy implementation research identifying, confirming or refuting generalistic variables. This study has two major concerns with implementation, specifically, how does the network itself and the context in which it operates impact on policy implementation, and what type or form of implementation is evident within the network. Policy formulation and policy implementation are inevitably the result of interactions among a plurality of separate actors with separate interests, goals and strategies' (Scharpf 1978:347 quoted in Hill & Hupe 2002).

4.4 Conclusions to Chapter

Within this summary, the persuasiveness of the adopted macro and meso level approaches is explored and clarified, which are to be informed by those concepts identified in the delivery analysis, i.e. implementation. A framework for analysis of the implementation of the Charter Standard is required, which takes account of the observable peculiar characteristics of grassroots football. Given little to no investigation in this area has previously been conducted, this is no easy task. However, extrapolated from the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3 particularly, it is possible to discern some overarching characteristics. The policy field is constitutive of innumerable diverse individuals, teams and leagues, with diverse motivations for participating (both playing and organising), ranging from recreational to competitive, contributing to social capital or developing talent. Such motivations inform the way in which, and why, the Charter Standard is implemented by various actors with a stakeholding in grassroots football, whether that be through a professional occupation, or through cultural underpinnings. This reflects an 'open' or 'vulnerable' characteristic typical of the sports policy sector (Roche 1993:77). In addition, grassroots football, although being administered through a structure of County FA's is also constitutive of the wider sport policy sector is that disunity is common in that 'it is clear that structural disorganisation and internal conflict are at least long-standing and probably endemic' (Roche 1993:91). Grassroots football is, in short, an arena which is contested by individuals with a multitude of motivations and interests, in which there is a lack of unity as to the purposes and running of the game. Although potentially possessing the largest amount of individuals with a vested interest in the game, such diversity of grassroots football mitigates against the formation of a group capable of lobbying common interests and issues for the nature, function and future of the grassroots game. These enduring characteristics render grassroots football susceptible to intervention by non sports interests or more powerful co-ordinated groups to establish their interests within the area.

Given such observations, at the meso level, a dialectical approach to policy networks appears to offer the most persuasive framework for capturing the grassroots level of football and analysing the implementation of the Charter Standard. It is possible to delineate and identify a football development policy network in which to frame the empirical analysis of implementation within the grassroots football subsystem. Figure 4.7 does not provide an exhaustive list, and indeed, one of the strengths of the policy network approach is the fluidity in which to capture relevant organisations or individuals for a particular policy. As such, a different issue within football development such as the analysis of coach education and performance may include different organisations such as UK Sport. Therefore, those listed below are integral to, or otherwise have some involvement with the Charter Standard in the empirical investigation of the thesis.

Operating at 3 distinct yet overlapping levels

NATIONAL LEVEL

FA, ESFA, professional clubs, DCMS, DfES, Sport England, Football Foundation, Sports Coach UK

REGIONAL LEVEL

County FA's, Local Education Authorities, Sport Development Departments, amateur & semi-professional clubs, County Sport Partnerships and the Football Workforce

LOCAL LEVEL

Amateur, youth and junior football clubs, School Sport Partnerships (primary and secondary Schools), local sports facility providers, local football partnerships, welfare organisations, private organisations e.g. soccer schools/holiday camps

Figure 4.7 A Football Development Policy Network

As such, the strength of the policy network approach lies in its capacity to provide an organising framework within which to analyse implementation. The dialectical approach espoused by Marsh and Smith (2002) sensitises us to the notion that the football development policy network is vulnerable to both endogenous and exogenous processes. However, given the valid criticisms of the approach as lacking any analytical power, and largely a metaphorical device, concepts and models informing implementation are required to allow for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics involved in implementing the Charter Standard. As such, insights from other meso level theories may be of utility.

Strengthening policy network analysis specifically, and meso level analysis generally, may be the incorporation of differentiated models and theories of collaboration, partnership and implementation, dimensions of which may enhance explanatory capacity. Given the discussion on relevant partnership and implementation literature, and the positioning of such models and theories, particular attention is drawn to; communicative and strategic models of partnership put forward by McDonald (2005), collaborative advantage and inertia (Huxham & Vangen 2005), policy action continuum of implementation (Barrett & Fudge 1981), and Matland's (1995) model of conflict and ambiguity.

Houlihan (1997; 2005) and Green (2006) note that meso-level analyses such as policy networks or the advocacy coalition framework are instructive as metaphors only when located within a broader theory of power. Furthermore, Daugbjerg and Marsh (1998:54) usefully reinforce the importance of integrating different levels of analysis, in stating

> "the macro-level of analysis deals with the relationships between the state and civil society, that is state theory, and, more specifically, the broader

> political structures and processes within which the policy network is located. State theory offers an explanation of the pattern of inclusion and exclusion within the network and an hypothesis about whose interests are served by the outputs from the network. The meso-level deals with the pattern of interest group intermediation, that is the policy networks; it concentrates upon questions concerning the structures and patterns of interaction within them"

Thus, the aspect of integration of greatest concern here is the discussion of the macro-level theories of pluralism, Marxism and corporatism. Despite observations that theories of the state have undergone a process of convergence (Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987; Ham & Hill 1993; Held 1996; Marsh & Stoker 1995; Lister & Marsh 2006), the contention is that the overlapping assumptions of neo pluralism and networked forms of governance appear to offer the paramount exploratory power for this study, given i) the conceptual insights derived from the partnership and implementation literature, ii) central to the policy network approach is bargaining and negotiation by individuals and organisations within the network approaching the implementation of the Charter Standard from differentiated positions of power which will be bound up in the context in which the network exists, and iii) the dialectical approach to policy networks three dimensional focus on the relationships between network and context, network and outcomes and agency and structure (Fig 4.5). In short, these assumptions acknowledge structural inequalities in state/interest group relations, but without resorting to overly deterministic assumptions evident in various Marxist analyses, for example, but acknowledging the political agenda is skewed towards corporate and business power (Smith 2006). For example, the Premier League in relation to the FA and professional football clubs in relation to grassroots football clubs. The state and its departments are viewed as having their own interests for the sector in terms of ameliorating social issues and providing an infrastructure for grassroots sport by mobilising NGBs such as the FA to implement policies. Such mobilising has been in the form of networks and partnerships that affect cross cutting issues such as education, health and child protection.

Moreover, Marsh and Rhodes argue that neo-pluralist accounts of policy networks explore the impact of professional influence, the logic of technical rationality, the privileged position of a select number of interest groups, and the complex interdependencies within decentralised government structures (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a: 266). Crucially, it is imperative to locate any analysis of policy implementation within the context of a theory of power relations (Hupe & Hill 2002). As Marsh (1995:5) notes, policy networks are characterised by consistent structured privileged which needs to be explained to enable an understanding of policy outcomes, in this case, implementation. In sum, the theoretical framework adopted in this study, takes account of neo-pluralist macro level assumptions underpinned by a differentiated networked conception of governance, a dialectical approach to policy network analysis informed by the intricacies of implementation and partnership concepts.

CHAPTER 5
Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the research strategy utilised in this study. The formulation of research questions are determined by what the researcher wishes to achieve, (Blaikie 2007:30). To answer such questions, a choice must be made among a number of competing research strategies (ibid), based on how best to answer the research questions, which is likely to be influenced by a particular research paradigm (ibid), to which the researcher is committed or which is regarded as providing the best orientation towards the research problem. Such an undertaking is a complex activity, underpinned by theoretical, philosophical, ideological and/or political considerations, combined with the researchers past experiences, peer and audience expectations, and personal worldview (Blaikie 2007:30). This chapter deals with such debate to provide a coherent understanding of the research process to analyse the implementation of the FA's Charter Standard.

Firstly, the ontological, epistemological and methodological basis of the study is outlined within the context of competing research paradigms (Blaikie 2000, 2007; Grix 2002; Marsh *et al* 1999; Sparkes 1992). Secondly, critical realism (Archer et al 1998; Bhaskar 1975, 1979, 1989, 1998; Lewis 2000, 2002; Sayer 1992; Downward 2005) is identified as an appropriate theoretical underpinning for this study, and is discussed in relation to debates regarding structure and agency (Giddens 1979, 1996; Hay 1995; Lewis 2002; Sibeon 1999) and the material and ideational nature of social 'reality' (Johnson et al 1984; Marsh et al 1999). Thirdly, power is defined (Hay 2002; Lukes 1974, 2005), both in terms of the capacity of agents to realise goals such as the implementation of policy, and as a relational and structural phenomenon in line with a critical realist approach (Goverde & van Tatenhove, 2000). This conception of

power is related to the premises of the neo-pluralist theoretical assumptions of the state adopted for this study outlined in Chapter 3.

Following this, the research strategy and methods selected are detailed and their utility evaluated within the qualitative research tradition (Searle 1999; Silverman 1993) with a particular focus given to inductive and deductive research methodologies and methods (Blaikie 2000, 2007; Bryman 2001; Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg 2005). The research strategy is case study-based (Marinetto 1999; Yin 1994) and triangulates semi-structured interviews (Devine 1995; Long 2006); and documentary analysis (Altheide 1996; Grix 2002; Long 2006). This section includes an identification of a strategy for an analysis of the interviewee and documentary data (Biddle *et al* 2001; Flick 1998), identifying the limitations of this type of research (Mackie & Marsh 1995) and the limitations associated with this specific study. Finally, the research strategy for this study, that examines the implementation of the Charter Standard within the context of New Labour's modernisation agenda for sport is summarised.

5.2 Methodology, Ontology and Epistemology

Here, consideration is given to the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the nature of the research undertaken for the thesis. As highlighted by Stoker (1995: 14), "Different broad ontological and epistemological positions inform different methodological orientations or preferences". Essentially, it is imperative to acknowledge that orientations of differing paradigms exemplify differing ways of viewing the social and political world depending upon the view brought to the research by the researcher. However, it is important not to misunderstand this point as advocating one set of ontological and epistemological positions as better than another; rather, the position to be adopted for this study must be clearly articulated

in order for the outcomes and conclusions of the research to be internally coherent (this further leads to issues regarding validity and reliability in qualitative research).

Ontological assumptions are concerned with what one believes constitutes social reality (Blaikie 2000:8; 2007:13). Although in practice it is usual to move back and forth between different stages of the methodological/research process (Blaikie 2007:27), it is useful to discuss them in a logical order. Grix (2002: 177) states that ontological assumptions act as the point of departure for research, after which epistemological and methodological positions 'logically follow'. Hay (2002: 5) agrees, stating that 'ontology logically precedes epistemology which logically precedes methodology', where methodology concerns 'how we go about acquiring the knowledge which exists'. As Grix (2002: 179) notes, 'Methodology is concerned with the logic of scientific inquiry; in particular with investigating the potentialities and limitations of particular techniques or procedures...[and] to the science and study of methods and the assumptions about the ways in which knowledge is produced'. Crotty (1998: 3) is more specific in defining methodology as 'the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes'. Methods are identified as the 'techniques or procedures used to collate and analyse data' (Blaikie 2000: 8).

Furthermore, Grix (2002) argues that the directional and logical relationship between core concepts of social science (ontology, epistemology, methodology and method) need to be understood if students – and academics – are to engage in constructive dialogue and criticism of each others' work, instead of what Grix terms 'arguing past each other'. Simply put, ontological assumptions lead to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choices of particular techniques of data collection and, importantly, the interpretation of research

findings. This logical, directional relationship between these important philosophical concepts is neatly portrayed by Grix (2002) Fig 5.1.

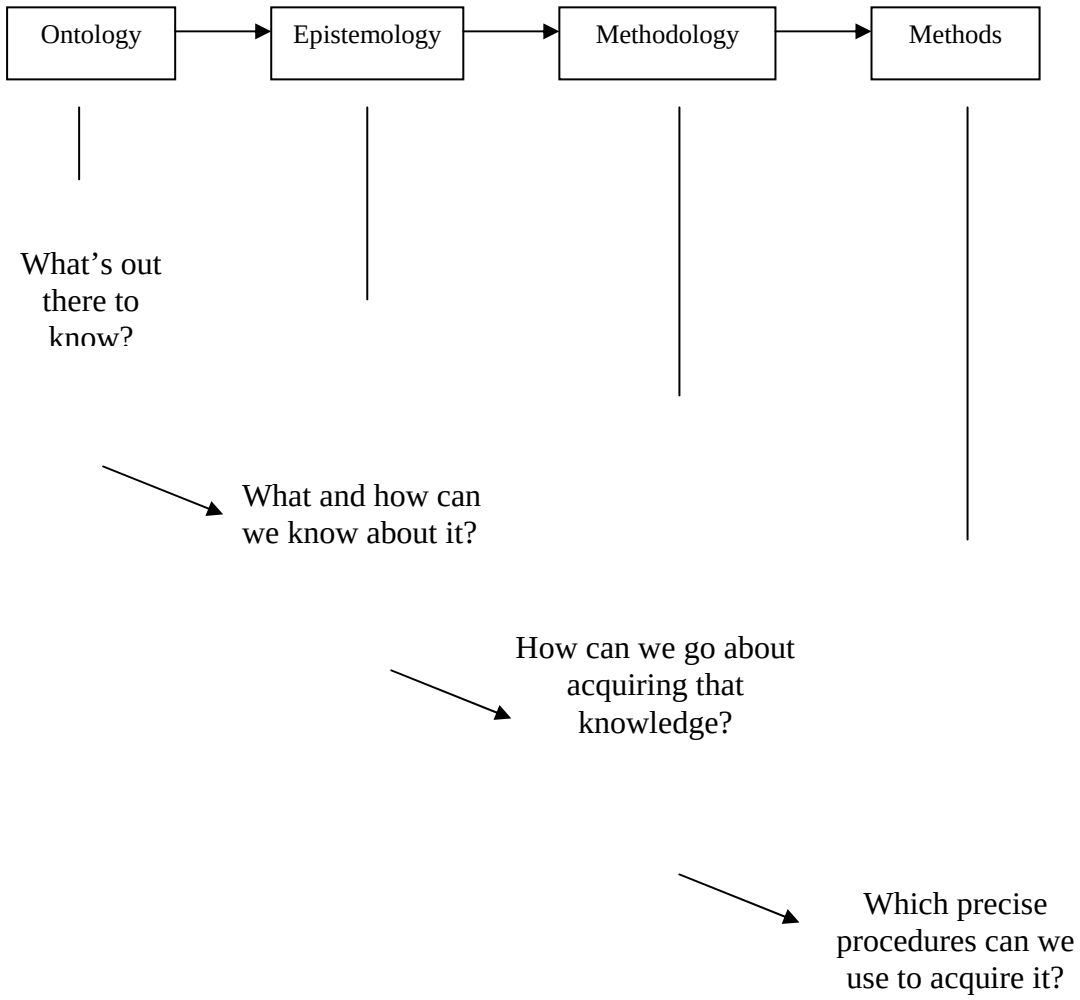


Figure 5.1 The Interrelationship between the building blocks of social research (Grix, 2002).

As Grix (2002) further describes, the position of the researcher is identified by the question: what is the nature of social reality to be investigated? Therefore, ontological assumptions revolve around questions regarding the nature of existence. In other words, one's ontological position is defined by the way in which the researcher sees the social world: does it exist in a subjective or objective form? This is neatly summed up by Bryman (2001:59)

> 'The central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from perceptions and actions of social actors'.

Simply put, according to Grix (2002) and Bryman (2001), there are two opposite ontological positions available to the researcher. These are: *objectivism*, where society is objectively measurable or *constructivism* where society is 'continuously being accomplished by social actors' i.e. it is in a state of constant flux.

As identified in the above diagram, following issues of ontology are a further set of assumptions of an epistemological nature that refer to questions of acquiring knowledge and the nature of that knowledge of social reality (Grix 2002: 177-178). Furthermore, Blaikie (2000:8) argues that epistemology is concerned with "the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be. In short, claims about what is assumed to exist can be known". As Bryman (2001:13) highlights, there are two traditional, contrasting paradigms regarding epistemology: positivism and interpretivism[1]. Positivism has traditionally been associated with the application of natural science methods, that is, objective measurements are utilised to study social reality, whereas interpretivism is the view that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social reality (Bryman, 2001: 13; Grix, 2002). These distinctions are highlighted by Sparkes (1992: 21) in Table 5.2.

[1] These are the terms given by Bryman and Grix. It is important to note that there is a proliferation of terminological uses regarding these schools of thought.

Assumptions	Positivist	Interpretive
Ontology	External – Realist	Internal – idealist, Relativist
Epistemology	Objectivist, Dualist	Subjectivist, interactive
Methodology	Nomothetic, Experimental, Manipulative	Ideographic, Hermeneutical, Dialectical
Interests	Prediction and control (Technical)	Understanding and interpretation (practice)

Table 5.2 Differences in positivist and interpretivist social reality. Adapted from Sparkes (1992: 21)

As Marsh and Smith (2001) note, researchers in the positivist tradition focus upon identifying *causes* of social behaviour. The emphasis is deemed to be upon *explanation* whereby in the past it was believed that a rigorous application of 'scientific' methods would allow social scientists to develop causal laws which would hold across time and space. In contrast, adherents of an interpretive tradition focus upon the *meaning* of behaviour. The emphasis is placed upon understanding rather than explanation. It is important to note that the two positions given here are by no means an exhaustive consideration of all epistemological positions utilised within the social sciences, that would be too bold an assertion and it is outside the remit of this research to debate this fully.

Ontological questions concern the nature of the social world, that is, 'whether the reality to be investigated is external to the individual - imposing itself on individual consciousness from without (objectivism/positivism/realism) - or the product of individual consciousness' (constructivism/relativism) (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1). Epistemology, in short, is the theory of knowledge that is embedded in both theoretical perspectives and in method. Whereas ontology is about 'what we may know', epistemology 'involves a certain understanding of how we know what we

know' (Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005:737: Blaikie 2007:18), in essence, how humans come to have knowledge of the world around them (Blaikie 2007:18).

An epistemology provides a philosophical grounding for establishing what kinds of knowledge are possible, that is, what can be known, and criteria for deciding how knowledge can be judged as being both adequate and legitimate (Crotty 1998:8). Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg (2005:733-34) state that 'researchers acquire knowledge of the epistemological background and the theoretical assumptions embedded in a method and take these into account when using the method', and therefore they reject the strategic or intuitive use of method, where links to epistemological positions are unclear or unstated. Therefore, as Bulmer (1984) observes, research strategy and research methods or techniques are not independent of methodology. In other words, research techniques emerge from a theoretical position that reflects values, beliefs and dispositions toward social reality, which are further informed by the framing of the research question/problem at hand (Blaikie 2007:6). It is important to note that it is not possible to establish by empirical enquiry which of the ontological and epistemological claims is the most appropriate. The proponents adopt a position partly as an act of faith in a particular view of the world. All that can be done is to debate their respective strengths and weaknesses (Blaikie 2007:25). Sparkes (1992) succinctly notes that, it is not the research problem that determines the method employed, but a prior intellectual, emotional and/or political commitment to a given 'worldview' or paradigm. However, it can be argued that the techniques of research are not intrinsically bound-up with a particular paradigm, but the paradigm chosen does have implications for the research strategy and techniques selected. Indeed, Blaikie argues that research strategies or logic of enquiry are associated with one or more research paradigms, yet it is the overlap of ontological and epistemological assumptions that creates an association between them. Harvey (1990: 1-2) concludes that methodology is the

point at which 'method, theory and epistemology coalesce in an overt way in the process of investigating specific instances within the social world'.

This thesis is premised on the ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with realism, and more specifically, critical realism (Archer et al (eds.), 1998; Bhaskar, 1975, 1979, 1986, 1998; Hay, 1995, 2002; Lewis, 2000, 2002; Sayer, 1992). That is, the researcher adheres to the notion that not all social phenomena are directly observable, structures and phenomena exist that can not be observed empirically and furthermore, those that can be purported to be directly observable, may not present the social world as it really is. Consequently, as noted by Marsh and Smith (2001), we cannot study either what people say or what they do alone because there is often a division between appearance and reality. Further, they note that the world to an extent is socially constructed, and that the way in which institutions or processes are socially constructed affect outcomes, but the extent of that social construction is constrained by deeper, less obvious unobservable social relations such as patriarchy and economic relations. Marsh et al (1999) identify the core assumptions of realism. In particular, realists, like positivists, contend that the world exists *independently* of our knowledge of it, but unlike positivists, realists adhere to the notion that there are deep structures that can not be directly observed. Again, similar to positivists, realists argue that there is necessity in the world. In other words, structures do have causal powers, so it is legitimate to make causal statements. Further, realists pertain to the view that while social phenomena exist independently of our interpretation, or discursive construction of them, the discursive construction undertaken by actors does affect outcomes. Therefore, structures are not seen as sole determinants of outcomes, rather they constrain and facilitate. Agents are given due weight in that they are capable of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing structures.

This is neatly summed up by Lewis (2002:151)

> "Social structure and agency are held to be recursively related. Each is both a condition for and a consequence of the other. Actors constantly draw on social structures in order to act and in acting they either reproduce or transform those structures. Consequently, neither agency nor structure can be reduced to the other"

This relationship between structure and agency will be discussed further in due course. Downward (2005) argues that policy evaluations such as this research, by their construction presuppose a realist perspective. In short, this notion is logical in that realism is an ontological position in which objects and structures exist independent of human perceptions. Therefore a policy such as the Charter Standard can be viewed as an unobservable entity that has consequences for the actions of agents. The location of realism on the positivism (objectivism) – realism – relativism (constructivism) 'spectrum', is clarified in the table below, which summarises the core assumptions of three competing paradigms.

Positivism [objectivism]	Realism	Relativism [constructivism or interpretivism]
'Reality' exists independent of our knowledge of it	'Reality' exists independent of our knowledge of it	'Reality' does not exist independent of our knowledge of it
Agents cannot shape reality – they are shaped by it (determinism)	Agents can shape (construct, deconstruct, reconstruct) reality but not determine it – action is shaped by antecedent social structures	Agents determine reality
There is no dichotomy between appearance and reality (there are no 'deep structures')	'Reality' consists both of 'deep structures' that cannot be *directly* observed, and 'surface' social phenomena that can be directly observed. Social life is not simply a discursive construction	'Reality' is socially, or discursively, constructed. There is no 'objective reality' beyond our subjective experience or discourse
Social phenomena exist independent of our interpretation of them	While social phenomena exist independent of our interpretation of them, discursive construction does condition outcomes, but does not determine outcomes	Social phenomena do not exist independent of our interpretation of them. Interpretations (discursive construction) determine outcomes
'Objective reality' can be directly observed by using theory to generate hypotheses which can be tested (and falsified). Researchers seeks 'truths' that are independent of the researcher	Researchers study both unobservable and observable behaviour. Unobservable 'structures' are *inferred*	Research seeks to *interpret* social phenomena. Meanings can only be understood within discourses

Table 5.3 Core assumptions of, and differences between, Positivism, Realism and Relativism. Source: Adapted from Blaikie (2007); Green (2003) and Marsh et al (1999: 11-14)

Bhaskar,[2] asks the question "what properties do societies possess that might make them possible objects of knowledge for us?" (1989: 25). As with realism, there is a lack of agreement as to what critical realism as a distinct position constitutes. For instance, although emerging as a philosophical position, there is a debate as to whether it is an ontological or epistemological position, or both, and in some cases it has been utilised as a meta theory in underpinning the use of empirical research methods (Scott 2005).

[2] Although other authors have contributed to the debate, Bhaskar is largely accredited as the main protagonist. Bhaskar (1998) notes that the term 'critical realism' again has different interpretations and uses.

Generally however, the critical realist approach to social science seeks to avoid the polar extremes of voluntarism implicit within the relativist paradigm and determinism within the positivist paradigm. From the perspective of critical realism, 'there is an external, "real" world which is independent of its social construction, but the social or discursive construction of that world has an effect on outcomes and, thus, an effect on the material world' (Marsh *et al*, 1999: 219). Bhaskar (1986) distinguishes between three ontological strata, where social 'reality' consists of 'underlying mechanisms' (the real), experiences (the empirical) and events (the actual) that are intransitive. That is, they exist whether or not they are detected in research. In this sense, social structures are 'real' and possessed of causal powers when exercised by 'powerful particulars' such as policy implementers. Thus, social structures become 'generative mechanisms' that give rise to tendencies (forces) in 'open systems', that is, the opposite of the closed systems of the natural sciences, where prediction rather than explanation is the basis of research outcomes (Scambler, 2005:163). In sum, 'modern critical realism' acknowledges that both social/political phenomena exist independently of our knowledge of them, and our interpretation and understanding of these phenomena, shape outcomes. Such assumptions resonate/fit with the dialectical approach to policy networks in analysing the implementation of the Charter Standard. This then is both a rejection of the assumptions and rationales of positivism and relativism. In effect, Bhaskar urges social scientists to look 'beneath-the-surface in order to explain occurrences on-the-surface' (Scambler, 2005:165), which allows for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of implementation (O'Toole 2004).

Therefore, research from this perspective seeks to identify and explain both external 'reality' and the social construction of that 'reality'. Sparkes (1992:39) observes that research focusing on how actors construct and reconstruct their 'realities' 'has tended to ignore the power relationships within which people operate when these realities are constructed'. By contrast, for critical realists, 'social and political events

are generated by a complex causal nexus that involves both the efficient causation of actors and the material causation of social structure' (Lewis, 2002:21). Sparkes (1992:39) concludes that 'social reality is not constructed in a free and voluntary process since negotiations are shaped by particular organisational relations, structures and conditions'. A relational analysis is therefore preferred in critical realist approaches which focus on how and why practices are constructed, in specific ways, and who benefits from these constructions. The implication for policy implementation analysis is clear. For instance, actors involved in the implementation process within the grassroots football policy environment will implement the Charter Standard in ways that have been influenced by the actors' inherent culture, the structured context of a fragmented and contested policy subsystem that characterises grassroots football and the resources that actors bring to bear within the structured context.

The role of theory in critical realism is therefore to contextualise observable behaviour, where theory is used to infer the underlying structures in social/political phenomena. In practice, research involves investigation and explanation of the dialectical relationships between structure and agency and the material and ideational aspects of social 'reality'. Further, critical realism attempts to highlight the historical underpinnings of social reality. Thus, it is argued that agency, social structures, ideas and history are important in any analysis of policy implementation. In relation to policy analysis, Marsh and Smith (2001) have addressed these ontological and epistemological assumptions in the use of policy networks, and the implications for methodology of their application. They identify that in order to identify both causal relationships that are directly observable and relationships that can only be established indirectly, i.e. through inference of theory, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques may be applied. However, the quantitative data will only be applicable for those relationships that are directly observable. In contrast, the unobservable relationships can only be established from the

researcher's theory, in this case, primarily policy networks. However, before an account of methodological and data collection techniques is given, a brief account of the role of theory in critical realism is provided, with particular emphasis on policy networks.

Hollis and Smith (1991: 207) suggest that the role of theory in realism helps to contextualise observable behaviour by using theory to infer the underlying structural relationships in policy networks. This view differs considerably from a positivist notion of the role of theory, which reflects a different epistemological position. Marsh and Smith (2001), in critique of Dowding (1995, 2001), who they associate with adhering to the positivist tradition, outline that theory in this respect is to generate testable hypotheses that are capable of being falsified. To realists such as Marsh and Rhodes, theory is a tool used to establish which social relationships are observable and to interpret the results that are found. Importantly, it is recognised that theories in this sense contain implicit and explicit normative assumptions, as the researchers are investigators who are not independent of the social world. The aim is to develop analytical frameworks that help researchers to interpret the complex world. Theory therefore provides a way of constructing a narrative that helps to explain and identify the underlying structural relationships not directly observable in an empirical sense. Indeed, it is impossible to make any sense of the social world without a theoretical framework. In specific relation to this research and policy networks in particular, the critical realist perspective regards theory as having two distinct purposes. Firstly, acknowledging that discursive construction of phenomena by individuals within policy networks has a crucial but not determining effect on policy outcomes, for example, how the Charter Standard is implemented. Secondly, that the nature of this 'real' phenomena constrains and/or facilitates that construction.

Political Science authors have assimilated the assumptions of critical realism into policy research, mainly in respect of policy network perspectives (Hay 1995, 2002; Marsh *et al*, 1999; Marsh and Smith, 2000; 2001). Moreover, insights from critical realism have been utilised to explain sport policy (c.f. Green 2004; Green & Houlihan 2005). Green and Houlihan (2005:4) identified and explained underlying structural relationships in policy networks, communities and advocacy coalitions in respect to elite sport development and policy change over a period of thirty years in three countries. Moreover, in line with Green and Houlihan (ibid), the premises of critical realism can be reconciled with a neo-pluralist account of power (see Chapter 3). For example, whereas classical pluralism over-emphasises the role of interest groups in shaping policy (an agency-led account that assumes power can be measured in terms of an agent's intention and capacity to act), neo-pluralism recognises the way in which social and economic structures constrain political outcomes (Marsh 1995:283). Importantly, however, critical realism also rejects the more deterministic aspects of neo-Marxist 'ideologically orientated inquiry'. The neo-Marxist perspective arguably underplays the role of reflexive agents who construct, deconstruct and reconstruct social reality. Moreover, it is argued that neo-Marxism overplays the role of economic forces, and in some cases, social class, as key variables in the analysis of social/political phenomena.

Critical realism is premised on an anti-foundationalist ontology which recognises that not all social phenomena are directly observable, and an interpretivist epistemology which recognises that social phenomena may not present 'reality' as it is. In this respect, it is claimed that not all forms of power are directly observable and some social (political) phenomena may misrepresent themselves in practice. Critically, the discursive construction of power mediates and shapes policy processes. However, unobservable social structures, such as power embedded within the culture of an organisation (prior decisions) can also shape policy outcomes.

In order to more fully comprehend critical realism and its relationship to this study, understandings of structure/agency and, first, the material/ideational dimensions of social 'reality' are explored. Positivists view social 'reality' as consisting solely of material, that is, objective phenomena. In this sense, the material character of social 'reality', action is understood within a context of material constraints, such as forms of social and political organisation. Conversely, relativists view social 'reality' as consisting of a set of ideas held by actors (ideational subjective constructions). For analysts who emphasise the ideational character of social 'reality', 'Social action is … a process of endowing a situation with meaning, and it is those meanings, ideas, symbols etc. that are the "stuff" of the social world' (Johnson *et al* 1984:14). Actions of policy actors, for example, are not an adaptation to material conditions (behaviour) but an expression of meaning that actors assign to conduct through language. Critical realists assume a dialectical relationship between the material and ideational, whereby 'Ideational constructs … have the ability to produce material effects' which in and of themselves shape policy processes (Marsh *et al* 1999:125-6) such as implementation of the Charter Standard. Critical realists not only attempt to synthesise the material and the ideational, but also agency-led and structure-led accounts of social reality. In keeping with the dialectical approach to policy networks discussed in the previous Chapter, the view adopted for this research is that critical realism is both an ontological and epistemological position that influences the choice of empirical research methods.

The tenets of critical realism have widespread currency in the evaluation community, and underpins evidence based policy largely due to the work of Pawson and Tilley (1997). Very briefly, it is argued first that 'science is anchored in an intransitive domain, in a world whose autonomous constitution stands independent of the knowing subject' (Reed & Harvey 1996:298). Second, this intransitive world comprises nested layers of reality and the purpose of scientific endeavour is to

penetrate to ever deeper levels to uncover the causal factors behind phenomena which can be analysed at any one level. Third, these layers of reality comprise 'a generative nexus of mechanisms or entities' which are not immediately observable but 'are endowed with real causal powers, latent capacities and slumbering liabilities' (Reed & Harvey 1992: 356). Such entities or mechanisms generate social phenomena. In the context of social systems, Reed and Harvey (1992) argue that critical realism can be aligned with the notion of dissipative social systems by adopting Bhaskar's (1998) 'social naturalism', which presents a 'transformational model of social action'. This model posits three levels of social reality: first, 'society' as a 'structural entity'; second, the individual, subject to socialization in particular social contexts but nevertheless with significant powers of agency; and third, an intermediary level comprising a 'position-practice system' of 'rules, roles and relations' that regulate the interactions between the individual and social levels.

Thus, individuals' interpretations, intentions and actions are conditioned by social structures and relations and by institutionalized rules and motivations; yet it is through human agents that society is reproduced and changed (see Archer 1995:135–61). Indeed, it is this power of agency to generate 'emergent' change of an indeterminate nature in social systems which underpins the notion of dissipative social systems in which there is 'not so much convergence and conformity, but a diversity of unpredictable outcomes' (Reed and Harvey 1992:371). As shall become apparent, the work of football development is suitably captured here. Football Development Officers and volunteers within clubs and schools for example, are bound by their institutional rules which have become embedded over time. The implementation of a modernising policy such as the Charter Standard which the above are charged to implement, is bound up in this context. That is, the Charter Standard has stipulations, criteria, rules and regulations which are open to a degree of interpretation through human agency, as each agent approaches the policy with their own biography and background within the football development policy

network. It is unlikely therefore, that the Charter Standard is implemented in a uniform fashion if the context in which it is implemented is given due consideration, a strength of the critical realist perspective.

An important characteristic of the above framework is that it attempts to transcend the traditional dichotomies of society/individual, structure/agency, macro/micro, by emphasizing the role of an intermediary level that regulates perception, interpretation and action at the individual level. It is this level that is the focus of Friedland and Alford's (1991) notion of society as an 'interinstitutional system' resonates with Bhaskar's framework which emphasizes the complexity of multilevel social reality. The focus on the role of organizations and institutions is reflected in recent work in the study of policy making which emphasises the complexity of implementation processes in contrast to the traditional 'top-down' focus on the specification and achievement of goals, on reasons for 'implementation failure' when goals are not fully achieved, and on how compliance with policy makers' intentions can be improved. The so-called bottom-up view focuses on the network of actors and agencies involved in implementation – what Hjern and Porter (1997) call the 'implementation structure' – and on processes of negotiation and bargaining which affect outcomes. It is this institutional and organizational context 'where certain, non-constitutional rules of behaviour prevail' (Kettunen, 1994:36) that is essentially treated as a black box in the top-down approach (Hjern and Hull, 1982; Tacon 2005). As such, adopting a critical realist perspective to understand implementation transcends such uni-dimensional analyses. This leads neatly to the debate surrounding structure and agency, and the implications of this debate for this research.

5.3 The structure/agency debate

Active and intentional agents operate in a context that constrains or mediates behaviour. Therefore explanations of social phenomena tend to be formulated around the relative autonomy of actors/agents in the environment in which they act. As Hay (1995:189) observes, 'Every time we construct, however tentatively, a notion of social, political or economic causality we appeal…to ideas about structure and agency'. Different positions taken with regard to structure and agency reflect different epistemological and ontological positions, and this affects the methodological orientation of this study. Social structure and human agency are held to be recursively related, in that each is both a condition for and consequence of the other. Agents are held to constantly draw on social structures in order to act, and in acting they either reproduce or gradually transform these structures. Further, these social structures are said to be pre-formed, that is they are not the product of people's actions in the present, but of people's actions undertaken in the past (Lewis 2000:250). Every human agent is said to be born into a world of antecedent social structures, they learn a language, culture and actions that are not of their own making. These social structures therefore are inherited by the current generation of agents, and impinge upon them without agents voluntarily accepting these structures. Further, these inherited structures confront agents as an objective reality that is ontologically distinct from and irreducible to their current subjective beliefs and actions. Therefore, critical realists reject the notion that social structure is merely the voluntaristic creation of agency (Lewis 2000:26). Moreover, the assumptions of critical realism relate to that of policy implementation in an analysis of 'strategic action', focusing on how actors mediate structural forces, that is considered necessary for understanding the 'structures of influence' shaping implementation of the Charter Standard. Here, strategy is defined as 'the selection of objectives and the search for the most appropriate means to achieve those objectives within a particular context at a particular moment in time' (Hay 1995:190).

Social reality is characterised by 'emergence', where 'At any given moment in time people confront social structures which are pre-formed in the sense that they are the product, not of people's actions in the present, but of actions undertaken in the past' (Lewis, 2000:250). That is, 'structures' are said to have causal effects in that they are made up of all those 'actions' by 'actors' in the past. Hence, antecedent social structures impact on current activity, agents (actors) and agency, in replicating and perhaps reinforcing structured privilege, for example. This limits opportunities for change, in the distribution of material and cultural resources. Although this appears to represent a structure-centred if not somewhat deterministic account of structure/agency, critical realism also asserts that actors are 'powerful particulars' who initiate activity (efficient causation) and material (structural) phenomena. Deep structures that are unobservable can only be made tangible through the decisions of actors (material causation). In this sense, it can be stated that critical realism offers an account of social 'reality' that transcends the 'duality' of structure/agency.

On the other hand, the opportunities and scope for the exercise of agency are shaped by 'structural conditioning' (Archer 1995:196). Structural conditioning has three aspects: involuntary placement, vested interests and opportunity costs. As the social/political environment is 'pre-structured' by 'material and cultural emergents' prior to an agent's engagement with it, agents are in effect involuntary 'placed' in situations not of their own making. 'Vested interests' result from the involuntary placement of agents, who will either seek to protect their privileges, and maintenance of the status quo, or seek to change their 'involuntary placement', if not privileged. 'Opportunity costs' provide a mediatory mechanism for the effective pursuit of vested interests. For example, national governing bodies of sport have been and are faced with an opportunity of acquiring greater resources, recognition and legitimacy through state-controlled National Lottery funding but at the potential cost of reduced control over their sport (see Green & Houlihan 2005b). Such reasoning in turn affects the methods employed, which are likely to be

predominantly qualitative in order to negotiate and account for the dynamics regarding implementation of the Charter Standard within critical realist assumptions.

However, such social structures are dependent upon human activity from the past, and indeed how these structures constrain or facilitate present human action is the concern for critical realists. It is this dependence that makes structures social. In essence, agents preserve or transform the structures they inherit with resources that are distributed amongst them that again are a historically given product of the actions undertaken in the past. Therefore, pre-existing social structures serve both to facilitate and constrain present human agency. This point is pertinent to this research in that the facilitation or constraints of human actions within the grassroots football environment are sought to be understood, which have been influenced by past processes which provide the structured context for the agency involved in implementing the Charter Standard. Therefore, with regard to the critical realist assumptions of this research, it is important to give credence to both structure and agency and recognise the importance that neither is reducible to the other. In drawing upon critical realist assumptions then, the researcher is concerned with relationships between observable social phenomena, and also unobservable relationships that can only be established indirectly i.e., they are inferred from the researcher's theory and other observable relationships such as actors interdependences with one another. Hay (1995:193) maps the positions in the structure-agency debate as follows:

	'Insider' account (agency-centred)	'Outsider' account (structure-centred)
Simple view of structure-agency	Intentionalism	Structuralism
Dialectical view of structure-agency	Structuration Theory	Critical realism, Strategic-relational approach

Table 5.4 Positions in the structure-agency debate. Source: Hay (1995: 193)

Hay (1995) argues that critical realism (Bhaskar 1986) provides a 'structure-centred' account of social practice that embodies a dialectical view of structure/agency. Critical realists posit the existence of 'layers of structure which condition agency and which define the range of potential strategies that might be deployed by agents…in attempting to realise their intentions' (Hay 1995:199). From the standpoint of critical realism, agency acquires meaning relative to 'deep structures' and these structures both constrain *and* enable the actions of agents, and define the potential range of options and strategies open to actors. Importantly, actors have, at least in theory, the potential to transform structures through action, and thus produce intended (and unintended) consequences. Agency is therefore not neglected or downplayed in this 'structure-centred' account. Indeed, the view adopted is that structure and agency logically encompass one another. In short, they have a dialectical relationship and this view of policy networks described by Marsh and Smith (2000) appears the most suitable to tackle the inherent problems between structure and agency, with Marsh *et al.* (1995:15) highlighting the relationship between structure and agency adopted for this research

> 'Agents are, in a sense, 'bearers' of structural positions, but they interpret those structures. At the same time, structures are not unchanging; they change in part because of the strategic decisions of the agents operating within the structure'

Therefore, policy outcomes, such as the Charter Standard, cannot be explained only with reference to structures within which actors operate, they are the result of strategic action by agents that are both constitutive of and constituting structural constraints. However, importantly, these agents are located within a broader social structural context within which agents can only manage or dictate to varying degrees. Nevertheless, at the same time, they do interpret that context, and it is this interpretation that helps give the structure its legitimacy in having enabling and

constraining features. It is through this interpretation that the structural context has a bearing upon actors' perceptions and decisions. Thus, with these considerations in mind, the selection of the dialectical approach to policy networks as outlined by Marsh and Smith (2000) is the most adequate model to capture such complexity from those discussed in Chapter 3. The adoption of a critical realist epistemological position means that, unlike epistemological relativism, there is acceptance of the possibility that causal relations may be identified in relation to policy networks i.e., that the dialectical relationship between structure and agency as regards a policy network may affect policy outcomes. However, unlike an epistemological positivist position that Dowding (1995 & 2001) takes, such explanations recognise that institutions and networks, the culture within these and the resources and attitudes of network members are all, to one extent or another, discursively constructed. For example, strategies adopted to implement the Charter Standard within grassroots football policy networks may differ from club to club, or school to school, depending upon the agreed steps and responsibilities that actors bestow onto one another. Therefore, in order to understand better the nature of the enabling and constraining factors for agents and structures with regard to the implementation of the Charter Standard, account must be taken of the three dialectical relationships outlined by Marsh and Smith (2000) in Chapter 3.

Furthermore, a dialectical analysis of structure/agency implies that research needs to examine interaction between political, economic and ideological factors; a multi-dimensional analysis that again is central to the dialectical policy networks approach. This type of approach implies an analysis of both exogenous and endogenous factors that appeals to the logic of policy networks.

It should be clarified, however, that from a dialectical understanding of structure/agency, constraints can also be resources and present opportunities for

change. The re-structuring of the sport policy area since 1997 presented opportunities for sport interests to extend influence, although whether policy actors have in practice done so, or been able to do so, remains an empirical question. In sum, research based on the premises of critical realism focuses on the 'conditions of action' that either facilitate or constrain action (Sibeon 1999). In practice, actors constantly draw on social structures in order to act, and in acting they either reproduce or transform those structures. Therefore, a 'relational' conception of structure and agency is emphasised in this study. Social structure and agency are held to be recursively related. Each is both a condition and a consequence of the other. Consequently, neither agency nor structure can be reduced to the other (Lewis 2002:18-19). In sum, critical realists maintain that social structure is 'ontologically irreducible to people and their practices', thus social structure is 'intimately bound up with agency' (Lewis 2000:249).

Given these insights, it is important for this study to identify the 'limits' of agency in any study of influence, interests and policy implementation. In this regard, Scambler (2005:163) argues that 'We carry the potential…to act freely and rationally, individually and collectively; but in fact we seldom do, and when we do, we typically fail to allow for our structural conditioning, the unintended consequences of our actions and the dynamism and complexity of the social world we inhabit'. As with structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), critical realism highlights both the intended and unintended consequences of actions formulated through strategy, on the basis of actors' partial knowledge of structures and anticipation of other actors' behaviour. In other words, agency is important in understanding policy processes, but it is mitigated by a 'weakness of will', the absence of 'perfect' information, and assumptions concerning the power of others. Clearly this has implications for any study of policy mediation and implementation. Above all, agency is mediated by structured privilege. To paraphrase Marx, policy actors 'make their own history but

not in circumstances of their own choosing' (Hay 1999:36). Finally, as Hay (1995:191) argues, attributing agency is in effect attributing power; both causal and actual.

In relation to the state, Jessop (1990:129) argues that, 'As a strategic terrain the state is located within a complex dialectic of structures and strategies'. Systems, and their structures, are viewed as strategically selective, where certain strategies and actors are favoured over others. Similarly, critical realism offers insights into the *systems* of influence, comprising of structures that favour specific strategies, actors and interests over others. Lewis (2000:265) contends that 'Macro-social structure exerts a causal influence because the course of action that people choose to pursue is conditioned by the distribution of vested interests and resources embodied in antecedent social structure'. Thus, the state can set the parameters for a policy actor's interpretive activities, ensuring that discourse is dominated by narratives and meanings that serve the interests of the state. This is not to suggest that structures determine policy choice and actions, but clearly any study of influence cannot exclude the pre-existing 'nested hierarchy' of structures (Hay 1995:200). Related to this is the conception of power, to which this chapter now turns.

5.4 Power in the policy process

A conceptualisation of power relations is critical to understanding policy processes. For example, in explaining how policy is made, or is 'steered' by policy actors in implementation, or in shaping policy outcomes. In line with the critical realist assumptions of this study, 'power is viewed as the capacity of agents as well as a relational and structural phenomenon' (Green & Houlihan 2005:6; Goverde & van Tatenhove 2000). This section, in a discussion of understandings and forms of 'power', briefly reviews the neo-pluralist conceptions of power as these relate to the premises of critical realism and the study undertaken.

Lukes (1974) observes that the possession of power is made explicit in cases of overt conflict. Hence, it is empirically testable in certain circumstances. This 'one-dimensional view' focuses on the way in which political decisions and outcomes are the result of collective inputs by interest groups (classical pluralism). The second 'view' posits an understanding of power where there are 'two faces of power', one overt and the other covert, or the public and private faces of power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). According to elite theorists, the covert uses of power make possible benign public representation of power as serving the general interest. Hence, a research focus on non-decisions in the efforts of groups/interests to prevent issues from arising (McLennan, 1990:55). Subsequent to this analysis, Lukes (1974) proposes a 'three-dimensional view' of power in which instances may exist where people fail to recognise their own interests. This concept of power is most evident in neo-Marxist accounts of power, most notably in the work of Gramsci (1971) in which power is acquired and maintained through a combination of coercion and consent, in which consent can be 'manufactured' by dominant interests. In other words, the third 'dimension' of power involves 'the exercise of power to shape people's preferences so that neither overt nor covert conflicts exist' (Ham & Hill, 1993:70). According to Lukes, power can be visibly or invisibly exerted within the policy process, and even if not deployed or exercised, the mere capacity or potential to affect others constitutes power. For example, and of relevance to policy implementation, decision makers or implementers bring to the process their own values, beliefs and assumptions regarding the Charter Standard. In doing so, they have the capacity to include or exclude issues for discussion and action, thus suppressing challenges that do not suit the interests of the decision maker, or simply ignoring issues that do not correspond to the values of the powerful. To understand how and why the Charter Standard is implemented, it is necessary to consider which groups or individuals exercise power in the implementation process. This study must therefore take account not only of visible decisions and decision-making

processes, but unobservable behaviour, covert preferences and overt manipulation of policy (McLennan 1990).

Although Lukes' analysis is instructive, his distinction between 'subjective' ('perceived') and 'actual' ('real') interests evokes Marxist notions of 'false consciousness' that are rejected by critical realists (Hay 1999:48). Further, the empirical identification of 'real' interests remains problematic. In sum, Lukes does not disentangle the identification and analysis of power from its critique. Importantly, Hay (2002:185) observes, from a critical realist perspective, that power is not only the capacity of one actor to shape another's choice and action, but the effect of that shaping on future action. Hence the important concept of 'context-shaping' (Hay 2002) that informs any analysis of 'influence', within policy processes, for example. In this conceptualisation of power relations, structures are shaped by policy actors 'such that the parameters of subsequent action are altered' (Green & Houlihan 2005: 7). 'Power thus conceived, centres on the capacity of actors to redefine the parameters of what is socially, politically and economically possible for others' (Green & Houlihan 2005:182).

A policy area can therefore be perceived comprising 'the institutionalisation of beliefs, values, cultures and particular forms of behaviour' (Marsh & Smith 2000:6) that create the parameters of decision and action. Power is therefore 'mediated by, and instantiated in, structures' (Hay 1999:51). This is an indirect form of power and as an object of investigation is coupled in this study with a focus on *direct* power, or power as 'conduct-shaping'. Direct power is observable in policy processes in practices such as decision-making and negotiation. Of note is that this view of power as both direct and indirect (observable and unobservable) has utility in addressing the critical questions identified by Marsh and Stoker (eds.) (1995:293), namely: 'Why are certain actors in a privileged position in the policy-making process?' and 'In whose interest do they rule, and how does their rule result in that interest being

served?' In order to answer these questions, critical realists do not need to rely on value-judgements about the interests of policy actors, as is the case in classical Marxist analysis. In other words, where an actor (A) exercises power over another (B), this does not necessarily compromise B's 'real' interests. It remains an empirical question. Unlike Marxism, whilst acknowledging that a particular causal factor can dominate events, such as economic forces, research undertaken by critical realists recognises that a range/mix of causal factors can influence events contingent on the particular case being studied at a particular time. In other words, social life cannot be reduced *a priori* to the operation of a specific factor (Lewis 2002:22). The aim of research premised on critical realist assumptions and understandings of 'power' is therefore to explain, rather than make value-judgements about, structured privilege.

Relative to state-non-state relations, Hindess (1996:10-13) defines power as 'legitimate capacity'. Here, power is perceived as fundamentally dependent on the consent of those over whom it is exercised. In sum, this conception of power rests on consent, and 'presumed acts' of consent, where the individual transfers the right and capacity to govern. 'Consent' is further problematised by Foucault (1980:220) who views power relationships as unstable and reversible, where dominant interests can be challenged and changed. Therefore, whereas 'power as quantitative capacity' implies those who possess more power will prevail over those who have less, reversibility implies an altogether more complex reality. However, on a continuum of power relations, he also conceives of power as 'domination' where the subject has 'little room for manoeuvre', where actors 'margin of liberty is extremely limited' by the effects of power (Foucault 1988:12). Foucault also introduces the concept of '*Governmentality*', that is the use of power to affect the actions of individuals through impacting on their 'conduct' or the ways in which persons regulate their own behaviour. Importantly for the study undertaken, Foucault suggests an expansion of 'governmentality' has occurred relative to domination and reversible relations of power. In later work, (Foucault 1986, 1988; see Hindess 1996 for a fuller account)

Foucault observes that the acquisition of consent is one of a number of rationalities of government strategy, in steering a policy area for example. The central point regarding the study being undertaken is to acknowledge Foucault's (1982) observation that the study of power is not wholly the study of quantitative capacity. Rather, it is the study of 'the total structure of actions brought to bear' on the actions of others in specific contexts, *and* any resistance and evasion mediating its' objectives. In this regard, Lewis (2000:262) states that, 'the state is able to set limits on people's interpretative activities which ensure that public discourse is dominated by narratives and meanings which serve its own ends'. Therefore, critical approaches focus on the 'political effects' of research. Rose (1999) observes that in modern systems of governance where states can be characterised by 'advanced liberalism', the state is one part of a complex set of government and non-government relations, including quasi-government authorities. In 'advanced liberalism', governments seek to shape conduct and context in the governance of behaviour. These understandings of power are, in sum, instructive for the study undertaken. This Chapter now turns to a review of the research methods selected for this study.

5.5 Methods

Following the choice of a research problem and research questions, and assumptions about how to answer them, a procedure, a logic, for generating knowledge is required, that is, a research strategy (Blaikie 2007:8). Blaikie offers four such strategies: the inductive, deductive, retroductive and adbuctive. Each one provides a distinctly different way of answering research questions (see Table 5.5)

	Inductive	**Deductive**	**Retroductive**	**Abductive**
Aim	To establish universal generalisations to be used as pattern explanations	To test theories, to eliminate false ones and corroborate the survivor	To discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed regularities	To describe and understand social life in terms of social actors' motives and understanding
Start	Accumulate observations or data	Identify a regularity to be explained	Document and model a regularity	Discover everyday lay concepts, meanings and motives
	Produce generalisations	Construct a theory and deduce hypotheses	Construct a hypothetical model of a mechanism	Produce a technical account from lay accounts
Finish	Use these 'laws' as patterns to explain further observations	Test the hypotheses by matching them with data	Find the real mechanism by observation and/or experiment	Develop a theory and test it iteratively

Table 5.5 The logics of four research strategies (Adapted from Blaikie 2008:8)

Inductive research strategies begin with the collection of data, followed by data analysis, and then proceeds to derive generalisations, i.e. inductive logic. The aim is to describe characteristics of social phenomena such as implementation, and then to determine the nature of the patterns of the relationships, or networks of relationships, between those characteristics. Once generalisations about

characteristics and/or patterns have been established, some writers claim that they can be used to explain the occurrence of specific events by locating them within the established pattern. The inductive strategy is useful for detailing 'what' is occurring, but is limited in its capacity to answer 'why' such phenomena occur satisfactorily (Blaikie 2003, 2008).

A deductive strategy adopts a different starting point and works in the reverse order to an inductive strategy. It begins with a pattern, or regularity, that has been discovered and established, and which requires an explanation. The researcher has to find or formulate possible explanation and a theoretical argument for the existence of the social phenomena under investigation. The task is to test that theory by deducing one or more hypotheses from it, and then collect appropriate data. Should the data match the theory, some support is provided for its use, particularly if further tests produce similar results. However, if the data do not match the theory, then the theory must either be modified or rejected. Further testing of other theories can then be undertaken. According to this research strategy, knowledge of the social world is advanced by means of trial and error processes. Blaikie (2007:10) contends that such a strategy is only useful for answering 'why' questions.

A retroductive strategy also starts with an observed regularity, but seeks a different type of explanation. This is achieved by locating the real underlying structures or mechanisms that are responsible for producing an observed regularity. To discover a previously unknown structure or mechanism, the researcher must construct a hypothetical model of it, and then proceed to try to establish its existence by observation and experiment. For instance, whether there is an observable policy network for football development. This may require the use of indirect methods, as the structure or mechanism may not be directly observable. The search is for evidence of the consequences of its existence. Should it exist, certain events can be expected to occur. Retroduction is a process of working back from data, to an

explanation, by the use of creative imagination and analogy. This research strategy provides an alternative way of answering 'why' questions.

An abductive research strategy aims to discover the construction of social reality by the actors' under investigation. That is, how actors conceptualise and give meaning to their social world, their tacit knowledge. The main access a researcher has to these constructions is through the knowledge that social actors use in the production, reproduction and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation. Their reality, the way in which they have constructed and interpreted their activities is embedded in their everyday language. Hence, the researcher has to enter their social world in order to discover the motives and reasons that accompany social activities. The task is then to re-describe these actions and motives, and the situations in which they occur, in the technical language of social scientific discourse. These social scientific typifications provide an understanding of the activities in more systematic explanatory accounts. Blaikie (2007:11) contends that this research strategy can be used to answer both 'what' and 'why' questions.

While each research strategy has been constructed in a way that their logics of enquiry are incompatible (Blaikie 2007:33), it is possible to combine them in practice, such as being used in sequence or one incorporated in part of another (Blaikie 2007:34; Barbour 2007). Moreover, each research strategy lends itself to particular philosophical foundations such as ontology and epistemology.

This research is concerned with the interpretations of actors in respect of the ways in which they feel enabled and constrained within the structures they occupy to act or not act in various ways in implementing the Charter Standard. As Duke (2002) and Marsh & Smith (2001) note, in order to provide an in depth analysis of the processes involved in the implementation and development of policy from the perspective of the actors involved in policy networks, a qualitative case study design is the most

appropriate and commonly utilised. The positivist research models, which most commonly use quantitative methods (Bryman 2001), are of limited use in the investigation of policy and qualitative approaches offer distinct advantages (Rist 1994). Whereas quantitative measures and techniques can provide researchers with important descriptive data, they do not allow for information or access to meanings and choices that individuals make that can be identified with qualitative techniques. Therefore, quantitative techniques may allow us to know what happens, but not, in inter-subjective terms, why (Pollitt et al 1990).

Quantitative methods also stress independent variables such as; inputs, outputs, indicators and measures of performance, which take away human perceptions and meaning. Complex processes are forced into pre-conceived categories. Alternatively, qualitative methods can be used to elucidate information from the policy process which quantitative methods do not, such as how an individual acted in order to fulfil a piece of criteria for Charter Standard accreditation, and the difficulties, if any they faced. They have the potential to explore innovation, originality, complexity, interactions, conflicts and contradictions, and more pertinently to this study, provide explanation of the three dialectical relationships identified by Marsh and Smith (2000) as being crucial to an adequate explanatory role for policy network analysis.

In keeping with the epistemological and ontological positions outlined above (critical realist approach), and the preferred 'dialectical' approach to policy networks, qualitative methods for data collection are deemed the most logical and appropriate. Robson (2002) maintains that theory rather than data or the methods used to produce data is central to explaining reality. Common methods when applying the Marsh and Rhodes policy network typology of 1992 are of a qualitative nature under a case study design with semi structured interviews underpinned by documentary analysis (Marsh & Rhodes 1992, Rhodes 1997, Marsh 1998). These

methods of data collection are also the preferred technique to the dialectical approach of analysing the football development policy network for this study (Marsh & Smith 2000).

Positivist assumptions focus on systematic procedures, such as the construction of scientific tests and use quantitative techniques for data analysis (cf. Burrell & Morgan, 1979). By contrast, critical and interpretive research utilises the ideographic approach to research which emphasises the importance of allowing the subject to unfold its nature and characteristics through an analysis of the subjective accounts provided by interviewees, in order to uncover the hidden dynamics of situations. For the study undertaken, the research goal is to compare 'rival webs of interpretation in terms of agreed facts and established rules of intellectual honesty' (Bevir & Rhodes 1998:99). This is followed by a provisional rather than a determinate explanation, hence the exploratory nature of the study. In agreement with Rorty (1980), social scientists should not attempt to discover facts, but should advance critical interpretations of processes, for example, policy processes. This is the case, according to Rorty, as our understanding is both context-dependent and mediated through language. Finally, as Geertz (1993) observes, a reflexive approach to one's own position in the research process is crucial, and is attempted here. The following sections analyse qualitative research, with a particular focus on inductive/deductive research; the case study method; and the research techniques selected, namely: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. A summary of the research strategy concludes this chapter.

5.6 Research Design and Data Collection Process

The FA contracted Loughborough University to evaluate the Charter Standard scheme from 2004-2007. The FA Charter Standard steering group was set up in order to devise a research design deemed most suitable to meet the aims of both the FA and thesis requirements (See Chapter 1). The steering group consisted of; 2 FA sponsored research students (one of which was the author); a senior lecturer in sport policy (the original supervisor of the project); the FAs head of Education, and the FAs National Club Development Manager, both of whom were responsible for the delivery of the Charter Standard in schools and clubs on a national basis. The steering group, for both FA and thesis purposes, decided an approach that explored the actions and perceptions of implementers was needed to understand the context specific processes regarding the implementation of the Charter Standard, that is, a qualitative research design. The author was tasked with generating a suitable design, an overview of which is justified here. The representatives of the FA in the steering group did not question the research design proposed and were satisfied to support the author's approach and any subsequent requests. The research design was put to the steering group and accepted as a framework with which to elicit the required data. This was based upon a qualitative research design, utilising a multiple case study approach, involving the use of interviews and documentary analysis. The methods selected are justified below, and the data collection process is summarised in Table 5.6. (pg 215 this Chapter).

Qualitative research can 'capture' qualities that are not quantifiable and is therefore associated with interpretive approaches to research. Devine (1995:141) states, 'the crucial question is whether the choice of method is appropriate for the theoretical and empirical questions that the researcher seeks to address'. Devine (1995:137) also argues that qualitative methods have contributed to the study of political behaviour by 'seeking to understand political actors as conscious social beings who shape the

world of politics as well as being shaped by it'. Specifically, qualitative methods draw particular attention to contextual issues in which to place the interviewees' perspective, and thereby seek to capture meaning, process and context (Bryman 1988:62). In meeting the aim and objectives of this study, a focus on context, process and meaning is essential. Qualitative research therefore focuses not on devising general laws about behaviour, but on interpreting particular or unique actions (Keat & Urry 1975:142-3). As Devine (1995:201) states, research and its explanation 'involves understanding and interpreting actions rather than drawing conclusions about … regularities between statistical relationships'.

Moreover, Howlett and Ramesh (2003:48) conclude, 'What is needed in policy analysis … is an analytical framework that permits consideration of the entire range of factors affecting public policy'. Therefore, the authors add that 'theoretical efforts … should remain firmly rooted in the middle or meso level. That is, policy theory cannot and should not claim to be more than a part of the development of general theories of social and political phenomena … *careful empirical studies and careful generalisation* can provide a useful middle-range theory and understanding of public policy-making' (ibid: 48, *emphasis added*). In this respect, a critical realist approach to research is to gather and analyse data founded on both inductive and deductive processes (Blaikie 2000:102-107; Bryman 2001:390). In respect of induction, an analysis by Charmaz (2002) is instructive for this study, where the variants of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) are identified and provide the basis for inductive research. These are summarised as: simultaneous data collection and analysis; pursuit of emergent themes through early data analysis; discovery of basic processes within the data and inductive construction of categories to explain these processes; sampling to refine categories; and integration of categories into a theoretical framework. The implication is that research is a cyclic process without steps or stages of analysis (as summarised in Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005: 739). Although the objectives of this study do not specifically

include theory-building, accepting that an element of theory building is evident in all research, the grounded theory approach to research has utility in sensitising the researcher to the possibility of 'forcing' the theory onto the data, and therefore facilitates critical reflection in the research process.

This approach contrasts with that of Stoker and Mossberger (1994) who state that researchers need to begin with a theory, and through empirical research, reflect back on theory. Yin, (1994: 4) adds that 'theory means the design of research steps according to some relationship to the literature, policy issues, or some other substantive source … Good use of theory will help delimit a case study enquiry to its most effective design; theory is also essential for generalizing the subsequent results'. Critical realists chart a 'middle path' between these approaches to research. This study adopts a similar approach to Green (2003:371) who concludes that, 'the study's analytic strategy was based upon an approach that was iterative or recursive; that is, the data collection and analysis proceeded concurrently, repeatedly referring back to and informing each other'. The study undertaken is inductive in the sense of being open-ended, empirically informed, and 'grounded' inquiry, as opposed to deductive research that tests pre-set assumptions (unlike positivist research). Thus 'open-ended' methods were selected to facilitate an understanding of the processes and dynamics regarding implementation. However, it is recognised that research in practice, is theory-laden and therefore deduction is a feature of the analytical strategy. The aim of the approach taken was to develop insights on the basis of careful observation of empirical phenomena, both in order to provide opportunities for subsequent comparison in careful generalisation. That is, the findings would be specific to that particular Cluster. However, following inductive methods, identification with greater regularity of similar processes and dynamics of implementation would assist the FA in increasing the likelihood that such processes were a national issue.

In sum, this study adopted an inductive/deductive approach to investigation although recognising that the 'themes' to investigate are informed by prior understanding of policy theory, hence an element of deduction, although as noted, assumptions about likely outcomes are avoided. As shown in Table 5.6, the first step undertaken by the steering group was to devise a questionnaire for Charter Standard accredited schools and clubs, as a 'scoping' exercise to ascertain baseline data regarding how the Charter Standard had been received. Questions were devised in line with the criteria set out in both schools and clubs application packs (See Appendix's B and A respectively). Whilst the results of the questionnaire formed the first year report to the FA, they did not inform the analysis of the thesis. However, the results did sensitise the steering group to pertinent, national issues that were used to inform the subject matter of the subsequent case study analysis.

5.7 Multiple Case Studies

Discussion within the FA Charter Standard steering group concluded that in order to provide a representative sample of Charter Standard implementation across England, that case studies of Charter Standard implementation in six distinct areas or 'Clusters', was needed. The steering group loosely derived predetermined criteria to inform selection was based on: a geographical spread; a variety of types of County FAs (for example, their size, and those with relatively new development departments versus those with established development departments) local authorities and school sport partnerships; and a range/spectrum of demographically distinct areas, ranging from high deprivation inner city to affluent rural and diverse ethnic populations. The author was tasked with identifying potential Clusters, and the County FAs that had jurisdiction in those areas. The author's selection was accepted by the steering group without question. Whilst all six Clusters formed the

basis of a 3 year evaluation report to the FA, the three most distinct Clusters were selected for the purposes of the thesis. The criteria by which each Cluster was selected is detailed in the Introduction to each Cluster in Chapter 6.

Case studies are particularly useful for qualitative research into policy implementation (Mischen 2007:553), in which the accumulation of knowledge takes the form of refining and enhancing understanding of situations rather than refining and enhancing theory to a level of specificity for the generalisation and prediction of outcomes (Yanow 1996; Fox 1990). Importantly, the context of a case study must be taken into account. Case studies typically involve multiple methods of data collection (Robson 2002) as discussed above. As Yin (1994) suggests, a case study is a strategy for conducting research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. Case study research involves an intensive study of a specific case, where 'The case study is essentially a narrative-based account of a limited number of select instances, which belong to a social or behavioural phenomena as it occurs in its natural setting' highlighting the perspectives of those subjects 'within' the case (Marinetto 1999:63). The rationale for using this strategy or research tool, is to describe and explain a case that has yet to be studied in any detail, to capture its uniqueness, and to provide an appropriate context for linking theory with practice (Yin 1994). Hence, the case study approach can be defined as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. It is, in part, exploratory as it observes data in its 'raw' form and can be seen as the prelude to other case studies. This approach generates detailed and qualitative empirical material from a limited number of actual events. A relatively high level of detail is needed to investigate complex themes and/or theoretical issues as in this study. Thus, a practical examination of the extent to which theory and practice relate to policy implementation can be ascertained. Hence, this study is, in part, descriptive, in its focus on sport policy implementation processes in the relatively under-researched area of grassroots football. It is also

explanatory, as it draws conclusions relative to theoretical frameworks, having drawn upon a wide range of variables such as political, economic, organisational and ideological factors. In sum, case studies tend to focus on interconnected relationships and processes, creating an opportunity to explain why specific outcomes happen (Denscombe 2003:31), hence its particular utility as a strategy in this study.

There is a misconception about multiple case studies that must be avoided here, in that they are for the purpose of gathering a sample of cases so that generalisations to a wider population can be made. This is not the intention here. Again Yin (1994) argues that multiple case studies can follow on or run concurrent with each other to focus on an area not covered by the others. This indeed is the aim here. As noted in Table 5.6, the researcher 'enters' the grassroots football environment and seeks to explore different facets of the network by undertaking multiple case studies i.e. different Clusters within the network. Having selected the areas for case study, the FA members of the steering group provided the contact details of the relevant FDOs in each County FA. At this point, it is important to note that anonymity was granted to all interviewees in the data collection process. Whilst the FA members of the steering group were knowledgeable of which FDOs were in the sample, no names of organisations or clubs were divulged by the researcher to the steering group. This also held true for those club volunteers, teachers and professional development staff, whose identity was concealed from one another. However, at times, some individuals were at pains to mention they knew the author had been in contact with others within the Cluster. All individuals and organisations were made aware that they had been granted a label or pseudonym. Such a strategy was employed to reassure interviewees that their views and perceptions would inform the FA regarding issues and opportunities implementing the Charter Standard brought them. Not only this, the strategy also ensured as practically as possible, that the

opportunities for interviewees to push forward their own priorities for grassroots football with the FA were suppressed.

The FDOs were briefed in advance that contact by the author would be made, and that they should provide any information requested. Following an interview with the FDO, themes emerging from the interview were identified. The FDO was asked to provide the contact details of those individuals and organisations associated with a particular theme of implementation. All FDOs supplied these details willingly, and did not try to push the researcher to other groups. This approach also minimised the opportunity for FDOs to select those individuals and organisations that they felt may respond in an interview in a manner sympathetic and supportive to the FDO. However, given that the FDO had control over which individuals and organisations they discussed in response to interview questions, the capacity to select those favoured by the FDO remained. Each Cluster was investigated concurrently, although there was some overlap with some interviews occurring in more than one Cluster simultaneously. The approach conducted followed that of the 'tracer studies' method (Hornby & Symon 1994), a technique utilised to assess the 'reach' and effectiveness of networks. Similar to a snowballing technique, the point of entry is the FDO at a particular county FA. During the interview, issues arose that the researcher needed to 'trace' through the network by contacting the next recommended individual regarding that issue or link. The FDO then recommended a club or school contact. As Duke identifies with regards to policy networks:

> 'At the end of all interviews, I always asked respondents to provide names and contact details of others they thought were important for me to interview. This simple question generated very interesting data in its own right on who knew whom, who valued whom and whom networked with whom. This technique enabled me to establish a fairly accurate picture of the membership and shape of the policy network and which members were considered to be major players'. (2002: 47)

The aim is not to generalise statistically, but to identify the common themes emerging and also the different issues that emerge based on different structural components of the network i.e. rural or urban areas were expected to have different issues as regards implementation due to different antecedent structures. The individual case studies (or Clusters) are inter-related as they are part of a wider policy network that has different structural and agent factors.

Although case studies have been criticised in terms of lacking objectivity and generalisability, Guba and Lincoln (1981) argue that researchers can support the use of the strategy through ensuring reliability and validity of the techniques used; highlighting the appropriateness of the data analysis conducted; and identifying a relationship between the techniques, such as interviews, and the conclusions of the research. Further, tentative generalisations can be made from case studies. Given that the Charter Standard is a policy conceived at a national level, some commonality in issues of implementation would be expected. Moreover, the multiple case study approach has allowed for Clusters to be investigated on a national basis. Thus a basis for generalisation and comparative research exists. In sum, although each case is unique, it may be one of a type (Hammersley, 1992). Further, aspects of the Charter Standards implementation examined in this study offer the potential for generalisation given a number of 'significant features' on which comparison could be based, most notably institutional features such as County FA processes within the modernisation agenda of performance targets and joined-up working.

Comparison is also achievable through the use of the same theoretical framework or lens. Arguably, the type of approach used in this study is the developmental case study, where the focus is on studying policy processes across time and then using research as a foundation for explaining political processes, such as policymaking or implementation. Although the case study recognises a number of variables, in the

form of factors influencing policy, according to Peters (1998:141), 'good case researchers accept complexity and multiple causation as a crucial characteristic of their research'. Thus this study, although attempting to highlight the key factors/influences shaping policy, does not attempt to include an analysis of *all* such factors, particular as the 'boundary' of a case study is difficult in practice to specify. This is particularly the case where a complex policy area such as 'sport' is subject to 'policy spill-over' (Houlihan & White 2002).

5.8 Semi-structured interviews

Following interviews with the respective FDOs, subsequent interviewees were selected by the researcher, in negotiation with the FDO on the basis that each could offer valuable insights into policy processes. The criteria for selection were: involvement in implementation of the Charter Standard as a paid professional or a club volunteer; were involved at a decision making level, that is, in a position to affect implementation, and were involved in the direct implementation of Charter Standard criteria. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by the author. Field notes were also kept from each interview, with the author recording notes regarding whether the views of the interviewee seemed distorted, fabricated or exaggerated (Rubin & Rubin 2005:74). As such, inconsistencies were checked against the views of others within the Cluster, and official documentation. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to reflect on the interview and clarify and rectify any points or claims made. Each interview took place in a location convenient to the interviewee; usually their place of work, residence or address at which their club was registered. A list of interviewees, the location of interviews and a selection of transcribed interviews are compiled in Appendix D.

The semi-structured interview had a guided list of open-ended questions, and relatively informal discussion of issues. Interview schedules were modified to suit a particular individual and issue. A schedule was set with a standard set of questions or issues, whereby the researcher took a flexible approach to data collection, altering the questions and probing for more information with subsidiary questions regarding interesting lines of inquiry that emerged (Gratton & Jones 2004). Moreover, following the tracer study method, interview schedules for subsequent interviewees were modified to explore new issues that emerged that affected that particular individual. For example, FDOs were asked about their job role such as meeting KPIs. Any issues that arose from this question that affected other individuals were followed up with the subsequent interviewee with the schedule accounting for a discussion of the issue. This is a key qualitative method utilised by policy network analysts (Duke 2002; Marsh & Stoker 2006) in gathering data relating to actors' subjective perceptions, beliefs and experiences, and can be utilised to elucidate how they perceive to be enabled or constrained in implementing the Charter Standard within the policy networks of which they are part. Indeed, as Duke (2002) highlights, in order to operationalise policy networks and assess their influence, there is a need to enter the perceived worlds, or 'reality' of the actors involved in them, and that engaging them in discussion is the best way to generate detailed and rich data on their perceptions and experiences of working on the Charter Standard. In specific relation to the dialectical model of policy networks, the semi structured interview allows the respondent to relay his/her experiences and perceptions with regard to the structural relations within which they are involved and how they are enabled and/or constrained by these (structure and agency). Indeed, Devine (1995:183) contends that firstly that the interviewer must draw particular attention to contextual issues, placing the interviewee's attitudes and behaviour in the context of their individual biography and wider social setting (network and context). Secondly the learning from experience of actors in adopting strategies that have had a bearing

upon the ways in which the Charter Standard has been implemented (network and outcome).

Here then, explanation involves understanding and interpreting actions rather than drawing conclusions about relationships and regularities between statistical relationships (Devine 2002:201). Therefore, reasons for adopting the semi-structured interview in a qualitative approach for this study are; i) to gain a more agent centred approach on the dynamics of policy networks responsible for and working on the Charter standard; ii) to ascertain from the agent's perspective what they deem to be good and bad practice in implementing the Charter Standard; and iii) to attain information on their perceptions of how the policy networks they are involved in might enable or constrain their actions, particularly the culture and beliefs they espouse.

Distinctions were made between the 'rhetoric' of policy-related documentation and an interpretation of 'reality' from the perspective of policy actors. Specifically, this method facilitates access to actors' beliefs, values and norms, embodied in policy preferences and priorities, and insights into the factors/influences perceived as constraining or facilitating action (the structural context in which policy actors operate). Using this method, evidence of indirect forms of power can be inferred, given that 'all social activity takes place within the context provided by a set of pre-existing social structures' (Lewis 2002:19). The interview also facilitates trust and rapport where information may be considered confidential or 'sensitive' and thus 'unexpected data' may emerge, and importantly, responses can be put into context, giving research a 'dynamic' quality not found in quantitative research methods. However, a degree of caution in interpreting the data is needed to counter the weaknesses of the method, particularly in avoiding researcher 'bias' (Gratton & Jones, 2004:142-4). Semi-structured interviews are in effect 'guided conversations' (Lofland & Lofland 1984:59). Hence, the author constructed a checklist of questions

that acted as a framework in which open-ended discussion can take place. Thus, the 'assumptive worlds' of policy actors can be explored, in order to highlight the significance of agency in an account of sport policy processes. In sum, as stated by Green and Houlihan (2005:7), semi-structured interviews are selected as the appropriate method for: gaining an agent-informed understanding of historically-developed processes; allowing distinctions to be made between the 'rhetoric' in policy documentation and the 'reality' provided by policy actors; obtaining insights into the beliefs, values and priorities of policy actors; and assessing the constraints and/or opportunities available to policy actors relative to the structural context in which actors operate. Further, the use of this method allows insights into the strategies employed by policy actors in the pursuit of their interests and moreover, in the mediation of other's interests.

The potential 'weaknesses' of using semi-structured interviews in research are problems of unreliability, the interpretation of the findings, and generalisability (Devine 1995:141). This is particularly the case when interviewing senior personnel or 'expert interviewees' (Flick 1998:91-2). Devine (1995, 2002) addresses these 'weaknesses', noting that in respect of reliability, the aim of quantitative research is to seek a diverse range of responses around a particular research topic, and not, as in quantitative research, to generate a representative sample of the population. Also in respect of reliability in using semi-structured interviews, whereas quantitative studies use highly structured interviews and closed questioning, qualitative studies use an interview guide with open-ended questions and probing of the subject, in order to seek clarification or further elaboration on an answer. The decisions and actions of interviewees can then be contextualised in an analysis of the answers provided. Richards (1996) advises caution in conducting interviews with senior personnel, in relation to avoiding being too deferential, or over-familiar, maintaining distance and avoiding personal opinion. To ensure all relevant topics and issues

have been discussed, the interviewee is also advised to use an *aide memoir*. In practice, for this study of sport policy, the interview guide was composed of interview questions focused on the themes identified in the Cluster tables.

Another core problem relating to the use of semi-structured interviews is the analysis and the validity of the interpretation of data. Whereas quantitative analysis uses statistical analysis of variables, qualitative analysis of interview data is approached through the construction of a transcript from notes made during the interview which is then subject to numerous readings until 'themes' emerge from the data. This continues until an argument is established. The key difficulty of this method is in establishing validity to support a 'plausible account' of the data. Devine (1995:145) suggests various techniques to enhance validity. For example, interpretation can be discussed with other researchers until a consensus is reached, and a coherent argument emerges. Here 'coherence' is critical as opposed to correspondence with 'external reality' as in positivist research. The author also discussed the emerging findings with interviewees, informally, and outside of the formal interview, with their analysis subsequently assimilated into the 'final' account. Copies of transcripts were also submitted to interviewees to allow the interviewee to confirm or refute the data (not that their viewpoint was necessarily used in the final analysis). Moreover, interview data was compared with data from previous interviews, and points made by interviewees were subsequently incorporated into questions in later interviews. Additionally, follow-up questioning with some interviewees was conducted both formally and informally. The findings were also related to the policy theory and the findings triangulated with similar studies, as the research progressed, leading to improvements in the interview guide and questions. Thus the most pertinent questions to ask emerged over time as the research evolved. Finally, the context/environment in which the interviews took place was taken into account in the transcript analysis. In sum, in order to enhance

the validity of the method, a number 'checks and balances' on personal interpretation were established.

A third problem of using semi-structured interviews, and for qualitative research as a whole, is the matter of generalisability. However, a carefully designed research project can help facilitate understanding in other studies, through identifying regularities and variations (Devine 1995:145). Although this study is not explicitly comparative, elements of comparison took place between accounts of sport policy presented by interviewees for example.

5.9 Documentary analysis

At the end of each interview, interviewees either; provided the author with documentation such as Club Handbooks, County FA newsletters or Codes of Conduct that the respondent thought were of use; or, following the identification of a particular issue during the interview, were asked by the author to provide relevant documents were possible. For example, a facility development plan. Essentially, those documents not publicly available. A search for publicly available documents was conducted by the author. This involved a mixture of two things; i) targeting a specific organisation, i.e. school, club or County FA website to search for any documents relating to the Charter Standard, or those that provided a picture of the organisation, and ii) entering of key words into a search engine such as Google for policy documents, newspaper articles relating to clubs, schools, county FAs or Charter Standard news stories.

The analysis of documents is of central importance to this study. Journal articles, books, policy documents (from FA and other Sporting organisations such as Sport England, DCMS and individual voluntary clubs) are among a wide range of documents available in research of this type. May (1997) describes documents as

'sedimentations of social and political practices' and as such argues that documents must be approached in an engaged manner. It is not possible to remain fully detached in the process of reading them. This research follows qualitative document analysis with the main emphasis on discovery and description, including search for underlying meanings, patterns, and processes, rather than mere quantity or numerical relationships between two or more variables (Altheide 1996) such as in content analysis of documents. Football Association documents such as Charter Standard criteria, the football development programme and club and school newsletters are examined. Like all qualitative research, it is interpretive, but it remains empirical, meaning that instances of certain meanings and emphases can be identified and held up for demonstration. While generalisation to a broader population is not the foremost goal, generalization can be accomplished at a later stage of research if appropriate sampling strategies are used Altheide (2000). This approach assumes that it is not specific content per se, e.g., the number of times a phrase is used in the document, that is important. The focus is upon the processes, practices, and perspectives in the document. In policy documents such as the Charter Standard and club development plans, importance is placed on the meanings attached to policies and how they are framed and manifested in everyday conversation and interaction. In essence, how these policy documents are interpreted, and how this interpretation facilitates or constrains the actions of agents is of central importance. Furthermore, documents may also be interesting for what they do not say.

Denzin (1970) asserts that documentary research is an important research instrument, particularly if combined with other complementary research methods. Policy-related documents are considered to be 'sedimentations of social and political practices' (May 1997:157) and therefore 'we need to appreciate the way in which policy ensembles, collections of related policies, exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge', as discourses' (Ball 1993:14). Although this

study does not utilise discourse theory and analysis (Howarth 1995), it is important to recognise the 'discursive strategies' of policymakers.

In this study, a qualitative analysis of documentation (Altheide 1996:15) is used, through the application of thematic coding (Flick 1998), in order 'to understand how different discourses structure the activities of actors and how they are 'are *produced*, how they *function*, and how they are *changed*'' (Howarth 1995:115). Whereas quantitative techniques seek to reveal patterns or regularities in content through repetition, qualitative analysis 'emphasises the fluidity of the text and content in the interpretive understanding of culture' (Ericson *et al*, 1991:50). Moreover, an analysis of document content can highlight the beliefs, values and preferences of policy actors, in addition to factual detail relating to organisation, administration and resources. Texts can be seen to be attempting to impose authority on the social world described (May 1997:175) and setting parameters for debate so as to prioritise certain interests or exclude others. As May (1997:164) concludes, documents 'do not simply reflect, but also construct social reality and versions of events'. In other words, what is not included in policy-related documentation may be as important as what is included and the way it is expressed. In practice, the content of documents can prompt questions and raise issues to pursue through interviews. In sum, documents are not 'neutral artefacts' that report social reality, but are a media through which political power can be demonstrated and legitimised.

It is noted, however, that the findings of this approach will need to be placed in a social context (Giddens 1976), given that 'many important relationships between social phenomena cannot be observed' (Marsh & Smith 2001:531). In sum, 'Texts must be studied as socially situated products' (Scott 1990:34). It is argued that an analysis of the language of texts alone cannot answer the research questions in this study, and therefore the analysis of policy documentation needs to be combined with an analysis of the 'material context' in which decision-makers utilise their

influence. This 'material context', whilst recognising the significance of economic structures and processes, highlights the 'primacy of politics', acknowledging that texts have political origins.

Scott (1990) considers the quality of documentary sources in terms of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. The key consideration when addressing these concerns is to establish the social and political context in which the document has been produced (May 1997:170). In other words, documentation does not exist in isolation from the political, economic and ideological context in which it was written. Given that the choice of research method should be based on its suitability for addressing a particular research question (Grix 2002:179), document analysis can be considered an 'essential technique' for studies of policy. This is, not least, because of the extent of policy-related documentation produced by public and voluntary sector bodies and its availability for research purposes. On a pragmatic level, much of what takes place in a policy process is recorded in written form and the participants themselves are therefore easily identifiable. To be able to answer research questions, document analysis, in combination with the use of semi-structured interviews can arguably provide a springboard to a more in-depth analysis of power in the sport policy process if these methods are linked to the premises of theoretical frameworks located within a 'theory of power'. Although document analysis clearly involves a process of active choice, idealisation, selection and closure by the researcher, it is argued that as long as biases are made explicit to the reader, the researcher can defend the approach to the study and analysis of the findings. Table 5.6 summarises the data collection process.

	Time Line	Action	Research Method
Step1	April 2004 CS Steering group meeting	To collect baseline data for the FA regarding the perceptions of clubs and schools regarding implementation and sustainability issues of the Charter Standard	National Survey to Charter Standard Clubs and Schools
Step 2	January 2004 – December 2004	Proposal of research design to suit FA and thesis objectives	Literature Review using key word searches and mapping back from relevant articles in relation to policy implementation analysis
Step 3	January 2005 CS Steering group meeting	Identification of 6 'Clusters' for investigation (3 of which used for thesis requirements)	FA target specific FDOs within each Cluster. Tracer Studies method to be adopted in following issues/themes and individuals associated with them
Step 4	Data Collection by author beginning: Cluster 2 19/5/05 Cluster 1 24/3/06 Cluster 3 17/1/06	Simultaneous data collection and transcription of interviews. Recording of field notes and specific issues and follow up with individuals recommended by interviewee.	Semi Structured Interviews and collection of documents. Thematic analysis inductively generated
Step 5	January 2007 CS steering group meeting	Final Report to FA to inform FA National Game Strategy 2007	

Table 5.6 The Data Collection Process

It must be noted that data collection did not take place in a smooth linear fashion. For instance, upon identifying Cluster 2's Club FDO as the point of contact, their lack of availability at the time meant that the respondent recommended others within the Cluster to interview in the meantime. Moreover, each Cluster was not dealt with separately, as data collection occurred simultaneously across Clusters

when necessary. Following step 3 in Table 5.6, the FA members of the steering group ceased to have any input in the research and became disinterested following the dissemination of the first year survey report which had little bearing on the thesis. The final meeting at step 5 was attended by all members of the steering group, except for one member of the FA. The final report was due to inform the FAs National Game Strategy in 2007, although details were not divulged by the FA.

5.10 Thematic Coding

At step 4, thematic coding of interview and documentary data was conducted. Following Flick (1998), the underlying assumption was that different social worlds offer different views, which can be interpreted and organised into groups or themes, and is useful in case studies were elements of comparison exist. Sampling is oriented to groups/interests or their representatives whose perspectives are likely to be instructive in addressing the research questions. Thematic coding is applied in steps. First, a short description of the case study is made. This is continuously re-checked and modified during further interpretation of the data. This case profile includes details of the interviewees such as their involvement with the Charter Standard (See Cluster Tables). The data is coded into conceptual categories, i.e. themes. Coding is taken as a starting point in addressing; conditions (e.g. what has led to a particular situation); interaction among actors (who acted and what happened); strategies and tactics (which ways of handling the situation, avoidance or adaptation); and consequences (what changed, and what was the outcome) (Miles & Huberman 1994:56).

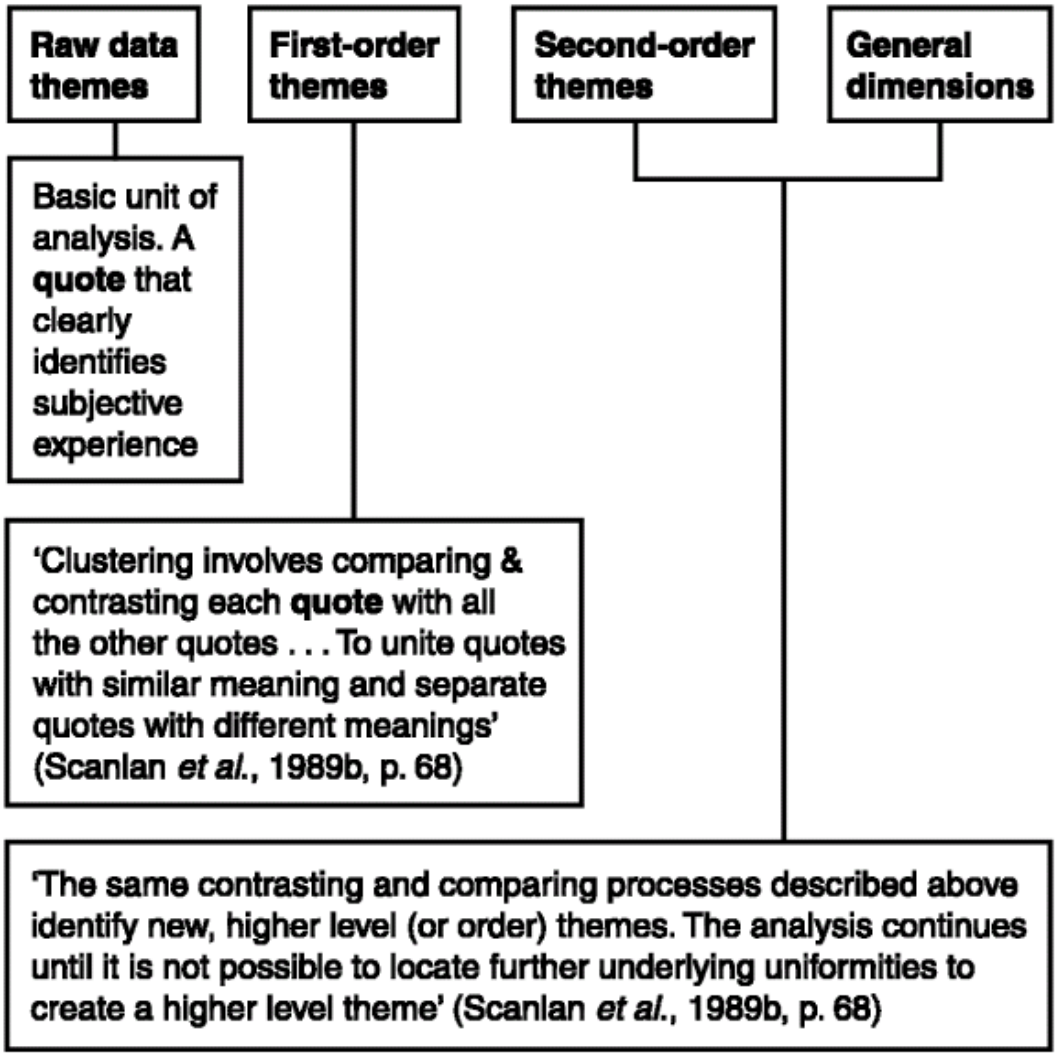


Figure 5.7 Structure and rationale for the process of thematic coding. Adapted from Biddle et al 2001

The themes that emerged in the study included modernisation, relationships, and structural antecedents. Each of the themes was divided into sub-themes as the study progressed. For example, 'relationships' was sub-divided into girls' football. The social distribution of perspectives on the issue in interviews and documents from research subjects could then be compared in the analysis of data. As detailed in Figure 5.7, thematic coding was undertaken inductively through the use of semi structured interview questions which allowed for open ended discussions (See Appendix D). This allowed for inductively generated themes through the organisation of data into interpretable and meaningful categories (Scanlan et al 1989:68) as detailed in Chapter 6. Following Schwandt (1999), and Meyer and

Wenger (1998), such themes were then subject to deductive analysis in Chapter 7 following cross comparisons between Clusters and the incorporation of theory (policy networks). As such, the use of theoretical knowledge in the latter part of the analysis process highlights the inductive and deductive elements of the research design.

One final point of reinforcement must be made clear here. It is not the intention to measure or evaluate the implementation of the Charter Standard against the criteria required for accreditation (see Chapter 2 and Appendix A and B). This would inevitably lead to the identification of implementation gaps, which, whilst important to the success or otherwise of policy implementation, provide little explanatory power other than identifying that the actions of 'a' have not met criteria 'b'. Rather, the criteria for gaining Charter Standard accreditation has been used as a guide to structure the research design in terms of document analysis and interview themes/topics to prompt the discussion in relation to the processes involved in implementing aspects of the Charter Standard. In short, the policy 'text' (Charter Standard) is decentred and the policy 'context' prioritised, so that the act of implementing the Charter Standard both precedes and transcends the formal stated aims of the policy itself. This also guards against over emphasising the fecundity and importance of policy statements in place of the importance of the processes of implementation.

5.11 Conclusion

This Chapter has detailed the methodological underpinnings and associated methods of data collection for the thesis. In short, following Blaikie (2007) and Grix (2002), a critical realist position is adopted. The latter claims there to be a directional relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology. Whilst recognising that the research process is rarely this mechanical, these relationships set the

parameters used in the thesis, which are inextricably linked to the research questions posed, sources of data collected (Grix 2002:179) (see Chapter 1), and the methods used (see table 5.6 pg 215 this Chapter). This study draws upon the critical realist assumption that there is a 'real world out there'. This does not pre-suppose a positivist position. Rather, critical realism also assumes that whilst such a 'real world' exists, not all social and political phenomena are 'directly observable' as 'structures exist that cannot be observed and those that can may not present the social and political world as it actually is' (Grix 2002:183). In the empirical chapter to follow, social and political phenomena such as dynamics and processes shaping the act of implementation, may exist independently of the implementing actors' knowledge. Yet their interpretation or understanding of them shapes outcomes, i.e. how the Charter Standard is implemented. Thus, structures do not determine, they constrain and facilitate reflexive agents who interpret and modify them. Lastly, actors' knowledge of the world is imperfect; it is theory laden. In order to identify and comprehend both the external 'reality' and the construction of that 'reality', theoretical concepts need to be employed (Lewis 2002).

CHAPTER 6

Implementation of the Charter Standard in Three Clusters

Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings from all three Clusters investigated in the policy network for football development, with the implementation of the Charter Standard being the central focus. As described in the methodology section, a research design consisting of a mix of inductive and deductive approaches was adopted. The Chapter draws on empirical data gained from interviews with key actors involved in the implementation of the Charter Standard, and supplemented with documentary material such as FA Charter Standard handbooks and application packs, and individual club and schools applications, newsletters and policy documents. Each Cluster (or case study) has been subjected to a qualitative thematic analysis, informed by approaches and concepts detailing the characteristics of sport and football development set out in Chapters 1&2, the context of modernisation within a neo-pluralist framework, and meso level theories of the policy process as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. Therefore, the six Clusters are organised around the following three principal themes with the dynamics of Charter Standard implementation the central focus; i) structural and contextual factors, ii) modernisation of grassroots football, and iii) relationships between organisations. The Chapter concludes with a summary of the key implications and a discussion of the comparisons and differences between the main issues identified in each Cluster.

In line with the literature review, the first two themes are informed by the theories relating to a macro and meso level contextual nature. In this connection, and due to the nature of the research focusing on a relatively ignored area of football and

academia, the most notable here is the policy network approach as it is noted as being the most flexible and all encompassing approach to analysing contemporary policy implementation (Hill & Hupe 2002). Having provided the historical context in Chapters 2 and 3, the focus here is largely concerned with the immediate present, although it is necessary to locate these contemporary insights within the context of actions undertaken 'pre-modernisation' and Charter Standard implementation; the latter may have significant implications for the dynamics and nuances of contemporary policy-related actions undertaken by the implementers. This observation is in line with the theoretical assumptions highlighted above and critical realist assumptions set out in Chapter 4. As Lewis observes 'All social activity takes place within the context provided by a set of pre-existing social structures' (2002:19). Hay (1995:198) adds that at any given moment in time, actors face social structures which are pre-formed in the sense that they are the product of actions undertaken not in the present, but in the past, often with unintended consequences. Moreover, Sibeon (1999:142) contends that in any analysis of policy, the conditions actors face or confront include, inter alia, the 'intended and unintended outcomes of ... earlier policies'. Such somewhat abstract 'pre-existing social structures' frame the 'conditions of action' (Betts 1986:39) within which actors in the football development policy network operate, and can usefully be conceived of here as encompassing past decisions, past policies, organisational (club/school/county FA) rules and language and social and political norms.

6.1 Cluster One

Introduction

Cluster 1 centred on a large town covering two wards of a metropolitan borough in the North West of England with a population of 87,186, lying north and west of Cluster's two and three respectively. The area was selected by the Charter Standard steering group based on 2001 census data which established the area as relatively mixed both economically and socially and above average population density. Over 98% of the population was of white British origin, with an unemployment rate 1% higher than the national average. Significantly, 24.4% of the population were under the age of 16, the age group at which the Charter Standard is primarily aimed. Unlike in most other towns, there is no single town centre, and the town is fragmented into separate settlements and housing estates. The town lies three miles west of a major city (population 816,216), which is also a metropolitan borough. The city and the surrounding area, including the town, has an economic and cultural past dependent upon maritime industries, and has suffered through industrial decline combined with severe infrastructural damage during the Second World War. It is, in short, one of the top ten poorest postcode districts in England (ONS 2005).

One club was located in an affluent village four miles west of the town, but which participated in the junior football league within the aforementioned town. In relation to football, the town is located two miles north of the major town within the metropolitan borough, which hosts an established professional lower league football club. Three miles east of the town, separated by a river, there are two established internationally recognised professional football clubs located in the major city. Although the exact number of junior and adult amateur grassroots football clubs in

the area is not recorded, the County FA recognises this area as a particular 'hotbed' of football.

Due to historical processes, County FAs were formed at a historical juncture in which their jurisdictional areas mirrored that of the old shire system. Relatively recent political restructuring in the U.K has led to the forming of metropolitan counties, which has provided a source of confusion over the administration of grassroots football within the surrounding area. For instance, the metropolitan county within which the town and borough are located politically does not match the boundaries covered by the County FA which provides football for the area, as the County FA was established long before the metropolitan county and has kept its jurisdictional areas. Further complicating this, although the town and city are in the same county politically, the nearby city comes under the jurisdiction of a different County FA, which also has jurisdiction over secondary schools within the town on which the Cluster is centred. This leads to confusion in development work as "schools do not always know who they are affiliated too" (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06). The County FA in which all clubs within this Cluster are located is responsible for all football development issues within the county with respect to clubs, but not schools. Nine district FAs have the responsibility of administering and running local leagues accountable to the County FA, which in turn reports to a Regional Manager. The reliance on district FAs to deal with issues in relation to administration is due in part to the areas geographical size and the approximate 1,000 clubs (and un-stated number of schools). The sole FDO is responsible for development work including the implementation of the Charter Standard in both clubs and schools (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). None of the clubs in the area had achieved 'Community' status, the pinnacle of Charter Standard accreditation, or indeed anywhere in the entire borough at the time of the research. Equally, although there are established

amateur clubs with large junior sections within the area which own their own grounds and facilities, none have achieved Charter Standard status, or have shown a desire to do so despite attempts to persuade them (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). Indeed, they have been noted as being "openly hostile and critical of the Charter Standard, and see it as interference from the FA" (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 07). All Charter clubs within the area, and therefore within the Cluster, rent council owned facilities.

Table 6.1 shows the constituents of the organisations and individuals making up the Cluster, their involvement with the Charter Standard, and the links between them. Due in part to the jurisdictional complexities and the inconsistencies between clubs and schools within the Cluster coming under the auspices of different County FAs, the issues raised in this Cluster relate predominantly to junior grassroots football clubs rather than schools.

Contacts	Organisations & Responsibility	Charter Standard Involvement	Network Links
Football Development Officer	jurisdiction in football that extends into another county council border which has no county football association due to historical political processes. It has a large geographical region and contains a varied environment of inner-city, suburbia and rural areas. There is a challenge to upgrade pitches and facilities in all these areas. Responsible for running local football partnership (not yet in evident operation)	To implement Charter Standard and other football development initiatives across all these areas	All clubs and schools within County Association borders. Recommended contacting club 3 in relation to club friction issues. Conducted Charter Standard presentation at district league AGM
Head of PE	Major Secondary school exclusively for boys. Affiliated to different County FA than clubs even though in the same Cluster as all clubs contacted. Organises sport and PE in curricular and extra curricular time. Chairman of schools District FA organising representative teams.	Charter Standard School. Did not implement Charter Standard, member of staff responsible now left.	ESFA, local amateur clubs in football pyramid (in the Cluster area but not interviewed, do not have Charter Standard). Clubs 1&3 in terms of players predominantly coming from the school
Secretary Club 1	Administration of all club matters. Development of girls section but no teams dedicated to girls, and plans to forge links with schools. Run 'tots' section for under 5's, links to two adult clubs although not part of club, running 10 teams from under 7s to under 16s	Charter Standard club status, implemented by former club member now left to join club 2. Responsible for maintaining the standard. Seeking to gain Development status	District league which consists of all clubs contacted within this Cluster. FDO regularly by phone. Head of PE on rare occasions for player recruitment
Secretary Club 2	Administration of all club matters and running teams from under 6 to under 15 for boys and boys and mixed teams at under 11 catering for approximately 200 children. Participate in two junior leagues, one of which all clubs in Cluster participate in. No links or pathways to adult football. Based in reasonably affluent area but facilities are at a premium. Responsible for drawing up private facility development plan for the development of new facility on the strength of Charter Standard accreditation.	Charter Standard development club. Forges links with local primary schools, organising coaching sessions within schools. Maintains Charter Standard status.	District league which consists of all clubs contacted within this Cluster. FITC from professional club provides coaching sessions and days out to stadium, talent identification.
Secretary Club 3 and district league committee member	Responsible for all club matters. Club has 14 teams catering for approximately 150-200 children ranging from under 7 to under 14's for boys, and 3 girls teams, just coaching sessions at under 7-11 level. Responsible for making decisions relating to disciplinary, league admittance and arranging AGM's for the district junior league. Also	Charter Standard Club status. Implemented when club was founded and used as a guide. Maintains Charter Standard status. Liaises between other clubs in Cluster and wider district to	FDO in arranging AGM's and inviting to meetings. Fall out with Club 1 used charter standard as impetus to set up new club. District league which consists of all clubs

	involved in setting up a girls only league for the age group over 11's.	found girls league.	contacted within this Cluster. Head of PE on rare occasions for player recruitment
Secretary Club 4	Responsible for all club matters for boys teams ranging from under 6-10 (Mini soccer) to under 16. Coach of one team. No youth section but do have pathway to adult team in district adult section of the league. Provide for girls at under 11's in mixed teams, but no girls teams.	Charter Standard Club Status. Implemented and maintains Charter Standard. Keen on achieving highest status (community)	District league which consists of all clubs contacted within this Cluster. FDO on occasion when needs advice
Secretary Club 5	Responsible for administration of club, and coach. One team club	Charter Standard Club Status. Implemented and maintains Charter Standard	District league which consists of all clubs contacted within this Cluster. Club originated from split with club no.1. FDO rarely. Use local primary school facilities for training and fixtures
Secretary Club 6	Responsible for administration of club. Club has 11 teams at mini soccer level. Plans for three girls teams to enter 11 aside when split occurs between male and female game at age 11	Charter Standard Club Status. Implemented and maintains Charter Standard	District league which consists of all clubs contacted within this Cluster. Club originated from split with club no.1. FDO rarely.

Table 6.1 Organisations and individuals implementing the Charter Standard in Cluster 1

6.1.1 Charter Standard Implementation: Structural and Contextual factors

Structural and contextual antecedents in relation to the organisations and individuals within this Cluster have facilitated the adoption of strategies and the emergence of issues that have impacted both adversely and positively on grassroots football in general and the implementation of the Charter Standard; for clubs in particular. Although there are other inter-related processes, the implementation of, and progression within, the Charter Standard, and the usage, ownership and availability of council facilities is a major structural constraint within the Cluster given the reliance on them by clubs for both training and fixtures. Although the schools central to the town have their own facilities, the clubs rarely utilise them, an issue discussed in more detail in the ensuing sections. Constraints in relation to the implementation of the Charter Standard are threefold in this respect, particularly regarding the history and longevity of the clubs' association with the facilities in the area, the scarcity of council facilities and the density and proximity of clubs to one another. This impacts upon the dynamics of implementing the Charter Standard within the Cluster in two intersecting ways.

Firstly, implementation is constrained by competition between clubs densely situated within the Cluster for access to essential resources in terms of facility usage for clubs to exist and develop. Reliance upon council owned facilities limits clubs' potential to progress through the Charter Standard framework from Charter Standard status to Community Club status (see Chapter 2). For instance, The FA (2003a) requires clubs to devise and implement a club development plan, which includes the expansion of the number of teams in conjunction with the number and level of qualification of coaches in order to progress through the Charter Standard framework. The concerns of club staff regarding this issue were ubiquitous

> "It can be difficult both securing and retaining a facility whether that be a school or leisure centre because everybody wants the same slots and the best pitches…some clubs have used those facilities for years and get precedence from the council…but it is basically first come first served" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 27 / 3 / 06).

Such structural characteristics constrain the potential and ability of those clubs (in the case of this Cluster, all clubs) whose expressed desire and ambition is to expand and develop through the framework, as the number and quality of facilities militate against expansion. Secondly, intrinsically related to the first constraint and the lack of resources of the County FA to assist all clubs (see Table 6.1); the scarcity of facilities and the competition to acquire and retain them means that the consequences of these interlocking processes renders competition itself between clubs a constraint upon the ability of each individual club to progress within the Charter Standard framework. This is particularly pertinent given the insights from many observers within the Cluster that "as soon as one club struggles to fill their slot there is another club waiting to pounce on the opportunity to take the slot, sometimes purely because they can in order to gain an advantage over their rivals" (Secretary Club 4 interview 17 / 6 / 06).

The dynamics involved here, namely the competition for scarce, dilapidated resources owned by a third party to expand football provision in line with the requirements of advancing through the Charter Standard framework, has given rise to a number of strategies adopted by the clubs. These resonate with processes connected to modernisation, and exacerbate the fragmentation and competition within the Cluster. This provides the FDO with several conundrums. When facing such structural constraints, each club expressed a wish to purchase and develop their own facility (see Table 6.1). Very little dialogue occurred between individuals

across clubs regarding the issue of facility usage and development. All club secretary's concurred with the views of Club 4's secretary (Interview 17 / 6 / 06) despite the same constraint facing each of them.

> "It is extremely difficult in this area because of the condensed nature…we are fragmented as a club, and play our games and train at a number of different venues, which makes not having a base difficult to coordinate…the pitches are of variable quality and are not cheap to hire…it is our vision to develop our own facilities and gaining community status will be the final thing we need to get either the council or some private developers to actually partner us…but we can not pay for the exploratory work needed for them to turn around and say it is not possible to build a facility here."

In this connection, clubs perceive that: i) the onus is on them to work individually to develop the facilities for their own club, and those 'that really want to will find a way' (Secretary Club 4 Interview 17 / 6 / 06) rather than rely on, or work with the council or for that matter any other junior clubs in the area; and ii) gaining Charter Standard accreditation will assist clubs in receiving grants from the Football Foundation in order to plan and build facilities. However, the Charter Standard literature does not state that being in possession of Charter Standard accreditation will provide clubs with a guarantee or advantage in terms of accessing funding. Yet such an understanding is perceived as being communicated to clubs through the County FA. Moreover, The Football Foundation does acknowledge that clubs in possession of the Charter Standard are given preference when funding issues arise, as such clubs epitomise a commitment to developing plans with identified aims and targets to meet them, displaying a professional and businesslike manner in which the Foundation can trust (Football Foundation, personal correspondence 18 / 3 / 2005).

Moreover, further interlocking processes concerning the geographical size of the County FA's jurisdictional area being covered by just one FDO renders development work in 'outposts' such as this Cluster difficult, as it is "impossible to support every club to the extent to which they require supporting in Charter Standard…I concentrate on some areas more than others due to pure logistics" (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). Although this is a source of tension and frustration amongst clubs within the Cluster, there is also recognition and acceptance that the County FA and FDO are constrained by the resources allocated by the National FA and the geographical location of its headquarters

> "the County FAs are totally responsible for what's going on [the perceived lack of development work in the area]…I don't think personally that they have the resources needed…one of the biggest counties geographically, it's just huge, so I can't pass on any blame to him [FDO 1]…I think more support for him is warranted" (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06)

The combination of the sheer number of clubs and geographical fragmentation of the County FA's jurisdictional area creates a conundrum for the FDO. The centre of this particular Cluster is located over 45 miles away from the administrative headquarters of the County FA, the most frequently used centre for development activity such as courses and workshops required for clubs and schools to achieve Charter Standard accreditation. Although it is possible for members of schools and clubs to attend sessions held in the nearby city only 3 miles away, the issue of clubs remaining under the jurisdiction of a separate County FA to that of the city means that: i) the County FA with jurisdiction for the nearby city has no authority over the town and therefore no avenues for, or interest to, promote its development work within the town's area. This results in individuals finding it difficult to access information about courses held more locally; and ii) requires individuals from schools and clubs to confront the financial and loss of leisure and work time

implications associated with travel to the County FA headquarters in which they are located. The view of Club Secretary from Club 2 (Interview 20 / 6 / 06) is indicative of the concerns expressed by all clubs in the Cluster

> "for attending the child protection workshop, myself and two others from the club have to undertake a 90 mile round trip…we have to take time off work and suffer the expense involved with travelling…we are keen to keep the Charter Standard, but some of the barriers they [County FA] make us face are a nonsense…there is always a cost implication…for the coach education courses it is even more of an issue when they are held over a week or a number of weekends which means we have to travel five times or more"

Conversely, the FDO perceives that the cost implication for participating in such courses is a secondary concern to the geographic accessibility issues, stating "it's not necessarily the cost, its accessing the courses, so we put quite a detailed coach education programme on" (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06). There is apparent conflict and ambiguity between, on the one hand a voluntary organisation and on the other, a professional, as to the most appropriate way to overcome structural constraints in order to implement the Charter Standard. Such circumstances led the FDO to develop a number of strategies to ease the burden for club volunteers undertaking coaching courses and child protection, emergency aid and administration workshops for Charter Standard accreditation application and maintenance. The FDO sought a compromise of a mixture of direct provision from the County FA, with a reliance on an increasingly active and mobilised volunteer body within the 'modernising' of grassroots football. Firstly, with regard to coach education, 14 courses are held annually at various suitable locations within the County. However, in relation to this Cluster, the nearest courses are still over 20 miles away, and for volunteers to attend relies upon the separate processes in relation to work and

leisure time, combined with the availability of facilities and FA staff to host the course on particular dates to intertwine

> "we set the dates for those…therefore they [clubs] are not always able to access them. I think the biggest strategy…is that we offer clubs courses in their own environment in their own area so they don't have to travel too far at a time and date, obviously if we have got the tutors available and convenient to that location" (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06).

Secondly, in this connection regarding both coach education programmes and workshops, the endeavours by the FDO to stage and organise courses and workshops based on demand from individual clubs created both positive and adverse impacts. For instance, larger clubs which require a substantial number of individuals to undertake a particular course to fulfil Charter Standard criteria requirements are encouraged to support the FDO by providing an appropriate facility (usually an established amateur or semi-professional club training facilities) within the town to host a course. Providing the club can guarantee a minimum number of participants, the FDO will organise a course or workshop (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). However, this strategy is contingent on a number of factors, and has created a source of tension between clubs. Firstly, such a strategy has been successful in accelerating clubs' success in achieving various levels of Charter Standard status (FDO Interview 20 / 3 / 06; County FA newsletter 2005) generally. However, clubs (such as Clubs 2 and 4 in this Cluster) which host a large number of teams are at a significant advantage to benefit from such strategies in comparison to clubs 3 and 5 which cater for only six and one team respectively. Such an assumption would seem both contradictory and erroneous, given that smaller clubs will be required to undertake less training and fewer qualifications, and therefore encounter less cost implications than the larger clubs, who may require extra and specific assistance. Yet, the lower numbers or even singular individual required

from smaller clubs to undertake such courses every three years to renew their practice (FA 2003a) to maintain the Charter Standard accreditation not only face the same structural and geographical constraints as their counterparts, but are less likely to have the same financial and human resources to undertake such an activity. They are therefore, largely unintentionally, excluded from County FA support due to the nature of such strategies. In this connection, coach education, child protection, and emergency aid workshops courses are set aside specifically for members of the hosting club who coordinated delivery with the County FA. This both creates and reinforces exclusivity of access to the already meagre FDO support and assistance; and exacerbates the fragmentation and contested nature characteristic of grassroots football. This is more apparent specifically in relation to such a dense Cluster in which all teams are in regular contact through the same league, share the same council facilities and cohabit, with the exception of one club, in an area of a three mile radius.

In this respect, Club 2, the most advanced on the Charter Standard framework in the Cluster, and indeed the borough having attained development status at the time of research (see Table 6.1), reported having more time and resources to fulfil Charter Standard requirements than other clubs. The secretary perceived that the business background of the clubs' administrators allowed for greater ability to perform duties in terms of producing football development plans (required for development status or above – see FA 2003a) for recruiting volunteers and coach education and progression, and for performing accounting duties for the club. The club is therefore better placed to engage with the modernisation of grassroots football. Moreover, the capability of the club to engage more widely in football development work is enhanced utilising the Charter Standard as a guide, structure and base. The club sought to develop activities and development work over and above the criteria

required for Charter Standard accreditation at any point on the framework. The most prominent and ambitious example being the application process to build the football club its own facility. Such practices included the drafting of facility development plans and funding applications requiring a deal of business acumen (FDO interview 20 / 3 / 06). This is further enhanced given that the County FA will actively seek to work with those clubs more capable of adopting business like practices, the FDO stating:

> "we will give more support to those who have achieved Charter Standard status and are capable of moving through the framework to the highest levels because I recognise them, I know them in detail and at the end of the day they are more likely to help us hit our targets as a County" (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06).

Finally, this particular Cluster illustrates tensions between the structural antecedents shaping the characteristics of grassroots football in England and the changes in social structure and transformations in gender relations, identities and ethnic demography prompted by government egalitarianism and social engineering (See Chapter 2). Such ideological espousals are not met in the practice of girl's football provision. Although social engineering has prompted increased participation, and acceptance of women's and girls' football in England at the level of policy, failure to realise egalitarianism reinforces the predominance of boys' football within the cultural fabric of the country, and constrains the development of an infrastructure of equal distinction for girls. The Charter Standard also reflects the changes in the ideology of society. Although slightly ambiguous and reflecting a lack of clarity, clubs must have a code of conduct which makes reference to equity (FA 2003a), which in turn is supported by an equity strategy (FA 2004). Clubs are directed to this for guidance when devising their application for Charter Standard accreditation

at the basic level. Moreover, those clubs applying for development or community status must display evidence of links with, or have direct provision for, girls' football (FA 2003a).

For instance, all clubs within this Cluster consisted of girls participating at mini soccer level. However, on leaving mini soccer at the under 11 age group, girls must play separately to boys, a situation that all clubs within this Cluster struggled to provide structured opportunities for, as historically they never have. The Charter Standard and the desire to progress through the framework poses a problem for the clubs. The intersection with the above issues in terms of competition for facilities, the geographical dimensions and the structural antecedents characterising junior grassroots football means that progression is hindered:

> "the problem with girls at the moment is that when they come to under 11s we don't have a league locally...there is nothing available for them...when we did have specific girls teams they were having to travel a 90 mile round trip to play in competitive games because there were no other teams locally...we couldn't support it and the girls and their parents also found it difficult to sustain...if you get a girls team together, who are they going to play?" (Secretary Club 1 interview 14 / 6 / 06).

Evident here is the manifestation of the continuing and enduring structural antecedents manifest in grassroots football, as it is the girls section of the clubs which are sacrificed due to a lack of infrastructure and the number of girl participants being lower than boys. Moreover, although clubs express that girls football was being developed prior to their Charter Standard application (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06), the commitment to developing girls football seems to be emphasised only as a means to an end in order to support the clubs' development

through the Charter Standard framework, rather than a commitment to developing girls football for the sake of the girls themselves (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06).

In sum, it is clear that structural and contextual antecedents in relation to implementing the Charter Standard in this Cluster have raised several pertinent constraints, and opportunities. It is clear that there is a desire from clubs to advance through the Charter Standard framework. However, it is apparent that the geographical area and resources at the disposal of the County FA within which this Cluster resides, combined with the inherent jurisdictional complexities this brings, a series of issues remain pertinent to the development and modernisation of grassroots football in general, and the implementation of the Charter Standard in particular. These issues can be summarised as follows: i) A reliance on over-subscribed council owned facilities and the large number of clubs within a densely populated location has exacerbated competition between clubs for access to resources; ii) access to essential training courses to achieve aspects of Charter Standard accreditation criteria, for example coach education, is hindered, and strategies adopted by the FDO to overcome this seems to exclude smaller and less established clubs; iii) development of girls football is hindered by a mixture of the above two issues, in conjunction with the historical legacy of the area which has traditionally neglected the development of opportunities for girls in favour of boys; and iv) these issues raise barriers to advancement through the Charter Standard framework for those clubs that expressly wish to do so. It is clear that although clubs are engaging with the modernisation process by implementing the Charter Standard, they are doing so in an environment which presents obstacles not of their own making. It is reasonable to assume that those clubs with resources and expertise to overcome these on an individual basis without constant intervention from the County FA i.e., those that can 'professionalise' or 'modernise' themselves,

are more likely to achieve and maintain higher levels of Charter Standard accreditation. In short, questions remain as to the administrative and organisational capacity of the County FDO to provide adequate Charter Standard support to those clubs engaged in the accreditation process and framework within this Cluster given the geographical and structural context in terms of both implementing and maintaining Charter Standard criteria.

6.1.2 Charter Standard implementation: the 'modernisation' of grassroots football

The issues raised in this section should be read as both occurring within, and impacting upon, the structural context previously identified. The nature of the clubs being densely situated in close proximity to one another, competing for the same scarce resources (council owned facilities and players), and the difficulties associated with the logistics and geographical context with reference to the County FA headquarters, frames the modernisation processes of grassroots football for this Cluster.

In conjunction with the logistics of attending coaching courses impeding the potential of clubs to achieve Charter Standard accreditation and progression through the framework, the intersection between changes in the content and assessment of coaching courses and the Charter Standard criteria have contributed to a mixture of enabling and constraining processes in relation to the potential and ability of clubs to fulfil accreditation requirements. Thus, although this section is concerned with the dynamics of the modernisation agenda and how these impact upon the implementation of the Charter Standard, it is important to provide an understanding of the FA's coach education programme. It is worth reiterating here the

modernisation process within the FA, and sport in general, has been influenced in part, by the dual processes of the wider New Labour agenda and the internal investigations and reports by the FA concerning consistent underachievement and questioning of its governance.

Briefly, as noted in Chapter 2, the FA adopted a somewhat ambivalent approach to the training and development of coaches until 2001 when 1st4sport Qualifications[1] were established, as the professional body for accrediting and organising sport coaching in the UK. Reflecting the modernising of development work for football, the FA sought to work in partnership with 1st4sport to develop, implement and accredit coaching qualifications for football at Levels 1,2 and 3 (The FA 2001). Operating as the brand of Coachwise Ltd (which offers business solutions and products to sports organisations in the market), the trading arm of the National Coaching Foundation, the inclusion of a private sector organisation into the delivery of mainstream sport coaching highlights the practice of modernisation adopting and inculcating business practices to support sport development. Before this time the FA centrally awarded their own qualifications, namely the Junior Team Manager, Coaching Certificate and Coaching Licence. Although County FAs predominantly offered these courses, there are also other recognised centres for these qualifications such as colleges, schools, football clubs and private training organisations.

[1] 1st4sport Qualifications is an awarding body recognised and regulated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) that works in partnership with a variety of organisations, including The Football Association (FA), The Rugby Football Union (RFU), England Hockey and sports coach UK, to develop and award qualifications for the active learning and leisure industry. The QCA-recognised awarding body, 1st4sport Qualifications, is a brand of Coachwise Ltd, the trading arm of the National Coaching Foundation, (known as sports coach UK), the UK-registered charity leading the development of coaches and the coaching system in the UK.

This Cluster particularly highlights temporal dimensions impacting upon intersecting processes in relation to: i) clubs' Charter Standard accreditation and renewal; ii) the attaining and expiration of volunteer coaching staff qualifications; and iii) the pace of changes in the content, requirements and assessment of coaching qualifications. With regard to the first two, the FA requires clubs to provide evidence that they still meet the criteria to maintain their status every three years (FA 2003a). Combined with this, coaches are required to undertake a renewal of their existing qualifications or advancement up the coaching framework (see Appendix C), every three years (FA 2003a), with the expiry dates of each rarely matching one another. Such separate but intertwined and parallel processes have particularly afflicted this Cluster, as Secretary Club 4 (Interview 17 / 6 / 06) states:

> "I wish somebody would look at the reality of volunteers having to either give up a week of their annual leave or spend 18 months doing a course over the weekends when they need the qualification as soon as they can for their own benefit and for the club to achieve and maintain its charter status".

Exacerbated by the geographical and logistical structural antecedents, the conundrum here is that, potentially, all clubs which hold Charter Standard status, may not adhere to the required criteria for significant periods of time, as there is no coordination between the availability of coach education courses and the expiry dates of clubs renewal submissions. Although the FA acknowledges this, and allows coaches one year to renew or undertake new qualifications (FA 2003a), the FDO only becomes aware of this if clubs are proactive in providing the information, as there is no active monitoring system in place (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06). A pertinent example here is the FA's Junior Team Manager's award (JTM), which would not be recognised for new Charter Standard clubs for 2007, and will be phased out for those existing Charter Standard clubs for 2008 (FA 2005) upon which they were then expected to undertake the new level 1 course. Possessing the knowledge that the JTM would be phased out eventually, the FDO sought to transfer all those with the

current JTM to the new level 1 course in 2005, and did not support the staging of JTM courses within the county, supporting only level 1 coaching certificate courses to

> "ensure that we as a county were not going to fall behind in the cross over and lose clubs and coaches...also because the JTM is a very minimal course in terms of preparing coaches to coach, the coaching certificate [1st4Sport level 1 coaching certificate in football] provides coaches with a much better and more up to date understanding of the coaching process and organisation for kids" (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06).

The FDO sought to pre-empt a potential crisis by bringing the transition period forward for clubs. By altering the requirements from the existing national FA specifications, the FDO's actions resonate with Lipsky's conception of street level bureaucrats in adopting measures or 'coping strategies' which best fit the specific County's needs and capacity. In this respect, the FDO encountered considerable challenges to transfer those coaches who had the FA JTM award prior to the FA's partnership with Coachwise in 2001, to 1st4Sport's Level 1 Certificate in coaching football (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06). This process has two related consequences in relation to the Charter Standard. Firstly, those coaches in possession of the JTM award perceived that the JTM was no longer accepted to meet the FA's Charter Standard requirements (Secretary Club 3 Interview 27 / 3 / 06), despite the Charter Standard application and renewal packs stating otherwise (FA 2003a, 2005). This led to concern and rumour mongering amongst all clubs that they may not currently be within the Charter Standard criteria, and that their accreditation was at risk. This can be attributed in part by the actions undertaken and instructions given by the FDO. Secondly, coaches were reluctant to undertake the new level 1 course as the commitment was substantially greater than the JTM in terms of cost, content and number of hours they were required to attend

> "A JTM was done in one day and only cost about £20...a level one coaching course is now taking in advance of 32 hours which managers are needing to take time out from their club to undertake and it is costing well in advance of £100... Why the FA keep moving the goalposts I don't know...I have just recently done my JTM, paid for it and given up a weekend to complete it which I could have spent with my family...and almost immediately they say it is not valid anymore, you have got to do a level 1...I am not giving up more time, therefore I am going to drop off the coaching scale and the club's Charter is in jeopardy" (Secretary Club 2 Interview 20 / 6 / 06).

The process of undertaking the more detailed and intensive level 1 course signalled ubiquitous approval amongst all club personnel in the perception that there had been advancement in both their knowledge and confidence to organise and deliver basic coaching sessions to children. Previous to undertaking such courses, coaches, the majority of which become involved due to their children playing for the club, have adopted practices from their experiences (both as children themselves and adults) in the era of unscientific coaching practices and ambivalent attitude of the footballing authorities to a structured approach at the grassroots level. That is 'pre-modernisation' prior to 2001. Although the JTM provided a much needed structured approach to coach education, on completion of the level 1 course the JTM was viewed on reflection as a nominal qualification which rewarded commitment and attendance rather than inculcating coaching practices to enhance children's enjoyment and ability. The FDO concurred, in considering

> "Once they [club coaches] have gone on the course, their attitudes completely change and they can fully see why they needed to do the qualification...the biggest issue they have is the cost side" (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06).

The synchronisation of views between the FDO and club coaches regarding the transition from the JTM award to the level 1 certificate in coaching football resonates with the modernisation rhetoric of volunteers becoming 'fit for purpose'. The

adoption of such measures reflect an engagement with the modernisation agenda for sport and football in particular, given the emphasis placed upon the FA to provide greater quality coach education at the grassroots level to empower the voluntary body to adopt a more structured, professionalised and skilled approach to junior grassroots football. Although expressing both reservations and disdain in consistently undertaking new qualifications to keep in line with the pace of change in the criteria of the Charter Standard, and the changes in the content on coach education courses, all club personnel still endeavoured to undertake what was required of them under instruction of the FDO. This was "for the good of the club and the kids, not myself" (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06), and because clubs wanted to be seen to "be doing the right thing by adhering to FA standards" (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). As such, implementers display compliance with Charter Standard criteria. The reasons for compliance with policies are wide and varied (c.f. Houlihan 2002), but, as will become clear it would seem that the most obvious explanation is perceived self interest.

Such engagement with the modernisation agenda highlights the second issue in relation to Charter Standard implementation, which centres on club personnel adopting a more business-like approach to the operational activities of their club. This is in the context of a similar approach adopted by the FDO and County FA through the modernisation of the FA nationally, and the criteria and guidance of the Charter Standard manuals (FA 2003a, 2003b, 2004). Indeed, development departments and their personnel are in and of themselves manifestations of the FA's modernisation. Given that the Charter Standard requires clubs to develop a written constitution that makes reference to AGMs, publication of accounts, membership procedures, child protection procedures, equity, disciplinary procedures and codes of conduct to name but a few (FA 2003a), several clubs adopted new recruitment

practices. These included interviewing potential new staff (voluntary coaches or administrators) and parents and children in order to assess their attitudes towards and capability of adopting such requirements. Moreover, the rules and regulations enshrined in these aspects of the Charter Standard (for example, no dissent or abuse to referees, opposing players or opposing parents) were used by the clubs as a tool not only for recruiting suitable individuals, but also as an exclusionary and disciplinary measure if individuals were to break club rules (Secretary Club 2 Interview 20 / 6 / 06; Club 2 handbook). As most clubs within the Cluster had attained the basic level of Charter Standard accreditation with the exception of clubs 2 and 4 (development club and the ambition to be development club respectively), the engagement with development plans based upon a needs analysis for volunteer coaches and administrators and child protection officers were redundant, and in many cases the commitment involved to implement such plans deterred club personnel from pursuing advancement through the Charter Standard framework. Bearing in mind the structural difficulties faced by the FDO to support clubs within this Cluster, and the general apathy towards and constraints on progression, it would suggest that clubs within this Cluster, although engaged with the modernisation agenda, did so only up to a point.

In this connection, the use of technology in the implementation process is revealing. Clubs 2 and 4 undertook implementation due in part to competition between rival clubs within the Cluster, but primarily for their own benefit. The Charter Standard was perceived as confirming that the existing practices at the club in terms of coaching qualifications and sessions, club administration and child protection were already of the required minimum standard. In essence, clubs perceived that not much had changed in terms of their football provision and organisation upon implementing the Charter Standard and that it was just a 'tick box exercise' in which

the use of technology was influential in securing a quick application (Secretary Club 2 Interview 20 / 6 / 06). Therefore, compliance with the basic level of accreditation was relatively easy. For instance, existing club constitutions including codes of conducts for players, coaches and parents, meant clubs 2 and 4 were only required to adopt an equity strategy and membership procedures (FA 2003:4) which were 'cut and pasted' from the Charter Standard Club Development Manual on the FA's website (Secretary Club 4 Interview 17 / 6 / 06). Where there were gaps in terms of administrative paperwork, for example, an equity strategy, the approach was to access and utilise FA website resources and "just add our name to it and change little bits specific to us" (Secretary Club 6 Interview 30 / 6 / 06). Indeed, such practice was actively encouraged by the county FDO, as the intention was to provide guidance on football development plans and strategies by providing a physical presence at meetings with clubs where needed, and also resources for utilisation "without having to actually physically have contact with clubs" (FDO interview 24 / 3 / 06) with the intention of increasing FDO efficiency.

Acknowledging that due to the logistics of the area and the demands of meeting targets, it was easier and more efficient to concentrate on clubs in closer proximity to County FA headquarters (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). This indicates that although clubs within the Cluster were able to utilise technology available to them, they were also at a potential disadvantage in terms of receiving physical information and guidance on a 'one to one level' with those in position of authority and power regarding football development issues at a regional level. Related to this, problematic interlocking issues regarding the implementation of the Charter Standard are evident. There appears to be a lack of monitoring and auditing by the FDO to ensure that once accredited, clubs maintained the criteria and standards within the framework. As such, the FA do not appear to possess instruments to secure compliance with Charter Standard criteria to the extent that 'mere

implementation' (Houlihan 2002) is apparent. Therefore, the depths of the FAs commitment to implementing the Charter Standard seem questionable in this example, given FDOs do not seem to have resources or instruments to secure compliance.

All clubs within the Cluster expressed a perception that the FA did not monitor or audit them in terms of implementing and sustaining practice in line with Charter Standard criteria. Once Charter Standard accredited, clubs were left to their own devices with the process of a renewal application every three years the only monitoring tool evident: "we haven't seen or heard from anyone in the county FA since we got the award, there is a threat of spot checks but I have never seen evidence of them and everyone I know in junior football around here is of the same opinion" (Secretary Club 4 Interview 17 / 6 / 06). Yet all clubs expressed a desire to be monitored by the FA in order to be informed of any unintentional practices (or indeed intentional practices by rogue coaches and parents) they had adopted which were out of line with Charter Standard criteria. In this respect, the views of the Secretary of Club 3 (Interview 27 / 3 / 06) are indicative of many within the Cluster, stating that

> "I would be keen to see them, not only to ensure that we are doing things correctly because we can't oversee all our coaches and teams at the same time, but [also] to provide that reassurance that our accreditation means something...that we are distinguished from those who don't have it".

In terms of enforcing the Charter Standard, the Secretary continued

> "if you see someone official enforcing it, you are more likely to stick to what you have signed up for...otherwise it becomes a mockery, it is undermined and becomes undervalued'.

Indeed, this notion resonated with the modernisation agenda in terms of checks and audits which clubs perceived a need for, and actively wanted to encourage.

Lastly, tensions surrounding the issue of the modernisation of junior grassroots football clubs through Charter Standard implementation are evident. As clubs become accredited and 'modernised', they are committing to providing football in an organised and structured manner by meeting required standards. Such standards are auditable, and clubs are becoming more accountable for their actions if they become accredited, opening themselves up to external scrutiny from the FA in ways which clubs have never been required to do so throughout the history of grassroots football. Clubs that remain unaccredited are perceived as being under less scrutiny from the FA and therefore have greater autonomy to practice football provision in the way they wish. With reference to the structural characteristics of the Cluster with nine district associations being responsible for more localised administrative duties, the local league within which all clubs participated in the Cluster appeared as an arena for rumour mongering, conflict and ambiguity regarding the motivations for implementing the Charter Standard. The County FA strategy to promote the Charter Standard through localised league structures was reportedly undermined according to the perceptions of several clubs

> "at the moment they [the league] are paying lip service to the award…to the extent that they are taking delight in reminding those clubs who have got it that they are going to be audited and checked…rather than asking clubs who join the league whether they would be interested in the Charter" (Secretary Club 4 Interview 17 / 6 / 06).

Indeed all clubs within the Cluster reported the league to be ambivalent towards the Charter Standard and whilst not discouraging clubs to go through the process, did not actively support or promote the scheme, or actively provide any information in direct contradiction to the FDO's endeavours. Such perceptions were exacerbated in the approach adopted by the league not to give precedence or favour to Charter

Standard clubs vis-a-vis non Charter Standard clubs, specifically, in allocating pitches and fixtures.

Although not an FA stipulation, all club personnel perceived that they should be rewarded and given recognition in some manner, not least preference over facilities and funding. Charter Standard clubs desired some form of recognition as a reward for the implementation of what they perceived as high standards of football provision in terms of organisation, coaching and administration. In this connection, several clubs perceived that the FA were about to introduce a stipulation that all clubs must attain the Charter Standard in order to compete in leagues, which was motivation for them to undertake any qualifications for the renewal and maintenance of their award. Again, although leagues existed in other locations which stipulated that all clubs must be Charter Standard to compete (FA 2005), this was not the case for clubs in this Cluster. Indeed, where these leagues did exist, they were relatively recently established and administrators actively supported all clubs through the Charter Standard process (County FA brochure 2005).

In sum, it is clear that the modernisation of grassroots football, in part by implementing the Charter Standard, has not emerged unproblematically for clubs in this Cluster. Evidently, engagement with the modernisation process in terms of gaining new and updated qualifications has equipped clubs in the Cluster with greater confidence to structure and maintain their club through modernised football development. Despite this, tensions in engaging with the modernisation process are evident. The relatively fast paced changes in both the required coaching qualifications and their content, the adoption of business practices such as development plans, the screening of potential volunteer staff, and the undermining

of the modernisation agenda by the junior league have led to confusion and ambiguity regarding implementation of the Charter Standard. Associated with this, New Labour's modernisation agenda (c.f. Finlayson 2003b) espouses the use of technology. In applying for accreditation, the County FA emphasised a proactive approach by clubs to discover information about the Charter Standard utilising technology such as the FA website. It also underlined the necessary reactive stance taken by the County FDO based on available resources given the structural antecedent's specific to the Cluster. This has also been affected by the findings that some clubs are in breach of Charter Standard criteria despite holding accreditation. Such processes have been underlined by the apparent lack of monitoring and auditing from the County FA which is divorced from the mantra of modernisation.

6.1.3 Charter Standard implementation: Relationships and collaboration within the Cluster

This section explores relationships between the organisations (clubs, schools, local authority and County FA) and personnel, with particular reference to the implementation of the Charter Standard. The constraints and opportunities brought about by the structural antecedents and matters arising in connection with the wider modernisation process specific to this Cluster, frame the analysis. Specifically, geographical isolation of the Cluster and lack or exclusivity of County FA support combined with the contestation for scarce resources, and the pressures of the temporal pace of changes and adoption of principles of the modernisation process through Charter Standard implementation.

Deliberation over the value of implementing the Charter Standard, and the motivations for its subsequent implementation provide insights into junior grassroots football clubs in terms inter-club relationships more generally. Firstly, collaborative activity between clubs was hindered by the manifestation of latent tensions. Dynamics between junior clubs in the Cluster also formed the impetus for Charter Standard implementation in many instances. Clubs 3, 5 and 6 emerged from the break up of Club 1 concerning the issue of player selection based upon ability at previous junctures prior to this research covering the previous four years. Although particularly relevant to the previous sections, it is pertinent to offer a detailed context with specific reference to this issue in order to fully understand and appreciate such collaborative dynamics. Prior to the Charter Standard, it was common practice to select the most talented players for junior football clubs in the quest for winning competitions (Thorpe 2004; Pitchford et al 2007). In an effort to challenge the culture of this exclusionary mentality to try and ensure retention of young players of all abilities, the Charter Standard included a 'Good Practice Guide' (FA 2003d) which included a code of conduct for coaches which made reference to ethical implications raised by coaches' actions, covering team selection, demeanour and vocabulary towards children. Policies on anti-discrimination and equal opportunities for clubs supported the code of conduct. Although the Charter Standard recognises that 'it is natural that winning constitutes a basic concern' (FA 2003d section 4), for clubs and coaches, the code was 'not intended to conflict with that' but demanded 'coaches to disassociate themselves from a "win-at-all-costs" attitude' (FA 2003d section 4). This was supported by the notion that clubs should not 'in all activities, discriminate or in any way treat anyone less favourably' for 'the selection for teams' (FA 2003d section 8). However, this said, the Charter Standard documentation did not explicitly state that players must be given equal amount of playing time, and stopped short of stipulating that teams should consist only of players of greater ability. Indeed, such stipulations were a 'guide only' which could

not be rigorously enforced, and were designed to "persuade people that it is the right thing to do to provide opportunities for everyone at the club to play football regardless of ability" (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06).

Imprecision in the documentation was the catalyst for ambiguity and varying interpretations by different personnel, which led to division and contestation of values and ideas regarding football development more generally, but specifically, the principles of the Charter Standard. Despite this lack of clarity, the breakaway clubs concurred in their interpretation of the Charter Standard documentation that "all players must have equal playing time on the field" and enshrined these in their codes of conduct for their particular club (Secretary Club 6 interview 30 / 6 / 06). Conversely, Club 1 (the original club from which clubs 3,5 & 6 emerged) maintained the policy of selecting the best players. The views of the Secretary from Club 3 (Interview 27 / 3 / 06) are indicative of the tensions underlying the impetus to break away from one club to form another

> "we had a fall out…basically kids weren't getting to play football…one was my lad, they were under 10 and we were saying even if you give them five or ten minutes here and there you have got to give them a game…they didn't agree with that because they wanted to win trophies…so we broke away".

Despite very different approaches to the issue of team selection, all clubs were deemed to be in line with Charter Standard requirements. In this respect, the Charter Standard provided both the impetus for the breakdown in communication within one club, but also the vehicle with which to guide and influence the formation and development of new clubs:

> We decided to set up our own club and contacted the County FA to see how we go about it…did everything right and went for the Charter Standard under the County FA's recommendation…part of it was to show them we can do it ourselves and better than them and other teams in the

> league, some of which are a disgrace". (Secretary Club 6 Interview 30 / 6 / 06)

The Charter Standard was thus viewed as a vehicle to distinguish the practice of newly formed clubs from that of the established parent club. Moreover, implementation was based on a common motivation to compete against, or to keep in line with, other clubs within the area. Manifestations of mistrust and contestation regarding football development and the implementation of the Charter Standard centred on the eagerness of club personnel highlighting the unsuitability of rival clubs.

> "there is no way I would work them in any shape or form, they have the Charter Standard accreditation but in no way do they conform to its guidelines, particularly the way they treat players…that's why we set up on our own. They are undemocratic". (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06).

It is pertinent to note however that varying interpretations of the Charter Standard constitution in relation to this issue underpinned strained relationships between the newly formed clubs and the older established clubs, with proponents of each side of the argument believing they were correct. Indeed, the Charter Standard was offered as a justification for the stance undertaken by clubs on each side of the argument, the extent to which militated against any form of cooperation in terms of developing football. At the centre of this friction was an apparent neglect of coach education and development. Despite Club 1's contention that it adhered to Charter Standard principles and framework, the breakaway clubs reported that none of the coaches were qualified to level one standard and that the club did not support their training or up skilling (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06). This contravened Charter Standard accreditation criteria. As such, pertinent questions emerged regarding both the suitability of certain clubs to hold Charter Standard accreditation given perceptions of others behaviour not adhering to the criteria expected of Charter

clubs. In addition, how clubs in general were monitored to ensure that on gaining accreditation, they conformed to the practices and criteria designated by the Charter Standard (FA 2003a). Moreover, club personnel also expressed concerns about the management of processes and practices within their own club in relation to the above in terms of ensuring their own club maintained conformity to the Charter Standard accreditation process.

Argument and counter argument centring on suspicions about the practices of other clubs, emerging from the mistrust between clubs and the contestation for power and resources within the Cluster, exacerbates differing perceptions of Charter Standard criteria, and ultimately the 'meaning' of Charter Standard accreditation. The most pertinent example of this was manifested in concerns of the Secretary of Club 5 (Interview 25 / 6 / 06), who, in referring to Club 1 suggested that "no AGMs have been held for over 16 years…there is no committee in place or a child protection officer", both fundamental stipulations of the basic level of accreditation (FA 2003a:6). However, such claims were contradicted by the Secretary of Club 1 (Interview 14 / 6 / 06) who contended that in addition to having an established committee "the Charter has meant that every one of our coaches and managers are now FA qualified coaches, they are all CRB checked, first aid trained...we achieved the Charter 3 years ago". However, the Secretary from Club 1 (Interview 14 / 6 / 06) contradicted their initial point by continuing to state, with reference to coach and volunteer training that "we have been acting on this for 6-9 months because we didn't really need anybody to go through this prior to that". Therefore, despite having Charter Standard accreditation for three years previous to this research, the secretary implied that club staff during this period were not trained or qualified in coaching and child protection to the required levels as stipulated in the accreditation criteria (FA 2003a:6). Given the absence of any consistent or clear monitoring from

the County FA, such issues remained unresolved, and added to, rather than resolved, constraints in collaborative activity between clubs in grassroots football.

These longstanding issues, set within the context of contestation for resources between clubs, provided a catalyst for three related inter-Cluster issues: i) attempts to construct and implement a girl's league with clubs within the Cluster; ii) attempts to, and conflict concerning, generating and sustaining links with adult clubs to provide pathways (FA 2003a); and iii) similar conflicts in generating and sustaining links with schools to provide pathways (FA 2003a). These three issues are now explored in more depth.

Firstly, the relationship between clubs 1,2,5 and 6 appeared to have a detrimental effect on the development of girls' football within the Cluster. In the context of the structural antecedents impacting adversely on girls' participation, the mistrust, difference in values and direct competition between clubs exacerbated tensions. Whilst all clubs had girl members at mini soccer level, where teams are mixed, no pathways existed for progression of girls into girl only football at under 11 age. Following the line of reasoning in the above section on structural antecedents, girls stopped playing football. Parents of the affected girls within all clubs resolved to provide structured opportunities and fixtures for girls above mini soccer age in the forming of a league (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06). However, longstanding tensions mitigated against partnership development or collaborative activity and outright conflict was evident, rendering the forming of a local league problematic. For instance, the breakaway clubs refused to work with the established parent club, which had the larger number of girls registered in the Cluster

> "it is a very difficult scenario, because you do find in this area …clubs come from other clubs, like us…and there was animosity, and there still is because of differences of opinion on how to run the club…whatever issues we have with each other tend to cloud everything else to do with the kids, that's why we set up everything in our own way and used the Charter as our guide" (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06).

At the same time, Club 1 resolved not to work with any of the breakaway clubs, citing "their downright reluctance and obtrusiveness against us, why we don't know" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 14 / 6 / 06). Such longstanding and embedded tensions contributed to the exclusion of Club 1 from meetings and conversations regarding the development of a league.

A brew of mistrust, competitiveness and historical subjugation of girls' football combined in part to obstruct the establishment of a girls league over 11 years of age, despite sufficient demand from girls interested in taking up playing opportunities within the area, and playing in regular, formalised league fixtures (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). Motivation to implement the Charter Standard within the Cluster ubiquitously centred on the desire of clubs to distinguish themselves from other clubs, meaning that in this instance the Charter Standard was utilised as a tool for competition and individuality. For instance, the Charter Standard did not stipulate that clubs had to work together in their football development at any level of accreditation (FA 2003a), except for an ambiguous criteria noted as 'links to clubs' at the Community Club level of accreditation in the framework (FA 2003a:11). However, given the observations provided by the FDO and club secretaries, it is reasonable to assume that collaboration in this instance for establishing regular playing opportunities and fixtures for girls' teams may have been beneficial in two ways. That is, the development of an emergent infrastructure for girls' football

within the area, and the advancement of clubs through the Charter Standard framework given the stipulation that clubs must have a development plan which 'provides evidence of links (or provision) to…girls football' FA 2003a:9) when applying for accreditation above the minimum level.

The second issue concerns the 'condensed' nature of the clubs within the Cluster and the 'contest' for resources which characterised their relationships. This created difficulties in establishing pathways or 'exit routes', a stipulation of Charter Standard criteria at the Development and Community levels of accreditation (FA 2003a:9). Despite the ambiguity of such a statement, all clubs in the Cluster concurred that this stipulation referred to ensuring pathways with adult clubs, and clubs with youth sections in order for players to continue playing football beyond the age of 16. As noted in table 6.1, only club 4 provided such opportunities, having an established adult and youth sections within their own club competing in the local amateur football leagues. While not guaranteeing opportunities or progression, it did provide an avenue for young players to progress into adult football. As noted, this particular Cluster was recognised as being located in an area of a particular 'hotbed' of football, reflected by several established amateur clubs competing at level 7 of the national league system close to the Cluster with their own grounds and facilities. However, these clubs also had established youth and junior sections competing in leagues in the area, and crucially, did not have Charter Standard status, or any inclination to undertake the process. Moreover, they were viewed as exclusive, operating in their own interests and not contributing to wider football development in the community (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06).

The Charter Standard accredited clubs within this Cluster encountered difficulty in attempting to link with adult amateur clubs in the area which rented council facilities and competed at what was regarded as a 'lower level' of amateur league football, due to the transient nature of such clubs which emerge and fold with great regularity. This is in part due to having no structure or constitution, the historical culture of clubs being formed and folding with ease, and partly because of friendship and familial ties being broken and reformed (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06), an endemic characteristic of the English grassroots football infrastructure (c.f. Keeton 1972; Conn 1999, 2005). Opportunities to establish sustainable relationships with adult clubs were therefore scarce. Those adult clubs identified by the junior clubs in the Cluster as suitable for forging links became objects of contestation. For instance, Clubs 1,3 and 5 all approached the same adult club to try and establish links. In conjunction with such contestation, the junior Charter Standard clubs were also confronted by barriers within adult clubs. The example of club 2 is instructive here.

In recognising that it provided no pathways beyond the age of 16, due in most part to its reliance on council-owned facilities and the lack of capacity within the club, it approached an established amateur league club competing at level 7 of the national league system. This level 7 club did not provide youth or junior sections, but owned its own ground and facilities adjacent to the venue where club 2 played its fixtures and trained. Club 2 personnel perceived that a partnership with the adult club would be beneficial to both parties, including progression through the Charter Standard framework for the junior club, and the possibility of drawing up a development plan to attract funding from the Football Foundation for a new facility to the mutual benefit of both (see table 6.1). This idea was backed by the FDO (Interview 24 / 3 / 06). However, the adult club, continually successful at its level of football in terms of winning competitions for several years without having youth or

junior sections, deemed there to be no necessity to link with junior sections and establish pathways (Secretary Club 2 Interview 20 / 6 / 06), to the extent that

> "we had a couple of meetings with them, one guy was quite keen, but the committee who have been there for years didn't want anything to do with us because they saw no value in football development at the youth and junior levels… they just wanted to carry on the way they have been for years just picking players up through word of mouth and talent spotting, offering boot money to those they think are good enough…we really did try to merge with them, and that would have provided a continuation for our kids ensuring they didn't drop off from the game and solve all our problems, but theirs too as their ground is falling into disrepair and the amount of cash injection they would have got if they had 6-16 year old range teams".

Club 2 was successful in receiving funding from the Football Foundation to develop its own facility adjacent to the adult club's facility. The adult club then became interested in the developments taking place and decided it wanted to forge a partnership. However, on achieving its ambition without the need to forge partnerships with the adult club, Club 2 decided to continue with the development plan on its own, citing that "they keep on asking for money from us now but it is too late" and due to the adult club having "a bad reputation, all sorts of things have gone on there…money going missing, people getting locked up, all their players come from the estate several miles away and they are a bad crowd…there are fights nearly every week and they are an intimidating bunch" (Secretary Club 2 Interview 20 / 6 / 06). Yet such reservations were previously overlooked when Club 2 desired the link with the adult club. In addition, the contention was raised that if a partnership was forged, the adult club was not Charter Standard accredited, and the approach to playing and developing football would differ greatly from the practices adopted at the junior club in line with Charter Standard requirements. Indeed concerns were expressed that "the kids would lose the quality of our club, the standard of fairness and behaviour would get watered down" (Secretary Club 2

Interview 20 / 6 / 06) as they became exposed to the practices in unaccredited adult football.

The third and final issue concerns the emergent sport development infrastructure in terms of school sport partnerships, the PESSCL strategy and the links into a County Sports Partnership. At the time of research, these were little more than a year old (Head of PE Interview 17 / 7 / 06). This was reflected in the fact that none of the clubs' personnel could identify any links or partnerships with schools except in the capacity of hiring facilities, and none were aware of any of the aforementioned programmes. Moreover, in line with the method of inquiry adopted, none of the clubs identified any personnel from schools or local authority sport development departments in relation to their football development activity generally or the Charter Standard specifically. Two pertinent issues involving the main school in the town offer instructive insights with regard to operational relationships between schools and clubs and wider organisations involved in the sport development infrastructure in this Cluster: i) relationships between school staff and other sport development professionals in the local authority and the school sport partnership (SSP); and ii) the informal and 'word of mouth' relationships the school held with clubs in the area.

First, the fledgling SSP offered little in the way of football provision, choosing to focus on athletics and dance, as

> "football was not seen as important, so although the links in the partnership are getting stronger, they are not in terms of football because they say football is big enough and strong enough to look after itself" (Head of PE interview 17 / 7 / 06).

Apathy shown by clubs to forge links with schools, and the lack of support indicated by the SSP to develop football or promote the Charter Standard in any way rendered football development work 'difficult to start or sustain in many cases' (FDO Interview 24 / 3 / 06). Many of the activities and initiatives provided through the SSP duplicated school provision and did not include the development of any sport in terms of accreditation or links to wider community groups and clubs (Head of PE Interview 17 / 7 / 06).

The second issue here concerns the stipulation that schools in all categories of Charter Standard accreditation must provide evidence of an existing 'minimum of one link to an FA Charter Standard football club…or a club willing to work towards achieving the standard within a 12 month period…to provide opportunities for boys and girls who wish to play football outside school' (FA 2003b). In addition clubs only need to provide evidence of links with schools from Development Club level upwards of Charter Standard accreditation (FA 2003a). The onus for partnership working between schools and clubs therefore rests with schools. The lack of established school-club links is particularly evident given that all but one club are below Development Club level status. Given this, the Head of PE for school 1 noted that, despite holding Charter Standard schools accreditation, had not been proactive in seeking or attaining links with clubs other than through facility hire, and that any contact with clubs had been on the actions of the clubs themselves when seeking funding grants for resources (Head of PE Interview 17 / 7 / 06). In addition, the Head of PE noted that "if it is was just a case of stating we are working with the club to develop football then I would have no qualms in providing our details on the form to back it up…after all, it benefits the kids from our school" (Head of PE Interview 17 / 7 / 06).

The Head of PE also noted that links were "informal at best…through word-of-mouth" (Head of PE Interview 17 / 7 / 06) in that children from the school simply played for local clubs in the area who hired the school facilities and promoted themselves with paraphernalia in the school. All clubs noted the informal, word-of-mouth basis that characterised relationships with the school. Most of their playing membership was taken from the main school in the town (with some others on a wider basis), that they hired the school facilities for training, and that the school was a venue for club promotion in terms of distributing promotional paraphernalia and attendance at special events such as summer fairs. Some clubs (clubs 2 & 4) provided minimal ad hoc coaching sessions at the request of the school, which were viewed as a means to an end in terms of the school meeting the targets of other policies (out of school hours provision PESSCL), and for clubs to promote themselves for the purposes of attracting players. These sessions were discontinued once the school, bound by meeting targets for other sports and the sport development professionals meeting targets of their own, had no use for them. The sessions were not used in conjunction with gaining, or maintaining Charter Standard accreditation for either school or clubs. Other clubs observed that no schools had approached them to form links in terms of football development and Charter Standard implementation (Secretary Club 1 interview; 14 / 6 / 06; Secretary Club 2 interview 20 / 6 / 06; Secretary club 6 interview 30 / 6 / 06), and that they either had been given no information, assistance or persuasion from the County FA or schools to do so:

> "we have four of five primary schools in a mile radius, none of them to my knowledge are Charter Standard…none have approached us to do any coaching…we have got these level 1 coaches who could offer coaching sessions…it might help bring the kids to our club and teach them football…but we don't know who to approach or how…do we phone up the headmaster and say can we come along? There has got to be some sort of system that we don't know about" (Secretary Club 6 Interview 30 / 6 / 06).

Other clubs identified personnel as a schools liaison officer and contacted schools through letters and flyers with no reply. The interdependence of clubs and schools in order to achieve Charter Standard accreditation in forming partnerships and 'links' is undermined here, as relationships in this instance are based on communicative and ad hoc partnerships that emerge and dissolve transiently in reaction to the structural antecedents and the context of modernisation. They are therefore susceptible to the processes and dynamics involved in other related policies such as PESSCL which policy agents need to act upon.

In sum, a lack of collaboration is evident in the Cluster in terms of football development generally, and the implementation of the Charter Standard especially. The chasm between the criteria for clubs stipulating that the lowest basic level of Charter Standard accreditation does not require the forming of links with schools (c.f. FA 2003a:6), and the opposite applying to schools in that the lowest level of school accreditation requires links with a Charter Standard accredited club (FA 20003b:1), created conditions unfavourable for collaboration, and indeed the need to work in collaboration. Given the FDO's preference to work with clubs at the expense of schools, and the lack of a sport development infrastructure supporting organisations within the Cluster, the conditions to encourage partnership working were absent and indeed redundant, as schools remained aloof to the Charter Standard at the time of research. Indeed, evident collaborative activity, or lack thereof, centred on the relations between clubs within the Cluster. Mistrust and contestation created conditions in which the motivations for clubs to implement the Charter Standard emerged around two central issues. For example, Club 1, on being broken up due to the fragmentation and fractiousness which led to other clubs originating from their members, used the Charter Standard as a benchmark to work with in terms of guidance for setting up new club structures (Secretary Club 1 Interview 14 / 6 / 06). Likewise, the breakaway Clubs 3 and 5 evidently adopted the

Charter Standard as a tool to develop the structure of the club and to provide guidelines to which members were to adhere (Secretary Club 3 Interview 27 / 3 / 06; Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06) as the basis for forming new clubs. That is, the modernisation agenda: a) not only influenced the FA to undertake development work at the grassroots level, but the newly formed development departments within County FAs were becoming visible to clubs in the grassroots football policy network; and in conjunction with this, b) were identified through promotion and word of mouth as the body to contact for assistance in developing and sustaining a junior football club. In this respect the motivation for clubs to implement the Charter Standard centred on the perceived benefits of the Charter Standard as being internally useful in the form of 'doing things properly' and 'progressing in the right direction under the auspices of FA guidelines' (Secretary Club 5 Interview 25 / 6 / 06), but also due in part to the interlocking processes regarding the interpretation and dissemination of rumours and the realisation that other local clubs had attained the award. In short, it was perceived that in order to compete, it was wise to implement. The development of a girls' league brought an identified need to the fore in terms of football development generally, and in meeting the criteria for Charter Standard implementation for individual clubs. However, collaborative activity in this context can be viewed as a means to an end for each individual club's development and survival and reflects the contestation for resources within the Cluster. In this respect, clubs were working alongside one another rather than together to develop girls' football. Additionally, this process was also used as a vehicle with which to exclude other groups from the development of football.

6.2 Cluster Two

Introduction

Cluster Two centred on a district covering three inner city wards situated north and north east within a major city and metropolitan borough (population 1,006,500) in a metropolitan county of the West of central England. The city council is the largest local authority in Europe (ONS 2001). The city has a rich sporting heritage, and consists of two of the oldest professional football clubs in England with international and national reputations, one of which is a consistent competitor in the highest division of England, whilst the other having competed in the same division has a lesser profile. The city as a whole is ethnically and culturally diverse. In 2005 the ONS estimated that 67.8% of the population was White (including 2.7% Irish & 2.1% Other White), 20.4% Asian or Asian British, 6.6% Black or Black British, 1.1% Chinese, 3.1% of mixed race and 1.1% of other ethnic heritage. It was noted that 57% of primary and 52% of secondary pupils are from non-white British families, with 16.5% of the population born outside the United Kingdom. Such figures are significant given that the FAs Charter Standard scheme for clubs and schools targets these age groups, and that the FAs provision of football has been criticised as historically prejudicing minority groups in a number of ways (Conn 2005; Burdsey 2007).

The population density of the city is 9,451 inhabitants per square mile (3,649/km^2) compared to the 976.9 inhabitants per square mile (377.2/km^2) for England. Crime figures for 2006/2007 indicated the city was above average for the U.K in all aspects. The city centre has been identified as having the highest concentration of gun crimes in Britain, with three areas of the city, two of which make up this Cluster, being noted as in the top 10 worst gun crime affected areas of Britain (ONS 2005). It is, in

short, an area noted as economically deprived, notorious for gang related crime, has issues with immigration and is highly fractured along ethnic and cultural lines.

Ward 1 is a very diverse community, ethnically, with 70.6% (19,030) of the area's population being of an ethnic minority compared with 29.6% for the city as a whole, with an increasing migratory white population and a large immigrant community; double the city average of 16.5% and nearly four times the national average of 9.3% (ONS 2005). The ward is host to one of the professional football teams described above, reputed as one of the largest supported in England, but which until recently had been perceived as not being engaged with community groups, particularly those in the Asian community of the ward (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). Football, although popular, is so more amongst the white indigenous population which is in the minority of the ward (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). Club 1 within this ward was the only Charter Standard club within the ward at the time of research, and predominantly represented the Afro-Caribbean population of the ward.

The second ward is essentially suburban in character and primarily a residential area with a number of council estates in need of modernisation. A small ethnic minority population is recorded, representing 10.6% (2,724) of the ward's population as opposed to 29.6% for the city. White British is the largest ethnic population living in the ward. The only Charter Standard club in the area at the time of research, Club 2, was predominantly Afro-Caribbean.

The third ward has an ethnic minority population of over 82.6% the largest portion of which is Muslim of Kashmiri-Mirpuri descent compared with 29.6% for the city in general. Levels of unemployment were significantly above the national average. A

number of initiatives were in place by community groups and partnerships in order to tackle social problems such as gang related crime and social exclusion. The only Charter Standard club in the ward at the time of research, Club 3, predominantly represented the Asian population of the ward.

In short, the district comprised of the three wards is diverse and fractured across ethnic lines and has a large immigrant community, in which gun and gang crime is rife and is a key priority for local government. Indeed, the figures presented above are questioned by the Sport Development Officer for the district in claiming that 90% of people within the district claim some form of income support or housing benefit, with the crime rate perceived by local authority officials to be above eighteen times the national average which is not reflected in the public domain due to a media ban on incidents being reported due to high profile cases having occurred at the time of research (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05).

The County FA website indicates that there are over 2,500 affiliated grassroots football clubs, over 2,000 participating schools, and 75 grassroots football leagues under its jurisdiction, and recognises the Cluster as a particular 'hotbed' of football. The County FA has the largest remit for football development and therefore Charter Standard implementation in the country (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). The metropolitan county within which the wards of the city and the borough are located do not match the boundaries covered by the County FA which provides football for the area. The County FA had been long established before the metropolitan county and kept its jurisdictional areas for football beyond the political jurisdictional areas of the city itself and the metropolitan county. Indeed, including its own host county, the County FA has jurisdiction stretching across three different metropolitan and

shire counties. Complicating the political landscape further, each metropolitan or shire county is mirrored by three County Sports Partnerships all with separate sport development aims and objectives relative to their specific regions, of which football is generally lower on the development agenda than other sports (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05; PDM Interview 12 / 12 / 05). Moreover, the City Council underwent a process of 'devolution for localisation' (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05) in 2004, which split the City council into eleven districts with each district responsible for sport development within its wards. In part, this structural complexity is accentuated by "schools very rarely know where they are affiliated to" (Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 07).

The County FA has a larger development department and sub divisions than others due to the number of clubs, size and complexity of the area. As noted in Chapter 2, County FAs have separate governance and development departments. The remit of the development departments is to implement nationally led FA policies, and to link football with wider government policy in sport development by working in partnership with other agencies such as CSPs, SSPs and Local Authorities. In this regard, this particular County FA is perceived as unique (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). At the time of research, the development department consisted of a County Development manager at the helm, with a Football Development Scheme director directly underneath. The functions for schools and clubs were subdivided below this position to two Football Development Officers, one for clubs and volunteer development and another for schools specifically. Serving these development officers were two administrators to deal with all football development issues. Parallel to this structure was a coach education team, responsible for hosting coaching courses across the three metropolitan and shire counties. The County FA is also a limited company by guarantee, meaning it is non profit, but requires income generation to fund its activities through hosting courses volunteers are required to

undertake in order to implement the Charter Standard, for example, Coach Education, Child Protection and Emergency Aid workshops.

Table 6.2 shows the constituents of the organisations and individuals making up the Cluster, their involvement with the Charter Standard, and the links between them. The issues raised here relate predominantly to junior grassroots football clubs rather than schools. Moreover, the junior football clubs accessed within this Cluster all represented an arm of, or were in themselves, a local government funded voluntary charity organisation aiming to alleviate pervasive social problems indicated earlier.

Contacts	Organisations & Responsibility	Charter Standard Involvement	Network Links
Clubs Football Development Officer 1	County Football Association named after the major city is based in one major county and partly covers 4 other counties. Approximately 2,500 clubs affiliated to the County FA, and covers the second largest geographical area under county FA jurisdiction (but has the largest number of clubs)	Responsible for targeting and assisting in implementing Charter Standard with clubs. Other football development initiatives across the whole county	Local football partnership, club no.1, 2&3. All professional clubs FITC within county boundaries of which there are 5. FDO 2. SDO
Schools Football Development Officer	Same as above but responsible for school development	Responsible for targeting and assisting in implementing Charter Standard with schools. Other football development initiatives and education strategies across the whole county	Local football partnership. PDM and primary school no.1. FDO 1
Sports Development Officer	City Council. Responsible for sport development in 4 wards (all three in this Cluster) within inner city areas with high BME populations. Gun crime and gang culture prominent. Sport development utilised mainly as a strategy for inclusion amongst fragmented community and to counter anti social issues	Advisory. Targets clubs with Charter Standard to work in partnership with charity organisations to develop facilities within club no.1 ward.	Local charity organisation in ward 1. FDO's local football partnership. Club no.1 in developing facility development plans for funding to generate new community facilities and 2. PDM at SSC 1. Professional club FITC within the ward and Cluster
Partnership Development Manager	Based in inner city area with high BME populations. School is multi-ethnic, selective school for boys. Responsible for developing partnerships with local clubs, primary feeder schools, secondary school Clusters in all sports, developing out of school hours PE. Encountering problems forging links with clubs and schools across different ethnic communities within the Cluster.	SSC is not charter Standard. PDM has implemented Charter Standard at other schools within previous job role. Other sports perceived as more important to 'develop'. Gang related culture blamed for a lack of school-club links which constrains implementation of awards	SDO, professional club FITC within Cluster. FDO 2

		such as the Charter Standard	
Secretary Club 1	Football club part of wider charity organisation that provides welfare, job and sporting opportunities for members of the community, located in ward 1. Established by a social and youth worker as part of a youth club/organisation as a tool to combat youth gang and crime culture in the ward. Although all inclusive, members mainly constituted from one ethnic community within the BME area of the Cluster. Has boys and girls teams for all age groups from U9 upwards and adult section. Has links with Premier League football club and secretary scouts for club.	Charter Standard Club status in 2003. Implemented and maintains Charter Standard. In process of Development Club application and also aiming for community status long term	SDO, local charity organisation in partnership to generate plans for facility development. Club .2 . Some teams compete in same league as clubs 2&3
Secretary Club 2	Football club is part of a wider charity organisation that provides welfare, job and sporting opportunities for all members of the community. Although all inclusive, members mainly constituted from a different ethnic community than club no 1 within the BME area of the Cluster. Boys only teams at all age groups	Charter Standard Club status. Implemented and maintains Charter Standard.	On the fringes of ward within Cluster and therefore excluded from facility development for community. Club 1 and SDO on rare occasions. Some teams compete in same league as clubs 1&3
Secretary Club 3	Charity organisation catering for all members of the community. Has a mix of multi ethnic groups attending soccer school section at weekends. Has boys teams at all age groups up to adult. Caters for girls but no teams competing in leagues.	Non Charter Status. In process of applying. Having difficulty because of number of teams needing qualified coaches. Soccer school has a large number unqualified coaches	FDO 1. Some teams compete in same league as clubs 1&2. Scouts from professional clubs
Club Committee	Club no.4 slightly outside of Cluster and could be the start of a new Cluster in an affluent area. Has teams ranging from under 7's to under 16's catering for boys and girls.	Charter Standard Community Club status	FDO 1

Table 6.2 Organisations and individuals implementing the Charter Standard in Cluster 2

6.2.1 Charter Standard implementation: Structural and Contextual factors

Analysis of this Cluster raises similar structural and contextual themes to those in Cluster 1. That said, in line with a dialectical approach to policy network analysis (Marsh & Smith 2002), an undercurrent of prevalent structural issues *encompassing* the football development policy network rather than issues *within* the network structure itself permeate the dynamics of Charter Standard implementation and football development more generally regarding this Cluster. That is, processes 'external' to Cluster 2 bound up in the wider socio-political context influence inter alia, to a greater degree the dynamics and nuances of Charter Standard implementation within the network in comparison to Cluster 1. Whereas all clubs and individuals in Cluster 1 generally shared common cultural backgrounds and, to a lesser degree, socio-economic status, Cluster 2 is more fragmented and diverse. Each club is generally comprised of individuals from a specific ethnic community, which generally represents a particular ward within the Cluster who share a distinct identity and various commonalities within their own clubs and schools such as; relationships, kinship ties, cultural history and practices. Such characteristics exacerbate tensions between ethnically diverse communities, underpin gang and crime culture, and combine with the largely economically deprived and fragmented nature of the district to provide a milieu of prevailing structural and contextual antecedents that have impacted upon the characteristics of grassroots football provision and implementation of the Charter Standard therein.

Both constraints and facilitation of Charter Standard implementation are threefold within this context, particularly regarding; the history, longevity and status of clubs' standing and representation of specific communities in each ward, the wider funding environment around such areas of deprivation, particularly those with a

high percentage of ethnic minorities, and, communities perceiving the threat of violent and insidious gang crime to be looming.

Similar to Cluster 1 structural tensions regarding, inter alia, the density of the area, a number of clubs competing for scarce council owned facilities, and the embedded cultural practices within grassroots football, hinder the development and inclusion of minority groups and girls' football particularly. However, there are several points of departure based upon the demographic differences between the Clusters. Although all clubs reported similar constraints in expansion of club's in terms of facility development and usage as in Cluster 1, there are subtle differences. All clubs in this Cluster are extensions of welfare organisations whose charitable funding is contingent on the number of individuals as members. In this respect, all clubs were under greater pressure to expand provision and acquire greater facility capacity, as all noted being oversubscribed with people wishing to access their organisation to play football as an add on to the other welfare and educational assistance on offer. Exacerbating the scarcity of facilities is the density of the area meaning demand is often not met, and that

> "There are a whole lot of areas in the area which could be used for sport pitches, not only for football, but they are closed down due to a lack of funding and lack of interest. This means we have to take kids half an hour away to play football with other kids. They should really be able to stay in their immediate area, which is what we are trying to offer them" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

Similar to Cluster 1, all clubs had ambitions to develop their own facility in order to cater for such demands, with the Charter Standard perceived as an integral component to assist funding applications towards facility development. This impacted on both the capacity and the desire of each club to progress through the

Charter Standard framework. For instance, Club 3 reported being very fragmented with a number of teams competing in a number of leagues across several venues as they did not own their own facility (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05). Club 2 could not expand provision any further in the facility that they hired from the Local Authority for Saturday and Sunday soccer schools and the completion of league fixtures. Indeed, the growth of the football club for Club 2 caused problems in that the Local Authority planned to close down the facility they used for housing development. The club had grown to such an extent that no other council owned facility in the Cluster had the capacity to host such a large organisation (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05). Club 1, however, were more advanced in facility development plans (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05), which exposed a source of tension and conflict within the Cluster regarding external assistance in facility development, to which the second point of departure is now explored in some depth.

The implementation of the Charter Standard is bound up in the ethnic tensions, and economically and socially deprived nature of the Cluster, which qualifies the district within which it is part for substantial government funding directed towards regeneration. In this regard, two simultaneous processes intertwined regarding i) UK Government policies and initiatives based on regeneration, and ii) a UEFA influenced English football development initiative. Reflecting the socio-political context of partnerships and collaboration to implement policy, such initiatives concern the establishment of a range of different programmes to determine local needs and to pilot new ways to combat deprivation in the poorest, most deprived communities such as this Cluster. Resonating with New Labour's modernisation agenda in that citizens such as club volunteers are becoming 'fit for purpose' to deliver cross-cutting Government objectives (Newman 2001; Finlayson 2003; Green & Houlihan 2006), the Charter Standard is perceived by many to, a) assist funding

applications, and, b) augment the legitimacy of clubs in exemplifying sustainable good practice with reference to external funding bodies such as the Football Foundation.

One such government led initiative is The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's (NRU) 'New Deal for Communities' (NDC). Although not specifically related to individual sporting initiatives in its remit, organisations work collaboratively to deliver local cross-cutting projects, often using sport as a vehicle to engage young people in alleviating social problems such as poor health, poor education standards and crime (DCMS 2001; NRU/ODPM 2005)[2]. Briefly, such programmes aim to encourage the formation of community-led partnerships which place local communities and organisations (in this case grassroots football clubs) at the heart of regeneration policies and the design and delivery of local public services (Foley & Martin 2000:483; Marinetto 2003). As such, they are designed to respond to local circumstances rather than directing policy from central government in an example of collaborative bottom up policy implementation in which a partnership between the state and civil society is central, including an active citizenry with expanding individualism and rights, which come with an extension of obligations (Giddens 1998:65). Ward 1 hosted an NDC partnership, with the SDO for this Cluster representing the City Council Sport Development Unit on its board.

The NDC was in the final stages of a substantial redevelopment of a public park in partnership with the professional football club within ward 1, the City Council,

[2] The 39 NDC Partnerships launched in 1998 each face unique combinations and types of disadvantage, but all tackle problems associated with social exclusion. Between 1999/2000 and 2005/06 £1.54 billion (SEU 2005/06) has been spent by the 39 Partnerships, approximately a billion from Government investment and the rest from other sources, especially other public funds (£390m).

Heritage Lottery and Barclays Spaces for Sport[3] to develop a sports pavilion and sport facilities for community use, of which a mini soccer, junior and adult football pitch were to be allocated to one local grassroots football club (SDO Interview; 19 / 5 / 05 CSP annual report 2006). The development intended to link the facility to a leaseholder club as part of its wider social exclusion and welfare activities to operate and manage both the pitches and the pavilion for football and educational/welfare activities. Highlighting a 'development through sport' strategy, the NDC intended to capture people at a young age in an attempt to prevent future involvement in the incipient gang and crime culture in the area (NDC Delivery Plan 2003/04).

At approximately the same time, UEFA introduced its 'Hat-Trick' programme. £1.1million was allocated over a four year investment plan for national associations (the FA) to include as part of its own grassroots initiatives to improve infrastructures, amongst other things, in grassroots social projects (UEFA 2003). Such programme aims were compatible with the criteria in the NDC programme. The FA secured partnership funding of £3.4 million from the NDC after successfully demonstrating how it could deliver its own 'Hat-Trick' programme based on education, health and social inclusion through football by allocating UEFA funding. Given The FA Chairman Geoff Thompson was also UEFA vice-president, he was in a position of power to act as a 'policy entrepreneur' to acquire and manipulate such funding requirements and applications from UEFA by "quite cleverly linking their [The FA's] Hat Trick programme with the NDCs to use it as match funding and leverage to establish three year projects around football that they would part fund to

[3] Barclays Spaces for Sport was launched in 2004 in partnership with the Football Foundation. It is a £30million programme to create sustainable sports facilities in disadvantaged communities across the UK. It is the country's single biggest investment in grassroots sport by a private company. Working with communities funding has been allocated to regenerate areas into sporting facilities that local residents need and access to sport where this didn't previously exist. See http://www.barclays.com/community/spacesforsports/

target inner city areas, basically those areas in which they [The FA] have been criticised for not traditionally providing any support in the past" (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). Football in this sense would be used by the FA to combat the acute social problems specific to this Cluster, whilst simultaneously allowing the FA to deliver its own football development objectives such as implementing the Charter Standard (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). Adopting the principles of 'modernisation' and New Labour's 'Third Way' the FA arguably achieved collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen 2005). The FAs programme was a three-year scheme (2006-2009) for the appointment of 19 community football workers across England. These community FDOs would originate from the community in which they were to work (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05), based on the assumption that traditional approaches by the FA which employed FDOs to work in such areas in a top-down approach to deliver policy and initiatives had failed. Most pertinently, a combination of; FDOs perceived to be of different educational and cultural backgrounds, a longstanding lack of trust and suspicion in communities similar to this Cluster towards the FA in general (Dunnning & Sheard 1978; Kerrigan 2004; Conn 2005), and an embedded longstanding perception of FA personnel not understanding the unique problems and dynamics underpinning such a fragmented and diverse community (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview10 / 11 / 05). This located the Charter Standard as an integral component for the FA to highlight itself as a 'modernised' organisation capable of utilising government funding to deliver on wider public policy goals by adhering to New Labour principles of implementation.

Ward 1 within the Cluster was allocated funding for three posts, one for women and girls participation, one for club development to be assigned to a welfare charitable organisation that used sport as a vehicle to combat social exclusion, which would operate out of the new facility. The role of these community FDOs was to provide

opportunities for young people aged 7-16, while focusing on areas that suffer from multiple deprivation; poor health, housing, education, and high incidences of crime and drug abuse. The community FDOs were given a remit, 'to develop sustainable opportunities for children through FA Charter Standard clubs; develop leaders and coaches from within the communities; and to support the Government target of providing two hours of PE in schools every week' (FA 2005; UEFA 2005).

A mixture of geographical location, opportunism and favouring from politically weighty organisations placed Club 1 in an advantageous position in comparison to other clubs. At approximately the same time as the FA developed and linked the NDC with the Hat Trick programme, coincidentally, Club 1 had been encouraged by the SDO to achieve Charter Standard accreditation to highlight the club as sustainable to assist the Sport Development Unit and the local NDC in a facility development plan to apply for Football Foundation funding for the same facility (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05). In this connection, the SDO became a potential 'gatekeeper' or 'policy broker' in their position as a sports development professional with a remit for the area, but also in the capacity as a member of the NDC board. Club 1 was selected by the SDO for a variety of reasons; i) the organisation as a whole had been credited locally with combating gun crime and gang culture in the area, particularly amongst the Afro-Caribbean population, ii) the club was eligible for NDC funding, being located within the ward that NDC had responsibility for, iii) the organisation had a number of Government backed quality marks or awards, one of which was the Charter Standard, and iv) the club catered for teams of all ages offering 'pathways of welfare' from mini soccer age through to adult (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05 ; FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05).

Moreover, the funding cycle and requirements acts as a constraint on the selection of which clubs and organisations to work with. Given that most local voluntary organisations are transient and face issues with sustainability of themselves and programmes (McKinney & Khan 2004), identifying a suitable partner to deliver community objectives is problematic. Combined with this, the large number of voluntary organisations operating within such a relatively small area exacerbates fragmentation as historically embedded divisions and suspicion militate against groups from different and similar ethnic backgrounds from working in partnership with each other or relinquishing their identity as representing a particular group. This justified the SDOs position in working with Club 1, in stating

> "we are building the development of the clubs and facilities around them [Club 1] as they have the Charter Standard…we are trying to base our new developments such as this facility development, around those organisations which offer welfare and education, including football clubs, of which there are now many...but the Charter Standard highlights that they are three or four years more established than others in the area in terms of using football to help tackle the problems we face as a community than any of the other 49 organisations that operate in the area" (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05).

However, such justification in relation to the Charter Standard is erroneous, given that other clubs in the Cluster, also representing wider charity organisations had Charter Standard accreditation. It is likely that a mixture of personal relationships, and the geographical boundaries for funding based on wards opportunistically placed Club 1 in close proximity to the SDOs area of remit that consequently led to Club 1 being targeted as a partner for both the NDC and the SDU.

The County FA, in granting the Charter Standard to Club 1, became aware of the funding application. This coincidence placed Club 1 in an advantageous position with a powerful bargaining tool vis-a-vis the FA and other local groups of both similar and different ethnic backgrounds, as their bid fully complied with all Football Foundation criteria (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05; Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05). The duplication of funding influenced the FA to offer concessions in order to ensure their own funding development under the Hat Trick programme was not undermined (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). In order to advance with the funding application, the FA, having been recommended by the SDO, offered the club development role to Club 1 in agreement that the FA would proceed with their bid with Club 1 stepping aside working in support of the FAs application (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05).

The Charter Standard in this respect is a small underlying but significant element of such processes related to regeneration funding in the area. The consequences of Club 1 being selected as a key partner for regeneration funding in these wider processes created and exacerbated ethnic tensions within the area to a greater extent than they have been addressed. Such dynamics within the enveloping structural antecedents raise points of divergence between clubs and the SDO in the Cluster regarding issues relating to the ethnic backgrounds of individuals from each club. To re-iterate, Clubs 1 and 2 represent predominantly Afro-Caribbean communities within their respective wards. The major ethnic group within the district and Cluster is noted as being of Asian denomination, of which Club 3 predominately constitutes. NDC funding requirements stipulated that organisations must be transparently inclusive and representative of the community, to 'Involve local people' and 'Take proper account of the needs of people from ethnic minorities and other minority groups' (NDC 2002 accessed at

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/displaypagedoc.asp?id=837). Club 1 however, as with all clubs in the area, did not display such diversity. In this connection, identifying and working with an 'inclusive' club is difficult, as none fitting that criteria exist (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). Inevitably, clubs in the area with a greater reputation and longstanding association with the area are more attractive as potential partners, particularly given that Club 1 and its welfare arm cater for a larger number of people in the area, providing the potential to hit a larger portion of the population, even if that is only representing one ethnic group.

> "I am adamant that football development won't be exclusively with them [Club1]...if they are going to benefit from external funding from the public sector, we need to see that the club represents accurately the residential population of people in the ward and district…the majority of people in this district are from an Asian background. It obviously raises issues as the club is predominantly run by and caters for people of an Afro-Caribbean background and it will be a challenge for them to demonstrate they are more inclusive and representative of the population...what people do not realise is that they were selected because they have been longer established and had the Charter Standard longer than any other club in the area...in essence they are sustainable" (SDO interview 19 / 5 / 05).

On complying with becoming more representative and inclusive of the community, Club 1 would be 'extensively supported' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05) to become Charter Standard Community Status accredited. Therefore Club 1 would be the central hub of football development within the district, assisting other clubs with Charter Standard applications and would itself become a vehicle for football development in conjunction with the employment of the Community Football Development Officer (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05; Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05).

However, other clubs diverged from the opinion of the SDO. The selection of Club 1 was understood in terms of favouring a particular ethnic community vis-a-vis Club 3

and geographical location vis-a-vis Club's 2 and 3 (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05; Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05). Although recognised as a large club in terms of provision in the Asian community (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05; Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05), Club 3 was located outside the geographical boundary of the NDC project and 'as it is public sector funding, there is very stringent rules on where that funding can be spent...we didn't draw the lines on the map, central government did' (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). Such processes served to exacerbate tensions which clubs discursively constructed in relation to their own and other clubs ethnicity 'It's not really fair and all it is doing is creating animosity as they [Club 1] are getting everything at the expense of us and others' (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05).

Charter Standard implementation is constrained and facilitated in connection with the apparent divisions within the Cluster underpinned by gang membership and notoriety, which is partially equated with particular ethnic groups across the wards and is reflected in the membership of each of the clubs.

> "the area has specific problems around deprivation, violence, people getting shot…which stops children from travelling out of their little areas within the district which in turn hinders the work we can do across settings…but on the other hand, there is a lot that goes on here because funding just gets thrown at places like this, meaning that there are lots of initiatives, programmes and charities working in the area" (PDM Interview 12 / 12 / 05).

Indeed, all respondents noted that they had either been involved in, or affected by, gang and gun crime in the past, which, amongst other things, had motivated them to pursue careers which used football as a vehicle of welfare (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05). Although, none of the respondents suggested themselves or

their members were part of such gangs, the presence and notoriety of gangs impacted upon the choices and behaviours adopted by members of schools and clubs in relation to football (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05). In this regard, the fragmented nature of the Cluster is difficult for individuals to transcend. This is particularly highlighted in the attempts by schools to deliver wider government social inclusion infused policies such as 'Sportsmark'; 'Activemark' and the PESSCL strategy in generating school-club links, which the Charter Standard compliments. As observed by the PDM,

> "it is very difficult for clubs beyond their specific locality to involve schools and children…for instance one particular school is extremely successful on a national level in athletics, but the nearest club is based in another district from the school which has a notorious gang, so to get the children to carry on that activity outside school is very difficult as they often feel threatened if entering someone else's 'turf'…it is the same with football, sometimes even worse given the heightened competitive nature of football in general" (PDM Interview 12 / 12 / 05).

The Schools FDO (Interview 17 / 10 / 05) concurs

> "it is very rare that schools in this area can have out of school hours provision with clubs outside of their immediate vicinity because they can not overcome the cultural and religious barriers each ethnic minority brings both within the schools themselves and in relation to other schools...therefore developing inter and intra school football is limited at times".

The upshot of the perceived threat of violence limits the progression through the Charter Standard framework for both clubs and schools. To develop a club beyond the minimum level, and for schools to implement the lowest level, of their respective Charter Standard awards, evidence of school club links must be evident (FA 2003a; FA 2003b). It is worth re-iterating here that no club or school within the Cluster had advanced beyond the respective minimum levels accreditation of Charter Standard at the time of research.

Added to this, the Charter Standard became synonymous with wider initiatives within the area, and national government policy in terms of equality. This is unsurprising given that at the time of research, the 'Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport' was being integrated into NGBs 'Whole Sport Plans'. Although not directed at clubs at grassroots levels of sport, the Standard engrained an ethos in sport development professionals' work that clubs were expected to increase diversity and equality in clubs. This was transposed onto how the Charter Standard ought to be implemented. The SDO and PDM viewed clubs displaying equitable practices as 'fundamentally important' in accreditation being granted, in order for football development practice 'to have an impact on issues relevant to the area...to combat the important issues of social exclusion and gang related crime' (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). FDOs concurred that Charter Standard Clubs in particular had a role in "generating community relations" and "contributing to social inclusion", but stopped short of stipulating that this was a condition of Charter Standard accreditation. However, those clubs that demonstrate a contribution to combating social issues, and include people from different areas and backgrounds than themselves to join the club are looked favourably on, and may receive greater assistance in their application (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). As such, clubs which endeavour to develop social inclusivity and equality are favoured, and desired in terms of their ability to contribute to the wider policy agenda that sport development professionals work in.

Conflict and ambiguity regarding the ethos of the Charter Standard imply that different sport development professionals are capable of shifting programmes such as the Charter Standard to fit their own agenda. In brief, such processes reflect Lipsky's (1980) observations relating to the practices of 'street level bureaucrats'

transforming policy on its implementation to suit the conditions and constraints they work in. The criteria required for Charter Standard accreditation in this regard does not explicitly address inclusion or exclusion per se, but reflects the rhetoric of New Labour's egalitarian principles in stating that 'The FA is committed to providing opportunities for everyone to participate in football regardless of their ethnicity' (FA 2003a:4). The FA claims to have adopted an 'Ethics and Sports Equity Policy' which 'is about fairness and respect for people...equality of access and opportunity, recognising that inequalities exist and taking practical steps to address them...recognising that football needs to ensure that it is equally accessible to all members of society' (*ibid*). Clubs applying for accreditation must therefore adopt; an equal opportunities policy or sports equity policy, an anti-discrimination policy, codes of conduct for all members of the club ranging from coaches and parents to children, and for members to attend a sports equity course (FA 2003a:4). To support clubs and individuals to implement equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies, the FA produced a good practice guide for Charter Standard implementation (FA 2003d: 13-14). Stipulations such as this reflect little more than rhetoric in practice which give rise to difficulties and variances in implementation given the subjective nature of interpretation of the policies. This is despite the belief that implementing the Charter Standard, given its emphasis on equity within clubs and schools (FA 2003a), would act as an integrative force for football development in encouraging clubs to be more equitable (Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05). Yet, although there is guidance for equitable practice, clubs are not encouraged to actively pursue members of ethnic minorities as 'there is no need for it, some areas within the county do not have ethnic minorities in great numbers, so we can't have separate policies for different areas' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). The content intends to inform the practice of individuals within clubs rather than encouraging them to actively seek equitable practices which in effect make such policies largely redundant as they are not enforceable. That is, such policies in the practice of

football development by implementing the Charter Standard in this Cluster are not 'substantive', but merely 'empty shells' (Hoque & Noone 2004) as the adoption of such policies have not been supported by evidence of the adoption of supporting practices.

Moreover, implementation of the Charter Standard highlights a paradox. Set against a backdrop of the number of clubs and individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds not traditionally associated with football reportedly increasing, particularly of Asian extraction(c.f. Burdsey 2006), simultaneously, divisions based upon ethnicity are exacerbated. Bearing in mind structural constraints, the adoption of attitudes and stereotypes in relation to the ethnic makeup of each club reinforces difficulties in establishing equitable and diverse provision

> "the teams are predominantly Afro-Caribbean, the next group is White and then the next is Asian, and traditionally Asians…don't get involved in football...we find Asian families very particular in allowing their kids to join us... it's a shame as diversity is one of the things we champion and the Charter Standard reflects this" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05).

Given that the club 'embraces all citizens' but has a selection policy "we pick the best players for our teams in competitive leagues, which are predominantly Afro-Caribbean...and if I am honest we lose some Asians because they can not play competitively for us" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05), a processual hotchpotch of underlying assumptions/stereotypes and their evident self reinforcement underpin Charter Standard implementation. That is, stereotypes are perpetuated by those in key positions interpreting available evidence confirming beliefs they hold are true. As such, inculcation of equitable practice within the Charter Standard (FA 2003a) is accounted for in paperwork for accreditation, but is not operational in practice. Such observations reflect a widespread contentious

belief in the meritocratic nature of sport, in which the under-representation of British Asians in professional football is frequently perceived to be a result of a lack of participation at the junior and grassroots level of the game. Johal (2001:156) claims those in positions of power within institutions responsible for the organisation of football verify their beliefs by selecting evidence that this group in general do not or cannot play football. This substantial misconception (Burdsey 2006) ignores a burgeoning culture of amateur football which has existed amongst young, male British Asians (Burdsey 2006:483) external to 'mainstream' football.

There are several interlocking processes evident in football development regarding this nomenclature. Such processes correspond to; i) the history of ethnic minority football participation in juxtaposition to the historical mainstream development of grassroots football, generally organised by and for, white indigenous populations (c.f. Russell 1990; Goldblatt 2006); ii) the formation of structures and implementation of policies to overcome such stereotyping and; iii) a simultaneous increase in numbers of ethnic minority individuals and clubs paradoxically addressing, and exacerbating, longstanding divisions.

One outstanding example of this is the establishment of leagues representing particular ethnic groups within the Cluster. Whilst clubs 1 and 2 have a number of teams that compete in 'mainstream' leagues, teams from Club 3 almost exclusively participate in leagues and fixtures constituting the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds as themselves, that is, South Asian descent.

As Williams and Giulianotti (1994); and Back et al (1998) note, local football clubs representing a particular minority ethnic group often originate from local neighbourhood, kinship, work or ethnic ties, and are often a site for resistance to

perceived prevailing prejudices concerning embedded racial abuse and social closure in becoming a cultural resource for the local community. However, observations claiming clubs often overcome prejudice and gain acceptance for their achievements on the football field, which results in wider recognition of players from ethnic minority groups in football more generally, are questionable. Such prejudice is noted as pervasive in contemporary amateur football in work by Long et al (2000); Burdsey (2006), and here. Although developments have gathered momentum relatively recently, Bains and Patel (1996) and Bains and Johal (1998) sensitise us to the notion that a number of well established Asian football clubs, participate in tournaments and leagues away from the gaze of, and unaffiliated by, footballing authorities, and indicate participation of young, male British Asians, to be considerably higher than previously acknowledged (Bains & Patel 1996:7). Due in part to the increased popularity of football amongst this ethnic group, and the perceived perpetuation of longstanding exclusionary practices based upon racial stereotypes, British Asian players and clubs often became affiliated to leagues and associations organised on a predominantly, if not exclusively, British Asian basis. Few people external to this culture are aware of its existence, reinforcing stereotypes about a lack of interest and aptitude in football by British Asians (Burdsey 2006:485); further substantiated by the fact that as a result, participation of British Asians largely remains situated outside of football's implicitly white normative codes (Back et al . 2001: 173). In this sense, the Charter Standard has been implemented by Club 3 within the league in a competitive manner as "we want to show that we are just as, and even more capable when it comes to playing and organising football than the others" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

By implementing the Charter Standard, Club 3, by forming and participating in such leagues pride themselves on resisting what they perceive to be an embedded myopic approach to developing football by the FA, yet paradoxically conform to the

governing body's policies regarding how football should be developed. In this instance, rather than contributing to integration of different communities, the Charter Standard, unintentionally, has contributed to increasing separation and distinction between clubs, which in turn exacerbates embedded ethnic tensions in the wider community. The Charter Standard is used in this case, as a vehicle for further resistance and identification for particular ethnic groups vis-a-vis other ethnic groups and the organisational infrastructure of grassroots football. The Charter Standard has created a paradox by i) increasing the already established divisions along ethnic lines, which is exacerbated by the increasing number of Asian players and Charter Standard clubs participating in 'ethnic specific' leagues removed from the 'mainstream', and ii) conversely increasing the number of ethnic minority clubs conforming with 'mainstream' football development practices such as the Charter Standard and its attendant criteria such as coach education, child protection and club administration workshops. On the one hand, implementing the Charter Standard has assisted in accelerating the acceptance of ethnic minorities into those clubs traditionally 'closed shops' to such groups (Club Development FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). On the other hand, the Charter Standard has also been implemented as a badge of distinctiveness which reinforces exclusivity and cultural resistance.

In sum, this Cluster indicates that areas with a high percentage of geographically distinct ethnic minority populations in close proximity to one another, the implementation of the Charter Standard is contributing to increasing participation levels and sustainability of individual clubs which essentially are becoming more 'modernised', but also creating unintended consequences which may contribute to strengthening divisions between different ethnic and religious communities. The inclusion of the Charter Standard as a symbol of resistance in ethnic specific leagues, and as a symbol of contestation between clubs of different ethnic composition are

cases in point. Added to this, the perception that particular clubs, and particular ethnic groups, are being favoured by sport development professionals, government and the FA in terms of facility development, underscores the prevailing constraints. The undercurrent of gang membership and crime are significant barriers for progression through the Charter Standard framework given that clubs and schools experience difficulty in forging links. As such, the impact of the Charter Standard in this Cluster is limited to superficial adaptations in club practice, with greatest impact occurring as to how clubs are organised. For instance, as noted above, the Charter Standard and wider FA and government accompanying policies to combat racial prejudice within the game and society more generally are proactive only up to a point. That is, the notion that a club has adopted an equity strategy and equal opportunity policy in order to gain Charter Standard accreditation does not address or begin to tackle the core issue of embedded divisions based upon cultural, religious and ethnic incompatibilities within a Cluster such as this.

6.2.2 Charter Standard implementation: the 'modernisation' of grassroots football

The issues related to modernisation raised here should be read as both occurring within, and impacting upon, the structural context previously identified. The nature of the Cluster being ethnically fragmented, combined with competition for funding between clubs backed by wider welfare and charity organisations, frame the modernisation process for this Cluster. In relation to the other two Clusters, a number of similarities in relation to modernisation are noted. Underpinning subtle nuances and slight differences in how such issues were arrived at and are played out, serve to emphasise modernising processes for grassroots football across all the Clusters.

Briefly, three nuanced points of departure discussed here. These regard similar issues of, i) adoption of business principles and practice, ii) temporal dynamics in relation to meeting and maintaining fulfilment of Charter Standard criteria, for example, changes in coach education, and iii) ambitions of clubs to expand the number of teams and players with particular reference to advancement through the Charter Standard framework. The impact of modernisation and 'new public management' techniques are more acute in this Cluster given the structural antecedents identified. As such, the implementation of the Charter Standard is influenced to a greater degree by subtle differences in the structural fabric of the Cluster. These are discussed in brief.

First, the adoption and acceptance of business principles in football development work, and particularly clubs voluntary work is evident. Views of the Club FDO are revealing, acknowledging the wider modernisation agenda in which business practices are permeating the sport sector with greater impacts than previously experienced (c.f. Houlihan & Green 2006). Indeed, FDOs perceive voluntary clubs as 'businesses', embedding the notion that, for clubs to run efficiently and effectively, business practices must be adopted. Not only this, a general acceptance of such practices seem evident amongst football development staff whose job roles and functions are adapted to, and intertwined with such 'modernised' processes

> "it is a great thing to have this kite-mark because it is generic…it is not just about sport, you get these quality marks in any businesses…So we thought it was a great scheme to start with having clubs work their way up to something quite consistently which is recognised nationally and something they can feel proud of" (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05).

Given all clubs are wider arms of various welfare, voluntary and charitable organisations, exposure to business practices and achievement of kitemarks customarily in the public sector (Whitfield 2006:24) are not new. Vetting of volunteers and staff by clubs in Clusters 1 and 3 usually, although not exclusively, occur on implementation of the Charter Standard. In this Cluster, such procedures are routine everyday practices within organisations rather than just the football club. For example, interviewing potential volunteers is an established practice in all welfare organisations which is conveyed to football teams within (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

As in Cluster 1, all clubs perceived the Charter Standard as a symbol of confirming practice that already existed within the club conformed to FA requirements.

> "I wouldn't say that it made us do anything differently, just that we're more aware of what we are doing... and also because the club has grown bigger as well...it has allowed us to standardise practice across all teams within the club...everyone now knows what is expected of them and it gives us a formal structure to work within that everyone must abide by" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05)

Given that all clubs had a large number of teams and harboured ambitions for further expansion, the Charter Standard was perceived as beneficial in providing a much needed standardised infrastructure within which volunteers, players and spectators could be held accountable for their actions. Each club identified that they had established a number of policies and procedures, which had generally been 'cut and pasted' or adapted from the FAs website (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05). The view below is indicative of all clubs in the Cluster.

> "If you were, for instance, manager of under elevens, now whatever standard that I impose on the under elevens, I can't imagine or trying to put it onto the under nines if I'm not actually there, so if we've got some documentation and talk to all the managers and all the players and all the coaches, all the parents and all the young people involved...at least then, there's, there's a level and the same song sheet to be reading off of kind of thing." (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05)

As each club has a vested interest in expanding its playing membership, and progressing through the Charter Standard framework, training and accrediting of new coaches is a key concern. Each team within a Charter Standard club must have at least a level 1 qualified coach ranging to level 2 coaches for each one of at least ten teams at the Community level (FA 2003a). Resonating with processes connected to the pace of changes in coach education, and perceived advancement in coaching knowledge and practice in Clusters 1 and 3, the Club FDO (Interview 19 / 9 / 05) notes that:

> "clubs will say that they have done the old JTM's or they have done their old 'c' licence, they have been coaching for years, he is an ex pro and so on...that is the biggest stumbling block to Charter Standard...eventually clubs see the reasons why they have to do the new coaching qualifications...the problem is it is a big commitment and it is a lot of money to pay out for clubs if they are a club of 'x' number of size".

Indeed, each club concurs that the transition from JTM to 1st4 Sport Level One in coaching football has benefited volunteers' coaching practice (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05). Despite similarities with clubs in Clusters 1 and 2, contextual and structural factors make coach education a more acute problem for clubs and football development staff in this Cluster. That is, a multitude of funding bodies and programmes, football clubs as essential vehicles for welfare activities and competition and segregation along ethnic lines

The transient nature of coaches is a case in point. Given all junior football teams to an extent rely on parents to volunteer, clubs in this Cluster are more reliant on 'external' volunteers to assist teams, given that a major factor in children attending such organisations is primarily due, amongst other things to apathetic parents (ONS 2005; Club 1 newsletter 24/4/05; SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05; Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). All clubs in this Cluster ubiquitously acknowledged being susceptible to such a problem,

> "They just got their coaching qualifications and just disappeared, and the reasons are unknown...there was one guy, that was so enthusiastic, he was there for the beginning, he did the coaching course and the day after we never saw him again – gone" (Club Secretary 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

Thus, clubs adopt strategies to attract volunteers through subsidised coaching courses to manage new teams in line with club expansion to maintain Charter Standard accreditation or progress through the framework. Yet, they face similar constraints as clubs in Clusters 1 and 3. In this connection, schools experienced an extremely high turnover of staff (PDM Interview 12 / 12 / 05). Given all schools must have a teacher qualified to at least level 1 in football coaching, or the FA Teaching Certificate Key Stage 2/3/4 (FA 2003b), the transient nature of staff, often explained in terms of pressures emanating from the structural antecedents, renders schools susceptible to similar processes faced by clubs in the temporality of coach education and the transient nature of coaches. Therefore, those schools which do have Charter Standard status are potentially operating as being accredited without actually fulfilling the required criteria given that staff expertise utilised to implement the award may have left the school. The PDM (Interview 12 / 12 / 05) perceives this as 'down to luck whether or not there's somebody there with an interest in football and will to do it.'

The dynamics of temporal processes give rise to more than one issue of modernised implementation, which sets apart this Cluster from others. Whilst not exclusive to this Cluster, clubs experience difficulty in meeting Charter Standard criteria in undertaking CRB checks, essential for all volunteers in Charter Standard clubs (FA 2003a)[4]. Although volunteers registered within these organisations, having arrived via an occupation in social work or welfare, have CRB clearance for activities in their workplace, a CRB check must be undertaken through the FA's own CRB unit (FA 2003f). Therefore, some volunteers, having volunteered for several voluntary positions with different organisations have been through the CRB process a number of times within a year. The CRB process takes up to eight weeks for the FA to process. During that period, a volunteer is not excluded from participating in the clubs football activities (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). As such, clubs operating with Charter Standard accreditation potentially do not fulfil the required criteria for periods of time throughout the process, and are at risk of not fulfilling wider child protection legislation (c.f. Brackenridge et al 2007; Cabinet Office 2008).

> "you could have a good quality coach and you're there waiting ages for their clearance, or you can just say, you know what, because I know you as a person from quite a long time ago and also you've passed your qualifications and part of the football qualifications is to go through child protection...you say to yourself you can run with it...it's like a big grey area and there's no real clarity in it" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

Such ambiguity highlights frustrations with the modernisation process, not least because of recurring financial burdens incurred for voluntary and welfare organisations. Despite the Cabinet Office (2008) encouraging CRB checks to be free for all volunteers, The FA CRB Unit charges clubs an administrative fee for each disclosure undertaken, potentially costing each club a significant portion of money.

[4] CRB checks became a required criteria for all members of grassroots junior football clubs, both Charter and non Charter Standard post 2005 (c.f. Brackenridge et al 2007)

Therefore, as in Clusters 1 and 3, accreditation is undermined as schools and clubs do not fulfil the criteria of qualified coaches per team on a temporal basis (FA 2003a). Although a monitoring system is cited in Charter Standard documentation in the form of annual checks through a self evaluation for clubs and schools (FA 2003a; FA 2003b) little monitoring of activity to ensure clubs and schools are operating in line with Charter Standard criteria is evident. Unannounced visits to matches to check practice meets attained criteria, has been relayed to clubs, yet no clubs have experienced this (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05). In this connection, the Club FDO (Interview 19 / 9 / 05) expressed opinion that they did not have the resources to undertake such a task.

> "sometimes in the past there have been spot-checks but there isn't enough...we haven't got the manpower...we do annual reviews, but again that is based on trust, we hope that the clubs provide us with the information and that is updated. What I have found in the past is that clubs are telling us that they have got 'x' number of volunteers because that 'x' number qualifies them, in fact they have got other coaches in the club who aren't on the form because they are not qualified but they are a CS club…people hide facts to keep their status"

Due to an insufficient monitoring system based purely on trust and honesty, the Charter Standard is potentially undermined in the same way as in Cluster 1. The lack of a monitoring system is a contentious point amongst club volunteers.

> It's too easy…We've got the Charter Standard and as far as I'm concerned we've got it for life, I don't see us ever being able to lose it…I can't see how they're actually monitoring it or monitoring us...you've got a problem…I can't see how the FA are doing it, or what they're doing. Maybe they are doing it and I don't know. I've got no idea." (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05)

Another paradox is evident here. Given the observations made earlier regarding volunteers being drawn into the football development policy network, the discontent conveyed by club volunteers is counteracted by clubs themselves in wishing to resolve the monitoring conundrum. It is contended that the County FA does not have the resources to monitor, and that clubs between themselves should undertake monitoring activity (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05).

Connected to the above, a widely held perception evident within Charter Standard accredited clubs is that "volunteers are doing the FAs work for them...makes the FAs job easier" (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05). Understood in relation to the wider modernisation agenda, popular opinion was reflected by Secretary Club 2 in that "volunteers such as ours are taking on the paid work of others for the benefit of ourselves yes, but also we are a cheap answer to the FA". Given that in general, clubs fund their own development activity such as coach education, such a view has become embedded within the Cluster regarding the perception of the Charter Standard. Having become accredited clubs share the belief that greater extrinsic rewards should be available to them. Given the enveloping funding environment, such perceptions are magnified. This ranged from preference in funding bids to external bodies, and exclusivity of support from County FA staff and development officers. It was largely felt that, a lack of extrinsic rewards undermined the distinction of Charter Standard clubs vis-a-vis unaccredited clubs. The culmination of the perceptions of volunteers being drawn into the football development policy network in taking responsibility and accountability to deliver programmes such as the Charter Standard, a lack of tangible and extrinsic benefits in balance of intrinsic rewards such as kudos and a standardised club structure raise questions regarding the purpose and impact of the Charter Standard other than at a local and individual level. That is, the motivations of clubs to implement are bound up in a mixture

between local rivalry and the perception that extrinsic rewards such as funding will automatically follow.

Post implementation then, highlights problematic dynamics for both professional development staff and club volunteers alike. For clubs, a commonality throughout the Cluster referred to the desire of individuals to develop young people through football in conjunction with their organisation's wider goals on a voluntary basis, because "that is what we invest our time for, the rewards in seeing young people develop" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05). As such, clubs perceived that this desire also diminished in individuals within clubs as the process of engaging with grassroots football became 'modernised'. That is, a more rationalised, accountable and work-like activity, rather than the often spontaneous involvement characterising much of grassroots football culture.

A significant point of departure regarding the professionalization of coach education is amplified in this Cluster. Coupled with professionalization in the modernised practices of County FAs and the advancements in technology (for example internet access, websites and email), putting County FAs in greater touch with the football workforce than at any time in the past, has in part led to an increase in demand from coaches for coach education opportunities. In this connection, the 'modernised' approach from New Labour has encouraged private sector activity within the public and voluntary sectors. The processes involved in 1st4Sport developing a generic coach education framework for sport (c.f. Lyle 2002) has created an environment in which organisations other than NGBs can become training providers offering coach education. The opening up of these sectors to the 'market' (Whitfield 2006) has allowed for private and commercial coaching organisations to infiltrate the football development policy network. Tensions developed regarding the control County FAs

have over coach education. As noted by the Club FDO (Interview 19 / 9 / 05), the County FA does not have the capacity to meet the exponential increase in demand for coach education courses alone, and rely on partnerships with colleges and other providers which offer qualified tutors. However, problems are created as commercial organisations claim to offer FA level one courses to the letter, but in fact it is a minimal course of their own making which does not meet the standards in the 1st4Sport qualification packs (Club FDO interview 19 / 9 / 05).

Conditions influenced by modernisation have generated power struggles in areas such as grassroots football, once the preserve of the FA. The introduction of private enterprises into the football development network has served to question the power, utility and legitimacy of the FA, as other bodies are able to offer an alternative in areas such as coach education. As such, scepticism of the FA and County FAs has increased rather than waned. The Charter Standard is a case in point. Fulfilling criteria requirements such as relevant coaching qualifications and the drafting of development and business plans enhances the legitimate authority of County FAs and the FA. For instance, clubs do not express the view that the Charter Standard must be implemented because the FA suggests it to be the correct manner in which to develop and provide football. Alternatively, the Charter Standard is implemented to enhance individual clubs and welfare organisations applications for funding from wider funding bodies such as the Football Foundation (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05). Clubs, to be eligible for Charter Standard status, are required to have an FA qualified coach through a 1st4 Sport coaching qualification in football from a recognised and affiliated FA centre. Clubs have become entangled in this issue which has created obstacles in attaining and maintaining Charter Standard accreditation. For instance, Club Secretary 3 (Interview 10 / 11 / 05) notes that

> "we put all our coaches on the level one course at 'X', but having done this the County FA told me all coaches who had been on the course were not eligible as they were not recognised by the FA

The Club FDO (Interview 19 / 9 / 05) concurred

> "that's when we hit a block as a lot of clubs had done it and then suddenly found they had to give up 36 hours again to go and do the FA one because we don't, and rightly shouldn't recognise the other one"

Having identified the susceptibility of this Cluster to similar temporal dimensions as in Cluster 1, the imposition of new public management techniques amplify such processes in this Cluster. Most notable here is pressure to achieve KPIs for football development staff. Such techniques associated with New Labour's modernising process (Cabinet Office 1999) aim to encourage transparency and accountability, improve efficiency and make auditable, those organisations (County FAs; clubs and schools) providing a service (football) to their customers (players). In this regard, the number of clubs and schools to annually achieve Charter Standard accreditation. Funding is granted or withdrawn for football development based upon failure or success of achieving KPIs. The FA provides grant aid to County FAs to appoint Football Development managers and FDOs. Development staff produce development and facility plans, with inbuilt targets of increasing affiliated teams, coaches and Charter Standard clubs. Targets are reviewed to ensure they are realistic, measured and managed quarterly by FA national and regional management (FA 2004/05:9; Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). As such, football development has become underpinned by the doctrines of performance management, quality management and strategic management (Newman 2001:201). KPIs are deemed the unit of control (Newman 2001; Lawton & MaCauley 2004), in which individual County FA FDOs, are accountable to consumers or end users of services provided, in this case football. Such target and performance related tasks have created a number of conundrums and influenced a number of strategies to

counter them in order for FDOs to achieve targets. These centre on, i) clubs and schools applications and FDO support, ii) the multitude of, and pace in adaptations to new and existing programmes and initiatives impinging upon development work for County FA professionals, and iii) the acquiring of funding to develop clubs and schools capacity to deliver football opportunities.

Briefly, the modernisation of grassroots football manifested in the rise of full time professional development officers and supporting administrative staff since the early 2000s has been accompanied by a simultaneous rise in the number of both Government and FA led initiatives and programmes across a range of areas in order to 'modernise' the grassroots game. Given structural complexities, such difficulties are compounded by the Cluster being located in an area susceptible to a large number of wide ranging sport focused initiatives. FDOs try to avoid duplication, or to take advantage of those that may complement the Charter Standard (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05; SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05; County FA Annual Review 2006).

Superficially, development staff perceive there to be interfaces between different programmes. Fulfilling criteria or the delivery of an initiative to a target group can aid the impetus to undertake another programme. For instance, a school undertaking the Three Lions programme[5] in which links between schools and clubs are encouraged can establish an essential piece of criteria for the Charter Standard (FA 2003b; FA 2003d). Development staff subsequently recommend schools implement the remaining Charter Standard criteria such as qualifying teachers to

[5] The FA provides funding and resources through the 3 Lions FC programme to help schools and clubs broker sustainable relationships and develop school club links.

level one standard in coaching football (FA 2003b; Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05). FDOs target those clubs or schools that have 'been involved in developing football for a while' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05) or those that have been involved in a complimentary programme or initiative which they can use as a foundation to build a Charter standard application. For instance, 'teachers moving from teacher training to a qualified JFO (Junior Football Organiser[6]) instructor, are pushed to apply for Charter Standard' (Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05). Yet it is those clubs or schools that tend to be proactive in contacting County FA staff for assistance, rather than FDOs actively promoting the scheme which are encouraged to undertake a Charter Standard application. The reactive approach adopted by FDOs is actively pursued as it assuages the fragmented nature of the Cluster, as FDOs endeavour not to be seen to favour a particular ethnic group, area or particular clubs or schools (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05)

The combination of a large number of initiatives which often do not match or show little evidence of co-ordinated joined up thinking, each with KPIs built in for different job roles contribute to institutional fragmentation. Development workers adopt protectionist strategies to ensure individual targets are achieved is typical

> "it takes a lot to get your colleagues to work with you…everyone's tunnel vision… they promote their own programmes to meet their own targets... FDOs whose remit is to get as many girls playing football as possible may work with the SDO who has a similar target...Charter Standard is secondary to them or sometimes probably a little bit further down their list of priorities" (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05)

[6] The FA Junior Football Organisers course is designed to support young people aged 14 to 18 with the skills to lead groups of young people aged between 6 and 11 years in safe football activities under the supervision of an FA qualified coach. Teachers can become a qualified JFO tutor in line with Charter Standard accreditation (The FA 2003b). The JFO course is a stepping stone towards enrolling on the FA Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Football course that is open to people aged 16+. (see for example, http://www.herefordshirefa.com/Development/Schools/FA+Junior+Football+Organisers/)

This view is brought into sharp relief given that 'people's jobs are essentially on the line if they don't meet their own targets...as it becomes hard to justify their role' (Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05).

How each scheme or policy can complement one another such as the Charter Standard is often an afterthought, despite small evidence of harmonisation. For example,

> "the schools – club links initiative (Three Lions Programme) requires clubs to undertake coaching within schools. This feeds into the County FAs 'partnership' with PDMs in the SSP, who educate schools to accept only qualified coaches from Charter Standard clubs within a formalised coaching programme. The use of coaches from local clubs provides exit routes for children interested in playing football, so then we just say to the schools only work with CS clubs which must cater for girls." (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05)

Despite evidence of complementarities being understood by development staff, in practice the reality of implementation and coordination is somewhat different. Often, FDOs undertake spontaneous actions in an uncoordinated manner which resonates with Lipsky's (1980) theories of street level bureaucrats coping strategies. This is evident in relation to the interlocking processes of i) the identification and selection of clubs and schools FDOs wish to achieve Charter Standard accreditation, and ii) support for clubs and schools throughout application process. For instance, applications and enquiries regarding Charter Standard are often left to chance and 'land on the nest luckily through word of mouth' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). Indeed, as part of the FDOs coping strategy, a reliance on the combination of different initiatives and schemes and the proactivity of individual clubs and schools are perceived to aid the implementation of the Charter Standard and reinforces the FDOs largely reactive approach. Such strategies, whilst risky, have not been

detrimental to the achievement of annual KPIs for the accreditation of clubs and schools in this Cluster. Indeed, much the reverse is evident. FDOs report achieving KPIs for Charter Standard clubs and schools with relative ease. Similar to Clusters 1 and 3, several clubs have pre-existing structures which contribute to a basic level Charter Standard application. Due in part to the structural characteristics of the Cluster and football clubs as arms of wider welfare organisations, such a bearing on Charter Standard implementation is amplified here as

> "we thought the Charter Standard would take a lot of effort…we realised that because we're involved with the social side, a lot of the stuff was in place…the FDO said you just need to put it together so I spent some time on the internet filling in the required forms without really changing anything we didn't already have." (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05)

Whilst the Club FDO concurs 'Its easy, we hit them [KPIs] every time' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05), issues are raised regarding i) the quantity of clubs at the minimal club accreditation level and ii) perceived barriers to progression through the Charter Standard framework for clubs. The former brings into question the function, purpose and utility of KPIs, whilst the latter underlines difficulties that clubs reliant on volunteers have in modernising. Taken together, Charter Standard accreditation is potentially undermined by the strategies and tactics employed by both FDOs and club volunteers to overcome such issues. Whereas KPIs for Charter Standard club accreditation, the lowest level on the Charter Standard framework, are regularly achieved and in some cases over achieved, FDOs perceive there to be a difficulty in progressing clubs through the framework to higher levels of accreditation (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05).

The size of the county and the number of clubs at basic Charter Standard level in relation to the numbers at higher levels were perceived as disproportionate and that

it was important to 'not just that retain those at CS level, but it is moving them up now' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). Therefore, clubs perceived as being credible for development or community status are targeted by the FDO. However, the ambitions of clubs may not match the ambitions of the FDOs, as the achievement of County FA KPIs has no relevance to individual clubs. In addition, the perceived workloads to produce development plans are a mitigating factor in the hesitation of clubs to engage with the process (Club secretary 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05). A lack of desire to implement higher levels of Charter Standard accreditation and advance through the framework is underpinned by the perception that volunteers are undertaking work equivalent to that of paid development staff in connection with the perceived lack of rewards. Once implemented, the motivations to advance or develop within the Charter Standard appear to diminish, as "it is just more hassle... what are we going to get out of it??" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05)

Such difficulties have led FDOs to grant development (and at times community) status on the proviso that clubs put in place the required missing criteria within a given timeframe. This is more often than not based upon the level of coaches per team (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). As such, although the Charter Standard is implemented here, it is done so in a way which does not reflect the criteria required. Rather than just being a simple implementation gap (for example, a club has ten teams but one of which has a coach undertaking an FA accredited coaching qualification rather than already having it in place at the time of application), the Charter Standard itself can be perceived as being adapted to suit the needs of football development staff, so that what is actually implemented is not the Charter Standard per se, but a variation of the scheme.

Finally, strategies adopted by FDOs in achieving KPIs are contradictory to both the substance of Charter Standard and stated positions of FDOs. For instance, FDOs are keen to emphasise their focus for implementing Charter Standard is to increase standards and raise quality of football provision. As such, FDOs insist on working with those clubs that are either Charter Standard accredited, or are willing to work towards it. That said, simultaneous pressures to achieve KPIs influence the adoption of strategies, in particular granting accreditation precipitately, undermine the stated values of FDOs. Indeed, such actions are largely unplanned and are adopted in order to, amongst other things, protect jobs and assist career advancement as their performance is measured. Techniques such as KPIs adopted to underpin the modernisation for grassroots football development to increase efficiency, accountability and to measure performance, appear to have been imposed in a top down rationalistic fashion not accounting for different contexts or the potential for inventiveness amongst development staff.

In sum, it is clear the modernisation of grassroots football through the implementing of the Charter Standard has not emerged unproblematically for clubs, schools and professional development staff. The Cluster is exposed to similar processes occurring in Clusters 1 and 3, with similar outcomes. For instance, the motivation behind implementing the Charter Standard was to confirm that the clubs were already involved in best practice, and to attempt to advance the clubs position in achieving perceived extrinsic rewards that did not materialise. Similar tensions have emerged regarding the relatively fast paced changes in both the required coaching qualifications and their content, the adoption of business practices in the form of development plans and the screening of volunteer staff. Yet engagement club volunteers gaining new and updated qualifications has equally equipped clubs in

the Cluster with greater confidence to offer football to their communities. As such, all clubs perceive that the intrinsic benefits of a club infrastructure should be complemented by greater extrinsic rewards from the FA in recognition of their commitment to conforming to FA best practice. However, the structural context of this Cluster permeates the modernisation processes with greater incisiveness. Volunteers perceived themselves to be drawn into the football development policy network to undertake activities perceived to be the remit of County FA professional staff, putting the voluntary workforce under pressures resonating with professional organisations. The impact of business principles in the screening of volunteers is already an established practice given the nature of the organisation that the football clubs are affiliated to. The multitude of initiatives and programmes combined with the imposition of KPIs, that is, a series of agreed targets for organisations such as County FAs to achieve across a number of government linked sport development initiatives, adds to this complexity. Such practices highlight a manifestation of simultaneous broader social and political processes i.e. New Labour's modernisation agenda (Newman 2001:57) impacting upon grassroots football development. The modernisation process seemingly requires operation in a mechanical manner reflecting a rationalist approach to implementation. Yet, the actions of FDOs to cope with the multi-faceted assortment of a number of competing and interrelated programmes and initiatives does little to encourage efficiency, a fundamental aspect of New Labour's rhetoric on modernisation (Flinders 2007). Such processes have been underscored by the apparent lack of monitoring and auditing from the County FA which is divorced from the mantra of modernisation.

6.2.3 Charter Standard Implementation: Relationships and Collaboration within the Cluster

Constraints and opportunities influenced by structural antecedents, and matters arising in connection to the modernisation process specific to this Cluster, frame the analysis. Specifically, these concern fragmented communities and eminent gang culture along ethnic lines, competition between clubs for funding as part of wider welfare organisations, and pressures of temporal changes and adoption of principles of the modernisation process such as achieving of KPIs.

Relevant points of similarity with nuanced points of departure regarding Clusters 1 and 3 are evident, and are referred to throughout. For example, in relation to the discourse of the Charter Standard 'Good Practice Guide' discouraging selection policies based purely on ability (see section 6.1.3), all clubs communicated a discourse of selecting children for competitive teams based upon ability (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05) in order for their club to be 'as competitive as possible against our rivals...it is about pride in this area, we all want to be the best' (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05). It must be acknowledged however, that other football activities such as soccer schools held by each organisation demonstrated a predilection towards egalitarian rather than meritocratic provision. Yet these too were noted as recruiting opportunities for competitive league teams. A paradox is evident in that the raison d'être of each club relates to welfare of young people through an established 'development through sport' approach and, an explicit commitment to social inclusion and equity. Yet clubs evidently adopted what are considered to be exclusionary practices which do little to encourage and sustain participation levels for children (Thorpe 2004; Pitchford et al 2007) and which are discouraged in Charter Standard supporting documentation (FA 2003a). That is,

whilst football clubs within such welfare organisations welcomed all eligible young people for assistance under the welfare banner, those not exhibiting an aptitude for football were not encouraged to play in competitive matches against rival teams, and therefore had limited playing opportunities.

As in Clusters 1 and 3, to varying degrees clubs generally perceived the Charter Standard as a means by which to i) distinguish the club from others in close proximity, or ii) they were best served implementing in order to ensure parity in their immediate area, or a mixture of the two. Elements of one-upmanship regarding Charter Standard implementation are evident in two intersecting ways here. Whereas in Clusters 1 and 3 the Charter Standard was primarily perceived as a tool to attract more players from the same sparse pool to the club in contest with close local rivals, clubs in Cluster 2 perceived the implementation of the Charter Standard in terms of success by winning trophies and awards in relation to rival clubs. The overarching assumption being that accreditation would provide greater notoriety for clubs in relation to others in the locality.

Charter Standard accreditation criteria falls short of highlighting success on the field of play as a benefit or indeed an explicit aim. Yet the example of a 'Code of Conduct for Team Officials' in the 'Good Practice Guide' (FA 2003d) suggests that in their obligations towards their team, an official (coach, CP officer, administrator) should 'make every effort to develop the sporting, technical and tactical levels of the club/team, and to obtain the best results by the team, using permitted means', and to also 'Give priority to the interests of the team over individual interests'. Combined with this is a widely held assumption that the stipulation relating to the increasing level of coach education in advancing through the framework that better coaches

will yield better players (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05; FA 2003a; FA 2003b). Such language and wording is open to a large degree of interpretation, yet all clubs in this Cluster interpreted the Charter Standard as a vehicle with which to improve the skills of young players, their performances in competitive matches and the acquiring of trophies. In addition, all clubs within this Cluster hosted adult teams, meaning the requirement to provide pathways to adult football were already in place and did not require forging of partnerships or links with adult clubs in the area to advance through the Charter Standard framework.

A nuanced point of departure is noticeable regarding the availability of numerous funding streams. The perception that being accredited would enhance clubs' opportunities for funding awards from an external body such as the Football Foundation, resonates with the other two Clusters. Here, the desire to work in collaboration with other alike clubs within the area is undermined by the competition to secure various funding sources for each individual club. That is, the Charter Standard has been implemented by all clubs in an attempt to secure an advantageous position for funding applications in direct contest with rival clubs in the Cluster (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05 & Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05), which is particularly explained in terms of ethnic and cultural groupings (SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05)

> "If they are getting large amounts of funding from this NDC project because of the Charter Standard…we also needed to implement it because our organisation is bigger than theirs, we deal with gun crime and have a larger number of young people than them...if we have the Charter then surely we can be eligible for some large scale funding too to secure our future...but nothing has happened as yet despite some promises from the County FA" (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05).

Evidently, structural antecedents and modernisation processes serve to fuel tensions and difficulties in establishing and forging relationships between clubs. Such longstanding rivalry and contestation provide a catalyst for three inter-related Cluster issues: i) inter-club rivalry expressed in detrimental terms of rival clubs ii) gang notoriety and association with football clubs contributing to, and manifested by overt incidents deemed racist in nature; and iii) difficulties in generating collaborative activity such as school-club links. The first two are inextricably linked and are therefore discussed together.

First, inter-club rivalry has expressed itself in terms of derogatory and detrimental views of rivals and an outright questioning of their Charter Standard status regarding pervasive issues of child protection, potential malpractice and the exuding of racism. As such, the relationships in this Cluster appear more strained and heightened tensions are evident.

> "The other teams in this area that have the Charter Standard are similar to us…huge organisations with the same kind of young people on their books…Traditionally, there is a big rivalry between us, [Club 2 and Club 3] who represent each district which are all similar...deprived and under-regeneration and it's these areas where these two notorious gangs are from which makes it difficult…there is no way we could go into their district and attract players and it's the same for them here" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05)

Given the commonalities of all clubs in their attachment to welfare organisations and their stated aims to improve the lives of people within their communities through, amongst other things, football, a perception that benefits of working in collaboration across diverse communities was apparent. In this respect, all clubs recognised that they held similar desires and ambitions, and that communicating with one another may assist in achieving mutually beneficial aims, rather than working towards

similar causes in silos and at times, in competition. The following views are indicative of all clubs

> "football brings communities together and we should meet and do stuff together, like a little tournament, friendly matches or fundraising… if you bring your people and we bring our people and we club together and just split the money, … rather than being rivals on the pitch, that would build some bridges across the divide between the communities and also bring the communities together, which is something that we should do actually, but we don't at the moment" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05)

Yet, difficulties in achieving any form of collaboration between clubs exist, not least due to the intersecting processes between the generally competitive nature of grassroots football and fractious, fragmented ghettoized communities within the Cluster. Sport development professionals endeavoured to encourage collaborative activity between the three clubs in order to, amongst other things, improve community relations between the groups, but also to assist in developing football (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; SDO Interview 19 / 5 / 05). For instance, the Club FDO notes the opportunities for joint funding bids through the 'Kick It Out' campaign[7]. The campaign provides assistance for grassroots clubs and community projects to identify funding sources from external agencies to support excluded communities' inclusion into society, and by encouraging greater involvement in the game from such groups; particularly as the number of applications for funding received from ethnic minority groups in sport is low. The Club FDO noted that, given the fractiousness between clubs and ethnic minority groups in the area, clubs would be beneficial working with one another to develop joint bids, but prefer instead to operate in their own silos. The FDO further noted stated they could not

[7] Kick It Out is football's equality and inclusion campaign. The brand name of the campaign - *Let's Kick Racism Out of Football* - was established in 1993 and Kick It Out established as a body in 1997 . Kick It Out works throughout the football, educational and community sectors to challenge discrimination, encourage inclusive practices and work for positive change.
The campaign is supported and funded by the game's governing bodies, including founding body the Professional Footballers Association (PFA), the Premier League, the Football Foundation and The Football Association. See Long et al (2005)

'in good conscience' put forward a bid for large scale funding for the area with existing relationships between the three clubs (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). Clubs secured small scale funding, predominantly through the Junior Kit scheme and 'Awards for All' which did not benefit the community as a whole, but served to only to secure each clubs position within their own community. Indeed, attempts by the FDO to forge collaborative activities were consistently undermined by the refusal or inability of club personnel to engage with one another.

Often, such rivalry is overtly underpinned by the eminent gang culture within the areas each club represents. Although keen to distance themselves from such activity, noting that 'none of our players are involved in anything like that...we educate them not to', the association by location is problematic for all clubs in the Cluster, adding to the complexity of collaborative work and rendering it difficult to establish (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05).

> "in terms of the football clubs in the two areas…there is that undercurrent all the time that our team is associated with the gang in our area and likewise with the others in their respective districts...it means everyone is suspicious of each other...sometimes it gets a bit heated and references to the gangs are sometimes made by the players, but this is just bravado, trying to psyche out the opposition" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

Exacerbating this undercurrent, Clubs 2 and 3 maintained that County FA staff displayed favourability towards Club 1. With reference to the NDC partnership identified in section 6.3.1, such a perception antagonised already fractious relationships between clubs. The Club FDO often had to defend any development work with Club 1 as a 'largely unfortunate coincidence that they were selected by the NDC for the funding partnership' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). Such

divisiveness is exacerbated by longstanding and embedded relationships within the Cluster, and is manifest in views and perceptions of one another in terms of large degrees of suspicion, envy and at times, downright hostility.

> I know them quite well (Club 1), 'X' used to work here...We had lots of incidents with 'X', last year my under 10's, unbeaten in 2 and a half years played against his team (Club 1)...we were 4 nil up at half time and one of their parents had upset one of our parents a few words across the pitch...the referee had to stop the game...I said to one of the parents what are you arguing for, let the kids do the talking we are 4 nil up! I go over to the manager of (Club 1), he is on one knee doing his team talk and he is racking the joints while he is talking to 10 year old boys... yet these are Charter Standard... the way he spoke to them was a disgrace, swearing and calling names...I reported them to the County FA (Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05).

Moreover, Clubs 1 and 3 both expressed concern of the practices taking place within Club 2 which contravened Charter Standard codes of conduct and therefore accreditation. Despite complaints being made to the County FA, both clubs expressed concern that the same coach was repeatedly noted coaching the same team in the same manner following complaints. Indeed, qualifications of the individual and Charter Standard status of the club were actively queried, often citing standards within their own club being upheld more closely to the criteria.

Club 1 were also keen to highlight elements of bad practice in other clubs within the Cluster

> "I *know* of bad practice from them (Club 2), I know that there is a lot of bad practice that goes on there...those people smoke dope on the sidelines, I told their manager and spoke to the county and they have done nothing about it, if my children had to go there I would be livid absolutely livid...the parents are too frightened of this chap, he is very intimidating, and although they have their fears they won't say nothing through fear" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05).

Key here is the recurring issue of child protection raised by each of the clubs. The Charter Standard is referred to as justification for their willingness to report on one another's practice to the County FA. Accusations of bullying children to perform well to win games, as well as exposure to illegal substances, are, amongst other things, most constantly raised. It is not the intention here to debate the types and consequences of child protection issues raised by each club (c.f. Brackenridge et al 2007), but to acknowledge that child protection is a significant strand of the Charter Standard which is supported by the FAs Child Protection Strategy in conjunction with the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit[8]. Briefly, as noted by Charter Standard documentation for clubs (FA 2003a), each club must have a constitution in which they 'adhere to FA Child Protection Policies and Procedures' and have a 'designated Child Protection Person' who has attended the Football Association 3 hour Child Protection Workshop' (FA 2003a). Indeed, it is also a requirement that all coaches undertake this workshop as part of their coach education in order to receive their particular qualification level. Differences in interpretation, and conflict and ambiguity regarding the criteria are evident, which fuel mutual revealing and embellishment of one another's actions. Club 3, whilst reluctant to elaborate on the issue of illegal substance use at pitch side, were able to defend such criticisms and provide justification for allowing such practices to take place

> "As part of our organisation we educate adults over the harmful effects of drugs and the influences they as parents have over their children in society generally...but if we banned the parent, the child would disappear too...we would be disadvantaging the child not just from football, but all the educational and emotional support that we as an organisation offer them...it is difficult, but we have to do what we feel is right...anyhow, there is nothing, to my knowledge, in the Charter Standard application pack that refers to parents indulging in drinking alcohol, drug taking or whatever...but we do recognise that it is not acceptable, we just have to manage it in the right way" (Secretary Club 3 Interview 10 / 11 / 05).

[8] See http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/cpsu/AboutUs/AboutUs_wda60534.html for more in depth detail

Such views are corroborated by the Club FDO, noting the 'Good Practice Guide' (FA 2003d) stipulates in the code of conduct for coaches that they 'must always promote the positive aspects of the game...and never condone...the use of prohibited substances' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). However, they also note that such stipulations are not recorded in the guide for parents, although most clubs do include such stipulations in their own codes of conduct, stating

> "in principle they are right, but the Charter Standard's essence is about removing and preventing types of behaviour such as this...we do not find this acceptable behaviour and would remove the accreditation if we found this to be occurring at a club".

Consequences of such actions are twofold. The decision by Club 3 to allow such a practice to occur on sidelines in full view of parents and children is acknowledged as being out of line with the consensus regarding the essence of the Charter Standard. But, the organisation's objectives as a whole to improve the standards of living in their communities often means that some concessions are required in order to meet their own aims and objectives. Moreover, the club are knowledgeable enough to justify this by highlighting the existing gaps and the ambiguity in the Charter Standard criteria.

Such hostility between clubs is often underpinned and exacerbated by an undercurrent of racial and ethnic tensions. Although reluctant to elaborate on such instances, all club personnel noted encountering overt racism by other Charter Standard clubs within the Cluster, but stressed that their teams had been victims rather than perpetrators. According to the Club FDO, claims and concomitant repudiation by clubs regarding such behaviour was common, believing that 'many of the stories are largely embellished' (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). An indicative

view of such incidents reinforces the notion of hostility between clubs in claiming Charter Standard accreditation should be withdrawn from rivals

> "I've never experienced any kind of racial tension between anyone in our teams…we've experienced it when we've played away games, especially against them (Club 2)…how can you try to work with people like that who abuse you?" (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05)

Although the Charter Standard does not make specific reference to issues of race, behaviour deemed 'racist' is perceived as 'undermining the essence of the principle of the Charter Standard', and despite incidents in relation to race or ethnicity being reported, they were never followed through by the claimant club (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05). Indeed, the Club FDO was keen to emphasise this did not mean incidents of a racist nature did not exist, but that some incidents were suspected of being fabricated, or the involvement of claimant clubs in such incidents had been underplayed. Indeed, upon investigating some reports, FDOs came to the conclusion that they were 'relatively powerless' to undertake any action as people were reluctant to provide them with any information (Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05).

Third, generating school club links were problematic. Similar to Cluster 1, clubs reflected a lack of knowledge and desire to engage schools, despite ambitions from all clubs to become Community accredited, and advance through the framework (FA 2003a). Concomitantly, development staff concurred that the onus to develop school-club links remained with schools given; the lethargy of clubs in this instance; school-club links were a requirement for school accreditation at the minimal level, whereas for clubs, generation of links stipulated development level and above; and, that school-club links was also an integral element of the overlapping PESSCL policy

aimed at schools (FA 2003a; FA 2003b; Club FDO Interview 19 / 9 / 05; Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05).

A notable point of departure is evident here. The Schools Sports Partnerships within the Cluster had been long established. This created the potential for the Schools FDO to collaborate with the PDM to meet mutually beneficial aims and objectives. For instance, PDMs targets for increasing participation in the area set by the CSP targeted the same ethnic and cultural groups as that of the Schools FDO, whose remit was to encourage those from a less traditional background in football to begin participating with the eventual outcome being links with Charter Standard clubs in the area (CSP Annual Report 2006). Amongst other things, three inter-related processes mitigated against such collaborative activity. First, it is prudent to reiterate the underpinning culturally fragmented and gang activities hindering the imposition of school club links. Charter Standard schools must meet the requirement of providing a minimum of four sessions of football across two year groups outside of school lesson time per academic year (FA 2003b). Given the nature of the stipulation, sessions were often delivered by an AOTT with a football coaching and child protection qualification, usually representing one of the three clubs within the Cluster. For instance, whilst engaging in participation with children from different backgrounds to themselves within the school environment, 'when it comes to those same kids taking part in activities organised by clubs not representing their particular background then they generally do not get involved...making out of school hours activities difficult' (PDM Interview 12 / 12 / 05).

Second, the PDMs remit to develop sport did not include football except for targets imposed by the CSP to increase girls participation. Indeed, sports with generally lower participation levels both nationally and regionally had a higher profile on the agenda. Coupled with this, the Specialist Sports College within the Cluster, a grant maintained grammar school, did not reflect the demography of the Cluster, had a longstanding tradition of provision in rugby and cricket, and did not provide school teams for football, and did not have Charter Standard status. Thus, the need for collaboration with the Schools FDO became largely redundant. Third, the PDM had been relatively new to post, and, given constraints in structural antecedents and targets set by the CSP, had not endeavoured to build relationships with the Schools FDO or local football clubs. Given the schools and SSP focus on sports other than football, the generating of close collaborative activity to develop football in the future was also unlikely (PDM Interview 12 / 12 / 05; Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05). To overcome such problems, FDOs endeavoured to implement the FAs 'Three Lions Programme'[9], which defines a school-club link as a process to assist a young person to move from participating in football in school to moving into football at a Charter Standard Club (FA 2003b). Coaches from Charter Standard clubs provide taster sessions during school curricula and extracurricular time, by default, generating a school-club link. The benefits of generating this collaborative activity are noted as, amongst other things, establishing strong links between schools and clubs and coaching support for players/staff; and, providing clubs with an intake of new players and, equipment and promotional resource packages (FA 2003a, 2003b).

[9] the brand name for the FAs version of the PESSCL element 'School-Club links Programme' It is the FAs commitment to the delivery of the Physical Education and School Sport Club Links (PESSCL) strategy document, which sets out to ensure that all children, whatever their circumstances or abilities, should be able to participate in and enjoy physical education and sport (The FA 2003e). The programme consists of a 6-8 week FA Coaching course, held in conjunction with both school and an existing Charter Standard club, to offer regular football sessions to players of all abilities (FA 2003e).

The schools FDO described the programme as unsuccessful in schools achieving Charter Standard in this Cluster, as clubs 'got some benefits and disappeared'. Given that all schools have to achieve Charter Standard accreditation by the end of the project with the support of the club, the programme is undermined by collaborative inertia (Huxham & Vangen 2005).

> "They range from clubs developing written agreements for schools …normally if the club wants to use the facilities at the school, or it's from the sports college side because it's in their targets as well that you have to make formalised links with community clubs, whether it's football, whoever. But the links are generally very informal" (Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05).

Links resembling the FAs definition are tenuous. Most likely, 'links' are based on longstanding informal word of mouth relationships between clubs and schools, in that children attending a particular school traditionally attend a clutch of clubs in the locality of that school, who are linked together by the hiring of facilities. In that case, 'they don't need anything written down because the football's quite traditional anyway' (Schools FDO Interview 17 / 10 / 05). That is, difficulty in engaging with schools and forming school-club links; large variations in the interpretation of the constitution of a school-club link, ranging from sporadic coaching sessions in schools, interpreted as children registered at the clubs predominantly attending the same schools, and that school facilities were utilised by clubs for training and practice (Secretary Club 1 Interview 18 / 10 / 05; Secretary Club 2 Interview 30 / 9 / 05; PDM interview 12 / 12 / 05; Club FDO interview 19 / 9 / 05). Although, such informal links did yield more players for each club, no structures were in place and the 'word of mouth' approach evident in Cluster 1 equally evident here.

In sum, a lack of collaboration is evident in terms of football development generally, and implementation of the Charter Standard. The chasm between the criteria for clubs stipulating that the lowest basic level of Charter Standard accreditation does not require the forming of links with schools (c.f. FA 2003a:6), and the opposite applying to schools in that the lowest level of school accreditation requires links with a Charter Standard accredited club (FA 20003b:1), is reinforced in this Cluster. Conditions were also exacerbated by clubs being both unwilling and constrained to generate school-club links. Given the PDMs preference to focus on other sports at the expense of football, and the lack of engagement with an established sport development infrastructure enveloping the Cluster, conditions conducive to collaboration were redundant, as schools remained aloof to the Charter Standard at the time of research. In this connection, the structural antecedents of gang culture and ethnically fragmented communities contributed to the unfavourable conditions for collaboration. Indeed, no notable collaborative activity, except for the NDC partnership identified in section 6.3.1, existed between clubs, schools or sports development professionals. Inter club rivalry impacted severely upon any notions of collaboration. All club personnel reported collaborating with other clubs within the Cluster for the benefit of football development as a problematic issue, despite suggesting that such collaboration was both needed and an aspiration to improve football development specifically but community relations more generally. As such, inter-club rivalry and contestation underpinned by the predominant structural antecedents of highly ethnically fragmented communities and an environment replete with funding to address the social issues such characteristics bring, highlighted friction between clubs in which the Charter Standard was perceived as a mixture of two things. One, a badge of distinction vis-à-vis similar clubs within the Cluster perceived to relate to dominance and success in football matches and the winning of trophies, and two, a vehicle with which to gain an advantage over similar clubs in funding bids to various external agencies for the benefit of the organisation

as a whole. The rivalry between clubs often overflowed into rumour mongering and allegations regarding behaviour, and therefore status of clubs as Charter Standard accredited. Indeed, the criteria by which Charter Standard is accredited was utilised as a tool with which to undermine rival clubs' status. Prominent examples in this Cluster related to incidents of racism, and issues regarding child protection, an element at the core of Charter Standard accreditation. As such, given the lack of collaborative activity and engagement with the sport development infrastructure, the substance of rumour mongering tactics using child protection and racial issues to question clubs status and the probability of such characteristics enduring, the implementation of the Charter Standard is potentially limited at best, and undermined at worst. Finally, advancement through the Charter Standard framework for clubs in this Cluster is unlikely given such dynamics.

6.3 Cluster Three

Introduction

Cluster Three centred on the main administrative town and surrounding villages of a local government district (population 96,852 in 2001 census) in the East Midlands of England, which until recently was primarily an agricultural town. Population at the time of the 2001 census was 35,919, with 98% being of white British ethnicity. The area is considered relatively affluent, with unemployment rates well below the national average and percentage of retirees being significantly above (23.4% compared to 21% nationally). Over recent times the town has become a tourist destination, plus a commuter town to cities to the south reflected in the average distance of the population travelling to work being 5% higher than the national average. Employment figures for residents in the town were 65.7%, 5% higher than the national average. The surrounding area is geographically fragmented with the town being 19 miles from the nearest city, the county town, and is thirteen and seventeen miles from its two nearest largest towns in the county respectively. This is reflected by grassroots clubs in the area representing entire villages or communities. The town had grown from one of the smallest in England in the 1990s to one of the fastest developing commuter towns in the country (ONS 2001). Since 2000 the town has expanded with the support of government funded grants through regional development agencies with the building of numerous new private housing estates on the periphery.

In relation to football, the town supports an established amateur team competing at level eight of the national league system. The main local football team (Club 1), closed their ground due to safety reasons and decay in 2004, and had planned for a new Stadium to be opened, just outside the town's perimeter in March 2007. The town is encompassed by numerous villages, one of which hosts a football club (Club

2) 5 miles west to the town in this Cluster. The two nearest major towns also support established football clubs, one of semi professional status and the other having varied between professional and semi professional status. The nearest major city hosts an established lower league professional club.

The County FA was relatively late in achieving limited company status in comparison to the other two Clusters. Indeed, it was one of the last nationally to achieve this (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Concomitantly, the County FA was also observed as having been slow to modernise. The Football Development Team within the County FA comprises of the County Development Manager, a Football Development Officer responsible for both clubs and schools as in Cluster 1, and one Football Development Assistant, with a girls and disability football officer hosted by the County Sports Partnership. The County FA is also subject to similar jurisdictional complexities as the other two county FAs within the research sample, in that jurisdiction stretches beyond politically defined county borders. As highlighted in the table below, analysis of this Cluster encompasses implementation of the Charter Standard in both clubs and schools.

Contacts	Organisations & Responsibility	Charter Standard Involvement	Network Links
Football Development Officer	County Football Association with jurisdiction in football based in large geographical area with mainly large rural areas, with pockets of major urban areas. There is a lack of facilities in these areas. Responsible for all football development issues ranging from Charter Standard to facility development with over 1000 affiliated clubs.	To implement Charter Standard and other football development initiatives across all areas within the county. Provide information and target clubs. To lead local football partnership, arranging meetings with other sports professionals in the county where initiatives such as the Charter Standard are discussed	Club 1, PDM, SDO, Local football partnership. Facility development with Club 1
Sports Development Officer	Borough Council. Duplication of role with PDM in certain areas. Run sports courses available to the general public aimed at increasing participation rates. Football left to the County FA to organise.	Advisory. Passes people on who inquire about football and the scheme to the FDO	Primary school 1, PDM, FDO
Partnership Development Manager	SSC and secondary school 1. Responsible for developing partnerships with local clubs, primary feeder schools, secondary school Clusters in all sports, developing out of school hours PE.	Has identified local Charter Standard clubs and approached them to generate partnership plans with schools to develop school club links	All clubs and schools in Cluster, FDO Local football partnership. Facility development with Club 1
SSCO and Head of PE	Secondary school 2 Technology status college. SSCO part of SSP and is responsible for developing links within a Cluster set out by the PDM. Head of PE organises and runs school teams. School has strong football reputation within the area.	Charter Standard implemented through the help of PDM. Maintained by head of PE	PDM, Clubs 1 and 3. FDO rarely
Head of School	Primary School 1. Rural based outside the main urban area of the Cluster. Has own small facility. Only 3 members of staff, all of whom undertaken TOPS football course. All contribute to football provision.	Head of school implemented and maintains Charter Standard.	PDM, SDO, Club 2
Club Secretary	Chairman of Club 1. Based in the major urban area of the Cluster, a small town with no facility of its own. Very limited number of	Charter Standard Community status used as a tool in attracting funding for the	PDM, SDO, FDO schools 1&2. District

	playing fields, limited to school pitches. Responsible for all club matters. Have boys and girls teams at all ages and pathways to adult football in men's.	development of a facility on the outskirts of the town. Implemented and maintained by chairman	league
Club Secretary	Club 2. Based outside the main urban area in a rural pocket, the only club in the village. Has boys sections at all age groups leading to adult football. No girls football	Charter Standard Club status. Aspirations to develop up to community status, but hindered by rural area – not enough resources in terms of local people, especially females	Primary school 1. District league, PDM

Table 6.3 Organisations and individuals implementing the Charter Standard in Cluster 3

6.3.1 Charter Standard Implementation: Structural and Contextual Factors

The rural nature of the Cluster has facilitated the adoption of strategies and emergence of issues that have impacted both adversely and positively on grassroots football in general, and the implementation of, and progression within, the Charter Standard for both clubs and schools. Similar to Clusters 1 and 2, the usage, ownership and availability of council owned facilities is a major structural constraint, given the reliance of schools and clubs for training and fixtures. Moreover, scarcity of facilities constrain the development and sustainability of clubs and hinder competition and playing opportunities for clubs and schools alike. Processes enabling and constraining grassroots football development practice in relation to the Charter Standard are threefold in this respect, particularly regarding clubs and schools being sole representatives of a particular town or village; the scarcity of facilities in connection with expansion and advancement of certain clubs and schools through the Charter Standard framework at the expense of others, and relatively long distances between each club and school in comparison to the densely situated Clusters 1 and 2. The dynamics of Charter Standard implementation are impacted upon in the following intersecting ways.

Charter Standard is implemented in relation to interlocking processes regarding i) the capacity of the FDO to support clubs and schools through the process, and ii) and the desire and ambition of clubs and schools to undertake the implementation process. Similar to Cluster 1, clubs and schools are geographically isolated from the County FA. Yet whereas in Clusters 1 and 2, the practice of FDOs visiting several clubs and schools generally at a central venue to support Charter Standard applications, coach education or Charter Standard clubs and schools in wider development activities, the FDO in this Cluster experienced an overarching geographical constraint on development work.

> "It is difficult...the rural side of the county makes getting about quite a time consuming task when meeting clubs...and it is nigh on impossible to get more than a couple of clubs to travel to a central venue so that I can hit a larger number in one go" (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

This impacts on the quantity of clubs and schools being accredited. Indeed, at the time of research, the County as a whole was reported as being slow on the uptake of the Charter Standard with fewer numbers achieving accreditation, but that 'significant advancements had been made' in the period leading up to the research, particularly in small pockets within the County and since 'a change of development personnel at County FA HQ' (CFA Newsletter 2005). The mutual processes of pressures created in line with modernisation to achieve targets (i.e. the number of Charter Standard accredited schools and clubs), the longstanding and embedded profile and reputation of the County FA being unfavourable within the rural context served to inform a strategy of targeting particular schools and clubs by the FDO.

Given the exponential growth in population of the town and expansion of the town's borders, lack of facilities became a crucial issue. Interlocked with these processes, facility availability and development in relation to implementation of, and progression within the Charter Standard framework has, i) limited the expansion of the number of teams within clubs potentially hindering the ability of clubs to advance through the Charter Standard framework, ii) inextricably linked to the former, demand to play football within the town has not been met due to lack of provision, and iii) impacted on the provision schools offer to pupils to implement and maintain the Charter Standard. In short, the lack of facilities in the Cluster in the context of an expanding population in a rural area has impacted upon football development generally, and specifically the Charter Standard

Professional development staff devised a number of strategies to combat the interlocking processes noted above. Mixed fortunes for clubs and schools in the Cluster followed, the most pertinent of which are now detailed. An audit was undertaken to establish existing football provision in all clubs and schools under the County FAs jurisdiction. Those most likely to achieve Charter Standard accreditation with little endeavour were targeted. That is, those clubs and schools which were organised, administered and delivered football most closely to Charter Standard criteria (FDO Interview 21 / 10 / 05). For schools, professional development staff encountered dual problems particularly regarding primary schools located in outlying villages within the SSP. With such schools having limited numbers of pupils and therefore potential participants, engaging sufficient numbers of children into footballing activity to attain Charter Standard accreditation proved difficult to impossible (PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06).

Such dynamics indicate that 'schools may have 4 or 5 children wanting to engage with football, but because of the limitations receive little more than the standard requirement on the NCPE' (Primary Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06). This need not constrain schools in implementing the Charter Standard. In this connection, Charter Standard criteria for schools requires delivery of football to both boys and girls in a minimum of one year group for one block (minimum 4 weeks) per academic year at key stage 2, 3 or 4 (primary school children aged 7-11) (FA 2003b Section B). In this connection, criteria relating to extracurricular activities is equally basic. Football has to be offered to boys and girls at a minimum of two year groups for a minimum of four times external to schools lessons within one academic year (FA 2003b Section B). The quantity of children involved is not stipulated, as is whether or not the sessions are actually delivered. They just have to be offered. Also, activities which constitute acceptable provision in this respect vaguely include, amongst other things, 'one of

school teams, after school clubs, lunch time clubs, mini-soccer festival, or intramural competitions' (FA 2003b Section B). These are relatively minimal requirements, which most schools find they are already delivering. As such, rural schools are not disadvantaged vis-a-vis much larger schools in inner city and urban areas in becoming eligible for Charter Standard accreditation (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Indeed, it is noted that

> "it was relatively easy [to implement the Charter Standard] we did not have to change much as the FDO pointed out to us that we qualified even though we only have a couple of kids coming to after school sessions" (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06)

Paradoxically, given Charter Standard accreditation for schools requires entering a minimum of one team into a local schools football association competition (FA 2003b Section A); many schools within rural areas are highly disadvantaged given the lack of numbers to form teams. Combined with this is a relative reluctance on schools' part to travel to other venues. Another impact of the rural nature of the Cluster on schools capacity to engage with the Charter Standard involves the arranging and fulfilling of fixtures. The Primary School in this Cluster experienced difficulties in engaging with such practice.

> "nothing is set up because we cant sustain it between us...we could have a small schools league but getting to other venues would be difficult... I quite like it as it is really, just we're playing certain schools, friendlies, and home and away usually and we're quite happy with that without it being competitive or structured" (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06)

Given the small number of children involved, and the lack of adequate venues at schools and clubs, the FDO and SDO in conjunction with the local schools football association attempted to hold events for schools at sites in the nearby town or city. Attending one of these sanctioned events per year would allow schools to meet criteria for competitions and therefore be eligible for Charter Standard. Generally

however, take up of these is varied meaning it is difficult for the FDO to engage several schools in one event succumbing to the structural constraints brought about by the rural characteristics of the Cluster. This impacted on the FDOs strategy to target suitable and willing schools to accredit with Charter Standard to counteract the County FAs apparent slow take up on development work.

> "the transport issue is how to get schools to the main venues, there aren't enough quality venues to host events at the moment. Some of the schools don't have facilities…if we're looking to do any football activity, they don't have a school field. Or they have very, very limited playground so they can't do anything...they can not incur the cost of what is sometimes a 40 mile round trip and securing staff to give up their own time" (FDO interview 21 / 1 / 06).

The Cluster had an embedded sport development infrastructure of school sport partnership and their families, supported by proactive professional development staff with an interest in developing football. As such, the FDO perceived that schools had support mechanisms established to draw on to implement the Charter Standard. In this connection, it was also perceived that the basic standard for schools was far easier to implement than clubs' basic standard, given that schools by default had structures in place for, amongst other things, child protection and health and safety enforced by an external regulatory system (AfPE 2006). More importantly, football was included in the NCPE and schools did not need to endeavour beyond practices already in place at school, other than some training of staff which was tied into continuous professional development training days (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06; Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06). Given such perceptions, the FDO endeavoured to target clubs for support to implement the Charter Standard and to increase the County's accredited numbers, as schools seemed to be 'sufficiently supported by the PDM and SSCOs' as 'applications from schools are consistent' and generally uniform (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). As such,

the FDO secured the services of the PDM in devolving responsibility for schools Charter Standard accreditation. The strategy was generally to offer support for schools through giving advice on any missing relevant criteria not in the application. As such, the FDO generally did not come into physical contact with schools.

For clubs then, a variance in support offered to Club 1 and Club 2 became evident. Despite being fractured and with little centralisation (see Table 6.3), Club 1 was selected to bypass the basic standard and apply for the more comprehensive Community status. Given the club became the first in the county to achieve Community Club status in 2004 (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06), the club established itself as a powerful and effective organisation within the town, based primarily on football but also offering other sport, educational and social activities. With an established adult team and 250 junior members, the club had a longstanding reputation as offering and providing quality football experiences for youngsters (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06). In short, being the only recognised club within the town and within a radius of 5 miles, had a monopoly on football provision. This was beneficial but also detrimental concomitantly. Despite the relatively small population the club could not satisfy demand, and had on occasion refused junior players membership (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06). Conversely, the club was able to promote its identity to a greater extent, and had a readily identifiable pool of potential players, who through familial and friendship ties had an attachment to the club and very rarely travelled outside of the town to play for other rival clubs, given that very few alternative clubs existed in close proximity (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Those that did were characterised by strong family ties and historical close association with the community the clubs represented for instance, the village the club was located in. As such, it was unattractive for children within the main town of the Cluster to travel and play for the outlying

village teams, as they were very much viewed as 'outsiders' (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06; Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06).

Club 2 alternatively existed in a small village close to the border of the main town Club 1 represented. Antagonism between the two clubs, historically embedded in grassroots football culture, but mainly on a friendly, competitive basis in competitions, became exacerbated with both clubs desiring to implement the Charter Standard. Club 2, were encouraged to attain the basic level of Charter Standard accreditation. Whereas Club 1 were actively encouraged and supported to achieve the accreditation by the FDO, Club 2, whilst encouraged, received relatively little assistance from the FDO (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06; FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06).

The impact of such dynamics woven into the structural and contextual antecedents in connection to the rural nature of the Cluster was threefold. Club 1 required the establishment of two further teams and the provision for girls football (along with the concomitant qualified coaches – discussed in more detail in the ensuing section) in order to be eligible for community status. Given the only facility in the town other than the clubs own ground was a Local Authority leisure centre, the capacity to expand the club to achieve Community status was limited. Club 1, at the suggestion of the FDO were encouraged to apply for a Football Foundation grant to subsidise the building of a new facility on the outskirts of the town, to 'go hand in hand with applying for Community status' (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). The decision to favour Club 1 for community status was queried by Club 2, who cited their club was centralised, had its own venue and with the right support could develop the small infrastructure in existence. However, the FDO (Interview 21 / 1 / 06) cited a

combination of the size of Club 1's membership, longstanding reputation as a successful club, and several members of Club 2's committee required undertaking of child protection and coaching qualifications, as justification for their strategy. Moreover, the personnel at Club 1 were deemed by the FDO as more suitably able to modernise the club. Resonating with neo-pluralist assumptions and dynamics of implementation in Cluster 1, the business and entrepreneurial backgrounds of several of the club committee was a factor. Club personnel were perceived to be more suitably able to develop robust and sustainable financial and development plans (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). In short, they were deemed to have the administrative skills necessary to develop the club into a sustainable, target driven organisation. As such, the FDO (Interview 21 / 1 / 06) justified the strategy

> "With the smaller clubs it tends to take them longer to get things together…I have to prioritise which clubs are most suitable to support for funding bids such as through the Football Foundation...it causes some unrest but that is the reality of it...Club 1 have a well structured committee and most importantly have a history of getting things done and are a large established club...They (Club 2) still get my support but I have to guide them in the right way, community status is not for them at the moment"

As noted, the Football Foundation did not explicitly favour Charter Standard clubs, yet bids which demonstrated the building of new facilities had been incorporated into a developmental plan which aims to offer a wide range of opportunities for the whole community were given preference (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06; personal communication with Football Foundation 2005). As such, Club 1 attained an advantageous position vis-a-vis less powerful and established clubs within the Cluster. Club 1's catchment area expanded beyond the traditional town boundary to impinge upon Club 2's catchment area. The effects of this are summarised by the Football Development Officer, who stated

> "one thing we've got to be careful with a community club in a rural area… their boundaries go a lot further than if they were in a city, they perhaps concentrate on five or six schools in quite close proximity, but because of where they are their five or six schools might cover twenty or thirty miles... and that can take out local clubs as well...that's something we've got to be careful of in terms of making sure our Community Charter Standard clubs are getting the benefit but they're not making other clubs fold because they're taking all their players". (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

As such, a mixture of the rural nature of the Cluster and the general lack of facilities to aid increased capacity levels of participation required to progress through the Charter Standard framework (FA 2003a), exacerbate processes relating to the potential for different clubs to develop, based largely on the chance of their location and representation of a particular area. The expansion of Club 1's catchment area in order to achieve required criteria in line with Community Club accreditation, impinged on Club 2 to the extent that sections of the club began to fold.

> "whereas you used to have the situation that the odd player here and there would leave to go to play for them because they generally have more successful teams than ours, since they have built that new facility they have made their presence felt more forcefully in the two schools in the village...that's how they catch them...we are losing kids hand over foot and we have had to withdraw two teams from the league this year and merge two age groups together" (Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06)

As in Cluster 1, the girls' dimension of the grassroots football community was most adversely affected (in Club 2 and indeed other clubs in and around the Cluster). Briefly, given the culture of football in general, girls' sections of teams are historically disadvantaged when planned around boys' provision, and participation rates and interest in football is still largely the preserve of males. In order to aid their Charter Standard accreditation, Club 2 endeavoured to add more girls to the club in order to establish competitive girls teams in transition from just providing training opportunities. Given the structural antecedents, the club secured the

minimum number of girls to field a team and therefore enter a league, but no more. Having entered the newly established team in the nearest female league based within the city boundaries 20 miles away, a parallel process involving Club 1 impinged upon the development work of Club 2. Given Club 1 required the formalising of their provision for girls, and the establishment of teams in order to meet the required criteria for Community Club status and to enhance their funding bid from the Football Foundation for their own facility, Club 1 developed a strategic plan to increase the number of girls within the club. This included, amongst other things, visits to schools within the vicinity of Club 2, offering incentives such as coaching sessions delivered by more experienced and qualified coaches, and subsidised subscriptions and travel to venues in the nearby city to complete competitive fixtures. This resulted in two girls joining Club 1 at the expense of Club 2. The two new players assisted in Club 1 achieving its aims in its development plan towards meeting Community Club criteria. Concomitantly, the girls section of club 2 folded and the team resigned from the league. The upshot of which was that the remaining members of the original girls team did not continue playing as they "were deemed not talented enough" to join Club 1 and 'that team folded...5 girls are now not playing that were...We're trying to work with them closely as the club is Charter Standard and should be sustainable...but what can we do for them?' (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06).

The FDOs tactic is resonant with efficiency and target achieving characteristics of modernisation. Yet this nuance within the process of implementation both militated against, and facilitated the meeting of Charter Standard aims at one and the same time. That is, similar to Cluster 1, the egalitarian principles of the Charter Standard in the expansion and development of a structure for girls football was undermined, as opportunities to participate were denied some individuals based on a

combination of their location and the lack of provision to cater for their ability level. Yet at the same time girls' football within the Cluster also became more structured and sustainable with Club 1 formalising and expanding the girls sections of the club whilst achieving its aim of securing funding for a central facility for the town. Connected to this, power dynamics based upon, amongst other things; a hotchpotch of club location, club history (e.g. attachment of the local community), and skills possessed by personnel within clubs, combined in establishing circumstances whereby Club 1 expanded and became more sustainable at the expense of less powerful and able clubs. That is, whilst one club is in a position to meet the demands of modernisation based largely upon structural antecedents and the ability of the club to manoeuvre in them, other clubs have to decrease in size or concede even more power and resources to the more powerful.

In sum, it is clear that structural and contextual antecedents in relation to implementing the Charter Standard in this Cluster have raised several pertinent constraints, and opportunities. As in Clusters 1 and 2 there is a desire from clubs to advance through the Charter Standard framework. However, it is apparent that the geographical area and resources at the disposal of the County FA within which this Cluster resides, combined with the inherent perception of the County FA as ineffectual, a series of issues remain pertinent to the development and modernisation of grassroots football in general, and the implementation of the Charter Standard in particular. These issues can be summarised as follows: i) A reliance on over-subscribed council owned facilities and the fragmented nature of clubs within a rural location with teams representing particular towns and villages has exacerbated competition between clubs for access to resources; ii) access to FDO support is variable for schools and clubs in the application process for the Charter Standard, for example the PDM is relied upon to undertake support work for

schools and some clubs are favoured for different levels of accreditation based upon the FDOs audit which seems to exclude smaller and less established clubs from less populated areas; and iii) development of girls football is hindered by a mixture of the above two issues, in conjunction with the historical legacy of the area which has traditionally neglected the development of opportunities for girls in favour of boys. It is clear that although clubs are engaging with the modernisation process by implementing the Charter Standard, they are doing so in an environment which presents obstacles not of their own making. It is reasonable to assume that those clubs with resources and expertise to overcome these on an individual basis, i.e. those that can 'professionalise' or 'modernise', are more likely to achieve and maintain higher levels of Charter Standard accreditation.

6.3.2 Charter Standard implementation: the 'modernisation' of grassroots football

This section follows the identification of the structural issues impacting upon the implementation of the Charter Standard specific to this Cluster. Taking into account the insights provided by Marsh and Smith (2001) into dialectical policy network analysis and the critical realist assumptions of the study, issues raised in connection with modernisation should be read as both occurring within, and impacting upon, the structural context previously identified. The rural nature of the Cluster and the variance in FDO support afforded to clubs and schools with the subsequent advantageous and deleterious effects, and difficulties associated with the lack of adequate facilities, frame the modernisation process for this Cluster. Discussed throughout are issues of a similar nature to those in Clusters 1 and 2. Underpinning subtle nuances and slight differences in how such issues were arrived at and are played out in this Cluster, serve to add to the impact and emphasise modernising processes for grassroots football across all Clusters.

Briefly, there are four nuanced points of departure discussed here. These regard the similar issues of, i) the adoption of business principles and practice, particularly in vetting volunteers and adopting long term club development plans, ii) temporal dynamics in relation to meeting and maintaining fulfilment of Charter Standard criteria, for example, changes in coach education and a multitude of policies, schemes and initiatives aimed at youth and school sport, iii) the burgeoning practice of individuals and companies external to schools being employed to provide sport generally and football specifically, and iv) imposition of public management techniques such as KPIs. First, motivations for clubs and schools to implement the Charter Standard resonated across the spectrum of those in the previous two Clusters. For instance, Club 1 noted a mixture of confirming the practices already in place within the club such as codes of conduct and club constitutions with

adaptations to satisfy FA stipulations. Nothing new was noted except minor modifications in providing the correct wording suggested by the FDO, and to ensure each team within the club had a qualified level 1 coach. The formalisation of links with schools to satisfy Community Status was the most onerous task, but given this function was largely undertaken by the PDM (see following section), the burden on volunteers was reduced (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06). Club 2 noted similar processes which were required to take place, such as the formalisation of practice, but on a smaller scale with few adaptations. In essence, clubs and schools motivations for implementing the Charter Standard were predicated on the assumption that the award would be a symbol of confirming football provision already in existence. However this was a small undercurrent in the motivation to implement in comparison to the perceived extrinsic rewards each would achieve. There were however, small intricate differences between the two clubs given the capacity of each to expand and develop in the rural geographical context. For instance, the fragmentation and size of Club 1 vis-a-vis smaller Club 2 and the balance of power tipping towards the former, there was an element of one-upmanship resonating with Cluster 1.

In this connection, conflict and ambiguity regarding the perceived intrinsic and extrinsic benefits clubs and schools believe they have received or should receive upon implementation was a major point of consternation. Having engaged with the modernisation agenda by conforming to FA guidelines through the Charter Standard, intrinsic benefits were noted as standardised practice, greater efficiency and quality of provision within clubs and schools (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06; FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Extrinsic benefits were viewed as a combination of the FDO suggesting Charter Standard schools and clubs would become eligible for funding, and the Charter Standard

development manual stating 'the hidden benefits are the most important...you are demonstrating to all members, parents and the public, that you are well organised offering opportunities to all...which are excellent ways of promoting yourselves to potential sponsors and funding bodies' (FA 2003c Questions and Answers). As such, a perception became embedded suggesting that intrinsic benefits of an infrastructure for improved provision should be complemented by greater extrinsic rewards. As in the previous Clusters, such extrinsic benefits were based upon the belief that Charter Standard clubs and schools should be prioritised for funding. The FDO noted that clubs and schools should focus on the intrinsic benefits promoted by the FA (FA 2003d), in which the club and school should be able to promote themselves as distinguished from others within the area in terms of the safe and greater quality practices they employ (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). However, this was largely unintentionally undermined in two interlocking ways in conjunction with the promotion and awareness of the Charter Standard. Briefly, in both clubs and schools, parents of children were noted as being unaware of the Charter Standard, and did not select clubs on the basis of being Charter Standard accredited. Given the FAs claim that implementing the Charter Standard highlighted the club or school as offering parents an informed choice for their children's participation in providing a safe, well organised enjoyable club offering opportunities for all, the central underpinning ethos of the Charter Standard (FA 2003d) was largely redundant. Concomitantly, the partnerships and agreements forged by the PDM between clubs and schools, meant that all clubs within the Cluster had either implemented, or were in the process of implementing the Charter Standard so as not to be omitted from entering schools to deliver sessions and attract players. As such, even if parents displayed an awareness of the Charter Standard, the saturation of its implementation rendered a selection process based on clubs being accredited as negligible.

Clubs and schools were also susceptible to the cost incurred and the changing requirements of coach education, and the transience of coaches and qualified individuals. However, given the attachment of people to their local community and greater distances involved to take part in football in other areas, coaches leaving to either form new clubs, or join other clubs and establish different school-club links did not exist. Commonly individuals ended their association with their respective clubs upon their children coming to leaving age (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06; Annual Report Club 2 2006). Yet in this Cluster this issue was deemed generally not problematic by the FDO as keen and eager replacements were noted as being available as the next batch of youngsters became involved in football, so did the next batch of interested and committed volunteers in the form of parents (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Although a regular common practice in all Clusters and in grassroots football generally, given the characteristics of the Cluster based around familial and community ties such a process was fairly embedded.

The most notable point of departure in this regard centred upon the training and up-skilling of school staff in order to implement Charter Standard. Resonating with Cluster 2, given the exposure of teachers to various offers of training and initiatives for their school, the PDM adopted a selective strategy in choosing schemes deemed most suitable. Largely due to the close working relationship established between the FDO and PDM, the Charter Standard was selected in which all schools under the PDMs jurisdiction were expected to work towards. This was 'not problematic if individuals such as the PDM are in place who drive it forward, they choose the schemes that are worthwhile and sifts them out and tells schools which ones to do...the Charter Standard is a high priority' (SSCO Interview 13 / 2 / 06). Such a strategy was successful based upon the prominence and acceptance of the PDM in

the Cluster as an emerging figure of authority established by their capacity to 'get things done and provide practical help, something which the NGBs are poor at doing' (SSCO Interview 13 / 2 / 06).

Other schemes and training initiatives were often used as an incentive with which to entice teachers to apply for the Charter Standard (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). For instance, the FA TOPS football[10] course, aimed to provide teachers with knowledge and expertise to structure sport and PE to aid the development of youngsters skills. The TOPS course, the minimum qualification required by a school teacher in the Charter Standard criteria became attractive to teachers as it was 'relatively cheap and easy' having been aimed at those teachers with little to no qualifications in PE, particularly at primary school level (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06). Upon completion, teachers were then given incentives to undertake more in depth qualifications that were subsidised for those having undertaken the TOPS course and those committed to undertaking Charter Standard accreditation for their school (FDO Interview 21 / 1 /06). The FA teaching certificate Key Stage 2/3/4 (FA 2003b Section B) was the most pertinent example to further enhance football provision within the school

> "I and others from other schools did a TOPS football course, which was advertised through the Grammar School in [the nearby town], who ran two twilight sessions. And it was during that course that the PDM showed us the detail and said 'do any of you know about this? (Charter Standard)' and the answer was 'no'." (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06)

In essence, the Charter Standard for schools was perceived as intended to capture those football oriented individuals without them having to undertake any professional development to achieve accreditation (PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06; FDO

[10] see http://www.youthsporttrust.org/page/top-programmes/index.html for more detail

Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Also, it was perceived that the vagaries of school interest in football were largely due to individual interest from teachers. As such, qualifications such as TOPS were deemed to be a good and easy introduction to the sport in which it was hoped teachers would adopt a more positive and confident attitude to providing football in juxtaposition to other sports within the school (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06).

Resonating with observations of many clubs, schools also noted that the criteria required for implementing the Charter Standard largely existed already within the school, with small adaptations required. For schools, it was noted that the Charter Standard provided greater confidence for staff, or for the employment of Charter Standard club coaches to deliver football sessions within the school. The upshot of which was perceived to be the enhanced skill levels of children within the school, particularly amongst girls (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06). In addition, the desire of the FDO to achieve KPIs to improve the reputation of the County FA nationally and locally, led to acceptance of some practices within schools in instances when all criteria had not been evident. Given the Primary School had not met the criteria of 'support a minimum of one Primary School in their Cluster to work towards being a Charter Standard School' (FA 2003b Section B), the school had acquired Charter Standard accreditation whilst substantially, but not fully, adhering to required criteria. The FDO who suggested that, given the PDM had undertaken this work for all families of schools within the SSP, that this qualified the school against this stipulation (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06).

In this connection, monitoring and evaluation of clubs and schools is weak. The latter may seem surprising in this Cluster given the signing of agreements by clubs

and schools in the partnership working highlighted in the following section. However, given there is no top-down pressure from the FA, the FDO does not regularly monitor Charter Standard clubs or schools to ensure accreditation criteria is upheld. The upshot is clubs or schools may have Charter Standard accreditation without actually conforming to criteria. As in the previous two Clusters, the three year renewal form from clubs and schools (FA 2003a; FA 2003b) is the monitoring mechanism. Over this period, coaches qualifications (also with a three year lifespan) may have expired and not been renewed, and coaches or teachers may have left. Largely based on trust and awareness, the stipulation that clubs or schools must inform the County FA of qualified staff members leaving, and being granted a year's grace to employ or up-skill a suitable individual is weak and unenforceable (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Notwithstanding this, constitutions and codes of conduct for clubs were not included on the monitoring form and generally are not adapted or advanced, meaning a club or school could have a constitution six years old (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). A chasm exists between what is prescribed in the policy and what actually occurs in the dynamics of action. Therefore there is large scope for variations in how, and in what way, the Charter Standard is implemented and maintained. Tenuous monitoring is undermined by actions of implementers and policy subjects within Charter Standard clubs and schools. The FDO highlights such problematic dynamics

> "We just rely on honesty. If a coach leaves they've got a year to turn that round and get someone qualified...Club 1 said, "Well, we've got nineteen teams, we've got nineteen qualified coaches." They didn't have a qualified coach aligned to each team, they said "What's your opinion on that" I said "Well obviously just really down to trust. If you send that application form in with nineteen teams and nineteen names next to them, there is nothing I can do except accept it" (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Given such observations, Club 1 were noted as being a Charter Standard club "in name only, not in practice" (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). The propensity for club

personnel to purposely deceive the FDO and other professional development staff is noted as fairly widespread, given that 'loopholes' in Charter Standard accreditation criteria and its monitoring are commonplace. In this connection, the willingness of the FDO to censure such teams is also limited given that, if as widespread as expected, the KPIs for the County would be severely hampered (SDO Interview 23 / 1 / 06). More serious examples include intentional falsified information provided on monitoring and application forms (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06).

Professional development staff, are constrained in their efforts to combat such practices by a combination of the temporality of the Charter Standard and the transience of its criteria by implementers. For instance, the PDM notes

> "one club I've met with worked out the loopholes...at the point where you receive Charter Standard, you've met all the criteria and all your coaches are qualified, that can literally be the only time that you are actually a Charter Standard club, because the next day a coach could leave, he could stay for eleven months, he could leave again, never having to get qualified. So they won't in fact be a Charter Standard club. But they are in name" (PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06)

There is a notable discrepancy based upon the integrity of club and school personnel regarding implementation and maintenance of the Charter Standard. There are those clubs and schools which, at the time of implementation, do conform to criteria of the Charter Standard. Over time, the transient nature of staff and the expiration of qualifications, clubs and schools may unintentionally divert from the criteria required for accreditation. Added to this, there is a tendency for clubs and schools not to notify the FDO of such developments. Second, there are those clubs and schools which upon accreditation, do not conform to criteria. At times, this largely intentional practice, to identify ways to dupe the County FA into granting the

accreditation is lamented by sport development professionals (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Yet the ostensible strategy adopted by FDOs across all Clusters in order to meet KPIs, places them in a paradoxical position to censure or discipline clubs, which is compromised at best and, at worst untenable.

Third, issues regarding private enterprises entering schools to deliver football in both curricular and extracurricular time were evident. Given pressures experienced by teachers, particularly in primary schools to deliver and meet targets in line with wider government policies such as PESSCL, experiences of school staff resonated with those in Cluster 2

> "we just re-applied for our sportsmark, there is PESSCL, equity for girls and disability, gifted and talented...ensuring primary schools in our family have the relevant paperwork to achieve their targets and policies...it is impossible to meet all these satisfactorily in the time we have...so corners are cut inevitably" (SSCO Interview 13 / 2 /06)

Concomitantly, the imposition of PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time, particularly in primary schools has impacted adversely upon implementation of policy (SSCO Interview 13 / 2 / 06; Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06). In this respect, PE and school sport, particularly in primary schools was noted as being adversely affected given a longstanding perception within schools that the subject was less important than others. Therefore, PPA time was requested in line with curricular PE. As such, conditions emerged whereby the inclusion of AOTTS and private companies to deliver on the PE curriculum were required. Moreover, external qualified coaches, particular in primary schools, were assumed to offer greater levels of expertise (Primary School Teacher Interview 28 / 1 / 06; SSCO Interview 13 / 2 / 06).

A perceptible contradiction has emerged. At one and the same time, teachers who were becoming qualified in line with Charter Standard criteria were unable or declined to, put into practice skills gained as part of the Charter Standard process, despite having undergone CPD paid for by the school to undertake qualifications to up-skill them. As such, teachers' qualifications were largely redundant. This process ostensibly caused problems given that some primary schools employed parents with a 'football background' in order to meet targets based on word of mouth, rather than verifying their suitability to deliver on such policies (SSCO Interview 13 / 2 / 06).

The dynamics are exacerbated by the opportunism of companies and individuals who have noted the creation of a market for the delivery of school sport and PE given the conditions examined above.

> "there's a lot of private companies out there offering various football and coaching activities….there's a guy that operates from here, he advertises himself as an ex professional football captain...he's got 60, 70 kids down there every week, paying five quid a session and making a mint out of it...I don't even know if he is qualified (SDO Interview 23 / 1 / 06)

Given the Charter Standard and government documentation (DCMS 2001; DfES 2004) encourages the practice of forming school–club links and the use of AOTTS to deliver football activities, (as do powerful PE organisations such as AfPE) such provision seems to be desired by those in policy making positions for school sport and PE. However, given the rapidity with which such a development has taken place, many of the individuals entering schools are unregulated and it is not uncommon for their qualifications and backgrounds to go unchecked (SSCO Interview 13 / 2 / 06; PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06).

Fourth, the imposition of, and pressures in meeting, KPIs, provide an undercurrent for the modernisation of clubs in this Cluster which ostensibly resonates with the previous two Clusters. In conjunction with the rural structural antecedents, and following the issue of club expansion in the previous section, the FDO noted how vagaries of club fortunes within the modernising process were largely dependent upon the actions of volunteers in clubs. Given clubs in rural areas were generally small in nature, and often organised by one enthusiastic individual, such individual and personal endeavours appear more important and influential than those based in larger clubs in urbanised areas. This was expressed in terms of a mixture of characteristics which conjoined, such as; i) willingness to engage with the Charter Standard or any general modernising processes the club may be exposed to, ii) the intelligence and ability of individuals to engage with technology such as the internet, iii) ability to persuade and negotiate with others within the club as to the merits of undertaking practices such as coach education and child protection courses and, iv) the ability to write development plans and funding bids to access small grants for football kits. Given the structural constraints which impinged on the FDOs support, the actions of club personnel were extremely important. That is, those most able and willing to engage with the modernising process for grassroots football became favoured by the FDO. This is unsurprising given that such individuals were well placed to assist the FDO in achieving much needed targets and KPIs whilst simultaneously assisting in improving the reputation of the County FA as a forward looking, modern and approachable organisation.

Finally, a significant point of departure is the tension between the County FA committee and newly established development department with professionally paid staff. This is not to say such tensions do not exist in the other Clusters. Briefly, since the emergence of New Labour's modernisation agenda for sport, the structural

organisation of The FA has significantly shifted to a more interventionist 'top-down' managerial approach to grass-roots football governance. As noted in Chapter 2 each County FA received a professional FDO in 2000, largely funded and managed centrally by The FA, with responsibility for implementing national strategic objectives at a local level. Thus, volunteers in grass-roots football clubs were to be supported by an emergent professionalised County FA to help meet increasingly centralised, state influenced, objectives (Houlihan & Green 2006). Longstanding elected volunteers and key decision makers in administering the grassroots game locally remain aloof to modernising practices such as implementing the Charter Standard. As such, they retain legislative and regulatory powers regarding organising the game at a local level, and therefore a powerful position

> "getting the committee on board has been the most difficult thing...volunteers who administer leagues and the regulations in spare time aren't keen on us development staff coming in and as they see it treading on their toes" (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Given that County FA Council Members had volunteered over many years for their local organisation their personal experience being guardians of local grassroots football reflected 'bottom-up' local autonomy. As such, the FDO perceived that working with longstanding council members as a relatively new, professional member of staff coming under the same umbrella organisation was difficult as Council members expressed concerns at losing control to a centralised authority (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). The remit of professional staff to develop the local game in line with the National FA strategic framework is often at counter odds with the endemic culture of grassroots football, which has experienced relatively fast paced reform through attendant policies and initiatives. As such, the legitimacy and authority of Council members became questioned (Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06). Indeed, several members were deemed antagonistic towards the Charter Standard. As noted by the FDO 'The old Chairman of the board was very old

school...authoritarian...and the coaching they did themselves was very 1950s...they didn't see the need to move with the times and coach in a different way' (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06).

Compounding this friction is the commitment to amateurism by local council representatives. In this connection, the FDO was exposed to an underlying concern from Council Members that they may not have the necessary dedication, commitment and sense of duty and attachment that characterises amateur sports volunteers (Nichols et al 2005). This was often expressed in terms of the pressures for the FDO to achieve KPIs imposed by the regional FA manager, and that the FDO would not be acting in the best interests of clubs within the Cluster. The differential treatment of Clubs 1 and 2 is a case in point, whereby the latter, an established club with a longstanding association with the County FA through the chairman being a Council member, is perceived disadvantaged by the imposition of a modernised, professional approach to football development in the form of the Charter Standard. A certain amount of resentment was targeted towards those seen to be 'profiting' out of the game, in that

> "One of the biggest things that has been thrown at us is: 'We used to do your job voluntarily, and you're getting paid for it now." (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Unsurprisingly, the FDO in this Cluster (and also an undercurrent in the other two Clusters) identified numerous frustrations and constraints in that such departments were deemed unwilling, or indeed unable, to embrace change and 'modernising' practices such as the Charter Standard (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). The views of council members portrayed to the vast number of volunteers in local clubs contradicted the work of the FDO, undermining the Charter Standard. This required a deal of entrepreneurship on behalf of the FDO to 'persuade' or otherwise

'convince' longstanding members of the 'qualities of the Charter Standard' (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Such power struggles within the County FA, highlight the conflict and ambiguity regarding policies and initiatives such as the Charter Standard within organisations charged with implementing them. The Council Members, showing a degree of conformity over the Charter Standard as 'not in the best interests of local football' (Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06) in refusing to embrace new professionalised and rationalised approaches into the day-to-day activities of County FAs highlights the contested nature over the control and organisation of grassroots football more generally.

In sum, the motivation behind implementing the Charter Standard resonated with the previous two Clusters in confirming that clubs were already involved in best practice. Associated with this, in line with modernisation espoused by New Labour (c.f. Finlayson 203) was the use of technology in applying for accreditation, which was actively encouraged and utilised by the County FA. The up-skilling of school staff is a point of departure from the other two Clusters, yet this is unsurprising given that schools in the Cluster were engaged by the FDO to a greater extent in the Charter Standard process, mainly through established relationships with relevant sport development professionals such as the PDM, in a school sport partnership that was proactive and embedded in the community. Yet, dynamics regarding staff undertaking qualifications were similar to those experienced by coaches in clubs centring on time constraints. However, given the different contexts within which individuals operate, for school teachers the impact of this was to generate circumstances which required the employment of a newly professionalised and confident coaching industry to provide individuals to offer football in the school setting. The employment of private coaching companies became commonplace, particularly in primary schools where teachers had to perform several functions, and

in which school sport and PE was actively devolved by teachers to make their own time more efficient and to employ others deemed more suitable to offer football and to meet the government targets in policies such as PESSCL. The upshot of which, that on occasion, individuals were employed in the school setting to deliver football sessions in line with Charter Standard, PESSCL and NCPE requirements without undergoing any form of vetting procedure.

Most notable in terms of departure for dynamics and nuances between the Clusters, the tensions between longstanding County FA Council voluntary members such as Club 2's secretary, with their strong commitment to amateurist values and the FDO for the Cluster centred on the transformation of the regional and local administrative body into one organised around professionalised practices. New FA-funded personnel symbolised and 'embodied' the modernisation agenda of Government and The FA and, as such, concerns were raised about the necessity and suitability of these staff. The role of these professionals to develop rather than simply govern the game were interpreted as a direct attempt to transform the historic role of County FAs and, indeed, the grass-roots game more broadly. Attendant policies and initiatives such as the Charter Standard were therefore viewed with suspicion, as tools of this transformation, and a site of resistance. As such, the imposition of professional practices into a historically amateur and voluntary organisation from the top down caused internal problems to the County FA, ultimately hindering the implementation of the Charter Standard given the FDO had little support to undertake this across the County.

Lastly, reinforcing an overarching issue in the previous two Clusters, the apparent lack of monitoring and auditing from the County FA. As such, clubs and schools are

operating as being Charter Standard accredited without conforming to the stipulations and criteria in the FA documents and application packs (FA 2003a; FA 2003b; FA 2003d). The FDO and SDO are knowledgeable of this fact, and actively encourage such a practice to take place in order to meet KPIs. This common practice across all Clusters serves to undermine the ethos of the Charter Standard.

6.3.3 Charter Standard Implementation: Relationships and Collaboration within the Cluster

This section explores the relationships between organisations and personnel specific to this Cluster, with particular reference to the implementation of the Charter Standard. The constraints and opportunities for Charter Standard implementation influenced by structural antecedents and matters arising in connection with the modernisation process specific to this Cluster frame the analysis. That is, the rural geographic nature of the Cluster, competition for resources in terms of players and facilities, transportation, and pressures of the temporal pace of changes in adoption of modernisation techniques such as the internet, KPIs and the friction between modernised, relatively new professionalised staff and longstanding volunteers with steadfast amatuerist values.

This Cluster was largely distinct from the previous two in terms of the collaborative activity that emerged for football development more generally and the Charter Standard specifically. Such distinctiveness was underpinned by two similar constraints to collaborative activity and relationships with regards to inter-club

rivalry; i) the Charter Standard viewed as a badge of distinction vis-à-vis similar clubs within the Cluster perceived to relate to dominance and success in football matches, winning of trophies, and ii) clubs did work together to form leagues and competitions, particularly for emerging girls football. However, collaborative activity in this context was a means to an end for each individual club's development and survival and resonates with the contestation for resources within other Clusters. In this respect, clubs were working alongside one another rather than together to develop football.

A major point of departure in relation to the previous Clusters is noted here. As alluded to, the SSP pertaining to the Clusters was particularly active and well established, and was prominent in football development activity. This provided the impetus for several interlocking processes relating to the Charter Standard, such as i) the agreement of devolving responsibility by the FDO to sport development professionals operating in the Cluster to implement the Charter Standard, largely in an attempt to overcome the structural and modernisation constraints, ii) successful partnerships being established in which the Charter Standard was used as a tool to entice clubs and schools to develop football, particularly girls football development, iii) increase in power and status of newly formed sport development professionals (the PDM) over the FDO and significantly, longstanding traditional sport development positions (Local Authority SDO), iv) Repetition and replication of initiatives by forming numerous partnerships and agreements. Given the dynamics here are inseparable, they are taken together in providing a description of the collaborative and partnership activity at work.

Resonating with the processes in Clusterss 1 and 2 the FDO attempted to work through SSPs to implement the Charter Standard at local levels in areas perceived to be active in football development in order to achieve relatively easy KPIs. As in the previous two Clusters, the strategy, and emphasis for this was based upon the devolving of responsibility to the PDM for supporting schools through the Charter Standard application process, with the FDO acting in an advisory and regulatory position. Yet this did not seem to operate in a manner effective and advantageous to either party in the previous two Clusters. The dynamics in this Cluster differed which served to enhance collaborative activity largely by chance and circumstance, characterised by the FDO enjoying a particularly formalised understanding with the PDM. It is also worth noting that the FDO reported not having this type of relationship with any other PDM within the boundaries of the County FA (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06). The basis of this was a mixture of personal and professional commitments (See Table 6.3). The mixture of key personnel having knowledge of one another from previous job roles in sport development at different junctures, the entrepreneurial skills of the PDM, and the bargaining and negotiating skills of the FDO were influential in this regard. Combined with this the grammar school with specialist sports college status which hosted the PDM had a tradition as a successful footballing school. Implementation of the Charter Standard was promoted as a key priority of the Specialist Sports College, in which a mixture of school tradition in football and the personal preferences were largely the protagonist for the PDM to accept responsibility of implementing the Charter Standard on behalf of the FDO.

> "The SSPs are another resource into the networks that we work in, and if they could just make sure that what they're delivering is spot on, that would be brilliant from my point of view. But because most have never worked with a County FA before, because we've been inaccessible, they have just tended to go and do it themselves...partnership working is the buzz word but it needs to be done and we have been quite backwards in getting out there, but that is changing" (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Such dynamics emphasise why the school sport infrastructure was involved in Charter Standard implementation to a greater extent. Given the embedded perception of the County FA as historically weak and unapproachable, the FDO sought to make use of other influential individuals in a burgeoning professionalised sport development professional and aligned infrastructures, to assist implementation of the Charter Standard. This allowed the PDM 'greater control over which clubs were able to approach which school...as I had the say over it' (PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06). Indeed, it was noted that the partnership had been mutually beneficial in two overarching ways. First, the FDO perceived that clubs in the Cluster would be more responsive to individuals representing organisations other than the County FA

> "If we kept on banging the drum that this Charter Standard is good for your club and that it would be beneficial to do it, we would be met with a lot of suspicion...people are always questioning our motives and that puts them off doing any work with us...the PDM on the other hand doesn't represent football but can promote the same scheme but without the baggage we have" (FDO interview 21 / 1 / 06).

Club personnel verified this perception, concurring that the PDM had been the influential figure in establishing school club links for clubs and assisting with the criteria for Charter Standard accreditation (FA 2003a; Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06). The endorsement from the PDM was an important factor for clubs to trust an individual from the County FA and to strike up a working relationship with them. Second, given the control the PDM had over clubs entering schools to provide football, and access to all schools in the Cluster, they attained a powerful position within the local community. This enabled them to negotiate implementation of the Charter Standard with a wider audience than the

FDO. In addition, the PDM was able to secure a consensus regarding the interpretation of the Charter Standard, the benefits of implementation, and definitions of key criteria such as school-club links. This provided the PDM with greater potential to achieve a higher number of Charter Standard accredited clubs and schools more efficiently, and to hit and surpass KPIs.

Working through the families of schools within the partnership, the PDM undertook an audit of sports provision in schools. This was in order to satisfy a mixture of identifying a paucity of provision within secondary and primary schools with a view to developing and, to identify existing good practice in those schools which were in a position to attain accreditation. However, the FDO had difficulty in convincing schools that the Charter Standard was worthwhile given that Sportsmark was an award for the school in terms of sporting provision as a whole as against a singular sport. The reliance on the PDM in this respect as a gatekeeper was essential for the FDO to overcome such barriers and achieve the required KPIs for schools. The FDO was largely fortuitous in that the PDMs motives for assisting in the implementation of the Charter Standard was grounded in their ambition to achieve as many kitemarks for both self career advancement and the promotion of the schools under their jurisdiction, which were both perceived to go hand in hand (PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06).

> "they [the PDM] want to get more Charter Standard, that's brilliant from my point of view, I am invited to attend their meetings where I meet all the SCOs, they will then get all their secondary schools up to that level, who will then work with a primary school to get up to Charter Standard. So from hopefully an hour meeting I should get, twenty-nine schools in the next year up to Charter Standard level....I don't have to be at the coalface to push all those through as they do it for me" (FDO Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

By collaborating, each individual has enhanced the potential to achieve collaborative advantage within the context of modernisation by achieving mutually beneficial KPIs for the Charter Standard through strategic partnership working. Yet the agreement between these two key individuals for implementing the Charter Standard had ramifications for schools and clubs. In order to achieve mutually beneficial aims, the school-club link criteria in both variations of the Charter Standard award (FA 2003a; FA 2003b) was a key collaborative practice which had to be managed and enforced by the PDM and FDO.

Schools and clubs were required to formally work with one another to provide football. This was achieved through a mixture of encouragement to those in the process of, or keen to establish working partnerships with schools, and coercion of those clubs and schools providing football with informal links with one another. For example, the PDM identified which football clubs were in the vicinity of each school. Contact was made with clubs with support of the FDO, to encourage clubs to become involved with schools in their location on a formal basis, with the drawing up and signing of agreements, which, amongst other things, tied the club to providing out of school hours coaching within the school for a period of six weeks or more. Such an agreement allowed schools to meet the stipulation of school-club links for the Charter Standard, and the provision of out of school hours football (FA 2003b), whilst also formalising what had generally been an informal, word of mouth relationship. Such a strategic, top-down partnership achieved the attainment of mutually beneficial targets and goals for the PDM, FDO and clubs and schools within the Cluster. In turn, the proactivity of clubs exacerbated structural issues by relying heavily on the schools in their local area as recruiting sites, given the rural characteristics of the Cluster. The PDM negotiated with clubs which schools they were to formalise their partnerships, and in turn, those clubs not currently Charter

Standard accredited were encouraged by the PDM to undertake the process. However, those clubs that did not wish to engage with the Charter Standard were informed that their services would not be welcomed within schools under the remit of the PDM, and that schools in their vicinity would be offered to the nearest suitable Charter Standard club for sites of recruitment and football development (PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06; FDO interview 21 / 1 / 06).

> "we advise schools to work with Charter Standard clubs only and PDMs will only recognise clubs that are working towards Charter Standard or have Charter Standard level...We are trying to get away from the attitude that they know that teacher anyway, he'll let us use that school... The PDM tells them that in a years time that probably won't be the case. PDMs can draw down School-Club Links money, which again will pay for your coaches to come to that club. And as long as you look at it as a whole and explain everything to them as a whole, they sort of get the concept and they go for it." (FDO interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Despite some contestation and disagreement emerging between clubs regarding peripheral schools, that is, those schools equidistant to two or more clubs in the most rural pockets, the process was relatively smooth with concessions being give to those who felt they had lost out by the invitation to host football festivals within schools to attract those players not willing to, or unable to secure a place with the selected club (Secretary Club 1 Interview 3 / 2 / 06; Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06; PDM Interview 17 / 1 / 06).

Running alongside the agreement between clubs and schools, a further agreement was drawn up for the development of girl's football. Fortuitously for the FDO and PDM in this Cluster, the SDO with a remit for developing girls football in the area was a qualified level 3 football coach, had a football background and had previous successful working relationships with the two (See Table 6.3). Collaboration was established on the assumption that the SDO had greater access to clubs and schools

required by the FDO to achieve greater participation in girls football. Those clubs agreeing to become Charter Standard accredited to gain access to schools also had the proviso of developing teams for girls, with the penalty being removal from delivering football within the school or being an acceptable club for schools pupils to attend by the PDM (Interview 17 / 1 / 06). Indeed, clubs were expected to draw up a realistic plan to develop girls football within the school in conjunction with teachers and to offer pathways and opportunities for playing within the club. To assist with this, the PDM drew into the agreements between clubs and schools that the school would up-skill teaching staff to the qualification of JFO teacher, which would allow them to train up sixth form students to deliver football sessions[11]. Details of the partnership and the proposed advantages are summarised by the FDO who states that the SDO

> "coordinated a whole six week coaching programme for girls in the primary schools, which is linked to Charter Standard clubs. They've used the PDM who has used the School-Club Link budget to fund that…in partnership with them we're going to do JFO courses for the secondary schools to run the festivals for the primary schools and also run Coaching Certificates for the teachers to go up to Charter Standard…So it all fits in together." (FDO interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Indeed, both club secretaries and both school representatives within the Cluster acknowledged that the agreements signed by both parties were operational and effective in providing a closer link between both clubs and schools, in which both clubs had experienced a greater number of players wanting to play and register for the club. Reinforcing the position of the PDM as a powerful bargaining individual,

[11] The FA JFO course is designed to support young people aged 14 to 18 with the skills to lead groups of young people aged between 6 and 11 years in safe football activities under the supervision of an FA qualified coach. The JFO course is a stepping stone towards enrolling on the FA Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Football course that is open to people aged 16 and over.

they were attributed as being the influence behind such developments. This was extended to club 2 expressing the belief that

> "had it not been for the PDM, the club would probably not have undertaken the Charter Standard as they did not see the benefit of implementing, until the PDM was able to spell out the relationship we could enjoy with the local school" (Secretary Club 2 Interview 4 / 2 / 06)

Despite this, the Local Authority SDO had largely been marginalised in football development activities by the advent of newly professionalised NGBs, SSPs, the employment of professional staff to develop school sport in the local community and the concomitant growth in a more confident and professional voluntary workforce within clubs. Given a post had been established by the CSP to develop girls football within the county, and a development group for girls football set up by the girls FDO largely usurped the position of the SDO and their role within football development. The assistance and guidance of the SDO was not required to the extent it had been in the past on this issue. As such, the SDO, despite working within an environment characterised by collaboration and partnerships between clubs and schools, and between the County FA and the school sport partnership, found themselves to be on the periphery of such development activity. With the PDM becoming more visible for schools and clubs in the Cluster, they were noted as the individual with greater authority, power and influence within the community, and were therefore approached in the first instance for any advice regarding development work such as the Charter Standard

> "The difficulty for me is that I am not privileged with the information as to which clubs are or are going for Charter Standard...I would certainly benefit from some kind of shared information...we've actually helped schools through the process and provided some advice and some guidance...but I think that's going to go through the SSCOs and PDMs network rather than coming through us...at the moment we're kind of reviewing everything we do because … I think there's quite a bit of

> duplication at the moment between what we do and what the PDMs and the SSCOs are doing so" (SDO Interview 23 / 1 / 06)

Added to this, the SDO was aware that their assistance was becoming required to a lesser extent, not only by clubs and schools, but also other professional development staff, due largely to the school sport infrastructure being imposed in a top-down fashion. Given the background of the SDO their marginalisation was largely an unintended consequence of intended actions. This is exemplified by the replication of football development activities despite attempts to work in collaboration. The FDO noted the SDO would provide advice to football clubs regarding codes of conduct and club constitutions. Yet such advice was sport generic and did not fit criteria required by the FA to be included in a football clubs constitution fit for Charter Standard accreditation. Again, replication of work is evident here causing confusion for clubs as different sport development professionals have similar agendas, but not the capacity to engage effectively with one another due to bureaucratisation. Ostensibly, the difference between a sport generic and sport specific code of conduct or club constitution was the omission of key words such as 'football' or reference to specific elements of Charter Standard criteria such as the behaviour of coaches and parents in terms of not shouting abuse. The FDO noted 'there is no point a club coming to me with a constitution that does not make reference specifically to football regardless if it has come from Sport England's or the CSP website.' (Interview 21 / 1 / 06)

Given the recognition of such difficulties, it was apparent that the FDO, PDM and SDO had adopted practices which administratively allowed for collaborative advantage through the forming of formalised strategic partnerships. Such

developments were relatively new, and it was perceived that over time, such relationships would become embedded, expanded and provide a role for everyone. Given the unintended peripheral status of the SDO, it was recognised that given their expertise, a suitable role would be found for the SDO in terms of football development given time. However, this is contingent on a number of factors, not least policies and initiatives in place at this moment remaining in place, and the changing of such initiatives and the addition of new national led policies to be delivered at the local level.

In sum, collaborative activity and the establishment of relationships were largely dependent on the dynamism and entrepreneurship of key individuals within the Cluster. Moreover, their ability to persuade or coerce clubs and schools into forming partnerships on a formalised basis and to be alert to mutually beneficial agreements for sport development colleagues in meeting individual KPIs were key elements in achieving Charter Standard implementation. Indeed, the relationships between the key sport development professionals within this Cluster were deemed to be unique in comparison with other areas under the jurisdiction of these individuals. Such dynamics had differing consequences for development professionals. Significantly, given the historical perception of the County FA's inertia and aloofness to clubs and schools, the PDM emerged as a key powerful individual within the Cluster to drive football development. Fortuitously for the FDO, their background and affinity with football enhanced the potential for football development activities and the implementation of the Charter Standard. Therefore, a mixture of collaborative advantage and collaborative inertia (Huxham & Vangen 2005) is evident within this Cluster with regards to football development and specifically the implementation of the Charter Standard. Such a hotchpotch of dynamics combining to contribute to the characteristics of collaboration and partnerships within the Cluster resonate with the

intentions of New Labour's third way approach to policy, in which national policy is implemented at a local level adapted to meet local circumstances. That is, those partnerships that were formed, predominantly of a strategic nature, were most suitable for the circumstances within which they emerged. Yet, if it were not for the abilities of those key individuals, such conditions may not have been recognised and taken advantage of.

Summary

Table 6.4 provides a concise overview of the nuances, dynamics and processes of Charter Standard implementation across three themes in the three Clusters. A substantive analysis of these is provided in Chapter 7

Table 6.4: Summary of key implications across three themes of Charter Standard Implementation in Three Clusters

	Cluster One	Cluster Two	Cluster Three
Structural Antecedents	Longstanding established, reputable clubs tend to receive greater support for CS implementation and grassroots football provision. Geographical area of Cluster densely populated, numerous clubs vying for FDO support – constrained by Cluster being an 'outpost'. Clubs' desire to progress through CS framework hindered. Competition for scarce, oversubscribed and unsuitable council owned facilities and for players. Geographical constraints on access to essential training courses to achieve aspects of Charter Standard accreditation criteria e.g., coach education or child protection workshops arranged by FDO at inaccessible venues, or arranged by individual clubs for internal use. Tends to exclude smaller and less established clubs. Embedded cultural practices within grassroots football which hinder the development and inclusion of girls' football particularly Clubs able to professionalise or modernise less reliant on FDO support more likely to advance through CS framework.	Implementation bound up in embedded ethnicalised, fragmented communities. Tensions between different ethnic groups representative of different clubs exacerbate rivalry. Gang culture and crime underpinning tensions. Clubs competing for FDO support, scarce council owned facilities and funding streams. FDOs target specific clubs. Pressure to expand provision, acquire greater facility capacity to meet participation demands. Ubiquitous interpretation of CS as a vehicle with which to access funding streams CS implementation susceptible to, and largely subsumed into, wider government policies and programmes for social inclusion, e.g. used as vehicle to access funding such as the NDC. Embedded cultural practices within grassroots football which hinder the development and inclusion of minority groups and girls' football particularly. CS implementation exacerbating fragmentation of ethnic communities rather than contributing to social inclusion, e.g. formation of Bangladeshi Charter Standard league, Facility development for Club.	Geographical area of Cluster is rural with pockets of populated urban areas. Clubs' desire to advance through the CS framework hindered in this context. Rural schools lack facilities and numbers to advance through CS framework Smaller clubs insular, larger clubs fragmented – CS implementation formalising club structures. Teams representing particular towns or villages exacerbate competition for scarce resources. Local attachment to clubs increases rivalry – CS implemented as a form of one-upmanship. Inherent perception of County FA as ineffectual, leads to support from wider sport development infrastructure e.g. PDM, SDO. FDO audit to counter this identifying clubs most suitable to gain CS accreditation with little adaptation to practice. Embedded cultural practices within grassroots football which hinder the development and inclusion of girls' football particularly Clubs able to professionalise or modernise less reliant on FDO support more likely to advance through CS framework.

Modernisation	Club volunteers perceive greater confidence in structuring and organising club – formalising and standardising rules through codes of conduct. Extends to coaching practices in perception of providing a greater quality experience to children Tensions in temporal dimensions of implementation - relatively fast paced changes in both the required coaching qualifications, and their content, the adoption of business practices in the form of development plans and the screening of potential volunteer staff Dissatisfaction with time and economic pressures on volunteers and processes involved in becoming eligible for CS accreditation CS implementation undermined by structures e.g. the junior league unsupportive and hostile Rumours inflate conflict and ambiguity regarding CS must be implemented to ensure County FA affiliation, or by implementing clubs become more accountable for actions. League structures most common location for dissemination. Widespread use of Information Technology to 'cut and paste' FA templates Manipulation of KPIs for number of clubs accredited by FDO - accredited without conforming to criteria CS implemented as majority of practices exist in line with CS criteria such as codes of conduct, CP officer, - the manipulation of some aspects required to achieve accreditation - motivation	Engagement with the modernisation process in terms of club volunteers gaining new and updated qualifications has equipped clubs with greater confidence to offer football to their (largely ethnic specific) communities beyond the club membership. Tensions in temporal dimensions of implementation - relatively fast paced changes in both the required coaching qualifications, and their content, the adoption of business practices in the form of development plans and the screening of potential volunteer staff, Dissatisfaction with time and economic pressures on volunteers – being drawn into policy network to implement Multitude of wider government linked sport development initiatives and programmes each with KPIs creates complex environment for FDOs and club and school staff across a number of Undermines efficiency and clarity of purpose. multi-faceted assortment does little to encourage efficiency Manifestation of professional actions divorced from modernisation agenda. Multitude of KPIs, present modernisation process in a mechanical manner reflecting a rationalist approach to implementation. FDOs manipulation of criteria required to implement CS usurps modernised techniques such as KPIs Widespread use of Information Technology to 'cut and paste' FA templates CS implemented due to majority of practices in existence in line with CS criteria such as codes of	Use of and access to, technology in the form of the internet and email is variable across clubs skewing ability of clubs and schools to engage with modernising agenda in favour of those with access e.g. contact with FDO and access to FA templates for codes of conduct Dissatisfaction with time and economic pressures on volunteers – being drawn into policy network to implement Upskilling of school staff - dynamics regarding staff undertaking qualifications similar to those experienced by coaches in clubs centring on time constraints. Creation of environment requiring employment of private coaching companies commonplace, particularly in primary schools - in context of government policies for school sport. Professionalising of County FA engendered tensions between longstanding County FA Council voluntary members such as Club 2's secretary, with strong commitment to amateurist values and the professional Football Development Officer. Manipulation of KPIs for number of clubs accredited by FDO - accredited without conforming to criteria CS implemented as majority of practices exist in line with CS criteria such as codes of conduct, CP officer, - the manipulation of some aspects required to achieve accreditation - motivation behind implementing the CS was to confirm clubs

	behind implementing the CS was to confirm clubs were already involved in best practice. Lack of monitoring and auditing from County FA divorced from the mantra of modernisation. CS not promoted widely – parents are unaware or fail to understand the CS	conduct, CP officer, - the manipulation of some aspects required to achieve accreditation - motivation behind implementing the CS was to confirm clubs were already involved in best practice. Lack of monitoring and auditing from County FA divorced from the mantra of modernisation. CS not promoted widely – parents are unaware or fail to understand the CS	were already involved in best practice. Lack of monitoring and auditing from County FA divorced from the mantra of modernisation. CS not promoted widely – parents are unaware or fail to understand the CS
Relationships / Collaboration	Lack of collaboration between clubs and schools given minimum level of CS accreditation did not require links with schools clubs did not engage Lack of pro active sport development infrastructure for clubs and FDO to engage with - FDO's proactive approach to clubs and reactive approach to schools render conditions to encourage partnership working absent - schools remained aloof to the Charter Standard at the time of research. Collaborative activity a means to an end for clubs centred on the relations between clubs. Led to development of a girls' league to assist clubs with CS implementation Clubs working alongside one another rather than together to develop girls' football. Additionally, this process was also used as a vehicle with which to exclude other clubs from the development of football in the Cluster. CS implementation constrained – potential to	Lack of collaboration - clubs unwilling and constrained to generate school-club links – strongly underpinned by structural antecedents of gang culture and ethnicalised communities rendered Inter club rivalry – underpinned by different ethnic and cultural backgrounds constrain collaboration – i) CS a badge of distinction vis-à-vis similar clubs perceived to relate to dominance and success on the playing field ii) a vehicle with which to gain an advantage over similar clubs in funding bids to various external agencies for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. Inter club rivalry – criteria of CS used as a tool with which to question and report rival clubs accreditation and undermine status eg child protection and racial issues. Preference of PDM to focus on sports other than football FDOs (and clubs) and SDO lack of engagement with an established school sport development infrastructure - schools remained aloof to the Charter Standard at the time of research rendering school –	Established and proactive school sport infrastructure linked into football development and CS Collaborative activity dependent on the dynamism and entrepreneurship of key individuals within the Cluster, particularly the PDM – background in football - emerged as policy entrepreneur due to structural antecedents regarding CFA schools and clubs benefited signing formalised agreements to allow for pathways of players, and provision of CS clubs in school setting, - Clubs to assist non CS school in application process - key elements in achieving Charter Standard implementation for both schools and clubs. Close relationships between key sport development professionals largely unintended marginalisation of the local authority SDO, - position usurped by role in club development within CS being taken over by PDM. partnerships formed, predominantly of a strategic

	advance through CS framework diminished Partnerships with adult clubs difficult to establish as lack of interest in CS or any collaborative work – lack of pathways for players Word of mouth relationships predominate rather than formal relationships Interpretation of CS principles and criteria – lack of consensus, - contestation between the ideals of competitive football and participative football	club collaboration difficult Strategic collaborative activity for mutually beneficial activities evident in the NDC partnership identified in section 6.3.1, Word of mouth relationships predominate rather than formal relationships Interpretation of CS principles and criteria – lack of consensus, - contestation between the ideals of competitive football and participative football	nature, were most suitable for the circumstances within which they emerged – abilities of key individuals to take advantage key here FDO negotiation with other powerful NGBs to avoid duplication in schools Interpretation of CS principles - consensus apparent regarding the interpretation of CS principles and criteria

CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Conclusions: Policy Network Analysis

Chapter 6 has provided key comparisons and contrasts of the empirical findings in each Cluster within each established theme of Charter Standard implementation. Table 6.4 provided a concise summary of the apparent dynamics within each theme. This Chapter draws together those key implications regarding the implementation of the Charter Standard in three Clusters of the football development policy network. Whilst the substantive analysis of the empirical data follows here, the characteristics of the subsystem of grassroots football in the context of modernisation detailed in Chapters 2 and 3, and theoretical and methodological insights provided in Chapters 4 and 5 are incorporated into the discussion where appropriate. Here, the salience of different macro and meso-level theoretical frameworks set out in Chapter 4 inform the discussion, with particular emphasis given to the evaluation of the dialectical approach to policy networks in understanding implementation.

7.1 Structural Antecedents

The previous Chapter alerts us to the Charter Standard being bound up in the structural and cultural fabric of different Clusters of the football development policy network. Despite distinct structural complexities characterising each Cluster, striking similarities exist relating to the processes and outcomes of Charter Standard implementation. Particularly, these regard the interlocking dimensions of; geographical constraints on FDOs proactivity and support work; competition for scarce resources such as funding, facilities and players in light of advancing through the Charter Standard framework for clubs in particular and, difficulties in

establishing egalitarian provision. These dimensions are susceptible to, and in large part, defined by, peculiar endemic structural characteristics of grassroots football.

Facilities and Funding

Resonating across all three Clusters, all Charter Standard accredited clubs expressed a desire to draw funding from the Football Foundation to develop their own facility. Longstanding and inherent frictions regarding football facility development and maintenance are a key structural antecedent. As discussed in Chapter 2, questions remain regarding whether the footballing authorities and government have sustained their historically ambivalent position on the issue of facility development, or whether the resources at the disposal of both parties are not substantial enough to support the required investment to meet the demands of grassroots football. It is clear neither is willing or able to provide a long term commitment to invest in grassroots facilities (See Chapter 3).

Motivations for clubs to implement the Charter Standard centres on two interrelated ubiquitous points of consensus across all three Clusters in the football development policy network regarding facility development: i) upon implementing the Charter Standard, funding streams will become accessible to the club in which support from FDOs can be garnered to assist in drafting funding applications; and ii) facility development enhances the capacity of clubs to advance through the Charter Standard framework. Indeed, such perceptions seem reasonable given the FAs Head of Football Development, Kelly Simmons, states that Charter Standard clubs are a priority for the distribution of Football Foundation facility grants (FA Annual Report 2003/04:34). Deliberations between clubs and FDOs on this matter add to the complexity. FDOs are careful not to explicitly state that achieving Charter Standard status will guarantee funding from the Football Foundation, but do not actively

discourage clubs undertaking the Charter Standard application process from their stated ambitions (FDO Cluster 1 Interview 24 / 3 / 06; FDO Cluster 3 Interview 21 / 1 / 06; Club FDO Cluster 2 Interview 19 / 9 / 05). This translation of passive inducement has largely become internalised and reproduced, as such beliefs have never been quashed outright by those perceived to be 'gatekeepers' to funding streams. Given the lack of capacity for FDOs to support further development work for all Charter Standard clubs in light of the geographical constraints, and the absence of a clear statement of position on the issue of facility development by the FA, support for *all* Charter Standard accredited clubs is not feasible. Added to this, FDOs report being instructed by their respective Regional Development Managers to strategically select and support funding applications by

> "targetting clubs capable of becoming Community Status accredited, and those that we intuitively know have the skill base with which to draw up suitable and effective development plans…we have to be selective, we can't do it for everyone, there is not an infinite amount of funding and the Football Foundation will not support multiple bids from the same locations" (FDO Interview Cluster 3).

Crucially, the Football Foundation states that it draws upon the knowledge and experience of County FAs and local football partnerships to respond to the needs of local areas, reinforcing their reliance on, and increasing the influence of, the strategic actions undertaken by FDOs on this issue.

An instructive theoretical pointer is signalled here regarding ACF and policy network analyses. There has in recent years, emerged a notable confluence of political positioning between the FA, FA Premier League and Government, underpinned by a set of shared values on the issue of facility development. While neither party has committed individually to substantial financial investment in facilities at the grassroots level, the forming of the Football Foundation to mutually

fund projects is illustrative. Indeed, such processes indicate that a 'coalition' may be emerging around how activities in relation to grassroots football development should be undertaken. The former alerts us to a tripartite system of beliefs. At the 'policy core' level, two 'fundamental normative precepts' have emerged binding together actors within an emerging coalition regarding; i) an orientation of basic value priorities, and ii) identification of groups or entities that can deliver on these key precepts. It is clear that the value priorities of the FA, government and FA Premier League as mutual funders of the Football Foundation, is the incorporation of volunteers into a football development policy network as a resource to plan, develop and deliver new, locally specific facilities. Such exogenous developments have roused historically latent frustrations with the grassroots football facility infrastructure (Green 1953; DES 1968; Keeton 1972; FA 1997; Conn 1999, 2005). In this connection, it is reasonable to assume that the Charter Standard has influenced the mobilisation of the volunteer workforce by potential empowerment. Evidently, the Charter Standard is perceived as an emancipatory vehicle with which to entice volunteers into the football development policy network to pursue facility development, and is a key determinant that provides a mutual solution for the authorities and grassroots volunteers alike.

That the emergence of a coalition of actors centring on facility development has achieved positive sum results for some clubs, and not others, is significant. Both the ACF and policy networks approaches stress the importance of positive-sum relationships in the forging of strong reciprocal agreements in the policy process. For instance, the election of New Labour in 1997 with a commitment to a social inclusion agenda, with an increase in active citizenship and the positioning of the sport policy sector as potentially contributing to other politically salient agendas such as health and social inclusion (PAT 10 1999) provided an unprecedented

exogenous shock to the football development policy network. Indeed, dialectical policy network analysis sensitises us to exogenous shocks which embed antecedents, and facilitate actions by grassroots volunteers bound up with structured privilege within the policy network. That is, certain clubs are more malleable to the exogenous developments and are in a structured privileged position as they are the most suitably placed within the network to react to the changing environment to the advantage of their club.

The successful clubs identified in developing facility plans and achieving support from their respective FDOs for drafting a submission to the Football Foundation are Club 4 in Cluster 1, Club 1 in Cluster 2 and Club 1 Cluster 3, all of which have been targeted by their respective FDOs through Charter Standard implementation. A striking note of similarity is evident here. Each club has: the largest membership in terms of volunteers and junior players; has the existing capacity to become a Charter Standard Community Club (The FA 2003a – see also Appendix A and Chapter 2); has a longstanding embedded tie to the community the club is representative of, or plays football within; with the exception of Club 1 from Cluster 2 are largely located in the more affluent area of their Cluster; and have committee members in professional and business oriented occupations. Given structurally privileged clubs are targeted based on these characteristics, such processes are consistent with neo-pluralist assumptions informed by the above dialectical policy network analysis. Such theorising also resonates with theories of networked governance. If accurate, the final analysis will confirm the observations of Rhodes (1997) and other commentators that the state is becoming hollowed out, requiring the assistance and mobilisation of agents' resources and expertise in the policy process to achieve its outcomes rather than governing in a top down centralised fashion.

Power differentials in Charter Standard clubs and schools

Those clubs structurally privileged and supported by sport development professionals to a greater extent than others, were able to centralise their organisations from a fragmented base, and increase their capacity to expand beyond their current size. As such, the potential for each club to enhance and perpetuate their structured privilege within the network is greater. One example is the capacity for economic power being advanced through increasing membership in relation to other clubs. As such, they can become potentially more sustainable, and in some cases, as noted in Cluster 3, can subsume other clubs resources, further enhancing and embedding their position within the network.

The dynamics here point to grassroots football provision and administration becoming more centralised and formalised out of historically embedded fragmented provision. When combined with support for funding applications and grants, this has occurred largely at the expense of traditional one team clubs, and even of those clubs that are Charter Standard accredited, but lack the capacity to develop any further than their current provision. The endemic characteristic of transient one team clubs bound up in the culture of English grassroots football is a key point of concern here. For instance, schools with larger numbers of students and greater capacity to provide for football, and those with Specialist Sports College status are in a structural position of power are a focal point of FDO and wider professional sport development support. This would suggest that the FA is moving to support those clubs that are self sustaining, and schools that have the capacity and expertise to sustain football provision in curricular and extracurricular time. Such developments may seem rather insidious, given the exclusion of, or limited support to those not Charter Standard accredited or lack the capacity to expand beyond their current status.

The intended actions of FDOs in developing a strategy to assist those clubs deemed suitable to adhere to the Charter Standard generate consequences that seem unplanned and unforeseen (FDO Cluster 1 Interview 24 / 3 / 06). Yet the dynamics at play here are explicitly encouraged in football development documentation. Indeed, the FA was keen to develop action plans for the development of Community Clubs based on the formation and development of teams around suitable facilities, and to develop club facility provider partnerships (FA 2001:16). Therefore, by acting in line with their remit and the governing body's national strategy, FDOs are covertly favouring the most powerful and resource rich clubs at the expense of traditional one team clubs. Indeed, implicit in the FAs future plans for the grassroots game is the desire to address the transient nature of clubs (including after school clubs) forming and folding on a regular basis which hinders sustainability. This is often understood as having a debilitating effect on the development of talent and opportunities for sustained participation beyond school years (FA 1997). Out of the 43,000 plus affiliated clubs in England, the average number of teams per club is approximately 3.8, the lowest in Europe, leading to fragmented provision and unclear pathways. In comparison, the FA noted that the majority of leading footballing countries have a structure which allows for bigger clubs that run a number of teams and are generally professionally managed (FA 2001:15) and centrally supported by the state (Polley 2003; Goldblatt 2006). The assumption being that continental grassroots football clubs were part of a more structured and sustainable system, which was a key factor in developing and progressing talent and sustaining participation levels (FA 2001:15).

In this respect, the FA (2001: 13) stated that it had a priority in 'Developing a network of high quality, multi-team community clubs with excellent social, playing and training facilities...[which] are the "hub" of the community'. Indeed, such clubs

should be 'a focal point for all those who play, administer and coach the sport' and that 'FA Charter Standard Community Clubs will cater for boys/girls, men/women from fun football/mini soccer through to veterans'. Indeed, the FA endeavoured to identify and support clubs which have the potential to develop and sustain a number of teams in order to address its aims of 'football for all' and 'football for life' (FA 2001:15). Implicit here is the notion that clubs such as those in Cluster 1 and notably Club 2 from Cluster 3 are not sustainable and are not consistent with the FAs stated desire to develop along the lines of continental multi-team systems (FA 2001, see also Figure 2.2 pg 24, Chapter 2). Again, notions of networked forms of governance are evoked within a neo-pluralist dispersal of power. The FA and County FAs are able to target, and by inducements such as the Charter Standard, enhance funding capacity and steer particular clubs to their preferred development. In short, in the final analysis such theoretical indicators would suggest that the FA, in partnership with government agencies (DSCM 2001) have created the conditions amenable to including those clubs and volunteers deemed fit for purpose at the cost of the exclusion of the traditional one team club infrastructure common in English grassroots football.

Charter Standard and Egalitarian Provision

Finally, egalitarian provision, implicit in the Charter Standard is evidently difficult to achieve across all Clusters. As noted, grassroots football has been the preserve of overwhelmingly white, male participants. Females and ethnic minorities have always been on the periphery of participation, administration and organisation. To reiterate, in achieving Charter Standard accreditation, all clubs and schools must evidence a commitment to girls' provision (FA 2003a; FA 2003b). Points of convergence are evident in all Clusters, most notably 1 and 3, in which the fragility of girls football provision and development are highlighted. That is girls' football in clubs and to a lesser extent schools was emphasised as a means to an end in order to

support Charter Standard accreditation rather than a commitment to girls' football for the sake of girls themselves. This is not to say that all clubs, Charter Standard or otherwise, view girls' football in this respect. On the contrary there are numerous Charter Standard clubs which cater for females only (FA 2007).

For example, Clusters 1 and 3 experienced a concomitant increase in the numbers of girls playing football post implementation. Cluster 1 is notable for clubs poaching players from other clubs in order to attract the required numbers of girls to make up at least one team to meet Charter Standard criteria for girls provision (FA 2003a). The density of the Cluster is a key determinant in exacerbating contestation for female playing members. In this connection, the formation of a girls' football league by all clubs with the exception of Club 1, highlights the competitive nature of grassroots football, and the consequences for those clubs excluded as the playing opportunities for girls from Club 1 ceased. Cluster 3 alerts us to the expansion of community status and sustainable clubs as impacting upon the provision of other clubs within the Cluster to cater for girls. Whilst peculiar to the rural geographic nature, in this sense, clubs paradoxically increase provision and opportunities for girls, whilst also, largely unintentionally constraining them, largely based upon the reinforcement of a meritocratic approach to grassroots football. The girls section of Club 2 in Cluster 3 disbanded due to lack of sufficient playing members to fulfil fixtures. The consequence of which means the participation opportunities for girls with lesser skills and ability in a particular area are at best constrained, and nonexistent at worst. This reinforces the emergent structure of multi-team self sustainable managed football clubs. In the short to medium term this impact may disadvantage some girls, but in the longer term, the clubs capacity to expand may alleviate this. In the meantime, there seems to be no solution for those that are unfortunate enough to not have their participatory demands met. The dialectical

relationship between the network and the outcome (i.e. Charter Standard implementation within the football development policy network) is instructive, as the Charter Standard has limited impact on the context at a deeper level. Not only is girls football still marginalised, the Charter Standard has, through the structured agency of club volunteers, reinforced such marginalisation and structural inequality in grassroots football.

Similar dynamics are evident in relation to ethnic minorities. As noted, there are no explicit criteria in Charter Standard documentation for increasing the number of ethnic minorities within grassroots football. Yet the Charter Standard is underpinned by the FAs 'Equity Strategy' (FA 2001), and Charter Standard guidance makes reference to equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies as part of club constitutions (FA 2003a). For those clubs and schools in Cluster 2, rivalries were a catalyst exacerbated by, and bound up in, wider structural antecedents of fragmented, multi-ethnic communities split by gang membership. In this example, a dialectical approach to policy networks sensitises us to Charter Standard implementation having some, albeit undesired, impact on the network structure and wider socio-political context. The success of one club in securing funding to develop a facility with the support of key sport development professionals in the Cluster is interpreted by others as favouring one ethnic group. The importance of agency within these structured contexts is also accounted for, and allows for concepts such as 'policy entrepreneurs' or 'policy brokers' to inform an analysis of the dynamics taking place. The support of Club 1 in Cluster 2 by the SDO shifted the balance of power towards this club, and as a corollary, the ethnic minority it represented vis-a-vis other clubs and minorities. It is reasonable to assume that the advocacy role played by the SDO in securing and advancing the club's plans was largely based upon opportunism, but also upon the ability to invest resources and

take advantage of the situation that arose for anticipated future gain for themselves and the club. Whether intended or not, the impact of these actions perpetuated underlying power differentials in the football development policy network. Despite all clubs desires to utilise the Charter Standard as a tool for funding applications as 'advised' by football development staff, access to funding streams has been realised by one ethnic group. The upshot of which is, not only have Club 1 Cluster 2 potentially become more sustainable than counterpart clubs in the Cluster through facility development, the reinforcement and perpetuation of the marginalisation of other, mainly Asian group in Club 3 has occurred. Such reasoning centring on policy entrepreneurs suggests that the fortunes of clubs in implementing the Charter Standard and partaking in wider development activity is largely at the vagaries of abilities and structurally influenced decisions of key individuals.

Connected to this, the development of clubs in ethnic-specific leagues has also exacerbated the ethnic divide between clubs and heightened tensions in an area already replete with endemic tensions bound up in ethnically influenced gang and crime cultures. In both examples, the Charter Standard is being implemented in a way which encourages individualism rather than integration. That is, clubs are developing and becoming more sustainable, as is the FA's wish. Yet they do so in a manner bound up in the embedded structural characteristic of grassroots football in terms of contestation and competition for resources and on the field of play, and the wider socio-political context. The success of some clubs over others within a dense area characterised by gangs and ethnic minority attachments to small areas within this, fuels wider rivalry in the socio-political sphere encompassing the football development policy network. Clubs work separate to, and alongside, rather than with one another to develop football, and inevitably leads to little integration of different ethnic communities in football. There is also an interesting paradox

occurring. Ethnic groups representing each club in the Cluster are outwardly resistant to integration, yet conform to the FAs overarching policy for grassroots football, the Charter Standard. As such, they are conforming to 'mainstream' culture by implementing a policy that is overseen by a quintessentially English organisation. As noted by Club 3 in Cluster 2, here implementation may also be a symbol of resistance.

Although the Charter Standard has a specific set of concerns, i.e. strategic planning and administration in sustainable clubs offering coaching, ensuring child protection and minimum standards of provision, it does not exist in a social and political vacuum. Dialectical policy network analysis is instructive here. All three dialectical relationships are addressed. The relationships between network and context and network and outcome are most prominent here, being underpinned by the relationship between structure and agency. We are alerted to the importance of the context in which the network operates. As shown some structurally embedded antecedents significantly constrain the way in which the Charter Standard is implemented, or why it is implemented. The historical characteristics of grassroots football bound up in the structural context are relatively enduring. It is a matter of future empirical investigation as to the impact, if any, the Charter Standard will have in altering this. Given the discussion so far, it would seem that those clubs becoming involved in the Charter Standard are committing to a modernisation agenda which is transforming grassroots football from its historical origins as a spontaneous, largely unorganised and voluntary pursuit as government interests and influence are becoming more of a pressing concern for grassroots football. In doing so, inequalities in wider society are being exacerbated in this process. As such, the Charter Standard, is not amenable to adaptation to local conditions, and does more to reinforce the status quo rather than transforming the fortunes of those less

powerful in the network. In short, the Charter Standard is prescriptive and assumes a degree of homogeneity in, and beyond, the grassroots football development policy network despite distinct and varying characteristics in different geographical areas as shown by this study. Failure to understand obstacles and structural antecedents hinder the success of policy implementation. Without such understandings, the best-intentioned policies inadvertently serve to perpetuate the very inequalities they seek to reduce (Campbell & MaClean 2002).

7.2 Modernisation

Regardless of the varying structural antecedents and complexities across the three Clusters, which have exacerbated structural inequalities and created and reinforced power differentials amongst clubs and schools, striking similarities exist regarding the modernisation of grassroots football. Across all Clusters, Charter Standard implementation has mobilised volunteers and professional development staff, in conducting more rational, strategic and outcome specific actions for their particular organisations. The interface between these two interdependent groups is also instructive. All Clusters alert us to a paradox in grassroots structures regarding modernisation. For instance, the spontaneous character of grassroots football is turned on its axis for those engaging in implementing the Charter Standard, which poses significant problems.

Voluntarism to professionalism in grassroots football

County FAs across all Clusters have been viewed as slow to modernise, and under resourced to meet the demands of those clubs that wish to engage with the modernisation agenda through implementing the Charter Standard. Cluster 3 is a particular case in point, which details the resistance within County FAs to the

imposition of relatively new professionalised staff within the organisation. County FAs and the committees constituting them for example, continue to organise and administer grassroots football competitions on voluntaristic and amateur principles, whilst FDOs and their development work is characterised by business practices, public management techniques and a professionalised approach. This paradox has caused confusion for clubs and schools who conflate both FDOs and the longstanding volunteers on County FA committee and league boards. FDOs have experienced difficulties in persuading some clubs and schools of the merits of a modernised approach to grassroots football within clubs and schools. This study focuses on those that have Charter Standard accreditation, and even here, consternation regarding the ability of FDOs to provide adequate support in the modernising process is a pressing concern. Cluster 1 also alerts us to the resistance of more localised structures in the form of leagues which, again, organised and administered on voluntary and amateur principles, have been resistant and openly hostile towards the Charter Standard as an instrument of modernisation. Again, policy network approaches alert us to the notion of a coalition of interests and views within the network. In these terms, embedded and staunch amateurism and voluntarism are a common characteristic. Although many of these structures and organisations have never come into contact with one another, they hold similar values as to the ways in which grassroots football should be organised and provided, despite the inherent contested nature of grassroots football This also alerts us to power relations and contests within the network, of which more is said in the following section.

For FDOs, in Clusters 1 and 2, KPIs in relation to the number of Charter Standard clubs and schools to become accredited annually are problematic. In order to operationalise a modernised approach to football development, in line with other

NGBs and government departments with a remit for sport (c.f. Houlihan & Green 2009), the FA adopted the business techniques of performance management such as KPIs in order to provide measurable outcomes against which County FA development staff are judged. The FA provide grant aid to County FAs to appoint Football Development managers and FDOs, who produce development and facility plans, all with targets of increasing affiliated teams, coaches and Charter Standard clubs. Targets are then measured and managed quarterly by FA national and regional management (FA 2004/05:9). Resonating with the wider modernisation agenda for sport, those County FAs which do not meet agreed targets for Charter Standard clubs and schools to become accredited have their funding and future football development activities 'reviewed...in essence peoples jobs are on the line if they are not met' (FDO Cluster 3 Interview 21 / 1 / 06). Despite dealing with clubs and schools from essentially polarised demographic and geographic contexts, the pressures on development staff across the three Clusters are strikingly similar. So too, are the strategies to cope with them. In short, FDOs in Cluster's 1 and 2 have adopted numerous strategies to manipulate KPIs regarding the number of clubs and schools accredited with Charter Standard. These relate to accreditation based on the assumption that schools and clubs are in the process of, and will meet, the criteria they are short of. Given the transient nature of coaches and temporal dimensions associated with the absence of a synchronised approach to the hosting of coaching courses to meet demand, such tactics by FDOs seem rational. The undertaking of audits by FDOs to identify particular clubs and schools as possessing the potential to achieve Charter Standard accreditation has also led to accreditation being granted prior to all criteria being met sufficiently, as FDOs presume such shortfalls will be addressed. The upshot of which is clubs and schools are accredited, without conforming to all required criteria. Lipsky's observation of 'street level bureaucrats' is instructive here. From a bottom up perspective of policy implementation, the

agency of FDOs within this structured context highlights the Charter Standard as re-made and re-constituted in opposition to how it is prescribed.

For clubs and to a lesser extent schools, the imposition of business practices adopted by club personnel and volunteers to implement the Charter Standard reflects and reinforces the above observations regarding neo-pluralist characteristics of those in a structurally antecedent privileged position within the football development policy network. Across all three Clusters, the Charter Standard is a vehicle with which business-like procedures have been legitimised within all clubs. Given the characteristics of clubs in Cluster 2 as arms of welfare organisations, existing practices were embedded into the processes of volunteer recruitment, for example through the vetting of qualifications and CRB checks. Moreover, the achievement of, and engagement with, kitemarking schemes within the public sector prepared them for implementing the Charter Standard to a greater extent. As such, clubs in Cluster 2 were better placed than clubs in the other two Clusters to react and conform to, and understand the nature of the Charter Standard criteria in this regard. Club 4 in Cluster 1 and Club 2 in Cluster 3 are also structurally better placed to engage with the modernisation agenda given that the committee members offer business expertise in their professions. Key here is the notion of clubs becoming key delivery mechanisms to its service users in providing their product, which resonates with modernisation in the public sector. That is, the voluntary sector is perceptibly being empowered and drawn into policy making and delivery, providing a service to its users (Foley & Martin 2000). The literature on networked forms of governance (c.f. Rhodes 1997; Pierre and Peters 2000) is instructive here. Volunteers, through their clubs have been drawn into the modernisation agenda through a mixture of persuasion by FDOs targeting them through an audit, or by their own compulsion. The Charter Standard is a tool with which such volunteers could be said to be 'steered' to undertake practices in line with modernisation for sport. Moreover, once

'steered' towards undertaking practices to enhance service delivery, volunteers may be noted has having the potential to 'row' beyond the criteria of the Charter Standard to develop the club in ways they see fit, which may fit into more localised agendas. Clubs from Cluster 2, and club 4 from Cluster 1 and club 2 from Cluster 3 are cases in point. The Charter Standard for them is a base with which to base future club development work, and contribute to wider agendas, ranging from funding for facilities to engaging with wider social programmes.

From a theoretical standpoint, the dialectical approach to policy networks sensitises us to the context in which the network exists, and the potential for emerging coalitions within. That is, the Charter Standard, illustrative of modernisation, has presented grassroots football with a conundrum. Emerging from a relatively spontaneous activity with numerous and diverse interests, those engaged in implementing the Charter Standard are exhibiting a degree of consensus regarding the way in which grassroots football is provided to end users, i.e. children. Whilst the inherent competitive nature of grassroots football for both resources and success in competitions remains, there seems to be an emergence of a coalition centring on the beliefs of the virtues of the Charter Standard as the correct manner in which to practice grassroots football is evident. This reinforces the legitimacy of the FA as the arbiter of the game, and therefore places them centrally in any likely emergent coalition on this issue. This is also important given the FAs recent emphasis to achieve the target of 75% of youth and junior football teams as Charter Standard accredited (The FA 2008). Important here is the notion that club volunteers, although engaged in the modernising of their club, are not explicitly aware that the practices undertaken are contributing to a wider government drive to modernise grassroots sport (see for instance Houlihan & Green 2006 or Deloitte & Touche 2003 for details on the modernising of NGBs). Indeed, despite diverging views on the merits of the

Charter Standard, the nature of their engagement by implementing the Charter Standard is understood in terms of legitimating the FDO as a conduit of the FA as the overarching arbiter of football. That is, the Charter Standard is 'the correct and proper way' to provide football at the grassroots level, with accredited clubs and schools displaying confidence in distinguishing themselves from those unaccredited.

However, given what has been observed regarding the manipulation of KPIs to enhance the figures of clubs and schools accredited, it seems likely the FA will achieve this figure. If a coalition emerges within the football development policy network centring on the Charter Standard as the legitimate way to provide grassroots football, such beliefs and core values within the coalition are potentially premised upon false declarations of evidence. As such, these core values are potentially undermined and the success with which the FA can remain at the centre of this emergent coalition may be usurped if such widespread practice becomes endemic and is deemed inadequate. Exogenous shocks, such as a change in government, or endogenous shocks such as changes in personnel in the hierarchy of the FA may provide the impetus for this. More dangerous still, if the passage of periods of time allow such practices to become embedded and legitimised as part of 'deep core' beliefs, the probability of reversing such practices become less likely.

Temporal Modernisation and grassroots football

Examples from all Clusters highlight the transition from spontaneous involvement from a purely interest based motivation to volunteer, to a more structured, rationalised and organised approach to grassroots football. Up-skilling of volunteers, particularly the transition from the old JTM FA led qualification to those offered by Coachwise is the most prominent of these examples. The majority of

clubs and schools expressed reluctance on the part of their staff to undertake new and updated qualifications to meet Charter Standard criteria. Given the voluntary nature of grassroots football, time constraints and increase in costs in the changing of the content, for example the Level One coaching courses to include up to 40 hours of tuition spread over weekends, the time when football teams are already playing, are constraining for clubs and their volunteers. Moreover, the ubiquitous notion that the Charter Standard had redefined the nature, and meaning of volunteering for volunteers themselves. Coleman (2002); Garrett (2002); Taylor et al (2003); Cuskelly (2004); and Nichols et al (2005) note the increasing professionalised practices required of volunteers through implementing government influenced schemes such as the Charter Standard. In this sense, volunteers have become agents of service delivery, which has altered their experience and undermined motivations for becoming involved initially, from a largely leisurely, spontaneous pursuit to a rationalised activity which now brings with it accountability. Moreover, volunteers across all Clusters experienced a time-space compression of their previously free leisure time, as their activities become more 'like a second job', routinised and more time consuming, impinging on their everyday lives to a greater extent. Therefore, there is an evident tension between the voluntary sector grassroots football clubs becoming 'fit for purpose' to deliver government objectives, and to be accountable for them (i.e. the Charter Standard could be withdrawn if clubs are deemed not to deliver the service as prescribed) and the inherent motivation to volunteer for grassroots football for those engaged in the implementation of the Charter Standard. Implicit in the Charter Standard is that the increased levels of coaching expertise, knowledge and qualifications regarding child protection and club administration, will contribute to making clubs sustainable, quality service deliverers which can contribute to wider government objectives such as social inclusion and health. At this point, it is worthy of note that volunteers may be seemingly engaging in implementing the Charter Standard relatively freely, with some enticements based

around empowerment for themselves and their club in the provision of grassroots football, e.g. facility development and ownership. Yet in doing so, and often unwittingly, volunteers' actions are shaped by meeting policy objectives and criteria set by government. This is reinforced by the perceptions of volunteers post up-skilling to meet the requirements of Charter Standard implementation. Once such individuals had undertaken coaching courses, child protection workshops and club administration workshops, there is a striking note of agreement regarding the confidence and aptitude of such individuals to organise and deliver grassroots football, and to cater for children under their care. That is, volunteers perceive being better equipped, and empowered, to provide for and deliver grassroots football.

It is also interesting to note the emergence of the private sector and business into the football development policy network. Cluster 3 alerts us to private organisations entering the school premises to deliver football in both curricular and extracurricular time. As noted, despite up-skilling school staff, particularly at the primary school level, to organise and deliver structured football sessions tailored to the curriculum, wider exogenous developments such as planning, preparation and assessment time have impinged on their availability to deliver football. This has led to the need for external agencies to deliver in the school setting in order to meet Charter Standard criteria. The preferred option, as detailed in schools criteria (FA 2003b) is for local Charter Standard clubs to form a link with the school and provide coaches to 'deliver where teachers can't' (PDM Cluster 3 Interview 17 / 1 / 06). Given the voluntaristic nature of grassroots football occurring in volunteers spare time which does not match the school working day, this is difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Concomitantly, the emergence of confident and professionalised commercial coaching enterprises has developed an area of expertise in the private sector to take advantage of these windows of opportunity to deliver in the school setting, charging

fees and maximising profit in the process. Cluster 2 also alerts us to private coaching companies offering their own sport specific qualifications that are not endorsed by Coachwise. Such developments serve to enhance the neo-pluralist assumptions of business being in a privileged position. Whilst causing problems for the clubs involved, the wider ramifications are the questioning of the FAs previously monopolistic power, particularly as the grassroots football arena seems to becoming more susceptible and open to, marketisation and commercialism. As such, the FAs position within the football development policy network and any emergent coalitions is mediated by the context in which the network operates, exogenous processes, and the inherent characteristics of grassroots football.

7.3 Relationships and Collaboration

In general, given the observations in Chapter 6, it is difficult to generate and sustain any form of collaborative activity in grassroots football. The endemic characteristics of inherent rivalry between clubs, contestation for scarce resources, and the fundamental basis of provision centred on competition between clubs are facets of the grassroots game which largely constrain collaboration. Indeed, examples from Clusters 1 and 2 highlight the use of the Charter Standard post implementation as a tool for denigrating rival clubs in attempts to hold them to account for their actions in line with Charter Standard criteria. Claims and counter claims to County FA FDOs are regular occurrences in this regard. The fact that some centre on the more politically serious issues of child protection and racial abuse, particularly raised in Cluster 2, underscores the barriers to collaboration that a brew of self interest and inherent rivalry bound within wider structural antecedents brings.

Yet the Charter Standard has perceptibly altered the terrain of the football development policy network, albeit in small, but significant ways. In short, the process of implementing the Charter Standard has encouraged, to varying degrees, forms of collaboration or partnerships despite inherent constraints. The forming of a girl's league and attempts to secure partnerships with adult clubs to provide players with pathways of provision in Clusters 1 and 3 are cases in point. The former is suggestive of the Charter Standard impacting upon the inherent and embedded characteristics of the football development policy network. That is, clubs within Cluster 1 (and indeed across all Clusters) exhibited variable provision for girls' football. Yet Charter Standard criteria requiring clubs to provide evidence of embedding such provision (FA 2003a) generated an agreement amongst rival clubs that a more sustainable structure for the benefit of all clubs (arguably rather than girls themselves) was needed. Despite addressing the lack of provision for girls within the football development policy network, the inception of the league was based on the premise of advancing individual club interests through collaboration. That is, each club required one another's resources (e.g. players), but did so to increase their potential sustainability in ensuring the criteria of girls' football was safeguarded. As such, clubs are working alongside, rather than in synergy, with one another. Such observations raise discussion of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of partnerships and collaborative activity. Hastings' (1996) frameworks of 'resource synergy' and 'policy synergy' are instructive in capturing the dynamics at play here. That is, resource synergy has been achieved through the interaction between clubs which has not depended on exploiting their differences, but on combining their resources, for example, players and teams with which to compete regularly against, administrative expertise to organise the league and motivation in conforming to Charter Standard criteria. Policy synergy (Hastings 1996) is also evident given that, despite resource synergy being achieved, the rivalry between clubs has been combined to produce a solution, i.e. the league. Yet the original

differences between clubs underpinning rivalry, such as contestation for players and resources are maintained. Indeed, if we consider attempts by Club 2 in Cluster 1 to forge a partnership with a nearby adult club to advance their position in a funding application for a new facility, and their potential to advance through the Charter Standard framework, much the same theoretical observations seem evident. Therefore, whilst the Charter Standard has evidently made clubs aware of the potential and capacity to engage in collaborative activity, it does so only up to a point, and, in reflecting the grassroots football environment, seems limited to partnerships in which clubs work together for self interest rather than mutual gain. It is important to note that the contestation and rivalry between clubs in all Clusters is a mitigating factor in the motivation for clubs to undertake the accreditation process, and of itself, fuels inherent rivalries and competition between clubs which perpetuates the unlikelihood of clubs generating collaborative practices between themselves. In this sense, the characteristics of grassroots football bound up in the peculiar structural antecedents of each Cluster are a determining factor in hindering collaborative forms between clubs.

Sport Development Infrastructure

If we consider wider partnership and collaborative activities between clubs and other aspects of the football development policy network such as schools, SSPs and local authority sport development units, it is evident that the Charter Standard is having an impact upon, and is illustrative of, the modernising of grassroots football in encouraging collaborative activity. With regard to all three Clusters, implementation of the Charter Standard is evidently facilitated in those Clusters that exhibit club engagement with a proactive sport development infrastructure displaying a predilection towards football development within the delivery system for sport policy (see Chapter 2 and c.f. Shilbury 2000; Green & Houlihan 2004;

Houlihan & Green 2005; Sport England 2007) to a greater extent than those that don't. In this connection, agency of key individuals is a determining factor. The 'school-club link' criterion in the Charter Standard (FA 2003a:6; FA 2003b:1) is illustrative, and reveals the clearest differences in terms of the dynamics of Charter Standard implementation both i) facilitating collaborative activity generally and, ii) increasing the capacity for clubs and schools to advance through the Charter Standard framework by increasing requisite collaborative activity in their football development practice. This is reinforced given the chasm between the criteria for clubs and schools stipulating that clubs, at the basic level of accreditation do not require the forming of links with schools (FA 2003a:6), and the opposite requiring the school to be linked to a Charter Standard accredited club (FA 2003b:1). As such, at the basic level of Charter Standard accreditation at least, the onus is on schools to provide the impetus in generating school club links.

Each FDO endeavoured to devolve responsibility for schools Charter Standard implementation and accreditation to the PDM of the school sport partnership that each Cluster is connected to. The effectiveness of such bargaining and negotiation is susceptible to the vagaries of the knowledge, abilities, priorities and affinity with football of the PDM, and the priority sports for each SSP encompassing each Cluster. Whilst all PDMs agreed to undertake such work, variances in outcomes across all three Clusters are instructive.

For example, Cluster 2 alerts us to an active and established delivery system for sport, but football is not regarded as a priority sport for the SSP and the PDM. A mixture of the notion that 'football can look after itself' and that the structural antecedents, given football heightens evident tensions, are too difficult to overcome

in forming school club links for football, hinder provision. The attempts made by football development staff in Cluster 2, for example, through the Three Lions Programme (FA 2003f), have suffered collaborative inertia (Huxham & Vangen 2005). Clubs, in this Cluster characterised by their welfare obligations, have forged links with schools which are relatively short lived with little intention to continue or formalise the link once the programme has concluded, largely in order to extract funding from the programme. Added to this, key volunteer staff from clubs in Cluster 2 tend to move on very quickly, meaning the sustainability of relations required to formalise links and collaborative activity are compromised. Cluster 1 highlights no collaborative activity with the delivery system for sport. The FDO is disengaged, and has little contact with the SSP with regard to football development, explained in terms similar to those of the PDM in Cluster 2 in that football is viewed as a non priority for the partnership. This is exacerbated by the longstanding endemic nature of grassroots football in that word of mouth relationships are the most frequent form of contact between schools and clubs. Cluster 1 illustrates perfectly the underlying collaborative characteristics of grassroots football. The only Charter Standard accredited school within Cluster 1 perceives the links with clubs as through the hiring of facilities and those players from the school tend to play for the same long established clubs in the area. Indeed, staff recommend them because they are knowledgeable of their existence, or have personal relationships with parents, and because current and past pupils are members. Indeed, the school-club link criteria for implementing the Charter Standard is distorted in this dynamic. An evident malaise regarding formalising relationships between schools and clubs is apparent in Clusters 1 and 2, exacerbated by a lack of clarity in the Charter Standard criteria. Schools and clubs complete application forms under the impression that word of mouth agreements recorded on the application form constitute a school club link, and are often verified as such by FDOs in connection with the pressures of modernisation.

Conversely, Cluster 3 displayed an active and established delivery system with a predilection towards football development. A hotchpotch of; the PDMs and SDOs background, interest and expertise in football, football being a target sport for the SSP, and attempts by the FDO to engage with key individuals in the delivery system to overcome perceived barriers of the County FAs reputation in the area, all combined to create conditions conducive to collaborative activity. Added to this, the fact that all key sport development professionals had an intimate professional knowledge of one another aided capacity. Drawing on the school-club link criterion of the Charter Standard, in Cluster 3, the PDM developed an interpretation of the criterion that became clearly expressed and accepted between clubs and schools alike, and formally recorded in signed agreements. Key here is the agency and ability of the PDM to enforce such widespread agreement over interpretation. In short, the PDM evidently gained a position of power in the Cluster as the legitimate authoritative figure with regards to football development and implementation of the Charter Standard. This power was wielded in the form of threats and opportunities to clubs and schools to engage with implementing the Charter Standard. The PDM has exuded a remarkable degree of acuity for generating personal relationships and trust regarding their ability to deliver for their peers, and in legitimising their position as a key individual for both clubs and schools personnel. As such, the PDM was able to bargain and negotiate with schools and clubs to identify and reach agreement upon which clubs were to be formally linked with which schools. In addition, the PDM displayed remarkable ability to negotiate around the endemic characteristics of grassroots football in appeasing contestation between clubs. Significantly, this centred on clubs in and around the Cluster accepting the selection of Club 1 by the PDM and FDO as the legitimate club with which support and resources should be directed in securing Community Club accreditation.

In sum, comparison of collaborative activities across the three Clusters raises several points of theoretical and conceptual discussion. The example of a formation of a girls' league in Cluster 1 resonates with a critical pragmatist approach to collaborative, or partnership activity (McDonald 2005:594). That is, the solution to form a league in response to the problems posed by an inherent structural paucity of provision and Charter Standard stipulations that clubs must cater for girls and boys sections (FA 2003a), is addressed in a normative fashion. The league provides a resource efficient, outcome effective and inclusive progressive form of implementation in providing a solution. Such processes resonate with facets of McDonald's conception of 'communicative' partnerships. For instance, the forming of a league is based on a shared purpose for intangible benefits of each club; that is Charter Standard accreditation and the sustainability of girls' football with which to realise this.

Conflict, ambiguity and consensus in implementation

Alternatively, if we take the examples relating to school-club links in implementing the Charter Standard, the PDM in Cluster 3 has operationalised a structuralist approach to collaborative activity through the formalising of partnerships. That is, the ability to display a mixture of persuasion and coercion in linking schools with clubs displays discursive negotiation and bargaining aimed at nullifying opposition to the dominant interests and characteristics of voluntarism, through processes of incorporation (Davies 2002; McDonald 2005). That is threats and opportunities in offering or withdrawing, amongst other things, potential funding and increased County FA support. This particular example also displays a degree of congruence between McDonald's (2005) 'strategic' and 'communicative' partnerships. For

instance, in a strategic sense, collaborative activity is based on clear goals which are criteria driven, clearly defined and prescribed by the PDM and FDO. A movement towards the centralisation of power is evident, given the definitive social action undertaken by the PDM securing themselves as the 'managerial authority' of such formalised partnerships. As such, the chances of the Charter Standard being implemented in a consistent manner seem increased in Cluster 3. In a communicative sense, collaborative activity here perceptibly increases sustainability and community capacity building, as the less powerful voluntary sector football clubs are empowered through their engagement with more powerful, statist agents such as the PDM and FDO. It is perceived that this is in an 'equitable manner' (McDonald 2005: 593) utilising the unique valuable expertise of clubs at a local level.

Moreover, FDOs, receiving devolved power from the FA to deliver in local conditions, and the devolving of power to the PDM for the implementation of Charter Standard and its constituent parts such as school-club links, combined with the appearance of greater power percolating to individual clubs regarding their future development post implementation, resonate with an interpretation of collaborative activity signifying a concession towards an extension, rather than a repealing of, statist bureaucratic control. In this sense, it may be interpreted that in implementing the Charter Standard and enacting formalised school-club links, schools and clubs are entwined in a process which is implicated in strategies to secure governmental hegemonic control precisely through the relinquishing of some control. This can be taken further if we consider the potential amalgamation of the assumptions noted in a dialectical approach to policy networks and Rummery's (2002) observations that such collaborative activity is of itself implicated in the reproduction of existing inequalities and power relations. This seemingly occurs on two inter-related levels. First, the increasing power of those clubs already in a

structured powerful position within the Cluster, and; second, the exercising of power by FDOs and PDMs in coercing or persuading clubs and schools to engage with the Charter Standard. Yet increases in power gained by clubs such as Club 1 from Cluster 3 is conditioned by the PDM and FDO, members of the private/public sector and agents from state influenced organisations. That is, it may appear that this club has gained power vis-à-vis rival clubs in the football development policy network regarding future provision of football, but have done so under conditions in that they were one of selected, targeted or supported by the FDO and PDM to meet their own organisations agenda and fulfil their own job requirements. As such, the clubs expertise, geographical location and historical standing in the community has been capitalised upon by agents of the state arguably to further their own aims and objectives. It may be illusory that, for example, Club 1 from Cluster 3 in becoming more sustainable appears to possess greater control of their own destiny, but have done so in acceding to a political agenda often beyond their comprehension, understanding or awareness.

A further theoretical pointer is important with regards to the school club link criteria as an exemplar of collaborative activity in implementing the Charter Standard. Taking into consideration the above observations, Matland's (1995) concepts of conflict and ambiguity regarding implementation are instructive. Added to this, Figure 7.1 suggests they can be integrated into the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative activity. As noted, there was no perceptible activity in terms of school-club links in Clusters 1 and 2. Varying interpretations of the Charter Standard and its constituent criteria were evident. This generated high conflict and high ambiguity across the three Clusters which manifested itself in the processes of partnership and collaboration. As such, a mixture of symbolic implementation, that is the strength of networks or coalitions at the local level, and experimental

implementation, whereby the contextual conditions are determining factors in the outcome are evident. That is, resonating with a bottom up perspective, the importance of agreements by those working together, for instance, Cluster 1 in generating the girls league, are key determinants given a lack of clarity or guidance from any key professional development staff. In the case of Cluster 2, the structural underpinnings of gang culture and fractured multi-ethnic communities increased levels of conflict and ambiguity regarding the Charter Standard generally as each club, school and professional development staff brought varying interpretations regarding not only school club links, but the criteria required in general.

Conversely, the PDMs ability in Cluster 3 to generate and operationalise an accepted interpretation of the Charter Standard and its criteria, particularly the school-club link, provided clarity to an otherwise ambiguous and unclear policy (The FA 2003a; The FA 2003b). As such, the social action by the PDM has provided the impetus for 'administrative implementation' (Matland 1995:160) of the Charter Standard in Cluster 3. Their policy entrepreneurship has created the conditions conducive to clubs and schools undertaking a rational decision process, given that there is a high level of consensus regarding what constitutes a school club link, and in which clubs should be linked with each school. Mapping this back onto the collaborative and partnership literature, and bearing in mind the dialectical approach to policy networks account of actors skill and the concept of a policy entrepreneur, it seems evident that, in the case of Cluster 3; the ability and desire of key actors such as the PDM to take advantage of their position and tap into the potential power their structural position brings is a key determinant in how the Charter Standard is implemented. That is, Charter Standard implementation is facilitated when agents within the sport development infrastructure are active involved in football

development. In short, they display the ability to utilise available resources to centralise power in generating 'strategic' partnerships and collaborative activity.

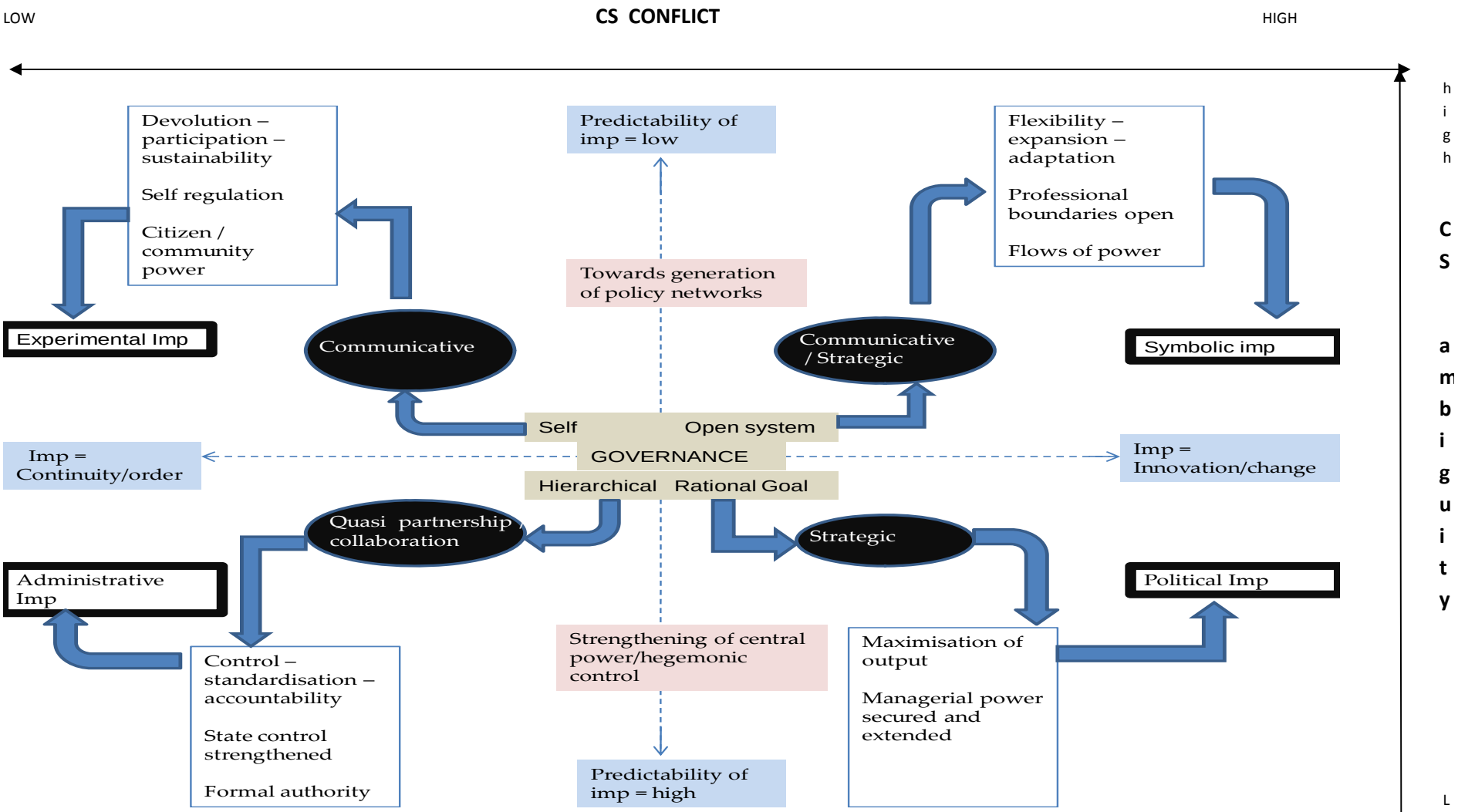


Fig 7.1 Relationships between CS conflict and ambiguity levels, types of governance and collaboration. Adapted from McDonald (2005), Newman (2001), Healey (1998), Pratt *et al.* (1998), Matland (1995) and LeGrand (2003)

Having discussed and concluded on the three intersecting themes on the dynamics of Charter Standard implementation across three Clusters of the football development policy network, a more substantive analysis of the study's theoretical and methodological insights is now provided.

Analysis

This concluding section centres on assessing the salience of the study's theoretical and methodological insights set out in chapters 4 and 5. In short, the suitability of theoretical and methodological lenses in analysing the implementation of the Charter Standard within the football development policy network is assessed. Consideration here centres primarily on the meso level of study. However, it is also important to reflect upon the macro level of theorising. The integration of these two levels is important for analysing policy generally (Daugberg & Marsh 1998; Green 2005). This is now discussed before an in depth exploration of meso level theorising to the implementation of the Charter Standard is undertaken.

7.4 Macro Level Theorising

This study has advanced that a persuasive account of policy implementation can be gained via a meso level analysis when combined with the assumptions underpinning neo-pluralism, set within a critical realist account of social reality. This section explores the utility of this standpoint relative to the findings of the study outlined in the previous section.

The macro level of analysis underpinning this study does have utility in understanding why particular clubs and schools seem to be in a privileged structural position regarding pre and post Charter Standard implementation. In this study,

local level implementation has been shaped by a context exhibiting increasing central government involvement for sport. Critical realist assumptions alert us to the notion of such intervention taking the form of context shaping and conduct shaping manifested via strategies of governance that attempt to secure consensus at the local level for meeting central government priorities. Given the observations in Figure 7.1, it seems the realisation of central government priorities are potentially achieved to a greater extent when consensus regarding the Charter Standard is apparent. This is largely dependent on the ability of key sport development professionals to secure such consensus regarding i) an acceptable interpretation of the Charter Standard agreeable to all clubs and schools under their jurisdiction, and ii) their legitimation as a key individual in which power becomes more centralised. Such an analysis raises the inter-related issues of power relations and the structure/agency problem (Hay 2002). As suggested in Chapter 5, power relations are a matter of empirical investigation. As borne out in Chapter 6, it is impossible for there to be a de facto statement of power. Hay's (2002) notion of 'context shaping' i.e. an indirect form of power is instructive here. Power thus conceived, centres on the capacity of actors to redefine the parameters of what is socially, politically and economically possible for others (Green & Houlihan 2005: 182). As such, power relations are emphasised whereby actors shape structures, organisations and institutions such that the parameters of subsequent action are altered. In short, this indirect form of power suggests power is mediated by, and instantiated in, structures (Hay 1997:51). Thus, all human activity is considered to take place within a context provided by a set of pre-existing social structures (Lewis 2000; 2002). This study highlights that in 3 structurally, demographically and geographically different Clusters of the football development policy network, different discourses regarding the interpretation of the Charter Standard are evident. It seems this lies in the capacity, or lack thereof, of key sport development professionals to inculcate and operationalise Charter Standard documentation in a

consistent manner within and across all Clusters. As indicated by Cluster 3, where key sport development professionals are successful in achieving low conflict and low ambiguity in centralising power, implementation of the Charter Standard is enhanced. However, discursive construction and the achievement of consensus regarding the interpretation of the Charter Standard and its perceived utility do not fully explain sport policy. Social structures, for example, the organisational processes and culture of grassroots football also shape policy processes and outcomes. Thus, to re-iterate, in the final analysis, the notion that the characteristics of the area under investigation i.e. grassroots football and its peculiar culture are significant. Moreover, such reasoning may offer an explanation as to why certain clubs and schools', but not all, are in structured privileged positions of power within the network, but it does not address the dominant interests that are served and how such interests result in that rule being served. As such, the consensus achieved may enhance implementation, yet, due in large part to the discourse of the consensus and the actions of key individuals such as the PDM in Cluster 3, how the Charter Standard is implemented is not fully compliant (c.f. Houlihan 2002; 2009) with predetermined criteria.

In understanding policy implementation the relationship between structure and agency prompt an analysis of the strategic action selected by actors. Regional and local sport development professionals have sought for the most appropriate means to implement the Charter Standard in conforming to the requirements of their job role, i.e. meeting a required number of Charter Standard clubs and schools being accredited per annum. Whilst these parameters are set through central government by agencies such as Sport England and the FA, in attempting to ensure that discourse and action is dominated by narratives and meanings that serve the interests of the central state, strategically calculating agents have re-interpreted

national policy in order to meet these, resonating with theories of street level implementation (Lipsky 1980).

In conjunction with critical realism then, neo-pluralist understandings of the state and power are instructive for this study in a number of ways. First, implementation of the Charter Standard is integrally bound up in the notion that powerful interests constrain or facilitate implementation and that certain actors or groups are unequal participants in the implementation process. Second, in line with neo-pluralism, a 'manipulated consensus' exists in the football development policy network, maintained by powerful public sector interests where voluntary clubs are subordinate to agents of the state. That is, although relatively free to operate as they wish, voluntary grassroots football clubs are being implicated into an agenda largely not of their own choosing through incentives and threats (or by fear of being left behind by not implementing the Charter Standard) and agents of the state capitalising on the inherently competitive nature of grassroots football. Lukes' third dimension of power is instructive here, if we consider that alternative voices are either excluded, or not afforded attention in a debate as to how to operate and organise grassroots football. Third, neo-pluralism accepts a significant role for elites in shaping policy implementation, but emphasises that elites may also be internally divided. If we consider the three Clusters, it is clear that the priorities for some political elites in the football development policy network (i.e. SDOs, FDOs, PDMs) have differing priorities depending upon their local context, which often places football and with it Charter Standard implementation as a low priority. Fourth, and most pertinent to the characteristics of grassroots football, neo-pluralism suggests conflicts between different interests are at the core of politics. This is reflected in the relationships between clubs in each Cluster of the football development policy network in which competition for resources to implement and maintain the Charter

Standard are key in explaining which clubs are in a more structured privileged position and therefore in an advantageous position to implement and maintain Charter Standard accreditation. In sum, following Marsh (1995:273), implementation is the product of conflict between interests for the allocation of scarce resources in a context characterised by structural inequality.

Yet neo-pluralism fails to adequately address why certain clubs and schools are drawn towards Charter Standard accreditation, and the power relations characterising this. In relation to neo-pluralist assumptions and the dispersal of power, Pratchett (2002: 331), indicates the modernisation agenda has a dual emphasis on democratic renewal and continuous service improvement. Part of that democratic renewal is citizen and stakeholder engagement. This is deemed essential because 'in the past too many initiatives were imposed from the top down and not locally owned by staff and users' (Cabinet Office, 1999:1). While the concern to empower communities and government agencies is, in part, an element in the process of democratic renewal it is deemed a consequence of the acknowledgement by government that it no longer has the capacity for the detailed planning and delivery of policies from the centre in relation to complex social problems. For Rhodes (1997), the outcome is a hollowed-out state where policy is made within increasingly self-governing networks. Consequently, individual units of government and staff are becoming more responsible for their activities and given greater autonomy. Neo-pluralism therefore supports the contention that networked forms of governance are evident, in which the activities of those constituting such networks are steered by the conditions, rules and regulations imposed by government. Such reasoning suggests the implementation of the Charter Standard is an exemplar of this. However, there is a strong element of 'centralist conditionality' (Game 1998:26 cited in Houlihan & Green 2009) in the granting of such autonomy.

Autonomy is earned not simply by being compliant, but by being both excellent and a model or 'beacon' for other organisations. The Charter Standard in this context is a particular example, given that those clubs which become accredited perceptibly become more autonomous by becoming eligible for funding streams which allows volunteers greater control and freedom over the development of their club. Yet, the ways in which the club can be developed are again constrained by the structural context imposed by government and its agents. The implication of this process is that the hollowed-out state is being replaced by a 'smart state' (Painter 1999:96), where the focus is on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government (Dowding 1995; Taylor 2000). Rose (1999:49) suggests this particular strategy is redolent of advanced liberal democracies; of 'government at a distance'

There is an apparent paradox between the rhetoric of empowerment and autonomy, on the one hand, and the strengthening of the government's capacity to set the strategic direction for policy and also micro-manage the activities of units of the state, on the other. Such observations have a strong resonance with the debates on power and the state associated with interpretation of Foucault's work on governmentality (see, for example, Rose 1999; Raco and Imrie 2000; Dean 1999; Houlihan & Green 2007). In this sense, power not only acts upon volunteers in grassroots football clubs and schools, but through them, harnessing their desires and choices 'to achieve the sought-after social order' (Davies 2006:252). Rather than debating whether the power of the state has been hollowed-out, or dispersed through a plurality of agencies, including sports agencies, attention is paid to kinds of knowledge and technologies through which social activity is regulated. That is, how the Charter Standard is implemented by grassroots football clubs and under what conditions in which volunteers are re constituted as self-disciplining subjects. Rose and Miller (1992:174) note that 'Power is not so much a matter of imposing

constraints upon citizens as of "making up" citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom' applies equally to grassroots football club volunteers and school teachers. In this conception of power, government seeks not to govern society per se, but to promote individual and institutional conduct that is consistent with government objectives' (Raco and Imrie 2000:2191). Such assumptions suggest that grassroots football clubs and schools offering football are becoming fit partners for government. The Charter Standard is operationalized through the application of various technologies including audit, benchmarking, public service agreements, target-setting, performance reviews and measurement (FA 2003a; FA 2003b; FA 2005). As noted in Chapter 5, KPIs, for example, reflect a normative commitment which 'hardens into the routines of practice a new regulatory common sense' (Power 1997). The net effect of the application of these technologies is to ensure that organizations are instrumental in their own self-government and engaged in the reflexive monitoring of their organisation's actions such that they are able to 'account for what they do when asked to do so by others' (Giddens 1995:35).

Yet, as noted earlier, such conceptions of power being wielded are potentially undermined. The failure to adhere to, and impose instruments of monitoring and auditing by FDOs suggests that such instruments of government may be creating an illusion of compliance. Strategic actions of FDOs, which, amongst other things, manipulate KPIs, mean clubs and schools potentially do not adhere to Charter Standard criteria at both the point of implementation or post implementation. Yet following the above discussion, Charter Standard accreditation would appear to suggest that FDOs and club volunteers act in a self disciplined manner consistent with government objectives. As such, this may indicate that at a macro level, the Charter Standard and its implementation may be little more than political gesturing by the FA towards government.

7.5 Meso-Level Theorising

Chapter 4 set out the strengths and weaknesses of three prominent meso-level frameworks for analysing policy implementation. It was argued that a dialectical approach to policy networks offered the greatest potential insights to Charter Standard implementation. Yet to date, none of these have been applied to a singular sport, or for that matter, to the arena of grassroots football. The intention here is to provide some concluding thoughts on the usefulness of this approach in analysing the implementation of the Charter Standard, and to provide insights into the utility of aspects of the ACF and multiple streams approaches.

Dialectical Policy Networks

First, the dialectical approach to policy networks is useful in helping to characterise the implementation process as complex, fluid, multi layered and fragmented. It is argued therefore, that the approach has utility in capturing a multitude of actors/organisations that are interdependent and interact in the implementation of the Charter Standard, and has proven particularly apposite for a study of grassroots football and one particular policy. This study has clearly illustrated that across all three Clusters of the football development policy network, significant actors operating at different levels and in different sectors, both in direct contact with one another or indirectly, are dependent on one another to achieve their individual goals in implementing the Charter Standard. A large number of interests exist, uneasy relationships predominate and essential resources are scarce. Second, the networks perspective asserts that policy is the product of the interaction between government and 'Clusters' of interests where the types of relationships that exist vary across policy sectors over time. This is instructive when considering that the modernisation agenda for sport (c.f. Delloitte & Touche 2003; Houlihan & Green 2005) is the first

notable sustained intervention by government into grassroots sport. When aligned to the neo-pluralist position, organisations are viewed as unequal participants in the implementation process. That is, some are better placed than others within the network to react to such exogenous shocks such as the modernisation agenda and the Charter Standard.

Third, in relation to groups being involved in implementation, interests outside of grassroots football are accounted for. For instance, Cluster 2 alerts us to the Charter Standard being an integral component of wider social activities for welfare organisations, and a perceptibly key signifier for potential funding success. Moreover, interests within grassroots football generally are ineffective, as they are wide ranging, diverse and vary significantly regarding the motivations of clubs and schools to implement the Charter Standard. For instance, Cluster 1 generally observed that clubs implemented the Charter Standard in order to establish a new club, and by recognising the FA as the legitimate body to offer guidance and advice, chose to follow the FAs guidelines through the Charter Standard. Added to this, an element of one-upmanship regarding rival clubs as to which clubs were perceived as the greater organised and had the better reputation in the area were important factors. Cluster 2, as noted centred on elements of one-upmanship in relation to the ethnically diverse and gang related characteristics of the area, and also noted as a tool of resistance, whereas Cluster 3 motivations centred on the ability of key agents to legitimise their own position and offer an interpretation of the Charter Standard accepted by all in the Cluster. In this sense, state actors (or specifically those in positions in which their employment is backed by the state such as FDOs, SDOs, and PDMs), have incorporated group interests in order to achieve their own goals (Smith 1993). That is, KPIs.

Fourth, the dialectical approach to policy networks is also instructive in considering the emergence and recognition of policy communities or issue networks, based upon the operationalisation of such motivations and the institutionalisation of particular beliefs. It would seem that, given the characteristics of the football development policy network, and that each and every grassroots football club and school practicing football is a potential member, it is largely inevitable given such vastness that the characteristics of an issue network are predominant. Added to this, the characteristics of grassroots football which have largely been borne out through this investigation, include, but are not limited too; inherent contestation and rivalry and; success on the field of play as an important characteristic of participation. This underscores such inevitability when applying policy network analysis. For instance, the three Clusters exhibit a range of interests and motivations being present, with access fluctuating significantly given the transient nature of volunteers and children moving in and out of the network at the vagaries of club membership. Some agreement within each Cluster regarding the Charter Standard is evident, yet this is not consistent across all Clusters of the network, indicating that conflict is ever present and a defining characteristic. An observation by Smith (1993) is instructive resonant with the characteristics of grassroots football generally in that issue networks develop where low political priority is given to the policy area, or policy, in question, or where a new issue has not yet been institutionalised. Clearly, all those involved in this study were engaged with the Charter Standard, but the wide range of motivations, and interpretations of the utility and focus of the Charter Standard indicate there is some way to go before the Charter Standard is a clearly and systematically embedded within the football development policy network.

The three Clusters within the network under investigation highlight the extent to which a policy community is emerging within the football development policy

network is debatable. That said, it is evident that coalitions are emerging around those sport development professionals adept in garnering support for their activities within the context of modernisation given the observations made in Cluster 3. As Houlihan (1997:16) observes, the defining characteristic of policy communities is 'the emergence of a core set of values that will inform the way in which problems are identified and defined, and also the ways in which solutions are selected'. The PDM in this Cluster supported by the FDO have played a key role in establishing consensus around the Charter Standard than in any other Cluster. As Richardson (1982:22) observes, policy communities are less concerned to solve policy problems and more concerned with establishing stable relationships of self interest, thus avoiding conflict and change. The football development policy network can perhaps be best described however, as an issue network given Rhodes (1992) and Marsh and Rhodes (1998) characterise policy communities as a stability of relationships, continuity of highly restrictive membership, vertical interdependence based on shared responsibility and insulation from other networks in that they are highly integrated. It would seem however, that the implementation of the Charter Standard is beginning to provide some semblance of consensus amongst those engaged with the scheme, in which they are interdependent with sport development professionals in a hierarchical relationship to achieve accreditation. Given the Charter Standard is a relatively new introduction to the football development policy network, it may be that the passage of time, and a mixture of the abilities and desires of the FA and its staff that ensures the Charter Standard remains a key policy instrument for football development professionals and government.

Fifth, in line with policy networks literature, the study highlights a number of resource dependencies key for both successful implementation of the Charter Standard and progression within the Charter Standard framework. This is most

notably found in the relationships between FDOs and clubs or schools, and between clubs and schools i.e. school-club links. Here the relationships between these key actors highlight the competition for scarce resources such as funding, which is percolating through County FAs by government in the form of the Football Foundation, in which volunteers are having to display their suitability to government led agencies for funding based largely upon their ability to organise, plan and develop their club or school in a sustainable fashion resonant with the Charter Standard criteria. As such, it seems government is supporting the establishment of a policy network for football development, whilst ensuring that those clubs and schools best placed to deliver on its wider political objectives are being placed within it. As Houlihan (1997:269) identifies, the formation of policy communities and networks often rests with governments, and their emergence depends on whether governments have a need for them in terms of legitimising policy choice or cooperation in policy implementation. It would seem that the Charter Standard and its implementation is a manifestation of governments need to draw upon local level expertise within the voluntary sector to foster a policy network that is formed in line with government requirements. In this connection, it is precisely because the characteristics of grassroots football resonating with an issue network in that conflict is ever present and membership infrequent, that the arena appeals to government as it is unlikely that any coherent sustained policy communities opposed to the Charter Standard or wider government objectives are likely to emerge.

In sum, Marsh and Smith's (2000) dialectical approach is instructive. Whether it be endogenous factors (e.g. resource dependencies in the network) or exogenous factors (e.g. ideological or political context), both are resonant with processes and dynamics of Charter Standard implementation across three Clusters. Exogenous forces

evidently mediate networks in shaping the conditions and choices available to actors and their subsequent actions in implementing the Charter Standard. In the final analysis, the policy networks approach integrated into a neo-pluralistic theory of power provides a plausible account of policy implementation. Placing implementation as the focus of analysis is plausible given the approach encompasses the three dialectical relationships which have been accounted for. It also transcends implementation literature by de-centring top down bottom up approaches to allow a focus on the dynamics of implementation, rather than adding to the mundane debate regarding which is the best way to analyse implementation, or how implementation has been carried out. However, its strength lies in its descriptive capacity as opposed to its explanatory capacity for analysing a singular policy such as the Charter Standard.

For instance, Chapter 6 highlights that policy implementation within a highly contested sector lacking consensus is not a technical and controlled process. Rather, it is complex, often confused, and highly unpredictable, despite similar outcomes occurring. That is, although the outcomes are similar, the dynamics and processes underpinning them across three distinctly different Clusters of the football development policy network are diverse and unique to those particular conditions in which implementation takes place. As such, initiatives and policies aimed at football generally and grassroots football in particular, are affected by a wide range of factors, not least the values and interactions of key individuals central to the implementation of the Charter Standard. Thus, whilst policy network analysis is useful in describing who has access to which resources and power, and who is in dominant positions in relationships between different individuals and organisations, it fails to account for how such resources are utilised and in what manner towards a particular cause. For instance, those clubs and schools not Charter Standard

accredited who elect not to engage with the accreditation process despite being identified by FDOs as key organisations capable of achieving accreditation and contributing to the modernisation process (FDO Cluster 1 Interview 24 / 3 / 06; FDO Cluster 3 Interview 21 / 1 / 06), are exemplars of powerful organisations opting not to operationalise resources. Moreover, whilst the inclusion of actors skills and learning in the dialectical approach to policy networks is instructive, this assumes that those actors involved in the process are maximising both their ability and resources available to them within given structural constraints. This overlooks the notions of values, ideas and culture constraining or facilitating the implementation process. Moreover, whether such actors choose to operationalise the resources at their disposal. Whilst there is a danger in conceptually and theoretically adding to an already convoluted framework, Marsh and Smiths (2002) dialectical approach to policy networks tends to ignore the complexity of the dynamics of decision making, and underestimates the significant roles of individual actors ideology (Kisby 2007). Therefore, as alluded to throughout Chapter 6 in suggesting the utility of some aspects of other meso level approaches, a discussion of the multiple streams framework and advocacy coalition framework follows in this analysis of Charter Standard implementation in order to determine if there is a utility in combining various elements of such frameworks to provide a more accurate conceptualistion of policy implementation.

MSF and ACF

The contribution of the MSF (multiple streams framework) (Zaharidis 1999) is largely limited, given its application is more suitable to analysing why specific policies are selected for implementation (c.f. Sabatier 2007), rather than how they are implemented. Yet the approach is useful in capturing the complexity and ambiguity surrounding policies which are a feature of the Charter Standard across all three

Clusters. As is evident, each organisation has differing values and expectations of what is both a) required to implement the Charter Standard, and b) their motivations to implement the Charter Standard. Added to this, the MSF identifies time and resources as key constraints for policy 'choice'. This can be extended to implementation given the insights from Chapter 6, which suggest that volunteers being drawn into the modernisation agenda to implement the Charter Standard are experiencing a time-space compression, in that the once spontaneous activity of volunteering for grassroots football has transformed for many into a routinised practice redolent of paid employment. Moreover, timing is also crucial given the observations regarding Club 1 in Cluster 2. The club found itself in an advantageous position vis-a-vis similar clubs in the Cluster due to a mixture of geographical location, and the fact that the club were a valuable resource for other more politically weighty organisations in funding cycles such as the FA and NDC. This underscored and exacerbated tensions between different communities within the Cluster, representing different clubs.

Most significantly, the MSF recognises that not all this is happenstance, by emphasising that political ideology is central to policy implementation, as it provides a meaning to action and a guide to identifying which issues are seen as important. It is maintained by Zaharidis (1999:80) that 'the ideology of the governing party shapes the kind of issues that will rise to the agenda and demarcates the solutions available for adoption'. In this connection, the MSF can be extended to policy implementation. If considered within the macro level insights in the previous section, the MSF here suggests that policy implementation is based upon 'value acceptability' as well as feasibility, where not only unfeasible policy options (for instance clubs and schools), but less favoured policy solutions and ideologies are likely to be rejected or ignored. This alerts us to the conditions shaped

by the modernisation agenda and New Labour's 'Third Way', in which partnership and pooling of resources are central to policy implementation. Moreover, the instruments of modernisation, i.e. KPIs, club and school football development plans with accountability, have shaped the conditions which have mediated actors policy choices, which at times are largely unintended and have consequences not envisaged by government. For instance, FDOs manipulating KPIs in allowing clubs and schools to become accredited with the Charter Standard without conforming to predetermined criteria, and the lack of monitoring or auditing of accredited clubs and schools. In this connection, policy elites are noted as important. Whilst FDOs are not policy elites in the sense intentioned by the MSF, they are key protagonists and agents of modernisation in the position of power they hold with regard to the implementation of the Charter Standard. In this sense, FDOs (and other key sport development professionals) have the power to shape policy and its implementation. As noted, the focus and application of the MSF has predominantly been on policy change (c.f. Green & Houlihan 2005; Sabatier 2007).

If extended to policy implementation, the three streams of 'politics', 'policy problems' and 'policy solutions' can enhance policy network analysis for implementation. The three streams are conceptualised as operating independently except in the event of a 'policy window', where policy entrepreneurs act to 'couple' the streams (Kingdon 1995). The concept of policy entrepreneur has been noted elsewhere as conceptually salient in institutionally weak areas such as 'sport' generally (Green & Houlihan 2005; Houlihan 2005), and in this respect has had some evident utility in both Cluster's 2 and 3. As noted, in Cluster 2 the SDO for the Cluster was able to conjoin a politically salient issue by selecting clubs deemed resource sufficient to contribute to alleviating social problems underpinned by gang and crime culture in multi-ethnic communities by using football as tool. Moreover,

they were able to take advantage of wider developments such as The FA's UEFA informed 'Hat-Trick' programme for disadvantaged communities. In Cluster 3, the PDM displayed policy entrepreneurship in mobilising the desire within the Cluster to provide a much needed football facility for community use to cater for demand. Again, the Charter Standard status of clubs was a key element in securing funding from government backed sources in the Football Foundation, and appeased those clubs not eligible. In both examples, the Charter Standard was located as an important political tool for these actors. This fits with Kingdon's (1995:165) observation that those actors displaying the characteristics of policy entrepreneurs take advantage of windows of opportunity as 'advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems'.

In sum, the MSF provides relatively useful, if limited tools for explaining Charter Standard implementation. The policy entrepreneur concept adds analytical purchase to the policy networks approach in explaining why and how some actors are able to utilise Charter Standard implementation towards their own causes. Yet, again, as in policy networks, it is weak in exploring the dynamics of implementation given its emphasis on policy change which inevitably places focus on structural processes and constraints, particularly when utilised in conjunction with a macro level theory such as neo-pluralism. However, the approach can and does give emphasis to the role of ideas and beliefs in the policy process which can be extended to implementation in analysing why and under what conditions the Charter Standard has been implemented, not how. A further observation is crucial if the framework is to have utility for policy implementation analysis. There is a tendency, given the terminology, that such conceptualising emphasises those actors in positions amenable to state apparatus, for example, FDOs, PDMs, SDOs. Taking into account the peculiar characteristics of grassroots football generally, and the socio-

political context of modernisation, the extent to which the framework can account for other actors such as club volunteers needs to be addressed. For instance, volunteers have become drawn into the policy process in order for agents of the state to utilise the resources they bring to meet government objectives. Not only do these volunteers have an impact upon policy implementation, to a large degree, they are also capable of manipulating, or capitalising on the three policy streams to meet their own agenda's and objectives in advancing their club vis-a-vis other clubs in their Clusters.

The ACF is noted as being closely related to the policy networks approach (John 1998:169). It is primarily a mechanism to explain policy change and stability over time and is based on the premises, among others, that policy subsystems are the most useful unit of analysis, and that a time perspective of a decade or more is needed to understand policy change (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994, pp. 178-180; Jenkins-Smith, St. Clair, & Woods, 1991; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Hence, the ACF is useful in studying subsystem dynamics through at least one formulation/implementation/reformulation cycle (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989) and provides a benchmark, policy change, for understanding the ramifications of challenge to the stability of subsystems. A key premise of the ACF is that public policies are reflections of belief systems in that they incorporate values, priorities, causal theories, amongst other things, of different subsystem participants (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier 1993, pp. 178-180).

Sabatier (1999:119) states that a subsystem 'consists of those actors from a variety of public and private organisations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue...and who regularly seek to influence policy in that domain'. As such, the

ACF does not advance the policy networks approach in this study, as little more than identification and mapping of actors and organisations in the grassroots football development policy network is evident, and given the paucity of academic analysis or grassroots football documentation, it is difficult to assess whether a mature (one that has existed for 10 years or more) or nascent (one in the process of forming) subsystem exists. Indeed, it is difficult to ascertain whether any actors have tried to influence the political agenda for grassroots football in the past.

It is debatable as to whether a coalition within a 'subsystem' for grassroots football is readily identifiable. Some key observations from Chapter 6 point towards characteristics of coalitions across the three Clusters of the football development policy network. However, this study supports the contention that coalitions may be emerging with the Charter Standard providing the impetus within the modernisation agenda. In Cluster 3, the emergence of a consensus regarding the Charter Standard as the way forward for grassroots football clubs and schools to operate their provision is a case in point. Whilst it is too early to claim with any cogency that a nascent coalition exists as the Charter Standard is relatively new (under 10 years which is a stipulation of the ACF), longitudinal analyses may confirm or refute such an observation. Moreover, the fact that a significant number of clubs and schools are engaged with the Charter Standard suggests a small but significant change in behaviour, culture and values in the 'subsystem' that may require time to become embedded. That is, a transition from pure voluntarism to a professional, businesslike approach to grassroots football for volunteers in both clubs and County FA structures. The utility of this distinction is that in a mature subsystem, relationships, processes, systems and structures are relatively embedded.

Implementation of new policies such as the Charter Standard therefore is contingent on a change in values, which is resisted if policy core beliefs are threatened. Added to this, the ACF assumes that actors can be aggregated into a number of advocacy coalitions (Clusters of interests that share common beliefs), composed of various government and private or voluntary sector organisations. Each coalition shares both a set of normative and causal beliefs, and engages in a non trivial coordinated activity over time (Sabatier 1999). In this respect, the issues experienced by the FDO in Cluster 3 are a case in point, whereby the governance department, underpinned by amateuristic and voluntaristic values, were openly hostile to the activities of the FDO, and implementation of the Charter Standard. As such, a polarisation of values suggests that there are potentially incompatible coalitions within the football development network. If the nascent 'professional' coalition gains more momentum, this may lead to increasing polarisation within the football development policy network as actors within each coalition become entrenched in defending their own values and beliefs. In this connection, policy core beliefs are 'the principal glue of coalitions interests' (Zafonte & Sabatier 1998). Although membership changes over time, as does coalition influence, the core beliefs of individuals and organisations have remained largely unchanged until an exogenous shock in the form of New Labour's modernisation agenda for sport has infiltrated the subsystem. Therefore, the ACF suggests a more causal relationship than the policy networks approach in recognising the impact of exogenous factors on policy implementation upon changes in the beliefs of actors, in this case, engaging with the Charter Standard. However, evidently the Charter Standard has been interpreted in several different ways both within and across all Clusters examined. For instance, some clubs interpret the Charter Standard as a tool with which to improve the skills and abilities of players to a greater extent, whereas others place value on the Charter Standard as key in establishing the club as sustainable, and others still as a tool for accessing government funding. With such a multitude of interpretations and values attached

to the Charter Standard, and the characteristics of the area with a vast number of clubs and individuals following their own interests, the establishing of a coherent coalition based upon a tripartite system of beliefs seems with the Charter Standard central to this, seems relatively distant.

The ACF also maintains that 'policy brokers' act to mediate between competing coalitions. In this study, it is clear that key actors have bridged across spaces between organisations that hold different beliefs, similar to the policy entrepreneur concept in the MSF. However, the extent to which clear coalitions exist in the grassroots football arena or 'subsystem' is still largely unclear in order to establish this. Yet, the ACF implies that policy brokers are 'neutral' in negotiating and bargaining, which is clearly not the case when considering the roles of the SDO in Cluster 2, and the PDM in Cluster 3, in which they seek to advance their own interests by utilising their own resources, and taking advantage of, rather than integrating, the resources held by others. Whilst there maybe suggestions of coalitions emerging within the football development policy network, it would be erroneous to suggest that this is consistent with the ACF precepts, as they are not clearly identifiable to fit Sabatier's (1999) theoretical observations. It seems therefore, that whilst the ACF can provide an interesting insight into grassroots football and Charter Standard implementation, it is unclear whether the coalitions or subsystems that may exist in grassroots football are consistent with the descriptions offered by Sabatier. Conversely, largely refuting the ACF lends weight to the characteristics of the football development policy network as reflecting an issue network which has little influence on policies, initiatives or funding of the grassroots game, and which is susceptible to and reliant on, rather than challenging, government or FA intervention.

In sum, the ACF displays potential for a description and analysis of policy implementation when coupled with a macro level theory of power such as neo-pluralism. It highlights and contextualises the strategic action of localised actors in implementing nationally influenced policy. Nonetheless, there are weaknesses highlighted above, which may be explainable more by the unit of analysis, i.e. the Charter Standard being a relatively new policy in that it is not yet possible to analyse subsystem dynamics through at least one cycle of formulation, implementation and reformulation. Added to this, the paucity of literature and general recorded information on grassroots football renders it difficult to historically examine past culture and values with any degree of certainty with which to inform the development of potential coalitions.

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