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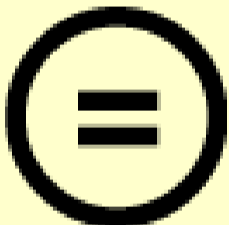
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**The Developmental Socialisation of Young
People in Club Sport: An Ethnographic
Account**

By

Martin Ralph Toms

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

Loughborough University

February 2005

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the issues surrounding the participation of young people (aged 11 to 13) in junior club sport. This follows the acknowledgement that club sport is a key site for participation by young people away from school but that very little is known or understood about how this sports experience actually works (MacPhail et al, 2003). This thesis examines the complex relationships and interactions that shape the participation and attrition of young people from a cricket club in the Midlands. This ethnographic participant-observation study focuses on two seasons of coaching sessions, practices and matches. It explores the dynamic interactions between the young people, their parents, their coaches and the cricket club itself. Underpinning this thesis are the core concepts of the sports socialisation process and the sociology of the family. On a more applied level, the thesis draws upon the theories of developmental stages of sports participation (Côté & Hay, 2002a), social construction and positioning in sport (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Data was generated through observation and semi-structured interviews with the young people, their parents, the coaches and other club officials. The taped interviews and field notes were then collated and a grounded theory approach was used to analyse the data thematically. A number of methods were used to do this including data coding, memos and conceptual mapping. The conclusions to the thesis highlight that there are key differences between the developmental stages of sampler and specialiser, that social construction and positioning within legitimate peripheral participation is vital to the way the sports club is experienced and practised by everyone involved in it and that 'the family' is of vital importance in the participation process at the club as well as the way that the club is socially constructed and perpetuated as being like a certain type of family. The young people themselves were seen to inhabit varied social positions which were linked to the positions and practices of their parents and the coaches as well as their level of participation within the club 'community of practice'. These experiences influenced their social construction of 'self as cricketer' and their continued participation (or attrition) from the club. The implications for policy makers and coaching practitioners is that more awareness needs to be made of the way that the interactions between coaches, parents and young people dictate their future participation or attrition from the club. The thesis ends with the assertion that the sports club experience for young people requires further detailed investigation.

Conference Presentations:

Toms, M. (2001) "Sport & Young People: An Ethnographic Case Study of Young Peoples Experiences and Positioning in Club Sport", *British Sociological Association -- Global Youth Conference*, University of Plymouth, 3rd September 2001.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The core focus for this study is to further examine an under-researched area: young people's socialisation into sport, and in particular club sport. Whilst Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight the lack of research at 'grass roots' level, this is further exacerbated by the plethora of work conducted at elite level (often retrospectively) (e.g. Côté, 1999 and Kay, 2000). The increasing work of academics examining the coaching process in detail (e.g. Jones et al, 2003) also highlight this, in that their work focuses on elite coaches and performers. Politically, the use of sport as a means of social development is also high on the agenda with the Government (DCMS, 2000) and opinion polls (e.g. MORI, 2000) reflect the value of club sport and participation in society. However, with this focus on the social, educative and health (Siedentop, 1995) benefits of participation, there is little research that identifies or explains the dynamics of this process at junior club level. Since this is also the main sports development route through which performers are spotted there is a dichotomy between the understanding of the youth sports process and the expectations of society on the development of future champions. This study intends to begin to bridge the gap of knowledge and focus more attention on the base of the sports performance pyramid which underpins sports participation at every level.

1.2 Introduction to the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a foundation on which the rest of the thesis is built. Since the thesis seeks to investigate the complex and dynamic process of the socialisation of young people into junior club sport it adopts an interpretive approach. This chapter acts as a starting point on this journey and opens the thesis through the analysis of the existing theoretical and empirical material in the field, the research methodology and also the adoption of specific research questions.

The first section of this chapter outlines the key theoretical concepts used within the thesis and the key literature that provides the foundation for the study. The second section outlines the methodological background to the research. The third section

introduces the research questions that underpin the study and the final section provides an overview of the thesis.

1.3 Outline of the Study: Theoretical and Conceptual Background

This section of the chapter introduces and develops the central theoretical background to the study and provides a brief summary of the major aspects involved.

1.3.1 Young People and Sports Participation

There is a growing body of knowledge and theory surrounding the participation of young people in sport and this ranges from the psychological to the sociological and beyond. The growing awareness of the importance of sports participation as a way of avoiding obesity, as well as a way of socialising young people into the world, is well recognised at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Whilst sports participation is also linked to schooling and Physical Education, the role of the school is also under scrutiny.

This thesis acknowledges the existing research that has been conducted in PE, sport education and general sports participation and intends to develop what is known as the socialisation process of young people in sport. The notion of socialisation in a sporting context is itself complex and open to interpretation (Coakley, 1998, Horne et al, 1999, Donnelly, 2000). This thesis does not seek to re-visit the existing literature in this area, but rather to explore and develop the notion of developmental socialisation outlined and explained by Côté (1999) and Côté & Hay (2002a). Their developmental approach to this complex notion involved the identification and marking of particular stages within a young person's participation. Each stage they noted to have particular characteristics. The first stage they define as the 'sampling' stage. This stage is where the young people (normally aged between seven and thirteen) sample a range of sporting activities. Next is the 'specialising' stage where the young people make conscious decisions to reduce the number of sports they play down to one or two. The final stage they identify is the 'investment' stage. This is where the young people (aged around fourteen and over) commit their time to just one or two sports. Since there are other factors involved in this process, it is worth remembering that the whole

socialisation and participation process is complex and multi-faceted (Horne et al, 1999, Fernandez-Balboa, 2000, Donnelly, 2000, Stroot, 2002).

The thesis uses Côté & Hay's (2002a) sports socialisation developmental stages (in particular the stages of sampling and specialising) as a starting point to explain the participation of the young people in the club.

1.3.2 Social Construction and Social Positioning

The concept of social construction and social positioning is rooted in and developed from role theory. Davies & Harré (1990) note that role theory fails to account for the dynamic aspects of social encounters and in a sporting context Kirk & MacPhail (2003) have further developed this theory into the dynamics of a sports club (as have MacPhail et al, 2003a and 2003b). Since it could be argued that sampling and specialising are social positions, this is the second theoretical aspect that can affect the socialisation process. As well as the young people, this social positioning also links into the behaviour and positions held by the parents, coaches and other club members and how they practise their positions.

This development of role theory into the more dynamic approach of positioning is important. The ways in which individuals negotiate their social positions with those around them and then practise these positions shows how complex and dynamic this concept is.

1.3.3 Situated Learning Theory

Kirk & MacDonald's (1998) use of Lave & Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory is the next theoretical concept that emerges here. As we have seen previously, developmental socialisation and social positioning impact upon the way that people act, react and negotiate their position within their social environment. Through the use of the theoretical notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice' that Lave & Wenger (1991) adopt, it is possible by developing this through Kirk & MacDonald's (1998) approach to physical education to link it to participation in a sports club context.

This theory helps to explain how it is possible for an individual to gain the required skill and knowledge associated with a community of practice (such as a voluntary sports club). Using this skill and knowledge, they can then build up a position and identity for themselves within the community. Individual practice of the community is also linked to social positioning and identity so it could be argued, on a simplistic level, that those who contribute most are full members of a community or practice and those who do not are peripheral members. A more detailed explanation is given in the following chapter.

1.3.4 Junior Club Sport in the United Kingdom

During the late 1990's and the early years of the twenty-first century the relatively poor performances of British national sporting teams and the criticism of the set-up of sport in various guises has led to much press and media attention. The ability of our adult players and the development of world class performers have come to dominate sports policy and participation in the UK (Houlihan & White, 2002). The new thinking about athlete development and the almost universal adoption of the Long Term Athlete Development Programme highlights this and is something that cricket has also begun to accept as part of its underpinning participation rationale (ECBCA, 2003).

The lack of empirical research in voluntary club sport for young people is also a cause for concern (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) since this is the well acknowledged breeding ground for talent at all levels in the UK. What is clear is that the key theoretical research conducted into youth sports participation (such as Côté & Hay, 2002a) is based upon the American model of sport for young people. Importantly it must also be noted that there are few 'sports clubs' (in the way that we know them in the UK) anywhere in the world, so our sports system is to some extent unique. Sport in the UK is dominated by single-sport clubs, whereas in most other countries multi-sport clubs dominate. In fact other key works (such as those by De Knop) are all based around the European multi-sport clubs. In short, the club based sports system that we offer young people in the UK is largely un-researched. It is only recently with works of Kirk & MacPhail (2003), MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b) and the beginnings of a focus on the wider nature and holistic approach to coaching practice in sport (e.g. Jones et al,

2004) that grass roots sports participation has gone further than simple statistics and motivations for competing.

What is evident is that there is a need for a greater understanding of the club sport experience for young people. Allied to the theoretical underpinning of the key developmental phases of participation, we can begin to understand and shed some light onto the process and perhaps provide a greater understanding of the complexities of decision making to continue, drop out or even move to another club. In this way we can build a better understanding of the nature of the experience of those in different stages such that we can inform National Governing Bodies of the need to educate and re-educate coaches, parents and helpers in order to keep young people playing sport. In short, to look at the process of what we can do to improve the overall club experience.

Within cricket the England and Wales Cricket Board have, like most sports, attempted to organise and provide a structure for the game at youth level. Such structure and progression however tends only to be available to those who achieve recognition at either county or district age group level and tends to ignore the key site for participation, the cricket club. It is at this junior club level that most of the hard work is done and it is also this level which perpetuates participation or attrition of young people from the game. However, MacPhail et al (2003a) acknowledge that the nature of the club is under-researched and poorly understood and argue that the sports club is not a naturally occurring phenomenon and that it is a dynamic and complex organisation.

1.4 Methodological Background

The research was conducted as two-season ethnography of the junior section of a cricket club in the Midlands (conducted during 2001 and 2002). The focus was upon the experiences of an Under 12 squad of young players (a core of around 18 young people) at the club. It involved examining the interactions of the young people and the parents, coaches, peers and other club members. Through semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes the thesis intends to provide an account of the youth sport experience for the young people in the club. As such it represents a multi-faceted and dynamic account of a living entity (the club) and how it is socially constructed and

experienced by the key people involved in it. Within this theoretical approach, the researcher's role as a participant ethnographer is also highlighted and the reflexive nature of his existing experiences spelt out in some detail.

The use of a grounded theoretical approach to the gathered data is also important. The interview and observational data was examined closely, analysed thematically and coded and retested through interviews to identify key themes from the data. These themes were then examined within theoretical and conceptual frameworks in response to a set of research questions (outlined in the next section) and were then analysed within the data chapters.

1.5 Introduction to the Research Questions

The introduction to this thesis has proposed that, whilst there is a plethora of knowledge on young people and sports participation, there is very limited understanding of 'how' the participation process works in a sports club environment. In order to try and answer this in a case study situation, the thesis draws upon and develops the key theoretical notions and concepts through the use of specific research questions. This section introduces the research questions which were founded in the literature, and modified during the course of the fieldwork to give a sharper focus during the data collection process. The literature review and adapted questions form the theoretical and conceptual framework of the thesis. These questions are outlined below.

1.5.1 Question 1

Can Côté & Hay's (2002a) theoretical model of 'sampling' and 'specialising' help us develop our understanding of participation in this particular situation?

- What are the key similarities or differences with the theoretical model?
- How does the idea of deliberate play and deliberate practice fit into this study?
- How is the decision making process of participation, attrition and departure informed/influenced (e.g. peers, parents, coach etc) and how does this occur?
- What are the key developmental experiential and transitional moments in the young people's experience of this club?

- How does cricket fit in with the other choices of sports played by young people?

This first question is based upon the theories and findings from the key works of Côté & Hay (2002a), Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b), and was further refined during eth data collection process.

1.5.2 Question 2

How is a sports club experienced by the young people within it (and also their parents and coaches)?

- How is the club socially constructed and how do the young people, coaches and parents practise it?
- What roles does the club play in the developmental experiences of its participants and how do they occur?
- What social positions do the parents and coaches have in this experience?
- How do these multiple relationships work in the club context?
- What type of multiple agendas (club's development, young people and parents) are there underlying the young people's participation?
- What expectations do the parents, coaches, club and young people have of each other?

This second question is based upon the work of Davies & Harré (1990), which has been brought into a sporting context by Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b).

1.5.3 Question 3

What are the young people's learning trajectories within this community of practice?

- How can the club be seen as a community of practice?
- What affect does gaining (or not gaining) legitimate peripheral participation in this particular community of practice have on the young people's participation and attrition?

- How do their relationships and influences change as they move (or do not move) along the trajectory from peripheral to full membership of the community of practice?
- How do their learning trajectories permit or hinder them from becoming members of the community of practice or becoming ‘cricketers’?
- How does the conceptualisation of the young people’s socialisation into sport (through legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice) throw new light onto the transitions between sampling, specialising and dropping out?

This third question is grounded in the developmental work of Kirk & MacDonald (1998) and their sporting interpretation of Lave & Wenger’s (1991) theory.

1.5.4 Question 4

In what way does the family have an influence upon the club?

- How does the family work as a positive/negative unit with participation at the club?
- How does the notion of ‘the family environment’ affect young people’s participation or attrition from the club?
- What role do families (parents, siblings etc) have on the way the club is practised by the young people and their parents?
- In what other ways are families important within the youth sport process at the club?

The fourth question is linked in with numerous sociological, educational and sports participation academic studies, but more particularly with the work of Kirk et al (1997a and 1997b), Kay (2000a and 2003), Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and MacPhail et al (2003a).

1.6 An Overview of The Thesis

From the outline and underpinning theory and knowledge that this chapter begins to highlight it is clear that the sports experiences for young people are multi-faceted, complex and dynamic. Through this thesis these aspects will be analysed in detail.

Whilst this first chapter is an introduction to the entire thesis, the second chapter outlines and explains the place of this research within the empirical and theoretical framework of existing data. This literature review looks at the socialisation process, amongst other aspects, and bases itself around the work of Côté & Hay (2002a), Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and Lave & Wenger (1991) in introducing the wide concepts of socialisation, developmental theory, social positioning and situated learning theory. The chapter also explores the issue of the role of the family within sports participation. The third chapter looks at issues of methodology and the debates surrounding ethnography as well as epistemological, ontological and paradigmatical concepts. It also spends some time discussing the ethical, reflexive and practical aspects that are vital to such real-world interpretive research.

The next five chapters (chapters four to eight) highlight and analyse the key data collected with reference to the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. Chapter four provides an overview of the club and provides some vignettes of the key characters as well as a description of a typical training session. This chapter aims to set the scene for the reader within the field of research. Chapter five looks at the theoretical notion of social construction and positioning within sports participation and develops the work of Kirk & MacPhail (2003) in exploring the dynamic and multiple relationships that exist within the club. Chapter six discusses in detail the analogy of the club as a family environment and how it is practised and constructed in this way. Chapter seven continues to look at the family-club link by examining the way the club is seen and identified as a family club in a socio-historical manner. Chapter eight looks in more detail at four case study young people from the club in an attempt to better understand their experiences of certain transitional moments, as well as how they construct their participation in relation to the dynamic and multiple relationships and positions they hold in the club.

The final chapter draws upon the discussions of the whole thesis to provide a summary and overview of the research. The chapter then moves onto a discussion of the implications of the findings theoretically, empirically and with regards to sports policy.

1.7 Chapter Conclusion

This introductory chapter aims to introduce the key empirical and theoretical knowledge that underpins the research. It introduces and discusses the key research questions and finally outlines the focus, structure and content of the subsequent chapters.

In order to put the research into context and to explain the underlying theoretical and empirical data on which the study is based, the next chapter provides a review of the key sources of literature. This chapter further highlights and explains the substantive conceptual and theoretical data on which the thesis is based.

Chapter 2:

Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This second chapter acts as the main theoretical section on which this study is built. It provides an opportunity for the reader to gain an insight into the background, theory and existing research that has been conducted in the area of young people and sports participation, and also into the development of the theoretical perspective informing the study. This chapter provides the formal theory that has informed the construction of the research questions and the development of substantive theory through the analysis of the collected data. The chapter identifies through the existing data and literature what the key research questions are, and it will become clear how and why they were formulated in the context of the thesis.

The first section of the chapter intends to build upon the material outlined in Chapter 1, and commence a discussion of the key concepts that are central to the study. First of all this chapter will outline some of the key theoretical tenets involved in understanding youth sports participation. The first section will examine research into young people and sport, and will look in detail at the notion of the socialisation process of young people into sport. This process will then be further developed and examined through the key theoretical concept of the participation and developmental stages in sport (which underpin the whole thesis and are central to the research questions), before a detailed analysis of the club sport experience begins to tie the theoretical focus to the practical environment. This strengthening of relationship between theory and data is then further explored and outlines how sports clubs are socially constructed through the process of social positioning, and in particular how the sports club and the sports experience is constructed by the individuals who practise it.

The second section of the chapter outlines the role of the family in the sports process. To begin with it draws on the literature on the sociology of the family. It then develops this theory in order to examine the family influence on the participation and attrition of young people in sport. The section then draws upon the existing literature

to build up a picture of how the family has an influential role to play in the sports experience at club level, particularly in the UK.

The penultimate section of this chapter outlines the detailed research questions, all of which are linked closely to the formal theories noted throughout this chapter. The chapter then concludes with a review of the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, and introduces the data collection methods.

2.2 The Sociological and Theoretical Framework for the Study

The key work of Evans (1986) identifies the emergence of critical socio-cultural research in PE and highlights a new approach to investigating sport through critical enquiry. Whilst this approach stems from the sociology of education, Evans highlights how PE and sport contain the fundamental theoretical social constructions of society. The interpretive and structural analyses of PE and sport, which they discuss, have further progressed and there is now an emphasis on deeper and more profound insights into both PE and sport (Yiannakis, 2000). The work of Jones et al (2002) and Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight these deeper socio-cultural perspectives. As Evans & Davies (2002; 31) point out “we should make research and teaching more, not less, complex and ‘theory’, ideas and innovation, not our enemies but friends”.

Since Willis (1977), Corrigan (1979) and Ball (1981) conducted educational research in the 1970's the focus on detailed empirical investigation of young people has tended to revolve around educational and social settings with the emphasis on interactionist approaches (Atkinson & Housley, 2003). Some of the most influential ethnographic work (which is now increasingly common) on young people stems from: educational (e.g. Hargreaves, 1967), social (e.g. Willis, 1977) and family (e.g. Moore et al, 1996) settings. Moreover, it should be noted that there are far fewer of these studies in the realms of sport and leisure than in other fields. It would appear that most of the studies that do exist in sport are bound in the positivist and quantitative traditions of psychology, physiology and biomechanics of participation. It is only through De Knop et al (2001) and colleagues (for example) that the focus has begun to change towards the young person rather than the sport itself. The realm of sports research has now opened to the awareness of the interactions of young people to their environment and to each other and to their experiences of sport. Rather than measure participation

and drop out in psychological dimensions, there is a growing trend to understand the sociological underpinnings of the sports participation phenomena (Sparkes, 2000).

2.2.1 Researching Young People in Sport: the Core Focus

The following section focuses in detail on the empirical work conducted on young people in sport and, more importantly, on Côté & Hay's (2002a) developmental stages - the theoretical underpinning of this thesis. This first part investigates the socialisation process of young people in sport, followed by an in-depth discussion of the developmental stages, a section on the notion of elite myopia and the concentration of research onto a minority in youth sport and concludes with a section about expectations in sport.

2.2.1.1 Young People and Sport

There is a great deal of research that has been undertaken looking at young people in sport. This has ranged from the positivist traditions of physiological and biomechanical analysis to the post positivist examination of the psychological and sociological influences on young people (of which we will examine the latter in more detail later).

The sample and site of these research activities also varies, with studies looking across elite and participatory sport and physical activity, across genders, ages and nationalities, across sports and 'sites', in recreational and competitive situations, in educational, team and competition settings. In short, a great deal of research has been conducted in a variety of settings. Studies related to particular disciplines (i.e. physiology, psychology, biomechanics) are not listed here, but each discipline is acknowledged as being important in providing an overall understanding of sport. In fact, with the continuing political agenda on health and obesity within the UK as well as talent development, there is an increase in physiological research being conducted with young people within exercise and sport (Abbott & Collins, 2004).

My study intends to look at the holistic role of the sports club in young people's experiences in sport, looking at the construction of self as participants and the relationship of these participants with the coaches, parents and administrators. More importantly, the study intends to look at how these multi-faceted roles have an impact

upon the young people's participation. At the same time the intention is to examine how the idea of 'expectations' about club sport (and of those involved) are viewed and met.

2.2.1.2 Young People in Sport: The Sociological Perspective

There is a wealth of literature and empirical research conducted on young people in sport: e.g. gender and participation, Coakley & White (1992), exercise motivation, Horga & Štimac (1999), sports commitment over time, Carpenter & Scanlan (1998), contextual factors, De Knop et al (1999), peer & parental influence, Babkes & Weiss (1999) and adolescent coaching preferences, Martin et al (2001). There is also further work on the influence of the socialization process, ranging from early theory (e.g. Spretizer & Snyder, 1976) to the more up to date developmental perspectives (e.g. Côté & Hay, 2002a, Abbott & Collins, 2004, Balyi, 2001 and 2004). Yet there is also a lack of literature about the role that clubs play in the sports process (Baar, 2001 and MacPhail et al, 2003a) and little evidence to suggest how the club experience that is recommended by DCMS (2000) is actually received and experienced by young people in the UK. There is also little evidence to suggest how sports clubs 'work' and what effect they have on the locality and community from an ethnographic perspective. The work that has been done is somewhat limited (e.g. Inglis, 1997 on the role of the board in amateur sports organizations). There has, however, been one ethnographic piece based around a cricket club, a feminist ethnography by Middleton (1986) of a village in Yorkshire. In this village Middleton saw the sports club as the centre of the village's male patriarchy. Cricket was used as a way of asserting that dominance, the women's role for example was to make the tea, clean and wash up and then return to collect their husbands/boyfriends at the end of the game (see also Marqusee, 1995 and Heald, 2004).

Now that the core focus of the thesis has been identified, this next section intends to locate this in the wider field of sports research and give a macro focus to the study. It has only been in the latter part of the twentieth century that research into sport has really taken off. The plethora of undergraduate and postgraduate courses at British Universities in the field (c.f. THES, 2003) identify that sport and leisure has become a popular area of research and study in the UK. Coupled with the growth of sports policy out of the health, education, welfare, inclusion and other social policies

promoted by successive governments since the 1960's (Houlihan & White, 2002), sport has never been higher on the political agenda.

Following the medicalisation of sport through the political gamesmanship of the Cold-War era in the 1970's and 1980's (c.f. Riordan, 1991), the focus on sport has grown from performance orientated studies (based around physiology and biomechanics), to a more sociological approach. There are now an increasing number of studies being conducted on young people and sport using both qualitative and ethnographic methods (c.f. Evans & Davies, 2002 and Gratton & Jones, 2004). Whilst there is still a dominance of funding and focus on elite performance improvement in the UK, there is a growing awareness and growing area of empirical work based around the broad field of grass roots (and elite) sport, physical education and sports pedagogy.

Evans & Davies (2002) highlight that since the early sociological studies of PE and sport during the latter half of the twentieth century theory has continued to develop apace. The sociological study of both physical education and sport has taken on postmodernist approaches such that, since the latter half of the last century sport has moved from anthropology to more distinct ethnography with a plethora of overt and covert studies being conducted in many sports, situations and levels (Sands, 2002).

The increasing awareness of the 'holistic' requirements of coaching and the fact that it is not performed in a social vacuum have recently come to the fore in the works of researchers such as Jones, Potrac & Armour (c.f. Jones et al, 2000). Whilst they acknowledge there has been an increase in empirical work on the physical coaching process, they highlight the lack of understanding of the cultural and social process and, in their opinion, the over-emphasis on training theory and sports science. Jones (2000) highlights that there is an urgent need to de-contextualise the existing bio-scientific approach made to coaching (a 'one size fits all' technical approach) to a critically reflective approach where we "move the mechanistic body as the focus of analysis aside, and bring in the social person" (Jones, 2000; 35). This ideological-critical approach links into Kirk & MacPhail's (2003) analysis of coaches and positions and highlights further the tensions that exist in this domain, as highlighted by the diversity of practice employed by coaches at 'Forest Athletics Club' (FAC) in

their study. It is also highlighted within Jones et al (2002) and the analysis of Role, Interaction and Power within coaching. Coleman (2002) further adds to this issue and highlights, from his empirical data on cricket coaches, that whilst volunteers (at county youth level) coached for altruistic and self-interest reasons there was an admission that there were too few doing most of the work. The study of 151 county youth managers showed a range of educational attainments and occupations (Coleman points out that many may have been PE teachers) which affect their role and position. He also points to the “multifunctional role of the sports club volunteer” (Coleman, 2002; 220).

Potrac et al (2002) and Jones et al (2003) also noted specific coaching behaviours through an in-depth observation of a top-level football coach and the positioning of the coach linked directly to his expectations in his role. Coates’ (1999) study of boxers focuses upon their point of view towards their environment, their coach and the role of the coach. Her findings highlighted further the need for more work on the coach athlete interaction. Whilst this is an acknowledgement of the paucity of research into these relationships at every level, the reliance on elite sport and coaching further heightens the argument that it is the grass roots ‘experience’ that is now under researched empirically and theoretically (MacPhail et al, 2003a). The multiple relationships and complexity of the club and the coaching process are well documented and highlighted as areas requiring further research (Potrac & Jones, 1999, Potrac et al, 2000, Jones, 2000, Jones et al, 2002, Kirk & MacPhail, 2003). Schempp (1998) and Potrac et al (2000) also highlight the requirement for further ethnographic analysis of this process. Indeed, Cross (1999a; 13) acknowledges that “coaching practice is sadly under-researched”, an area now beginning to be covered by Jones et al (2003).

Whilst there are an increasing number of studies that focus on coaching practice, only a few really consider the notion of the interaction between coach and athlete and fewer still at junior grass roots level. For example, Athanasios et al (2001) discuss the need for good communication by coaches to their athletes to ensure success and a positive coaching environment. Bergmann-Drewe’s (2000) study of the ethics of coaches and athletes at elite level universities in Canada identified the ethical

dilemmas surrounding the coaches' beliefs of the win at all costs or doing something for the better of the individuals. The coaches interviewed (N=9) showed different views but overall had a core concern for the individual more than the result. The coaches themselves also identified these core values as being embedded in their own sporting upbringing. She also goes on to discuss the notion of autonomy in coaching and the importance of both coaches and athletes understanding it as 'self-rule' more than 'self sufficiency'. Here the role of the coach is to provide information for the athlete, such that the athlete can develop as an autonomous individual as well as a sportsperson (Bergmann-Drewe, 2000). A study by Fasting & Pfister (2000) also notes (but at the elite adult level) that the expectations and experiences of the athletes are linked to the gender of the coach (particularly male coaches and female athletes). Whilst their international study focussed on what could be perceived to be 'old fashioned gender stereotypes' of interaction, it could be argued how much this was also to do with issues of positioning and influence within that particular coaching hierarchy. In this hierarchy, Anderson (2001) points out that whilst coaches do take their job seriously, they rarely agree and that in gymnastics "working with children gives low gymnast status but high moral status" (Anderson, 2001; 239). More worryingly in the wider context of coaching, Burke (2001) and Brackenridge (2002) show concern that ethical standards in both elite and voluntary sport indicate that with an increase in provision come issues of child abuse and child protection and, in many clubs, these are not adequately addressed.

Within cricket academic research is limited although, as the sport slowly becomes more professionalized and medicalised, there are still only a few empirical studies conducted on it. Most of this existing work is based around performance and includes injury prevention (e.g. Finch et al, 1999), psychology, mood and performance (Totterdell & Leach, 2001) and the biomechanics of bowling (Marshall & Ferdinands, 2003). The majority of these studies are also only conducted on elite level adults. However, the historical and social accounts of cricket are more numerous. For example, Brookes (1978), Marqusee (1995) and more recently Heald (2004) offer accounts of the socio-historical nature of the game and its place in British society. There are also some academic accounts such as Smith (2002), whose historical paper

on cricket in mid 20th Century Coventry reports that in working class areas the game was inextricably linked to work based sports and social clubs.

On the sociological side there is little in comparison. Spink & Longhurst (1990) for example identified motives for participation by young Australian males, highlighting the (usual) key aspects of fun and enjoyment. However, they also noted that there were different reasons for participation in the full and modified versions of the game and these decisions were based around the structural differences and adult nature of the sport. At a more junior elite level Carpenter & Scanlan (1998) highlight that the commitment levels of youth cricketers involved in county cricket changed over time and Coleman (2002) identified issues of education, commitment and motivational characteristics for volunteering in cricket coaching contexts.

Within education it has only been Toms & Fleming (1995) and Toms (1996) who have conducted any empirical research into the social context of the game. Whilst there are many assumptions about who plays, why they play and how this fits in with social class and education, it is only the quasi-academic works of Marqusee (1995) who bring these issues to the fore. The current lack of research into the grass roots of the game in the UK highlights how little is known about the participatory experiences of the young people involved. This study intends to develop these issues using existing and developing theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence. Indeed, there is no empirical data looking at how the cricket club works in relation to the young people, parents and coaches involved with it.

On a more general and national level, data does exist on a participatory level. For example, according to the Office of National Statistics (2002) 49% of 10 to 15 year olds participate in sport at least once a week and 22% of males aged 6 to 16 (and 5% of females) participated in cricket at least 10 times in the preceding 12 months away from school. However, little more is known about what 'cricket' actually meant (a full organised club match or a 'bat and ball' game) in this context, thus figures such as these are heavily unreliable. Consequently, research in cricket is limited in comparison to soccer and (more recently) rugby and the majority of the work that has been conducted is focused at elite level.

2.2.1.3 The Sports Socialisation Process

Whilst this section is bound very tightly with the research questions (see section 2.3), it should be noted that there are a number of key theoretical aspects that underpin the thesis. The first is that of the phenomena of socialisation. Within sociology the whole concept of socialisation is highly complex and theoretically contested and ultimately socialisation and the socialisation process means different things to different people. The concept of socialisation is an aspect of sport that is well researched and documented in sport (e.g. Coakley, 1998, Horne et al, 1999, Donnelly, 2000, and Côté & Hay, 2002a). It is not the intention of this literature review to examine the existing data in minute detail, instead it is aimed at providing an overall explanation of the theory and to acknowledge its importance.

Within the field of sport sociology the development of socialisation theory has been a long and complex process. On an individual level, Stroot (2002) links the development of the theory to social psychology and Bandura's social learning theory and Horne et al (1999) note that it was initially a functionalist approach rooted in the work of Sage. Eitzen (2000) however, argues that socialisation is rooted deep within Politics. He points out that it can be seen as "political cultural control" (Eitzen, 2000; 371) providing political and social definitions of what should or should not be done – but no choices. He links this historically to the public school era in the UK as well as more recently to the Communist states during the cold war era as part of National Policy to ideological social control (as Wright et al 2003 similarly note). Thus there are clearly a number of levels to this notion of socialisation, from the role of hegemony and social control, to the interactionist understanding of why young people participate in sport and what influences their participation. It is the latter aspect that is central to my thesis. An interactionist approach where it is acknowledged that:

Socialisation is a complex developmental learning process that teaches the knowledge, values and norms essential to participation in social life (McPherson et al, 1993; 37, cited in Horne et al, 1999; 129).

Horne et al (1999) note that during the 1970's there was a trend towards a functionalist approach to understanding sports socialisation. However the criticisms of this approach, being limited to only a few respondents and the relative influence of the differing socialising elements, led to a new approach. This approach was to be an

interactionist one that required an examination of the dynamics of social construction and identity. This interactionist approach to understanding participation then has two other aspects. One is that primary socialisation occurs at a young age (with the family as the most influential) and then secondary socialisation based around adolescence to adulthood. The former is linked with societal acceptance, the latter the negotiation of self within a cultural context (Donnelly, 2000). Thus, within sport, socialisation has been argued to be a very broad term that does not offer a clear and simple explanation for the processes young people go through in terms of their experiences but rather the impact of particular contextual factors such as social class or gender (Donnelly, 2000 and 2003). The whole theoretical concept of socialisation is one that involves:

An active process of learning and social development that occurs as people interact with each other and become acquainted with the social world in which they live (Coakley, 1998; 88 cited in Donnelly, 2000; 84).

As this section has already noted, many contextual factors affect participation and these are therefore part of the socialisation process. Factors such as family, social class, socio-economic background, age, gender, ethnic background, peers, coaches, teachers, educational background, geographical location and religious affiliation are all factors that are part of the socialisation process (c.f. Toms, 1996, Horne et al, 1999, Fernandez-Balboa, 2000, Côté & Hay, 2002a, Stroot, 2002, Donnelly, 2000 and 2003). Of these Côté & Hay (2002a) and Stroot (2002) argue that the (traditional) nuclear family is the first and most important socialising agent for any young person into sport. Of these a number of studies have looked at the family in detail. For example Anderson (2001) highlights the complexity of trying to understand children in different sporting environments and Wright et al (2003) take this situation further to point out that there is also an element of political socialisation in sport. Since participation is ultimately experienced through sports development and sports policy, they argue that underlying these policies are the desirable qualities that patriarchal society wish to see in sport.

Woolger & Power (1993) highlight a series of five key psychological dimensions of parenting that they noted through secondary analysis of existing empirical data in the sports socialization process. These are acceptance, modelling, expectations, rewards and punishments and directiveness. Their belief is that more research is needed with

sports psychology and the family to identify how this psycho-socialisation works and is (in their view) key to understanding sports participation. Zeijl et al (2001) discuss the nature of leisure activities for young people and how opportunity and practice are linked to class, age and gender. Zabriskie & McCormack (2003) note the importance of positive leisure involvement in life and family satisfaction from parents and children alike. They also note that this leisure contact and interaction acts to strengthen the family unit. In developing this notion of well being further, Brown & Frankel (1993) suggest that leisure satisfaction equals life satisfaction. Therefore, it could be argued that those who have a better experience of leisure have a better experience of life, which itself then has implications for the family environment.

Patrick et al (1999) highlight that parents, the family and the home environment as well as peers are important in the socialisation process and that identity perception and peer relationships contribute to activity involvement and commitment. They also go on to highlight the positive and negative effect of peers: “peers may encourage and support commitment through such means as enhancing adolescents’ enjoyment.....but may also detract from commitment by distracting their focus” (Patrick et al, 1999; 745). They also point out the importance of both parents/family and peers on the development of talent across a wide range of fields (including sport). Patrick et al (1999) also noted that there was a social shift to focus on one or more sports (similar to the development stages of Côté & Hay, 2002a) in order to achieve their peer expectations. These findings concur with those of Weiss et al (1996) who found, through their in-depth interviews with young performers, that there was considerable social support from their peers (12 positive friendship dimensions) yet there were also negative aspects (4 dimensions). This highlights the dynamic and unique relationships held within sports organizations and the way they are experienced by young people. Gold (1999) explains this further with the notion of a ‘circle of friends’ in which young people (and in particular in Gold’s work on disabled youngsters) are provided with leisure and social support from their peers.

Vanreusel et al (1997) conducted an empirical piece of research from the findings of a quantitative longitudinal study (begun in 1969) looking into continuation of sport participation from youth to adulthood. As well as describing in some detail the socialisation process, the paper acknowledges that there is a need for further

qualitative approaches to this. From the sample (N=236) results a number of patterns of activity present – e.g. inactivity in early youth often reflects inactivity in later adolescents. The study further suggests that different styles of involvement may result in different patterns of socialisation/de-socialisation at later ages. Interestingly, and importantly, Jones et al (2002) argue that it is not just the socialisation of young people into sport that counts, but also the socialisation of coaches and others involved in youth sport. This important issue is one that requires further research and consideration. Thus, the socialisation process can be seen to be highly complex and multi-faceted. In the context of this thesis the approach taken is an interactionist one which attempts to explain how the young people are involved in the club and how they were socialised into the game. In an attempt to link this concept into theory of participation Côté (1999) and Côté & Hay (2002a and 2002b) have conceived a developmental approach to sports socialisation which is outlined in the next section and which is a central theoretical concept that underpins this thesis.

2.2.1.4 A Developmental Perspective on Socialisation

One of the key theoretical developments in interpretive sports sociology is the concept of the developmental process that young people go through when they experience sport. During the period of seven to fifteen years of age young people make conscious choices concerning whether to join, play or drop out of an activity. They also decide on the level of participation and commitment they wish make to the sport. Whilst generally this has been part of the socialisation process, more recently it has become part of a developmental approach to sports socialisation (Côté & Hay, 2002a). What should be noted throughout this thesis however, is that in using the term ‘stages’ it is clear that this is not a static or formal process. Instead it is one that indicates a socialisation process that is fluid, dynamic and not necessarily predictable. In short the concept of these stages must be seen to be part of a dynamic process closely linked to each individual young person.

The central theoretical concept to this thesis is the notion of a developmental perspective (as Côté & Hay, 2002a describe it) which is an initial experience of sport that is bound up with what they define as three stages of participation: the ‘sampling’ stage, the ‘specialising’ stage and the ‘investment’ stage. The first stage of Côté &

Hay's developmental theory involves the young people's experiences in sport through what they define as the 'sampling' stage. This stage is where the young people are normally aged between seven and thirteen. At this stage the young people are developing awareness of themselves, their family life and their sporting opportunities. At this age they will sample a range of sporting activities. Underlying this are the issues of participation motivation and, whilst commitment may not be serious, participation in the activity is based around fun and enjoyment. Another key element to the sampling stage is the notion of 'deliberate play' where the structured activities that the young people participate in require the development of particular techniques and tactical understanding. It is primarily a stage where young people taste a number of sports and activities before choosing which to focus their talents on as they get older.

This model then moves on to the 'specialising' stage where the young people make conscious decisions to reduce the number of sports they play down to one or two. At this age (around thirteen to fourteen) their motivation for participating begins to shift away from fun to the enjoyment of competition and winning. 'Deliberate play' becomes training, or 'deliberate practice' which is aimed at improving the current levels of performance. This 'deliberate practice' is far more structured and focuses upon ability and skill development more than fun. It may be that the choice of activities become seasonal, as Côté & Hay (2002a) describe, although in the case of the UK this may be soccer and cricket as opposed to their example of baseball and hockey.

The final stage they identify is the 'investment' stage. This is where the young people (aged around fourteen and over) commit their time to just one or two sports. This will often involve increased and intensive training, financial and time investment from parents and time commitments from the family. As the training and 'deliberate practice' increases, 'deliberate play' decreases and motivation moves on to competition and success. At elite level, as Côté (1999) and Côté & Hay (2002a and 2002b) note, this is where considerable effort is placed on success. However, where this does, or cannot occur, it is likely that the young person will drop out or move to the 'recreation stage'. This stage is characterised by enjoyment of the activity more

than competition or success. The focus of this thesis is on the sampling and specialising stages.

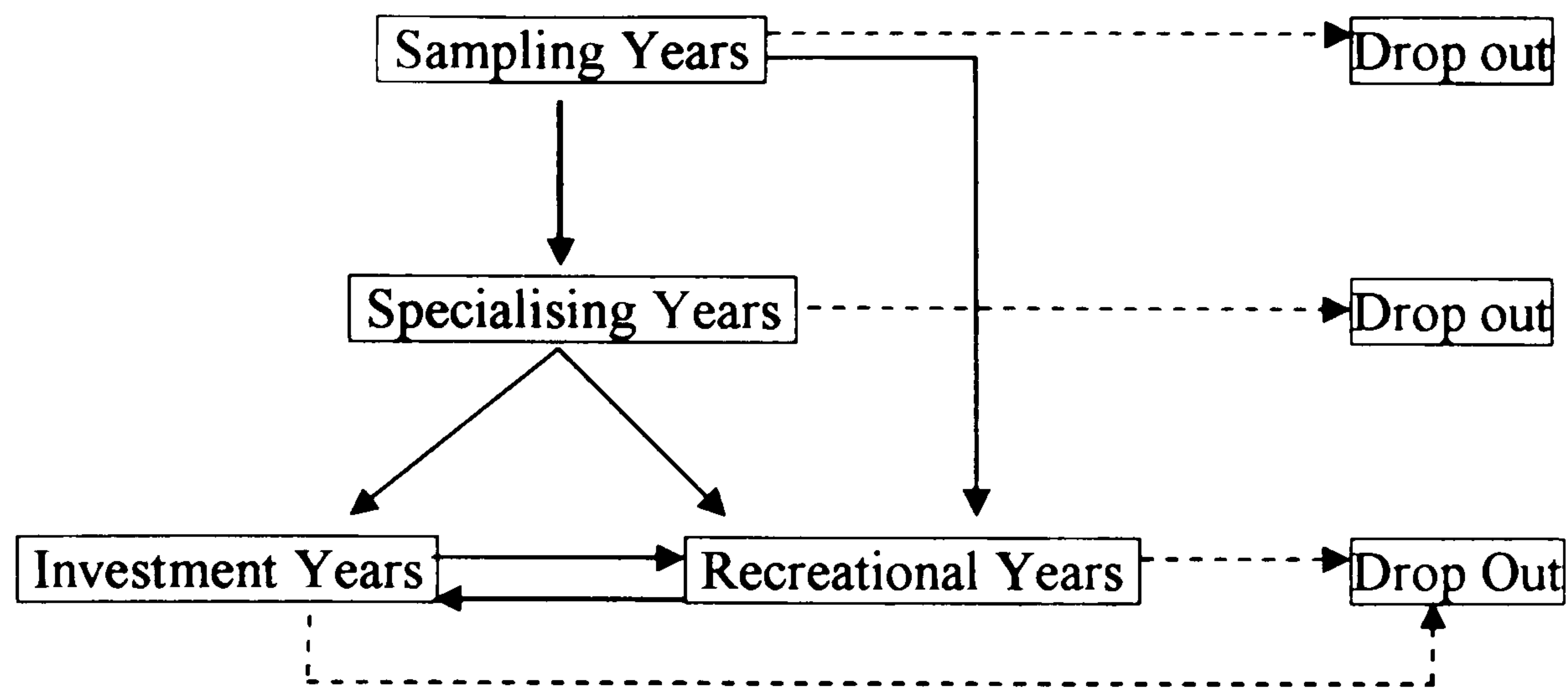


Figure 1: Model Taken From Côté and Hay (2002a; 488)

One of the key questions to be addressed is one of applying the practical to the theoretical of Côté & Hay's (2002a) sampling stage of the model. Côté & Hay (2002a) develop Denzin's (1975) notions of play to help illustrate how play and practice develop between stages. Whilst play and practice are acknowledged by Spink & Longhurst (1990) as central to the learning stages of youth cricket, it is only subsequent work (such as Carpenter & Coleman, 1998) that identifies the key motives for participation and commitment in (elite) youth cricket. One issue that needs some consideration is that of the way this model might work with regards to young people's participation in cricket. For example, cricket is a highly technical game and requires a substantial amount of sustained practice in order to be successful. Thus, a great deal of 'deliberate practice' is needed in order to be successful. This requirement for 'deliberate practice' means that there is a requirement for most young cricketers to be in the specialising phase of their careers in order to be competent. This suggests that cricket is a sport where individual success is dependent upon deliberate practice and whilst Côté & Hay (2002a) note that those who develop to the elite status focus upon deliberate practice rather than deliberate play, it would appear that this is true to some extent of cricket itself. The technical requirements and laws of the game mean that it is a sport in which you need to become 'socialised' in order to succeed and this occurs through the sampling and specialising stages.

Whilst there are clearly transitional moments within the club, there is little supporting evidence (apart from Côté & Hay, 2002a) that suggests how the transition from each stage actually works. Garton & Pratt (1991) and Toms & Fleming (1995) highlight that there are also factors such as class, gender, peers and family that can affect participation but little is known about precisely how this occurs. Indeed, with such complex, fluid and multiple phenomena it is very difficult to generalize – especially when the psychological determinants of participation must also be taken into account. De Martelaer et al (2001) for example, highlight the key developmental stages needed in sport alongside psychosocial and cognitive links to sport. What is perhaps clearer to argue (as Côté & Hay, 2002a highlights) is that there are certain factors that can cause ‘drop out’ and these can include the ‘pushy coach’ or the ‘ugly parent’.

Whilst Côté & Hay’s (2002a) theory dominates the current academic thinking, a number of national sports governing bodies in the UK have adopted the model presented by Balyi (2001 and 2004). Balyi’s model of elite development is divided the training stages into two separate models, one involving ‘Early Specialisation’ sports (involving sports specific training) and ‘Late Specialisation’ sports (which require more generic activities). For Balyi (2001 and 2004) there is clearly a different approach. Whilst his work is not based around empirical material, he identifies that there are two significant differences to sports coaching and the processes/stages involved. He identifies that there are two different processes that a young person will go through, depending on their choice of activity (i.e. whether it is an early specialisation or late specialisation sport). In the early specialisation model he identifies four stages: training to train, training to compete, training to win and retirement/retaining. In the late specialization model he identifies five stages (as above) but preceded by a ‘FUNdamental’ stage. The key difference within this is that of the idea of the ‘FUNdamental’ stage, where the emphasis is on fun and enjoyment. This can be seen to be separate from Côté & Hay’s (2002a) sampling stage where the notion of fun is directly embedded within the sport through deliberate play and the learning of fundamental motor skills. Balyi’s concept also suggests that the route to success is through prescriptive stages linked to physiological and psychological constructs (such as maturation, strength and fitness). Indeed, concerning cricket, Balyi

(2004) is quick to point out that there are specific chronological training ages. This prescriptive formula appears to ignore the issue of socialisation and instead focuses upon sports science as a means of developing athletes. Côté & Hay (2002a) however, propose a model that attempts to understand the development participation process rather than to control it.

The current debate revolving around developmental stages is that of the talent identification and the production of elite athletes. Whilst this has tended to have its basis in physiological requirements (Bourke, 2004), Abbott & Collins (2004) argue that it is becoming more evident that the process must be acknowledged to be multiple and dynamic. Through the use of Côté & Hay (2002a) in this thesis, it is clear that their focus is one of understanding the socialisation process of young people into sport more than it is the production of elite athletes. This analytical approach to participation is central in trying to understand the experiences of the young cricketers in this thesis.

2.2.1.5 Expectations in Sport

Although there is little evidence of empirical research concerned with the expectations of young people in club sport, it is clear that the notion of expectation (as opposed to the more psychological term ‘perception’) is an aspect of this thesis. Whilst expectation in sport is very much lost to the notion of perception, Jones et al (2002) begin to highlight the notion that coaches’ actions are driven by expectations and how the actors within a situation have been “socialized into them by the expectation of their roles” (Jones et al, 2002; 37).

Côté & Hay (2002b) note that parental expectations are linked to their child’s enjoyment and success but that these are also a source of pressure and stress and can cause not only interference, but also attrition. Parental expectation is a delicate balance and as Woolger & Power (1993) noted, expectations that are either too high or too low are associated with less enthusiasm from the child. Therefore, the relationship between the child’s motivation, attitude and behaviour is highly complex. Côté & Hay (2002b; 513) also note, “how children feel about themselves is largely related to how they are seen and treated by others, particularly their parents”.

Whilst in sociology generally there is limited research on expectations, the work that has been conducted tends to focus upon medium and long-term lifestyles and material aspirations (e.g. Eskilson & Glenn-Wiley, 1999) rather than on medium (and short) term sporting social experiences. Grob et al (1995) have examined perceived control and expectations of adolescents in a longitudinal study of their personal-social and societal domains. They concluded that expectations and appraisal of activities were central to the adolescents' perceived control of their lives and particular social situations - and that these were inextricably linked. Yang et al (1996) also argue that little is known about parental expectations and further work is needed to identify how these expectations affect sports participation.

Horga & Štimac (1999) have explained that there is little support in the empirically based motivation literature for fulfilling the expectations of coach or teacher as being a high priority for young people's participation. However, in the wider field of motivation the work of academics such as Rose et al (1998) highlight the direct link between young people who are successful at movement and their intrinsic motivation: a key element to a sport that is high in both fine and gross motor skills where there is a fine line between 'success' and 'failure'. In a slightly different way, Weiss et al (1996) investigated the notion of expectations of 'best friends' in a sporting environment. They concluded that there were positive expectations that young people wished to see in their best friends. Further, Van Deventer's (2000) study in South Africa highlights differing expectations of certain racial groups in sport (something that further supports Philipp, 1998). Thus, this notion of expectation within sport is inextricably linked to parents, background, experiences and opportunity. This is a concept we will revisit in the data chapters (chapters six, seven and eight).

2.2.2 The Club as a Site for the Sport Experience

Sports clubs in the UK have long been associated as the key setting for the sports participation experience away from the Physical Education environment (Kirk & Goreley, 2000, MacPhail et al, 2003a). In fact, the sports club has been identified as the most important part of the talent identification system (Sport England, 2000). Since the membership of sports clubs is apparently consistently increasing (Sport England, 2000) and the number of young people experiencing club sport is

approaching 50% (Sport England, 2000) it is clear that the club is a 'key site' for young people to experience organised and structured sport. MacPhail et al (2003a) further highlight that a MORI poll (MORI, 2000) notes that 80% of parents view sport as a vital part of a child's development. Across Europe the sports club as a phenomena is currently under close scrutiny (c.f. De Knop et al 2001). However, in the UK, according to Kirk & MacPhail (2003a), it is clear that the nature of the club is under-researched and poorly understood.

Kirk & MacPhail (2003; 26) argue that the sports club is not a naturally occurring phenomenon and that it is a dynamic organisation with "diverse meaning, multiple agendas and complexity". Thus it can be seen to be a socially constructed environment through which the young people, coaches, parents and club officials interact to ultimately construct the club. The concept of the 'social construction' of a sports club and the 'social positioning' of its members is relatively new (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) and this concept itself was developed from the interactionist notion of role theory. However, the fundamental need to understand the social construction (and thus practice of a club) is important in the wider context of understanding sport and young people's sports experience. Since it is generally accepted in the UK that sports clubs are the nurturing ground for young talent, as well as places for young people to socialise, Kirk & MacPhail (2003; 24) highlight that "the phenomena of the sports club is at one and the same time ubiquitous, complex and poorly understood". In the same way as Kirk & MacPhail (2003) describe, this study intends to further understand how the club is constructed as a unit of experience by the young people (as well as parents and coaches) who use it.

It is largely thanks to MacPhail et al (2003a) that there is any empirical evidence to suggest the importance of the club sport process in the UK to young people. Their seminal work at 'Forest' Athletics Club is the first real attempt to understand the process of coaching and experiencing sport at grass roots level in the UK (see also Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 and MacPhail et al, 2003a). Whilst there is a plethora of research into elite sport and coaching (e.g. Cushion, 2002, Potrac et al, 2002, and Jones et al, 2002 and 2004), there is very little known about the sociology of grass roots club sport. It is only through the European works of Steenbergen et al (2001) do we have any understandings of the sports club in any meaningful way. The detailed

empirical work conducted by people like De Knop and his colleagues (e.g. De Knop et al, 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2001) has also increased the awareness of the role of the sports club in (particularly) Belgian and Dutch society. The work of the Dutch 'Values and Norms Programme' is specifically focused on this and will be discussed in more detail later. In the UK, most of the empirical links with grass roots sport appear to be through the creation of policy, basic analysis of participation levels and the over-riding political and functional role sport has historically played here. Whilst sports 'teams' are often used for empirical research (in the same way that schools are, as a place where testing and measuring can take place with a captive audience), there are surprisingly few ethnographic studies in the UK. Holt & Sparkes (2001), who studied a College soccer team using participant observation, is one of the few that have been conducted in recent years in the UK. However, this study of team cohesion was conducted at representative (University 1st XI) rather than recreational level.

Within the UK Houlihan & White (2002) note that sports development and therefore sports participation is inextricably linked to politics and the shift of both funding and power between Sport England (and its previous incarnation as the English Sports Council) and National Governing Bodies. This focus on club sport is one that has proliferated since *Sport Raising the Game* (DNH, 1995) in the 1990's, which aimed at fostering closer club-school links as well as ultimately talent development and "objectives related to elite achievement" (Houlihan & White, 2002; 68). In 2000, *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS 2000) emphasised after-school and extra-curricular sport and the reinforced focus on the sports club as a setting for sports development, participation and elite development. All of this (as Bramham, 2001 highlights) is 'ideological' sports policy which is linked to the UK's lack of sporting success in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Research using sports teams at grass roots levels is also limited compared to focused studies done at the elite level. It is only Zevenbergen et al (2002), MacPhail et al (2003a) and those involved in the 'Values and Norms Programme' who have begun to attempt to deconstruct the sports club experience for young people. However, in the UK, apart from MacPhail et al (2003a), the focus on grass roots sport is threadbare. Carpenter (2001) identifies the use of sport as a central core of church involvement for young people in the UK. The majority of research into sport using sports clubs is

based around using the club to gain access to a homogenous sample. The few ethnographic accounts that exist of club sport are based around only a few specific issues. For example elite soccer clubs and their youth training schemes (e.g. Parker, 1998, Holt & Sparkes, 2001 and Cushion, 2002), gender and the cricket club by Middleton (1986), youth socialisation at a golf club in Australia by Zevenbergen et al (2002) and the gender in a golf club by Shotton et al (1998). De Knop et al (1998) have looked at grass roots club policy and parental participation at a club and Nicholls et al (1998), Anthonissen (2001) and Boessenkool (2001) all highlight the continuing and increasing pressures felt by coaches and administrators in grass roots sport. With the functionalist argument of Elling et al (2001b; 75) they argue that sport should be organized on a clear “age, gender and sport specific” basis. They explain that the reason young people are involved (or pushed) into sport is so that they can learn skills in a safe environment. They also highlight the issue of friendship and in a similar manner to Siedentop (1995), note that there are ‘performance’, ‘health’ and ‘social’ reasons for young people to play sport.

Biesta et al (2001) explain that there is a fundamental problem with the educative goal in club sport in that: “While it cannot be claimed that sport is an educational practice, there can be no doubt that sport, like any other social practice in which young people take part is an educationally significant practice” (Biesta et al, 2001; 95). They further argue that, with the socialising nature of sport, young people implicitly learn the rules and norms of the sport as well as the “climate and culture of their sport club” (Biesta et al, 2001; 95). The empirical data gathered through the 10 clubs they studied in Holland highlights a number of issues. The data from the young people, parents, coaches and officials saw the relationship between coaches and young people as important for positive achievements. The importance of the coach’s awareness of the young person’s well-being was also important to avoid dropout. At the same time the way the coaches practice worked also had an affect on the participation and ability dilemma (see chapter 5), part of the socio-moral climate established in the club. The data suggested and they concluded that “A positive socio-moral climate consists in social support, in helping each other, sharing experiences, providing opportunities for participation, but above all mutual respect and clarity of communication between club members” (Biesta et al, 2001; 109).

On the wider club-sport issue, Anthonissen (2001) explains the problems within Dutch club sport - the lack of involvement and help by others, the lack of respect to other members and the lack of membership payment. He also highlights the need for a change in policy and need for clubs to respond to the changing needs of society. The issue of clubs being run by voluntary officials with self-motivation and solidarity at its heart is as relevant in the UK as it is in Holland. Anthonissen also highlights the increasing diversity of clubs and the umbrella 'multisport' clubs. On the organizational side Boessenkool (2001) explains that "from a historical point of view, the process of managing and organizing sports clubs is a by-product of people's wish to engage in sport" (Boessenkool, 2001; 217). There is increasing pressure, dilemmas, tensions and problems related to the sport, the members and also the committee's own actions and there is difficulty in recruiting administrators, coaches, referees, people to carry out maintenance and adhere to the increasing demands of club operation. Boessenkool (2001) further explains that sports clubs require 'vitalisation' in order to be successful and to consciously deal with social changes, issues and problems. He also notes that there are four aspects that characterize sports clubs: their voluntary nature (of being organized of, by and for its members), their legitimacy (through the social expectation of what they are for, and the leisure experience they offer), the primary process of the core activities within the club (e.g. participation and youth development), and finally, the structure and management of the club (more often than not a club is run by a small group). There are issues linked to decision making on both a formal and an informal basis - in many cases neither are explicit. These tensions are forcing clubs to consider their role and their future. Boessenkool (2001) points out four theoretical orientations for them: the missionary linked in to the ideology and ethos of the club, the professional linked to the quality and cost of the facilities, the commercial identifying the need for profit over loss, and the individual customer linked to quality experience. Each requires the main committee members to subscribe to them and there is a clear requirement for a balance. Boessenkool (2001) also argues that sports clubs are seen to be too traditional and internally focused and that most clubs are keener to maintain the status quo than they are to take account of policy developments.

Further, Inglis (1997) highlights that in this way many roles are played by the board of an amateur sports organization and the need for more research into the

relationships and the “strange loops and tangled hierarchies” (Inglis, 1997; 163) of voluntary sport. However, taking a more basic approach, Anthonissen (2001) refers to Anthonissen & Boessenkool (1998) who identified three types of administrators through their use of a functionalist company analogy. These are: the ‘handymen’ who use nostalgia to react to change and attempt to maintain stability through repairing what has gone wrong, the innovative ‘engineers’ who react and act along management styles and systems, and the ‘directors’ who are aware of social changes and react to them through dialogue with club members. Overall however, Anthonissen (2001; 236) claims, “the quality of an amateur sports club is ultimately a combination of many factors”, but there are still overarching issues with members not paying fees or volunteering. De Knop et al (2001) also highlight a wide range of recommendations that administrators, coaches and policy makers should adopt in the development of their club.

With regards to the development of modified sports, Baar (2001) points out that these types of modified sports are not seen as ‘proper’ by many young people and that they are based around adult (mis-)conceptions (De Martelaer, 2001). At the same time, Anderson (2001) also notes that cohort organisation can lead to two outcomes: children interacting as children or young sports persons in the making, depending upon the focus and distinctions with the group. De Martelaer et al (2001) identify the key stages of participation (6 to 10; 10 to 13; & 13 to 18) as a didactic approach to the ‘average’ young person. The club coach is also vital as is the relationship between coach, club and young person. Youth members have a clear idea of what a coach should and should not be: “children hate yelling or complaining coaches. They expect a coach to be strict but also to react in a friendly manner sometimes being a joker” (De Martelaer et al, 2001; 311). They note that ideally a coach should be “like a father figure” (De Martelaer et al, 2001; 311) to the young people. They also highlight that sports clubs rarely take much notice of the views of the children, although they have a right to be involved in overall organization of the activity. The sports club is responsible for the overall physical safety of the young people and there is a need to balance the issue of equal opportunity based around play and competition to avoid conflict and tension. Baar (2001) notes that there is little research into how young people experience sports programmes themselves and that there is a mismatch between activity, rules and interests, often resulting in drop out. Baar’s (2001)

symbolic interactionist approach into children's experiences in a number of sports noted that in soccer and volleyball the young people failed to identify with the age-modified games and there was a yearning to 'grow up' and play the adult version, similarly to the way Spink & Longhurst (1990) noted young male attitude and participation in modified and full cricket.

In a study of young Irish footballers Bourke (2003) says that club scouts use mainly physical attributes as part of their selection criteria and Williams et al (1999) argue that they should also take into account the individual's sociological and psychological background. Bourke (2003) also highlights the social class issue that players are still targeted from the working classes in soccer. Her figurational analysis highlights the complexity, pressure and power relationships of all involved from the family to the professional club. On a more grass roots level Carpenter (2001) uses a commitment model to identify the use of sport in a church youth club setting alongside the political notion that sport would help promote church involvement. They note that sport was a very good tool for interaction and as functionalist as the setting itself which leads to questions about the use of organised environments and sport. Nichols & King (1999) note that in the Guide Association dropout rates, between the ages of 9 to 15, are large and are related to the shortage of skilled leaders and that recruitment to this niche is defined by the ethos of the organization itself. This socially defined recruitment means existing volunteers tended to recruit new ones who shared their own values (see also Coleman, 2002). Eley & Kirk (2002) go further by using sport and volunteering (The Millenium Volunteers) as a way of encouraging pro-social behaviour from young people and developing notions of citizenship behaviour (as Houlihan & White, 2002 further note). Wilson & White (2001), on the other hand, highlight from their ethnographic study of an inner city drop in centre in the USA that the diverse cultures involved created their own 'tolerance rules' to each other and, rather than adopting pro-social behaviour, they adopted tolerance behaviour bound within their cultural group. This, the authors note, provides the participants with legitimate cultural power within the centre as well as with power over the organization of the adults.

The complex dynamics of the sports club (as highlighted by Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) with the multiple positions, practices and agendas of those involved apply to

Boughborough Cricket Club in a unique way. Whilst all sports clubs are actively constructed by their members, it should be noted that the way in which a club is constructed and practised in this way is also a reflection of its social history and tradition. In this sense, the ethnographic study of Boughborough will highlight the unique construction of a cricket club whilst providing a further insight into how 'clubs', more generally, are constructed and practised by their members. As De Knop et al (1998), Nichols et al (1998) and Kirk & MacPhail (2003) point out, the structure of club sport in the UK is ubiquitous. The focus of both NGB's (see ECBCA, 2003) and Sport England (2000) is that club sport is the central focus for young people's participation and development in sport. Whilst this rhetoric is consistently produced, there is little awareness of the complexity of the environment and how it is successfully produced and managed. Since the majority of club sport in the UK is constructed and practised by willing volunteers (Shibli et al, 1999 and Houlihan & White, 2002), and cricket is no different to this (c.f. Coleman, 2002), it is clear that little is understood about the sports process for young people and, indeed, how the club acts as a setting for this experience. In short, away from the notions that club sport is important in a number of ways, i.e. the socialising process, the fun and enjoyment of young people and the participation goals of education, public health and elite development (Siedentop, 1995), little is known or understood about the process. At present, in the early part of the twenty first century, sport is part of the political rhetoric in the UK. It is linked directly to policies on health, education, inclusion as well as international success and prestige. Despite this, the lack of understanding of how it works at grass roots level is also apparent (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003), as is the diversity with which it is offered (Houlihan & White, 2002).

2.2.3 Sport, Social Construction and Positioning

Within youth sport literature the notion of social construction and social positioning are found fundamentally within the developing work on coaching pedagogy. The theoretical concepts of role and role theory have been further developed and critiqued throughout sociology generally (e.g. Raffel, 1999) and the sociology of sport, in particular (e.g. Weiss, 2001), including notion of 'social positioning' in sport (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003). Thus, whilst much of the 'role' literature is dedicated to coaching (in both sociological and psychological domains), the developing work on 'social construction' and 'social positioning' is drawn into the wider growing awareness of

the need for an understanding of the 'sports club' itself. This encapsulates how its members practise the club and how the on-going interaction of this practice is reflected in the club's construction. The theory of social construction and social positioning has its tenets in the linguistic analysis of conversation. This analysis itself is not new. Davies & Harré (1990) have the main theoretical thrust highlighting the use of language to reinforce social positions. The theory also highlights the social interactions of society through the way in which the multiplicities of self that we hold are portrayed, negotiated and characterised between individuals. Building on this, Kirk & MacPhail (2003) have begun to look in detail at the construction of social positioning in sport in an athletics club. They identified that each person practises their own (often multiple) socially defined positions, such as parent and coach. These positions can also be seen to highlight the interplay of influence in the practices and interactions of each of these groups and individuals. In fact, the entire theory of positioning helps us understand not only how individuals and groups practise and interact around (and within) their positions, but also how the practices of these positions construct the club itself. From this perspective this chapter intends to show how the club is constructed as a setting for young cricketers' experiences.

The idea of family members having and ascribing to themselves roles and positions is relatively new in social science. Cheal (2002; 161) identifies role as being "a socially defined position - for example the role of mother in a family. It is constructed by family members themselves as they interact with one another". These roles tend to be based around the mother/father identities in the sociology of the family (Morgan, 1996 and Cheal, 1999). However, as Davies & Harré (1990; 43) note, the notion of role tends to illustrate "static, formal and ritualistic aspects" of life, rather than the more "dynamic aspects of encounters". In sports coaching, Jones et al (2004) highlight the complex and multiple roles of coaches and how they not only play the role they are socialised into, but also how they create this role and their relationships between themselves and their athletes. The practical roles are also highlighted by Coleman (2002) who notes that in the LIRC study of sports club volunteers the sample of cricket coaches almost all (N=151) had multiple roles (i.e. of the 99% who were selectors, 75% were also coaches).

Role theory and also positioning are concepts that have their basis in familial sociology but are being focused upon in far more detail within the sociology of sport (Weiss, 2001) and, in detail, in the coach-athlete relationships at all levels of sport (e.g. Potrac & Jones, 1999, Jones et al, 2002, MacPhail et al, 2003a and 2003b and Jones et al, 2004). In sports psychology Eys et al (2003) have investigated role ambiguity and its use as a predictor of athlete satisfaction. The issue of social positioning within club sport is a key concept in the understanding of what a club actually is and how the interactions between all those involved can be viewed as part of a social process. Davies & Harré (1990) form the theoretical foundation of this approach with their discussion paper of the analysis of conversation to interpret and provide an understanding of how people position themselves (and ascribe themselves roles) in relation to one another. In a sports club context it is mainly Kirk & MacPhail (2003) who approach this and identify that the multiple agendas and roles of those within the club (parents, coaches and young people) make the club a “complex and dynamic social phenomena that is practised differently by the three groups of key players” (p 23). Jones et al (2004) go further by explaining that reflective practice in the coaching relationship helps define the coach’s role.

Davies & Harré (1990) highlight that the multiplicities of self with which we experience life are central to understanding our own actions and reactions to the wider world. In terms of sports participation, Kirk & MacPhail (2003) note that there issues of ‘multiplicity’ of roles within coaching practice. They also note that these multiplicities exist within the positions of the young people, parents and club (committee) members. Moreover, Goffman’s theories on the presentation of self are also key to this coaching self and positioning as Raffel (1999) notes. The role and self-presentation of coaches and athletes and the dynamics of such relationships are central to the interpretation of the coaching process. Weiss (2001) highlights that sport has a key role to play in role adoption and identity reinforcement. These are based around five areas of social subjectivity:

(a) Recognition as a member of a group: a social relationship and a belonging and experiencing approach found in team and club based sports.

- (b) Recognition of an assigned role: an individualized role with characteristics such as sex and social class, but with a more precise and individualized function within the game.
- (c) Recognition as a required role: recognition of both success and the effort put into to achieve that success.
- (d) Recognition in a public role: visible performance in front of (and expected by) crowds.
- (e) Recognition of personal identity: being an individual or being unique, intrinsic satisfaction and social recognition.

This social interactionist approach to understanding role and identity is central to my study, and to all of the participants within it (coaches, young people, parents etc). Weiss (2001; 397) notes, “in every social relationship which humans find themselves or enter into, they take on an identity”. In the case of sport and sports clubs this identity is based upon the role they adopt on entry and, in turn, on the five areas of social subjectivity (above). Ultimately (and for those in the Specialising/Investing stages) the young players will “play the way their team mates expect them to play, and as a participant he will take on the attitude his fellow players expect of his role” (Weiss, 2001; 399). Similarly, Jones et al (2002) highlight the ‘role-interaction-power’ dimension of explaining coaching practice and the interactionist approach and role-playing within the coaching situation. They also highlight the shift of theoretical understanding from constraining and determining features of social roles to the formation and development of these roles and the impact and relationship between them (Jones et al, 2002 and 2004). In short (and having evaluated the key theoretical perspectives of role, impression management and the presentation of self) they note that in coaching “what matters is not how the individual identifies him or herself, but how he or she is viewed by others...it can certainly be argued that coaches construct a front, or image, in the eyes of their respective athletes in order to achieve stated goals” (Jones et al, 2002; 41). Power is also a key element to coaching practice (Jones et al, 2002) and the way that coaches are perceived by ‘their’ athletes (and others) is key to their role and position. Jones et al (2002) highlight this power through the five typologies of French & Raven (1959) and May (1972) in explaining the dynamics of these relationships.

- (a) Legitimate Power: the power a person has through position in an organization (e.g. as a qualified coach in a club).
- (b) Expert Power: gaining the hold and respect of athletes through demonstration of expertise, questioning and knowledge, as well as the athlete's perceptions of this.
- (c) Reward Power: where coaches might use incentives to get results/respect (in the light of athlete's perceptions of the coach).
- (d) Coercive Power: a more dysfunctional approach of Reward Power, based around threat of punishment rather than reward (again in the light of the athlete's perceptions of the coach). A skill disposable to coaches but hopefully rarely used.
- (e) Referent Power: a person [individual qualities] rather than position centred respect from the athlete to the coach.
- (f) Nutrient Power: the empowerment of the athlete through the knowledge and ownership of their own performance and practice, but arguably a sensitive area concerning coaching and power (with non-conflict issues at the fore).

The power role has also been identified within a cricket club elsewhere as Middleton (1986) highlights. Her feminist study of the sports club as a central position of the dominant male hierarchy of village life links power relationships at another level and certainly highlights Kirk & MacPhail's (2003) multiplicity of relationships within the club and its dynamic entity. The club is constructed through its members, through their experiences of it and through the positions of those who are involved in it. Kirk & MacPhail (2003) begin to identify that the young people, parents and coaches construct and experience the club differently, but WITHIN these groups, there are different experiences, dependent upon how each individual constructs their own social position and then practises it.

From the data gathered from Boughborough it is clear that there are a number of different positions that each participant can hold simultaneously and practise differently (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003). The club can be constructed in a number of ways and in a similar way to the sociology of the family. Moreover, Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight the positions and differences in the way that the participants position themselves with each other, yet they provide little evidence to identify how people position the club in their own life experiences. It is this that underlies their own

positioning within the club and then with each other since family life creates an identity in which we are socialised and from where we then react to others. This is central to the identity and understanding of those who participate and take on the values and notions of the club from the beginning.

The notion of agendas is also under researched although, clearly from the evidence that we have noted there are negative associations between pushy coaches and ugly parents and their views on youth participation. What is little understood is how these agendas affect club sport. Whilst Kirk & MacPhail (2001; 6) highlight that in those involved in club sport there is clearly “diversity of meaning, multiple agendas and complexity” between their views, there appears to be little further empirical research in the sport domain.

Zevenbergen et al (2002) looked at the role a golf club played in the socialising of young golfers aged 8-14 into the club. They found through their ethnographic study that (like cricket) the structured environment of the club for young people highlighted the need for certain dispositions and affinity to the laws and rules of the game. Only those young people who ascribed to these values were successful members. The overtly functionalist nature of the club and the controlled approach by the coach further highlight Jones et al (2002) interpretation of French & Raven’s power typologies. What this study does provide is a useful account of the values and practices expected in an organized (yet tightly controlled) youth sports club – that has certain social connotations and class based practices. This is further exacerbated if the young people are women (Shotton et al, 1998) and where gender is a key tenet of participation (Coakley & White, 1992).

To help further conceptualise the construction of the club it is useful to discuss in more detail Kirk & Macdonald’s (1998) use of Lave & Wenger’s (1991) situated learning theory. Whilst Kirk and Macdonald (1998) use this theory with reference to physical education, it is clear that some analysis can be made of the theoretical concepts within the wide club sport context and with Boughborough in particular. The key tenets of this theory lie around the notions of ‘legitimate peripheral participation

in communities of practice'. Kirk & Macdonald (1998) go into some detail to explain each element of this theory (paraphrased below):

1. **Legitimate** peripheral participation in communities of practice: that there is authentic or genuine participation, and that underlying this legitimacy are relationships of power or influence.
2. Legitimate **peripheral** participation in communities of practice: that all participation occurs within sets of relationships, and people move from being 'new-comers', towards full participation. This also involves particular experience, expertise and new sets of relationships.
3. Legitimate peripheral **participation** in communities of practice: that learning is a meaningful social activity.
4. Legitimate peripheral participation in **communities of practice**: that these communities are groups who contribute shared practice, and are places that provide learners with a framework for making sense of that particular group. This is the social and cultural context of a group in which the learning is situated and that the practice takes place, in this research: a cricket club.

Although Kirk & Macdonald (1998) use this theory to examine physical education, it is clear that there can be links to organised club sport. In fact, within this, the use of the term 'periphery' does not refer to the core or margins of the club, but rather to the degree of membership held by the person in the club. Thus, the club can be constructed in a way that highlights it as a social setting and a 'community of practice' and as a place where its members can reflect the degree of 'membership' they have in that community. In other words (to adapt this theory into the context of this thesis), there are those who might be seen as being 'peripheral' members (i.e. new coming or novice parents or young people) and those who are 'full' members (i.e. those parents who are heavily involved in the club and children who are regular and consistent participants). It should be noted however, that it is possible for a parent or child to be a peripheral member even though they have been at the club for some time. The idea of becoming a full member in this context would involve the changing of relationships, and therefore positions with other individuals and therefore their own relationships within the club. For example, those who are full members tend to occupy positions of importance (i.e. they are coaches or committee members etc) whereas those who are peripheral members do not. However, both the more

experienced and full members were at one stage peripheral members until the social position that they occupied changed, and at the same time, the way that they constructed the club also changed. In other words this can be a dynamic and progressive process, and one that can be seen to be part of a continuum. Thus since 'full participation' is an aspiration more than it is a fact, and in using the continuum, then some are 'more experienced' participants or are 'further down the learning trajectory' relative to others.

Theoretically positioning is also a further development in the area of sports organisational theory and volunteering (c.f. Nichols, 1998, Anthonissen, 2001 and Baar, 2001) but, more importantly, it begins to locate young people, coaches and parents within this dynamic theory. As coaching practice increasingly becomes the focus of attention (e.g. Jones et al, 2004) then the way that coaching practices differ and the practices of the sports club are shown to be more complicated, and, therefore, the need for a more holistic awareness of the young person as the centre of this concept becomes clear. However, it can only be understood in terms of the way that the young people (and all other key club members) practise and construct the club.

The next sections of this chapter examine how the participants viewed themselves and their roles and positions within the wider context of the club. As Kirk & MacPhail (2003; 26) highlight: "The use of social positioning is useful for understanding how a club is socially constructed.....Because individuals are able to occupy some, but not other positions in relation to the club, people engage in different ways with the club and so have sometimes different understanding of what the club is. In other words they practice the club differently".

The multiple positions that can be held at Boughborough – for example: parent, coach and committee member, suggests that there are a number of positions that can be held in the club at the same time and yet they can all be practised and experienced differently.

2.3 Sport & the Family

Research conducted on the influence of the family on sports participation is well established in social science literature. The role of the family is also well

acknowledged in the socialisation (and sports socialisation) process of young people from childhood to adulthood. In fact, the role of the family in sport is acknowledged to be diverse and wide-ranging as this literature review will highlight.

The intention of this section of the literature review is to provide an account of the key empirical research conducted into the 'family' and sport. For the intentions of this thesis it should be noted that the research I am reviewing on the 'family' includes data collected about young people and their parents, siblings and other relatives. Since the majority of research does not define, differentiate or identify between parents, guardians or step-parents in any detail then it should be noted that to some extent 'the family' is seen here as a general and inclusive term.

The first section introduces a brief overview of the sociology of the family (it is not my intention here to explain this in anything more than brief detail), followed by a more in-depth discussion of the research that has been conducted concerning young people, families and sports participation. This includes empirical data taken mainly from the fields of sports psychology and sports sociology. The section also looks at the issue of family members within the homogenous group in order to provide an overall and wide-ranging analysis of the complex and inter-related factors involved. For example, the issue of social class is one that needs particular focus and explanation.

The term and description of 'social class' is itself complex. The terms 'lower, middle and upper' class have their roots in Victorian and pre-Victorian society so they are both outdated and old-fashioned. However, much of society is still ruled by this social terminology and, indeed, even now some researchers use social status and occupation to define class position whilst others use income and salary. The problem is that there is no consistency and whilst it is little doubt that those with higher incomes (traditionally those from the middle and upper class backgrounds) normally have more opportunity to participate in sport, it is possible to be a high earner in a lower class occupation. Theoretically, Sugden & Tomlinson (2000) examine the development of class theory by providing a historical account of the development of the interpretation of 'class' by academics. They highlight that through the works of Marx, Parsons and Weber we have begun to understand the dynamics and importance

of social class theory within society. Sugden & Tomlinson (2000; 319) go on to highlight that “sports participation and preference are intrinsically bound up with the production and reproduction of social hierarchies”. Therefore, it is both a complex and multifaceted concept.

Historically there have been clear divisions and links between sports participation, opportunity and social class (c.f. Hargreaves, 1987, Armour, 2000 and Sugden & Tomlinson, 2000), there have also been arguments that society is now more egalitarian. However, it is clear that these power links are still in existence today. Hylton & Totten (2001), for example, highlight that social class and barriers to participation are also barriers to sports development and that the structure and agency of society is reflected within sports participation and policy. As well as reflecting the views of Sugden & Tomlinson (2000), Armour (2000) refers to Adonis & Pollard (1997) who highlight that the middle classes ‘still’ tend to play cricket and golf. Armour (2000) also notes that Renson & Careel (1986) highlight empirical work that shows that those of a higher socioeconomic status are more likely to equate with individual non-contact sports and low socioeconomic status individuals with team or individual contact sports. Figures from Mintel (2000) further support this indicating 66% of those from high socio-economic groups (A/B) and only 33% from the lower socio-economic groups take part in sporting activities on a regular basis. Amongst these figures, 65% of (adult) cricketers were from the higher socio-economic groups (73% for golf).

Armour (2000) discusses the issues of social class and sport at some length and identifies that even though the notion of ‘class’ in society can be seen as outdated, it is still central to issues of opportunity and participation in sport. The complexity of this relationship is also highlighted when we consider that “sport, in all its manifestations, is not a ‘classless’ activity offering equal opportunities for all” (Armour, 2000; 79). This is further emphasised by the work of Kay (2003) whose review of the family and sport literature highlights that the financial, social and time cost of many sports links family structure, socio-economic status (and therefore class) to low participation levels. This clear link between family, income and participation in contemporary society further emphasises the existence of unequal opportunity in sport. In short it

appears that social class (and all that is linked to this) for those in the lower socio-economic groupings is a barrier to active participation in sport.

Zabriskie & McCormack (2003) also note that there is more likely to be satisfaction in leisure from those young people whose parents have not experienced a divorce - further highlighting the issue of the traditional family and sports participation. Conversely, however, Gilligan (2000) notes that sport can have a positive effect on young people's lives enhancing their resilience and self-esteem despite difficult home or other circumstances.

2.3.1 Young People and the Family in Sociology

Within sociology, 'the family' is a concept that has received much attention over the past few decades and is the subject of much debate which has resulted in very different sociological viewpoints (e.g. Giddens, 1990, Smith, 1995, Bernandes, 1997, Zimmerman, 2000 and Cheal, 2002). Here the family is acknowledged as a distinct unit that influences young people's lives (Giddens, 1989). However, it is acknowledged that it is a unit that is also under pressure from changes in political, social and economic policy (Cheal, 2002).

During the early and mid part of the 20th century, when academics began to focus on the family unit as a social entity, it was Talcott Parsons who began the movement to interpret the complex relationships within the family unit. As the 'father' (sic) of family sociology Parsons proposed an analogous concept that the family had a number of layers – like an onion. This functionalist notion assumed that there was stability, clear boundaries and clear roles within the family unit and it was seen simply as an 'onion' structure. Whilst this presents a very basic view of the family unit it is acknowledged that it does require significant modification (Cheal, 2002). Parson's analysis is that there is a central core of relationships containing the individual plus close family and that the successive layers outwards are taken up with people (i.e. in Parson's theory - extended family) who receive less attention. This functionalist notion explained by Cheal (2002: 157) as "a theoretical approach which stresses the positive benefits of families, and which claims that families exist because of the ways in which they meet individual and collective needs" requires much updating as it relies on traditional stereotypes. Holstein & Gubrium (1999) go further

by explaining that the meaning and understanding of the family is very much tied in with how it is socially constructed and accepted in society and thus, it is dynamic and has different meanings to different people. Cheal (2002) highlights that this relationship does not take into account situational or cultural factors but it is perhaps a useful way of beginning to explain the complex dynamics of the family unit. Smith (1995) goes further by noting the dysfunctions found in the family and argues that for the family structure “stability and order are considered natural and desirable, whereas conflict and disorder are evidence of deviance and dysfunction in the system” (Smith, 1995; 9).

Morrow (2001) (cited in Holroyd, 2002) explains that the primary space for the family is ‘home’ but that the changes in this family unit, and in society, identify the boundaries of home to be far wider. Holroyd (2002) spends some time discussing the family unit in terms of being a complex, multi-dimensional concept in which young people experience and ascribe their own position of self.

It should be considered that whilst the notion of the family is often seen as supportive, caring and informal with structured power, it cannot, however, be forgotten that there are also negative traits such as domestic violence as well as psychological and physical abuse. Whilst this account of the club as family does not seek to gloss over such seriousness or attempt to show a naïve or simplistic account of this relationship, it does wish to show the similarities of these theoretical concepts. The success of the club it could be argued, is actually down to the positive family-like relationships.

Thus, whilst there is a wide range of empirical and theoretical data on the family as a functioning unit, it is towards the more precise nature of the family in terms of sports participation that is the key purpose of this chapter. Therefore it must also be considered that even the most basic family research must acknowledge the complexity of the relationships and interactions of its members (Fallon & Bowles, 1997).

2.3.2 The Family Influence on Sport and Leisure

In both sociological and psychological literature the family is well established as a key influence on young people’s participation in organised sport (alongside peers, fun, friendship and the sport itself). In fact many empirical studies (c.f. Kay, 2003)

highlight that the family is **THE** most important influence on young people's participation in sport.

In the sports psychology literature it is clear that the family is a complex entity (Côté, 1999 and Côté & Hay, 2002a). It plays a number of roles - ranging from parental influence on reducing aggression in sport (Widmeyer, 2002) to the overall influence of the family on sports participation. This incorporates parenting style, support, modelling of behaviour, expectations and sibling relationships as Côté & Hay (2002b) highlight. However, much of this work is based around the psychological fields of task and ego orientation (Carr et al, 1999), motivation (White, 1998 and Horga & Štimac, 1999), self-efficacy (Côté & Hay, 2002b) and emotion (Cox, 1999). White (1998), for example, identified the perceptions of parents by their sporting children (N=279) and noted that this was directly linked to the task and ego orientation of the youths. She concluded that the parents' views had a major effect on the young people's sporting task and ego orientations - as well as their state and trait anxiety. In short it would appear that the family (in particular the parents) has a significant role to play in the psychology of youth sports participation. The key here is that we are already talking about those who participate and the majority of these studies have been conducted on elite young performers who make up a very small percentage of the sporting population.

Within the sociology of sport field the key phenomenon is that of the socialization process. This is an aspect of sport that is well researched and well explained – however, it is not the intention of this literature review to examine this in great detail but more to acknowledge its importance and its links within sociological theory. [Further readings can be made in Coakley, 1998, Horne et al, 1999 and Donnelly, 2000 and 2003]. It can also be seen in academic texts (e.g. Donnelly, 2000) that the notion of socialisation is a very broad term and does not offer a clear and simple explanation for the processes young people go through in terms of their experiences of sport (but rather the impact of particular contextual factors [e.g. social class or gender]). What should be noted however, is that many academics (e.g. Elling et al, 2001a and Wright et al, 2003) consider that government and political policy and strategy in sport ultimately now reflects a kind of political socialisation. Whilst it is not my intention to look at this in a figurational aspect (c.f. Murphy et al, 2000), it is

perhaps important to note that the new UK Government's Game Plan initiative of 2004 is based around the use of sport to promote health and social policy. The link between sport, socialisation and politics is it seems a very close one. Prout (2000) takes these changes even further to highlight that as public policy now locates itself around the control of young people's lives, there are fewer opportunities for self-realisation away from organized activities (e.g. club sport).

Within the specific works on the sports socialisation process Zeijl et al (2001; 380) point out that "the primary socialization agency - the family - governed children's activity in leisure as well as other domains of life" during the 1980's. Since then the focus has been on the consumption of life (as well as sport and leisure) by young people. There is beginning to be a change in understanding from the socialisation process as a passive experience (as we adults may have experienced it as young people) to it being a more active, financially based choice for young people. With the change in focus in leisure identified by Henry (2001) as moving from 'participation' in the 1980's to 'customer experience' in the late 1990's there is little doubt that this has also had an impact on how young people choose, experience and ultimately 'pay' for their leisure and socialisation. As Zeijl et al (2001) identify, for young people it is now 'leisure capital' that focuses leisure experience and ultimately socialisation into both sport and adulthood.

A great deal of research has been conducted into why young people take part in sport (e.g. Garton & Pratt, 1991) and how this participation is affected by other sociological factors (e.g. gender: Coakley & White, 1992, and age: Hendry et al, 1996). More importantly for this thesis, how the family (and in particular the parents) affect participation is also well researched (e.g. Mota, 1998, Babkes & Weiss, 1999, Côté 1999, Patrick et al, 1999, Wright et al, 1999 and Kay, 2000a, 2000b and 2003). Other studies have focused on the family and sociocultural activities as a whole (e.g. De Knop et al, 1999, and Raudsepp & Viira, 2000) and more precise issues such as pressures of school and training (Brettschneider, 1999). The majority however, have been based around the broad theoretical concept of socialization and its effects on young people (Donnelly, 2000).

Within the sports participation literature there is a plethora of research on the importance of the family (c.f. Kay, 2003) and the importance attributed to organised sport by parents (MORI, 2000). For example, the majority of studies focus on the positive aspects of parental and family involvement in the sports participation of (their) children (e.g. Côté, 1999, Kay, 2000a and Côté & Hay, 2002b). In contrast there is little empirical data that highlights the negative and dysfunctional role that the family can play in sport or, indeed, in the process of drop out from sport. The studies that do exist tend to be focused on the psychological pressures put on young people (e.g. Hellstedt, 1990, Hultsman, 1993, DeKnop, et al 1995 and 1998, Lee & Maclean, 1997 and Kanters & Tebbutt, 2001), rather than perhaps the sociological pressures felt within the family unit. Most of these studies are also based around elite young sports people (e.g. Lee & MacLean, 1997, Rowley & Graham, 1999 and Kay, 2000a). With the family identified as the first point of socialisation into sport (and ultimately into society) it is clear that this is the key aspect to the entire sport experience of young people. Yang et al (1996) cleverly point out that socialisation is a two way process between children and their parents. On the one hand the children are socialised through their participation and 'experience' in the sport/club whilst on the other their parent's lifestyle changes through this participation and commitment.

Côté (1999) has a theoretical approach to participation that is fundamental to this particular study. His empirical piece of research was conducted on the families of four elite young sports people. Results of the qualitative and quantitative data found three stages of participation with these young people from early childhood to late adolescence: sampling years; specialising years and investment years. Côté (1999) details the stages that were ascertained from the empirical evidence (notably through the use of grounded theory). However it is important to note that the research processes he employed (interviews and questionnaires), were completed with athletes and families retrospectively - inferring a biographical account. All were athletes aged 18 at time of interview and all were elite sports players and therefore not a typical sample of the experience of young sports people.

The important review by Kay (2003) goes some way to outlining the existing research with the family and sport – in both participation and policy. Kay (2003; 11) explains

that within social research “the family is recognised as a central social institution and a primary vehicle for social change”. She also claims that over the past three decades (one generation) there have been “significant changes in the way families fulfil their two primary roles – their caring and economic functions...the most conspicuous changes affecting families have been changes in their structure, composition and development” Kay (2003; 11). The data concerning family structure and participation is also important. There are a number of studies that identify that middle class children participate and receive more family support than children from low-income families (Yang et al, 1996, Van Deventer, 2000, Zeijl et al, 2000 and Kay, 2003). Those from low-income families are also more likely to drop out (Rowley & Graham, 1999). This is also reflected in national statistics where participation in sport by those of different income groups is highlighted (Hylton & Totten, 2001). Since there are also direct links to income and social class here, there are clear connotations and policy issues to be addressed. The acceptance of a family “cost” of kit, time, support and travel is key to participation and as Kirk et al (1997a and 1997b) highlight, in sport generally, the cost to the family in terms of time, social and economic ‘outgoings’ can be heavy. As Langley & Evans (1989) particularly note in cricket the financial cost can be unbearable.

It is from the work of MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b) that we begin to get an understanding of how this influence actually works and, ultimately, how the complexity of the relationships involved helps (and indeed hinders) young people’s participation. It is something I have identified previously (c.f. Toms & Fleming, 1995, and Toms, 1996 and 1997) and noted that there are a number of ways young people were influenced by the family in playing the game (Toms, 1997). These ways form the basis of an inter-related four-way approach to involvement in the sport. Firstly there is ‘Tradition’ - the importance of a traditional aspect to playing cricket is in many senses a common sense notion since the game is often passed down from father to son during informal play. Secondly, ‘Inspiration’ and the influence of parents or siblings as role models for young people in the game were also evident. Thirdly ‘Involvement’, which is an integral part of the socialisation process, which involves initial contact, parental support and even travelling to the club. Finally, and I would argue most importantly, is ‘Technical Competence’ (or Technique). Since cricket is a sport that requires quite a high level of ability in order for the performer to be

competent it is clear that this is where the family makes a big impact. A young person's interest and enjoyment in the game may well rest upon their technical ability (Rose et al, 1998). This is especially true of the more complex motor skills of batting and bowling (particularly batting where one mistake in the batsman's technique will end their involvement in that part of the game). Batting is, after all, the most popular part of a striking and fielding game as a number of sources have established (e.g. Sands et al, 1983).

Woolger & Power (1993) highlight five key psychological dimensions of parenting that they noted through secondary analysis of existing empirical data in the sports socialization process. These are: acceptance, modelling, expectations, rewards and punishments and directiveness. Whilst these are similar to my own views they also highlight a psycho-social approach to this influence which is common in the current post-modernist academic climate.

MacPhail et al (2003a) and Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight the way that the roles and social positions undertaken by family members (particularly parents) have an effect upon the involvement of their children in sport (at FAC). The positions they practise impact directly upon the participation and continued participation of their children. However, this sample (like mine) is based around those adults who are positive and supportive in the game, yet this is not always the case. The key point here being that those who have family members involved in sport are more likely to be involved themselves. In fact it has been readily established that one of the ways that parents become involved in sport is through becoming involved in coaching as volunteers (Cox, 1999, Cross & Brewer, 1999, Lyle, 2002 and MacPhail et al, 2003a).

With regards to how the family influences participation and involvement, Anderson (2001; 242) points out that there are social 'chains' of children who pull one another onto the sports scene with the aid and support of their parents. Zeijl et al's (2000) Dutch study identified that of their sample of 927 young people the majority of the younger age group (10 to 12) spent their leisure time with their family and the elder ones in the sample spent time with their friends. They concluded that no matter what the age of the young person the parental influence was high but at its highest in the ten to twelve age bracket. They also point out a direct correlation (as Kay, 2003 also

shows) between socio-economic status and sports involvement at this age. Further to this they indicate that there is most parental interference and pressure for them to be involved in activities because they believed that their parents thought it would be good for them. Zeijl et al (2001) later went on to point out in their theoretical paper that for children in western families the family unit governs children's leisure time and that socio-economic status now also governs participation, opportunity and expectations of what their leisure experience should be. This 'leisure capital', to which they refer, they conclude has a direct link to social class, leisure and informal education. Van Deventer (2000) comes to similar conclusions in his study of South African youths. Whilst he also highlights that the participation situation is reflected in the parental sporting lifestyle he also concludes that the expectations of both parents and young people also includes another element – that of their ethnic background. The expectations were highest in sport from the black parents leading Van Deventer (2000) to question the politics and policy of both education and sport in South Africa.

It is not just in sports participation that the family has a direct influence, since very often before participation occurs the family (normally the father) is vital to this initial interest. As I have noted (Toms, 1997) the role of the family in creating interest in sport is evident through tradition, inspiration and involvement. This also extends to active supporting of teams at live games and through the media. James (2001b) for example, notes that with children (aged 5 to 9) in team sports spectating that "fathers were the most influential socializing agent into introducing children to sports teams and that the gender stereotyping associating sports with males was prevalent" (James, 2001b; 233). In a similar manner Yang et al (1996) report that in their longitudinal study of young Finns (N=1,881) the fathers' physical activity has a direct relationship with their child's activity and participation. This is also further highlighted by Whannel (1999 and 2002), who asserts that the inherent hegemonic masculinity of sport naturally leads to a father-son relationship in sports interest and ultimately sports participation. This is also reflected by Moore et al (1996) who note that the father is central to this process and that young people identifying their parents' roles do not always include sport with their mother. Similarly with the media Biskup & Pfister (1999) highlight young males' interests in role models in sport (which is greater than females) and is further reinforced by parents. Carr et al (1999) go further by

identifying a direct positive correlation between sports heroes and the parental motivational climate at home.

Whilst it is simple to say that the cost of sports participation financially can be low (although the cost of cricket equipment clearly isn't), it is more interesting to note that there are time and social cost considerations that have to be taken into account when participating (see Kirk, 1997a and 1997b earlier). However, there are also more fundamental hegemonic issues that underpin and impact upon young people's socialisation through their parents and in particular mothers. Willming & Gibson's (2000) feminist empirical work on family life in the late 1990's highlights some of the key issues for women in leisure. Not only do they acknowledge that many women suffer from 'role overload' through their diverse maternal, domestic and employment responsibilities, but also how the traditional patriarchal family unit affects women's leisure. A conflict of gender roles appears and leisure time often suffers. However, whilst Willming & Gibson (2000) do not define what they mean by leisure, it is clear that they do not mean organised sport although they do highlight that women are more likely to become involved in leisure through the family than are the men. They also highlight that this involvement occurs most in the mid (school) stage and is more likely reflected through the involvement in the domestic task of taking their children to a class or club or playing with them directly. They explain that there are three themes in family and leisure for women: 1. freedom of choice as a natural condition of leisure, 2. conflicts among work, leisure, and family, and 3. negotiating and resisting the superwoman and typical male ideal. In other words the dynamics of the gender relationships of the parents involved will often have an impact and will dictate the children's participation. There are effectively "Multiple role responsibilities" (Willming & Gibson, 2000; 129) that affect leisure throughout the family.

Stebbins' (2000) theoretical paper looks into the area of obligation in leisure activity pursuits. He identifies that part of the leisure experience may be obligatory and thus it robs the participant of choice. He acknowledges that there may be an aspect that they have to take part in. In the case of my study this could be participation at training sessions (when all they want to do is play) particularly if it is a requirement for match selection. This itself may be bound around ability and status in the side and may be an influential factor in drop out. Stebbins (2000) explains the idea of personal obligations

which, from the parent's side, may actually be taking the child to the training itself or, conversely, using the sessions to baby-sit their children whilst they go and do their own forms of leisure pursuit. This training may be a 'disagreeable obligation', but is something they know they have to do to take part. Zabriskie & McCormick (2003) conducted an empirical study of 179 families in the USA and noted that there were direct positive relationships between leisure and family satisfaction. They also conclude from their study that there is a conscious element of trying to strengthen the family unit through joint leisure involvement. Interestingly they noted that there is also a negative relationship between divorce and family satisfaction of leisure. To counter this Gilligan (2000) notes that sport can have a positive effect on young peoples' lives in enhancing their resilience and self esteem despite difficult home or other circumstances (e.g. divorce or familial death). Frydenberg & Lewis (1993) also explain that when coping with stress and change young males tend to turn towards sport as a means of escape whilst their female counterparts turn to their friends and peers. Fallon & Bowles (1997) noted that the structure and functioning of the family unit had an effect on the way that young people spent time with their peers or their family. Clearly the data suggests that a young person from a stable home is more likely to participate in sport and receive the support from their 'family' to do so. This further supports the secondary analysis of Kay (2003).

Whilst it is clear that the family does have a key and important roles to play, it should also be noted that there is a plethora of research into peer influence. Patrick et al (1999), amongst others, highlight that it is not simply parents, family and the home environment that is important since peers also interact in this environment and this process.

2.3.3 The Family and Sports Attrition

Whilst it is clear that the family has a positive effect on young people's participation in sport it is also evident that the family can have a negative influence as well – and can be the key factor in drop out of activities.

Kanters & Tebbutt (2001) highlight the inappropriate behaviour exhibited by parents in children's sports in the USA. In a similar vein De Knop et al (1998) have conducted research into the attitudes of clubs to parents. They however, do not

acknowledge the capitalistic notion of a purchase decision and the financial cost of parental support (Kirk et al, 1998, Rowley & Graham, 1999 and Kay, 2003) to become involved. It is intimated that this purchase decision is a social one where the purchase is one of a sporting, social and developmental experience measured only by the satisfaction of (and through) the child. This itself throws up a number of theoretical issues about the quality of the experience and how this is measured from those who know the game to those who do not. However, this is far more complex and the processes that affect a parent's decision little understood (Green & Chalip, 1998, Babkes & Weiss, 1999).

De Knop et al (1998) highlights this issue of the parent's involvement in their Dutch study investigating sports clubs' (N=171) attitude towards parent's participation and involvement in the club. The Quantitative findings identified that 53% were not happy at all and 76.7% were not happy with the parental involvement. The study theoretically identified that sports clubs are a 'third education environment'. Further, there is also an aspect of 'problem parents' as De Knop et al (1998) highlight. Kanters & Tebbutt (2001) readily acknowledge the increasing problem of inappropriate behaviour of parents in American junior sports leagues.

De Knop et al (1998) go some way further to identify the issues found in voluntary club sport. They identified the following types of parents: the uninterested parent (who was never present at a sporting activity), the overcritical parent (who was never satisfied with the achievements of their child), the parent who yells from the sidelines (and often shout louder than the coaches), the parents who coach and give instruction from the sideline (often contradicting the coaches) and the over concerned parent (who is afraid of the dangers of the sport and threaten to take their child from the sports club). The study argued that "little interest of the parents, low parental participation, sports clubs having the feeling of being used as a crèche, a shortage of executives and volunteers...these are some of the problems the average sports club more or less has to deal with" (De Knop et al 1998; 5).

This 'problem' of parents and time commitments etc is further substantiated by Nichols et al (1998) in their study of youth sports clubs and volunteerism, MacPhail et al (2003a) in their study of positioning in club sport and Kay (2000a) in her empirical

study on the effect of sports participation on family life. Kirk et al (1997a) also highlight the time demands on families of junior sports participants emphasising the social consequences on their family and sibling relationships. These social costs and benefits were linked more directly to the emphasis on the changes to the routine and structure of family life. They also argue that this cost and benefit analysis (as well as time) was a significant barrier to children's participation. This was further compounded by the lack of one-parent families available to this sample. This is supported by Rowley & Graham (1999) who explain from their sample of 282 UK children that the cost of participation in intensive training (time and financial) led to drop out particularly of working class children and those from single parent families. Coleman (1997) explains the issues of parenting themselves as complex and full of the need to be accountable for their own behaviour. However, interestingly, Green & Chalip (1997) also note that the soccer organisation used in their study was also a useful place for parental socialisation into their child's sport. Arguably this could be seen as the first aspect of situational learning theory where these people may be 'new-comers' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to the sport.

At the same time there are clearly also underlying agendas for those involved in the experience of club sport. These, more specifically, include issues such as expectations of what the club 'should' and 'does' offer the young people and what their underlying reasons for participating include. De Knop et al (1998) point out the issues of parental involvement and the expectations that surround that. The expectations of the young people themselves, whilst appreciably being focused around the notion of 'fun, challenge and enjoyment' (c.f. Petlichkoff, 1993), tend to be further based around which developmental participation stage they are in (c.f. Côté & Hay, 2002a). In other words those in the sampling stage look for fun and enjoyment and those who are Specialisers tend to look for enjoyment of competition and winning (Côté & Hay, 2002a). There is also the element of adult expectations on their child's ability, enjoyment and improvement (that come from both parents and coaches) and these may well vary. Allied to this are the expectations of the coaches who (as Côté & Hay, 2002a highlight) can cause drop out and negative experiences of sport - as can the parents who have expectations that are either too high or too low (Côté & Hay, 2002b).

2.3.4 Young People, the Family and the Club Sport Experience

Whilst there is a vast amount of empirical data on the influence of the parents on participation there is very little that really defines how the parents affect club sports participation. Moreover, it is acknowledged that this is the central core to sport in the UK (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) but there is very little research to explain how the interaction, choice or even participation link between family and club works. For example, whilst much of the empirical data on sport identifies that the family is important, there is little to suggest how this importance works. It is only by examining the works of De Knop and colleagues in their “Values and Norms Project” in mainland Europe do we begin to see anything of the reality of the family-club link and only through MacPhail et al (2003a) do we have any sense of it in the UK.

MacPhail et al (2003a) point out that the role of the sports club is as a central place for young people to be socialised into sport and, as they themselves acknowledge, this concept is not new. They propose that sports clubs are becoming integral to the sports experiences of young people as physical education time in schools becomes more limited and Government and Sport England Policies become more focused upon community based club sport. At the same time MacPhail et al (2003a) also show that a MORI survey of adults identifies that 80% think sport is a vital part of children’s development. This development is further highlighted through Siedentop’s (1995) notions of functional goals for participation - those of educative, public health and elite development (c.f. MacPhail et al, 2003a). The developments of these goals are ones that can be ascribed to a social unit. Whilst little is known about these units of club sport, there are clear analogies of a link to family life, nuclear construction and a supportive environment. In short there are similarities between the traditional ‘family’ and the ‘sports club’. In a similar paper on the same study, Kirk & MacPhail (2003) develop the idea that there are socially constructed “positions” within the sports club using Davies & Harré’s (1990) theory of social-positioning (see section 2.2.2.4).

There are also studies concerning the coaching preferences of athletes and their parents. Martin et al (2001) conducted a psychological study on 239 adolescents and their parents coaching preferences. This Participation Motivation Questionnaire highlighted that there were differences between the requirements and expectations of the young people and their parents as to the type of coach they wanted. The study

showed that, whilst the sample had the same wishes that a coach could: (a) implement effective instructional practices, (b) perform the skills required of the sport, (c) provide opportunities for the athletes to compete and achieve their goals, there were a number of discrepancies. Firstly mothers (and fathers to a lesser extent) wanted their child to have opportunities to compete but their children preferred a coach who could develop team spirit and friendship and who could also perform the task themselves. Clearly, this suggests a discrepancy and confusion of expectations and also highlights the complexity of the parent-child requirements for a good sports experience. Putting this into a dynamic sports club environment shows just how complex coaching expectation and reality really are within a family and also between a family, coach and club.

This is also noted by De Martelaer et al (2001) who explain that Hellstadt's parental involvement continuum (from under-involvement through to over-involvement in the club) with the comfort zone being the middle ground. They also provide evidence to say that "parent are often willing to engage, but clubs fail to give necessary information about tasks, commissions etc" (De Martelaer, 2001; 315). In sports psychology White (1998) further identified that the perceptions of parents by their sporting children (N=279) was directly linked to the task and ego orientation of the youths. This noted that, in particular, the parents' views had a major effect on the young people's task and ego orientations as well as their state and trait anxiety.

Elling et al (2001a) follow on the work of De Knop et al (1998) with regards to club sport and highlight the theoretical notion that in Western society the functionalist nature of sports clubs is on a micro level to offer sport at a number of levels and on a macro level to integrate society. In the context of this research the focus is on a micro level.

There is further evidence to say that "parents do not necessarily view organized sport as an equivocally beneficial experience" (Green & Chalip, 1998; 96). Their suggestion (through a study of 157 parents with children enrolled in a soccer programme in the USA) is that there is a significant element of 'purchase decision involvement' in youth sport. Clearly this has implications for involvement,

commitment and ultimately the experience and expectations of all involved (none more so than the parents who have made financial commitments to the programme) and the children who must therefore get the most from it. Whilst this has implications for organized sports programmes, the element of volunteerism and commitment to youth sport in the UK's grass roots club system is also a key theoretical aspect to this study. Moreover youth membership may be inexpensive and training sessions (for the majority of clubs) free of charge this 'purchase decision' made by the parents is therefore likely to be made in a number of very different ways and involving different criteria. Nichols et al (1998) explain that there is a significant shift in the appearance and nature of voluntary sports organizations (under the umbrella of the voluntary sector). Whilst this is relational to the notion of volunteers and participation, it is also linked to the idea of quality and experience and ultimately Zeijl et al's (2001) notion of 'leisure capital'.

There is evidence to suggest that young people's experience of participation in sport is not necessarily positive, and can be emotionally painful (Brettschneider, 1999). Others (e.g. Morton & Docherty, 1980) have noted how for some children the promises of youth sport may never be fulfilled. Bizzini (1999) points out how modern society takes away the possibility of an autonomous experience of sport – because children's first experience (away from school) comes from a framework of organised club activity. This is further highlighted in the UK through Sport England who claim that almost half (46%) of the population aged between 9 and 16 have been a member of a sports club (Sport England, 2000). Whilst this is seen in a very positive manner in the UK, Bizzini (1999) warns that this may come at some cost and claims that 10% of organised sporting activities "are unacceptable, exploit children and threaten their health" (Bizzini, 1999; 28). This notion of 'club' is also important since in the UK clubs tend to be single sport with typically less than 50 members – compared to much larger multi-sport clubs from Europe (Nichols et al, 1998). Since this is relational to the notion of volunteers and participation it is also linked to the idea of quality and experience. As Nichols et al (1998; 45) argue - clubs are now "faced by the increasing demands of members for a service comparable with the private sector".

There is little evidence to link the analogy of the club as a family, but there are a number of studies that establish that there is a family environment within some clubs.

Anderson's (2001) study of a Danish Capoeira (a type of African sport) club noted that "adults invoked a family metaphor: "We're really like one big family; when we're out on trips, we take care of them" (Anderson, 2001; 241). In this sense, the adult students were parents or older siblings of their younger mates. At the same time there are also allusions to this within the positioning roles noted by Kirk & MacPhail (2003) at F.A.C. Whilst the parents fill the roles they create for themselves as non-attenders, spectators, helpers and committed members it is clear that parents are involved in the club experience. Although Kirk & MacPhail (2003) do not differentiate between which are the parents of samplers and which are the parents of specialisers, their grouping of parents does begin to illustrate this point. It also highlights that further research needs to be done in this area. At the same time their interpretation of coach positions also brings the family analogy to the fore since the coaches acknowledge that they conduct these roles voluntarily and for the moral, social and physical good of the children – they are unconsciously ascribing to their practice that of the core values of parenthood. This analysis is similar to that of Zevenbergen et al (2002) whose study of junior golf club cultures emphasised the familial habits that were congruous and reflected with those of the club resulting in acceptance and, ultimately, membership.

The idea and notion of a club and how it functions lacks any interpretive clarity although works, such as Middleton (1986), provide an interesting ethnographic account (from a feminist perspective) of a sports club from a village perspective and Sugden (1987) offers an in-depth analysis of a boxing club sub-culture. Middleton's perspective sheds light on some of the inner workings and male dominance of a cricket club - the hierarchy, history and, ultimately, hegemony over village life. Murphy et al (2000; 95) explain that "modern forms of sport developed through the type of voluntary association known as clubs". Whilst this historical link still exists in many clubs it is clear that the traditional dominance of the upper classes on the game within the club still exists. As Brookes (1978; 7-8) points out about the village game "it was dominated more often than not by the local magnate and his friends", or as Heald (2004) calls them, the 'squirearchy'. Thus the ethos of the club as one of social exclusivity and development (see results section for an analysis of Boughborough) is

on-going. It is something that still pervades cricket clubs throughout the country in the same way it does golf and tennis clubs, or even rugby (c.f. Light & Kirk, 2000).

On a more pragmatic note, the amateur and traditional way that club sport is arranged and co-ordinated (De Knop et al, 1998) has recently come under close scrutiny with political documents like *Sport Raising the Game* (DNH, 1995) and *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000) pointing to the importance of club sport in the development of young performers. What is important to note is that with such diverse organizations there is no set or correct way for them to offer youth sport – and hence are producing different (and arguably often haphazard) experiences. What is apparent is that sports clubs do not always provide a positive reinforcing experience for young people in sport (De Knop et al, 1995 and MacPhail & Kirk, 2000) as well as causing concern from the World Health Organisation that they may produce negative consequences such as injury, stress and social problems amongst others (FIMS/WHO, 1998).

More importantly there is little empirical evidence of the role that the sports club experience has on these young people and how this can affect their participation and commitment in both the long and short term. However, studies into PE and sports commitment have been conducted at High School level by Carpenter & Scanlan (1998) who found that commitment was directly related to involvement opportunity. At the same time sport psychological research into involvement and commitment has also taken place (e.g. Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998) but there is little data on commitment from a sociological perspective. Carpenter & Coleman (1998) have approached elite youth (9-17) cricket from this theoretical commitment angle and they identified that “youth athletes join programs for the opportunities they perceive to exist, and leave when these opportunities do not present themselves or are available elsewhere” (Carpenter & Coleman, 1998; 206). However, they importantly acknowledge that care needs to be exercised when examining motivational outcomes and extrinsic motivation.

Since my study aims to examine participation and the experiences of the club such empirical and theoretical models need to be examined carefully. Their claim is that commitment reflects persistence in an activity and accounts for the situations where

individuals either want to, or have to continue their involvement. Sport commitment is also defined within the paper as “a psychological construct representing the desire and resolve to continue sport participation” (Scanlan et al, 1993; 6, cited by Carpenter & Coleman 1998; 206). What the study does not give us is any qualitative empirical data to explain why these changes occurred and what caused them. The issue of commitment dynamics is not suitably addressed and can give no quality data into what exactly caused these changes and to what these changes may be attributed. Neither does it explain in any detail whether these changes were identified as either positive or negative and why these changes should occur at an ‘elite’ level. It can be surmised that at a grass roots level even these (albeit unknown factors) may be further exacerbated.

2.4 The Research Questions

This study intends to throw some light on the experiences of young people in club cricket at this particular club (Boughborough). In particular these questions will begin to link the formal theory to the emerging substantive theory.

The questions were broadly designed to focus upon these experiences as central to the study and also to bring in some of the other complexities that have been identified as affecting club sport: such as the notions of social positioning, the role of the parents and coaches in the sports experience and what the club ‘is’. Broadly speaking, these are wrapped around the central tenet of the study: the role of the club in the developmental stages of the young people. The key questions are highlighted below, and can be seen more fully in chapter 1.5.

1. Can Côté & Hay’s (2002a) theoretical model of ‘sampling’ and ‘specialising’ help us develop our understanding of participation in this particular situation?
2. How is a sports club experienced by the young people within it (and also their parents and coaches)?
3. What are the young people’s learning trajectories within this community of practice?
4. In what way does the family have an influence upon the club?

2.4 Chapter Conclusion

This literature review has shown the underpinning theoretical aspects to the thesis. Through the analysis of studies of youth sport and the family combined with the linking to each other of the theoretical notions of socialisation, developmental stages and social construction and positioning, the chapter has provided both a broad and focussed assessment of the issues that are being examined in this thesis. Having identified these key aspects of the study, it is clear that the chapter has simultaneously achieved an outline of the existing theory and data through the formulation and development of precise research questions based on the literature, and then further developed and modified through the research process.

The chapter has established that within the sociology of sport literature there are two key theoretical tenets that are inextricably linked to the understanding of the sport experience for young people. Côté & Hay's (2002a) developmental approach to socialisation suggests that young people first sample and then specialise in sports. Linked to this developmental perspective on sport socialisation are the notions of social construction and positioning (Kirk & MacPhail, 2002) and also legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) which are used in a sporting context to identify and locate various people and their full or peripheral participation and practice within the club. The chapter has also looked in detail at the family and sport link, and proposed that through the influence of the family the sports club and its practices can be seen to have similarities. In other words, this chapter has drawn upon a number of formal theories to create an overall theory of how a sports club is constructed and experienced from a developmental socialisation viewpoint. It has then provided a number of questions developed through the literature in order to explore these theories in more detail.

Having established the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis and key research questions, the next chapter highlights and explains the methodological issues within the framework of the data collection.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

Chapter two outlined the theoretical framework adopted in this study and the key research previously carried out in this area. Building on chapter 2, this chapter aims to provide a detailed analysis of the methods employed in the collection of data. As the literature review and research questions highlight, there is a clear need for a qualitative approach to the topic of this study. This approach is further examined in this chapter through the theoretical paradigms of qualitative research and ethnography. This chapter will also locate the researcher within the field of study and highlight the reflexive nature and requirements of this type of study.

Initially the chapter looks in detail at the theoretical considerations of ethnographic research. The second section looks in detail at the practicalities and issues of conducting research at Boughborough cricket club. The third section provides an account of how I located and positioned myself in the club and includes a detailed self-reflexive analysis of my experiences. The final section introduces a grounded theory approach to data analysis, and includes some illustrative examples. Throughout the chapter the theoretical and conceptual aspects are underpinned with examples from the field in such a way that I intend to “reconstruct the social actors, actions and settings” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; 245) for the reader.

The overarching aim of this chapter is to set into context the entire process of this research conducted at Boughborough and provide the reader with a clear account of the club, and the way in which I was part of the continuous and interrelated research process.

3.2 Theoretical Considerations

This section intends to highlight and explain the main theoretical focus and the key issues within this ethnographic research. The section begins with an overview of the growing use of ethnographic methods in sport research and is followed by an analysis

of some of the issues involved in researching young people in sport. The section then moves on to look at the theory underpinning the entire thesis and finally looks in more detail at the link between these and the research questions.

3.2.1 Ethnographic Research in Sport: an Overview

Ethnography involves an attempt to interpret specific encounters and events in a way that can provide meaning. It is about the researcher trying to “grasp the lived reality” (Ten Have, 2004; 108) of the situation from the subject’s perspective. This in-depth approach to research provides a way of being involved in your samples’ lives without directly affecting their actions. Moreover, ethnographers participate “in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; 1). This approach to qualitative research (well accepted in social science research) is now also common in sports research (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

Within sport, the use of qualitative and interpretive methodologies is fairly new (Sands, 2002). Despite academics like Sparkes (1996), advocating qualitative data collection in all sports research it is interesting to note that there is still a reliance on quantitative approaches to understanding physical activity. There is no doubt that the current use of mixed methodology empirical research is a response to the demands of research sponsors. This itself is at the cost of the detailed, descriptive and interpretive ethnographic case-studies that are still marginalised within sport education. The reliance (particularly from sponsors) on performance indicators and improvement naturally pushes ethnographic methodology to the edges of the discipline. However, whilst ethnographic and qualitative research is not always favoured by sponsors, it is making its mark in sports research as Faulkner & Finlay (2002) highlight. Their paper on conversation analysis in sport highlights the use of an ethnographic approach to sports psychology. Similarly, Holt & Sparkes (2001) use ethnographic methods in the psychological study of football team cohesion. Thus ethnography is increasingly becoming a tool for work in sport and is becoming as acceptable as quantitative methodology in the understanding of sport and sports processes.

This thesis intends to build upon this 'real world' research and explain in some detail the theoretical and practical issues of ethnographic research within the youth section of a cricket club. Whilst ethnographic research in sport is not new in that it has been promoted over the past 15 years, the ethnography of the youth sport-club experience is only just beginning to develop (e.g. MacPhail et al, 2003a and 2003b). The likes of Parker (1998), Holt & Sparkes (2001), Cushion (2002) and Potrac et al (2002) have concentrated their studies on elite sport (soccer). Ethnographies of grass roots 'sports club' participation lay largely unexamined (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 and MacPhail et al, 2003a). It is only in a small number of recent studies that an increasing interest in grass roots youth sport has appeared (for example Zevenbergen et al (2002) used ethnographic methods to study junior golf club culture in Australia). What must be acknowledged is the increasing acceptance that this methodology has (as a means of providing a clearer insight into the participatory and drop out experiences of young people) within sports research (Sands, 2002).

Historically the likes of Corrigan (1979), Ball (1981) and, in particular, Willis (1977) have been instrumental in educational ethnography. However, it has only been during the past decade that sport ethnography has been brought to the fore. The key ethnographic works of Giuliannotti (1995) on football hooliganism and Sugden (1997) who was deeply immersed in the seedy world of boxing in Northern Ireland, show where ethnography has taken the extreme road of risk and subcultural anti-functionalism. Whilst the academic arguments about the relevance of ethnography have now been muted by the likes of Denzin (1997) and Van Maanen (1988), the focus in sport and leisure has until recently been mainly on ethnographies of adult orientated sub-cultures (e.g. Wheaton, 1997) or elite athletes (e.g. Cushion, 2002). An example of this being the special edition of *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17 (1) in 2000, which highlights a number of ethnographic empirical works completed with elite athletes. Moreover, with more focus now being placed on grass roots sport with notions like 'Long Term Athlete Development' (Balyi, 2001 and 2004) being adopted, there is now more of an academic focus on grass roots participation, coaching and involvement. Indeed the work of Côté & Hay (2002a) and Jones et al (2004) further highlight a need for more detailed research into participation and coaching at grass roots levels. This is something highlighted further by MacPhail et al (2003a) who argue that more research needs to be conducted at this level in order to

better inform policy makers, teachers, coaches and parents about young people in sport. An ethnographic methodology is central to this interpretive paradigm in sport (Sands, 2002).

The role of ethnography in sports research is an increasingly common one (Sands, 2002), and there is a further trend towards seeking understanding of the relationships involved in sport, more than the sport itself. For example, ethnographic research into sporting subcultures (e.g. Coates and boxing and Wheaton and windsurfing) has now moved on to specific sports-organisational ethnography, looking into the complexity of relationships in the sporting situation. Examples include Cushion (2002) and Potrac et al (2002) on elite football and now the focus on grass roots sport led by Kirk & MacPhail (2003).

The increasing trend in this type of research in the UK is married to the increasing interest in sport involving all levels of academia. The popularisation of sports studies/science type degree courses during the 1990's has led to an increase in undergraduate and postgraduate students in the field (THES, 2003). The increasing developments and civilising of sport has led to more and more dangerous high-risk activities (e.g. free climbing) on which, undoubtedly, more academic focus will be levelled in the future. Underpinning much of the developing research today is the interpretive grasp of why, and for what reason, do we play sport and how is our cultural make-up, personhood and identity wrapped up in this pastime. Indeed, for those of us who do play, how can we (as 'jocks') finally come to understand our own self through the study of sport and are we not the ideal ones to properly execute ethnographic research into our own selves, our lives and our relationships. As Sands (2002; 25) highlights "for those already involved in sport studies, fieldwork will involve being *self* among *self*". The completely native approach by Wheaton (1997) highlights this in her study of the subculture of windsurfing. The covert works of Parker (1998) and the overt studies by Cushion (2002) and Holt & Sparkes (2001) in soccer also identify these issues.

However, with this thesis it is clear that to understand the feelings of young people in a particular sport through participant observation is to put yourself in the mind and relationships of those young people. This is a subjective interpretation of the

environment they are in, even more so when that environment is a dynamic and complex organisation. For example, Wilson & White (2001) conducted an ethnographic study of an inner city youth centre in Canada and they noted that the culture created within the youth centre was one of 'tolerance rules' and this power was taken from the adult members. It became a self-ruling organisation. This symbolic interactionist study highlighted the use of sport as a subculture with its own cliques, hierarchies and conflict. All of which were settled 'on the court' in non-violent ways.

One issue that cannot be forgotten in this whole context is the work of Bronislaw Malinowski (highlighted by Sands, 2002) who spent a number of years in the Trobriand Islands of the Western Pacific conducting an early form of ethnography (or anthropological study). It is, to some extent, the first recorded ethnographic study of cricket in which an adapted version of the game was used as a tribal activity and vehicle of celebration amongst the islanders. Whilst it is not my intention to detail this here it is important to note how Malinowski has been identified as the father of (sports) ethnography (Sands, 2002).

It can be seen that the access, participant observation and detailed description that comes with ethnographic research is becoming increasingly important in understanding the sports process and also the participation process. As sport increasingly becomes the focus of social, educative and health Political policy, so the need for understanding of the process and the relationships within the process require investigation.

3.2.2 Researching Young People in Sport

Within social science research the study of young people has been increasing and now covers many areas, as Prout (1998; 60) highlights: "The study of children within families and wider contexts of childhood is an innovative and significant growth area across the social sciences, and no longer confined to specialist branches of psychology". Whilst the context of this thesis is one of young people in sport, there is an element of a wider and more holistic context of their experiences. Moreover, the study of youths and adolescence in sport is not new and with the emergence of sports research in the past twenty years there is now a plethora of empirical research within

psychology, sociology, physiology, biomechanics and health concerning young people, sport and exercise. Sport is not only used as a vehicle for much of this research but also as a focus. With Sport and Government Policy moving from Physical Education towards Sport Education, there has been an increase in the number of studies conducted throughout the world. Siedentop (1995), for example, highlights the development of sports research and the focus shift from the physical to the cultural and educative role it plays in civilizing society.

The development of specific centres for researching young people in sport and exercise (e.g. Exeter University's 'Children's Health & Exercise Research Centre') to the European 'Values and Norms in Children's Sport' research programme (c.f. Steenbergen et al, 2001) are also becoming more prevalent. Whilst these may also be linked to funding sources, it is clear that the area is becoming a focus of policy, pedagogy and practice. Although the literature review spells out many of these empirical works in more detail, it should be noted that much of the research completed with young people in sport has traditionally been quantitatively based and it is only more recently that the focus has changed to qualitatively based approaches (Sands, 2002). It is only through the likes of Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b) that research involving young people in sport has moved onto the ethnographic stage with participant observation and interviews forming the basis of the data collection, grounded theoretical work the basis of the analysis and interactionism the basis of the interpretation.

When highlighting research with young people it should also be noted that the existing empirical work highlights the complexity, difficulties and challenges of working with such a group. Methodologically the issues of reliability, validity and bias are key concerns for any researcher working with young people. This complexity, for example, is highlighted by Davis (1998) who suggests that researchers can discover more than one set of voices or meanings in children's responses to their interaction with others and to everyday life. The works of Cox (1997), Fleming (1997) and Gratton & Jones (2004) highlight the pitfalls and problems of such work.

3.2.3 Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

Since the methodology is qualitative in nature and because the environment is a club entity the fundamental approach to the fieldwork is one of an ethnographic account of the club. However, within this genre of research, it is important to highlight the theoretical standpoint that will be taken throughout the thesis.

The first issue to consider is that of the paradigmatic nature of the research and where exactly this belief system, with which we make sense of the world (Denzin, 1997), fits into the whole thesis. According to Ten Have (2004) this paradigm is very often born of our own subjective awareness and, as such, it depends upon certain values and assumptions made about the socialization process. In this thesis it is clear that an interpretive paradigm is key to the research. It is an approach where ontology, epistemology and methodology “shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b; 19). The researcher therefore defines the research process. Moreover the researcher enters the field with their own framework (ontology) for the process, with their own specified set of questions (epistemology) and their own research design (methodology) - thus questioning the internal validity of ethnographic research is not simple (Cohen & Manion, 1994, Denzin, 1997).

It is clear that, as with all ethnography, an interpretive approach will be taken - it is more important to note the form and genre that this will take. Hammersley (1998) and Seale (1999) see social phenomenology in its widest naturalistic context as a framework for capturing the nature of human life in a better way than quantitative sources. In fact, the precise strength of this phenomenological approach is highlighted by Maso (2001; 138) who contends that it is vital “to consider every phenomenon, including the known ones, as if they are presenting themselves for the first time to consciousness”. However, one of the main criticisms of ethnography is the one of a lack of objectivity. Yet conversely, a nomothetic approach through quantitative methods would neither be able to explain things how they really are, nor would it allow an interpretation of the phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a).

These differing genres of research and the criticism of the lack of objectivity in ethnography is also further developed by Maso (2001). He reflects in detail that a critical approach to phenomenology where a bracketing approach can be taken by the ethnographer in order to explain their experiences. Maso (2001) identifies the notion of an *epoche* where the researcher can differentiate between their subjective pre-suppositions and their experiences – and thus bracket the ‘contaminatory’ knowledge in such a manner that it can be put aside. However, Maso (2001) also points out that this approach, whilst idealistic, is not possible as we now know that “perception and interpretation are inseparable” (Hanson cited by Maso, 2001; 138).

Since the aim of the study is to arrive at an understanding of a social entity and the multiple layers of interaction within it, the interpretive paradigm to be used is one of identifying and explaining the phenomena. As I am in a position of having my own ‘contaminatory knowledge’ of the field I am approaching and defining the study through my own experiences. This means that I am bringing this inseparable relationship in my own consciousness to the reality I intend to study (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000).

It is clear then that the study is being approached using an ontological approach, an epistemological standpoint and a methodological approach. The ontological approach adopted is one that highlights the notion of social reality as being ‘realist’ in so far that it identifies that there is a reality beyond individual consciousness. Epistemologically, the study takes a subjectivist view, since we can only come to understand knowledge through direct, personal experience. Denzin & Lincoln (2000b) highlight that such an approach is common within studies of ‘cultures’, and Charmaz (2000) identifies the use of a grounded theory approach to interpreting such data. Thus the ontological framework for the study is a “participatory reality – subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and given cosmos” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; 168). This (as Lincoln & Guba further note) is a paradigm where ontology and epistemology are now one and the same dictated by the participatory method of the study. This issue is somewhat contentious and Sparkes (1992a) and Bryman (1996) argue that both practical and epistemological issues should be separated and an appropriate methodology should be chosen through pragmatic considerations rather

than theoretical ones. The methodological decisions, as Bryman (1996) highlights must be based around pragmatic decisions and should not restrict the viewpoint of the researcher. Using a realist ontological approach and a subjectivist epistemology, it is clear that in order to better understand the socialisation process of young people at the club through their interactions the only appropriate methodology is ethnography.

The research in this thesis was conducted using an interpretive framework. Marvasti (2004) argues that both interpretivism and also symbolic interactionism are basic aspects of constructionism and that constructionism is based around the assumption that “our knowledge of social reality is: 1. subjective; 2. situationally and culturally variable; 3. ideologically conscious” (Marvasti, 2004; 5). This interactionist approach then highlights how we interpret any situation and how these interpretations are continually revised as events occur and as time passes (Hammerlsey and Atkinson, 1995).

With an explicit awareness of my ‘contaminated knowledge’ my interpretive approach was very close to that of Corrigan (1979; 6) who tried to “make sense of the world” and Bilton et al (1996; 591) who wanted to “tell it like it is”. However, I would also need to be able to construct an objective identity where the phenomena studied is not de-humanised with a “view from nowhere” (Griffiths, 1995; 81) but is an acknowledgement of self, subjectivity and all that goes with it. Griffiths (1995) explains this concept (to a theoretical group of students) in some detail:

Ultimately knowledge can only be produced through the careful consideration of individual experience. But be warned! Your experience is not enough on its own. You will need to use it carefully: bearing in mind relevant theory and your political position. And you will have to be prepared to reflect and re-think your understanding of the experience over time. (Griffiths, 1995; 87).

Thus, whilst there is criticism of ethnographic methodology from some positivist quarters (c.f. Tedlock, 2000), there is also an argument that no method can interpret the real truth but that ethnography is more suitable than others (Tedlock, 2000, Rock, 2002, Ten Have, 2004). Therefore the method I employed in this study was one that was most appropriate for interpreting the experiences and events that occurred within

the club and allowed flexibility to define and develop a grounded theory approach towards the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3.2.4 The Research Design

The choice of an ethnographic methodology for this research also needs discussion and justification. In order to answer the research questions (see chapter 2) and elicit as much in-depth qualitative data, it was necessary to spend a substantial amount of time in the field. Thus the choice of an ethnography for exploratory research in sport is well founded, especially in the area of coaching and youth participation (e.g. Parker, 1998, Cushion, 2002 and Kirk & MacPhail, 2003). The use of ethnography rather than survey methods or oral histories is, through the nature of the material to be gathered. Since the study is also longitudinal and based around everyday events that took place, the only viable method was ethnography. With a second season of data collection also undertaken (in order to look at attrition and the movement between developmental stages) this further validates the choice of methodology.

The methods used by Cushion (2002), Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b) also explored the data using profiles of key participants and, in particular with social positioning, this is clearly an important aspect to understand what underlies their practice at the club. In fact, similar to Cushion (2002), this thesis employs a narrative approach to its main participants, but unlike Cushion, it does not attempt to provide a 'formal' structure to the relationships. Being a voluntary club providing such a structure would be both difficult and complex. Since one of the foci of the thesis is to understand the relationships and practice of positions within Boughborough, this would impose a structure without acknowledging its complexity. These profiles can be seen in chapter 4.2.3 as 'vignettes of the key characters'.

3.2.5 The Development of Research Questions

The research questions within the study were fairly dynamic in that during the data collection, and due to the exploratory nature of the research, they were refined as the process continued and the grounded theory was developed. At the same time, through the interaction with the young people, coaches and parents, the objectives of the study became more focused and as the themes began to emerge, at times a more directive approach was taken to elicit further information. For example, as it became clear that

the family was an important influence on participation, more directive questions were asked to find out 'how' and 'why' this was the case (see also section 3.5). As the original research questions became adapted to the study and data generated, it became clear that whilst there was little direct change in objectives, a more precise focus was taken in order to conceptualise and theorise what was emerging from the data. As such the existing questions were refined to fully capitalise on the data that was being gathered. Thus additional questions relating to the family and the club were asked.

3.3 Practicalities in the Field

This section of the chapter intends to link theory to reality and is designed as a way for the reader to identify what the realities of the ethnographic study at Boughborough really were. In short it intends to provide an account of the realities of the field.

The first section looks at the complex issue of access to the club. The following section details the sample and the next highlights the interview processes. This is followed by a section about participation, observation and field notes and finally there is a section on the ethical considerations identified within the study.

3.3.1 Access to Boughborough

The issues surrounding access to clubs and overt ethnographies of clubs, although limited, have been well documented in the sociology of sport (e.g. Parker, 1998, Cushion, 2002 and Sands, 2002). In this study it was in fact very difficult to gain access to a club. Whilst I initially contacted five identified 'head' coaches of clubs from the county youth handbook (who were initially recommended to me by playing colleagues) it became clear that all appeared to be suspicious of my motives. They (apparently) did not wish to have their coaching put under the microscope or, perhaps, misunderstood the focus of the study when I initially contacted them by telephone.

Gaining access became a six week process of phone calls, letters and negotiation. In a similar manner to the way Smith (2001; 226) encountered it in her study of business, it became an "anxiety-provoking experience...gatekeepers tend to deny and delay researchers because they are concerned – not unreasonably from their point of view – about the uses to which the data will be put" - a situation for which I now have considerable empathy. An example of this resistance and rejection by gatekeepers is further highlighted by my experience with a large local club with a well-respected

youth system. Their 'head of coaching', John (a pseudonym), initially welcomed the idea when I spoke to him at length about the project and the type of access I needed. Within a week he turned around and responded to my letter of approach (see Appendix A) to say "trying to organize cricket at ***** is a difficult job with scarcely enough people to help, without me having to satisfy another party whom I would consider to be placing extra pressure on my performance..." (Personal Correspondence, 19th October 2000). Whilst this could well be indicative of the pressures that many youth sport organisers are under, methodologically it highlights what Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) refer to as 'gatekeepers safeguarding their own interests'. In the coaching theory literature, it also echoes Lyle's (1999a; 4) point that there is an "understandable reluctance of the coaches to expose their situations to scrutiny".

Finally, on the sixth attempt, I spoke to one of the youth coaches at Boughborough cricket club (a pseudonym), who although interested, was not the organizational gatekeeper. However, he did refer to himself as the important contact for the research - he was the 'guy I first approached' (field notes 28th May 2001). His contact (and my direct gatekeeper, Paul [a pseudonym]) happened to be a local 40 year old undertaker who, it transpired, was looking for a new career direction in cricket. He had just been voted in as Chairman of Boughborough and was keen to develop his own coaching links. I'm sure my links with the ECB were an important part of his agreement as was my role in teaching/researching Sport at Higher Education level (he was keen to confide in me that he'd just passed a Diploma in Sports Psychology from a local University). He was both responsive and enthusiastic about what he (as club Chairman and Director of Youth Cricket) termed "an interesting and useful" piece of work. He spent some time talking about the state of youth cricket, his involvement in the county set up, his wish to do a Level 4 Award and also the distance learning Sport Psychology diploma he had just completed. At the end of the chat, not only did I feel empathy with him, but also a sense that I was to become a useful tool for the progression of his career!

The choice of Boughborough as the club to be studied was both a purposive sample and a pragmatic choice. Since Paul was keen to become involved in the research and the club contained a number of youth sections which were essential to the study this

opportunity was ideal. Pragmatically, the club was also on my route to and from work, practices were early in the evenings and the youth section played in a league in the same region made this a perfect choice. Yet since purposive samples are based around judgements of typicality (Cohen & Manion, 1994), there are clearly implications to this study's wider value. As with any purposive sample, the club was specifically identified as having particular characteristics required for the study and is not claimed to be typical, but it does I'm sure reflect the reality of club cricket for young people. These characteristics were the presence of a youth section (particularly at under 12 level), an 'organised' coaching environment (set days and times etc), facilities (e.g a club house) available to the parents, young players and coaches, and ample space in which interactions between all of the participants could be observed. In short, characteristics which are similar to most cricket clubs that have a youth section.

This further leads on to an explanation of the structure of the game at youth level, and a structure that Boughborough reflects. Within the county league structures (and regional leagues) which are the most dominant form of adult competitive cricket in the UK, junior leagues (often further divided into county areas such as North or South etc) are normally run with softball 8-a-side from the ages of 7 to 11 and then hard ball 11-a-side from 12 to 18. Boughborough is typical of many clubs with junior sections in that it runs teams at every level, and more specifically at under 11 and under 13 levels (hence the purposive choice of club). Whilst there is a competitive structure here it makes it more complicated to define the club as being 'grass roots'. However, this study makes the claim through the fact that the club is grass roots in that it is amateur, is run on a voluntary basis, possesses players with a range of abilities, doesn't require elite performers, offers coaching for beginners and ultimately is the first point of contact many young people have with the organised game. Whilst it does contain specialisers in the youth section, the voluntary nature and range highlight it to be at the lower end of the competitive structure within the broad definition on grass roots.

A further meeting with the youth committee proved insightful. Whilst sitting in the local working men's club there was an air of expectancy about the forthcoming season, the organization of the youth section and the development of the club. The

conversations revolved around the successes of last year allied to the malaise of the poor season the adult team had just had. As both club Chairman and Director of Youth Cricket (a club given title) access could virtually be guaranteed. It is this type of gate-keeper access that is so important in ethnographic research and, in this case, the acceptance (through the Chairman) by the other coaches in the club. Whilst I am sure there was some concern (even hostility) that I may be resented as an 'invisible expert' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) it became clear that a trade off with my own coaching skills would become a key part of this access agreement. It became a tacit sharing of skills, a "research bargain" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; 72), or a "beneficial exchange" (Sands, 2002; 39). This bargain (I well knew) would mean that the club would call upon my skills to help manage large groups when the coaches themselves were struggling. During the meeting a number of coaches questioned my own motives, the ethics and the interference that the research may cause. Having explained myself as an observer who can help with some coaching at times (and therefore a participant observer with coaching credentials) this appeared to satisfy them and the idea of a 'coach-helper-observer' during the coaching sessions clearly appealed to them.

The whole issue of access is fraught with obstacles and it is interesting to note that even on completion of the fieldwork, no-one had questioned my credentials, qualifications, child protection status or identity - reflecting the concerns raised by Brackenridge (2002) about the state of voluntary grass roots sport.

3.3.2 The Sample

The age range chosen as part of the sample was based around the 11-13 age group (as fits Côté & Hay's (2002a) sampling and specialising stage 'overlap'). This was for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is based upon the research questions (see Chapter 2.3) and informed by the empirical evidence in the literature review and, secondly, for ease of access (they were coached and/or played on a Monday night). Theoretically it is also, as Côté & Hay (2002a) and Balyi (2001 and 2004) describe, where the transition from fun and enjoyment towards training and practice are most apparent. Therefore the sample should be wide enough to cover all aspects of the developmental stages.

The sample itself was to be all of those individuals who were either directly, or indirectly, involved in the Monday evening sessions (i.e. coaches, parents and young people). The initial fieldwork was based around the experience of the researcher during the evening training sessions. This itself was dependent upon the weather, the number of coaches and the young people at the session. In this respect it was a very fluid approach, relying on the real world situations in which the club found itself on a week-by-week basis. Research was conducted at each session (apart from those cancelled due to bad weather) with the researcher being flexible enough to adapt to each different scenario, either ready to interview and observe, coach and observe or simply observe - depending upon the situation. They were (as Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995 explain), both suitable informants from the initial stages of the study as well as volunteers who emerged from the study with information.

Using the research questions as a focus point the research took on a grounded theory approach in which the theories were developed through a continual revision and questioning of data. As Ten Have (2004) identifies this is a constant comparative approach. The first phase data is coded and then the developing theory that is 'grounded' in this data is refined and tested in the second phase of the research. Whilst such a notion of 'phases' is somewhat idealistic, the reality is that throughout the study various incidents were being coded and data collected during different phases - since events do not happen chronologically (or logically) in fieldwork. (More detail on this grounded theory approach can be seen in section 3.6).

As well as observation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the young people, the coaches, the parents and other club officials - as well as less formal discussion and conversation at both training sessions and matches (which were written up as field notes see section 3.4.4).

3.3.3 Interviews

With the practices being held mainly on a Monday evening the pragmatic choice of days to do the fieldwork was relatively easy. However, the complexities began when the fixture list became congested and the Mondays were also used for some games. This was overcome by attendance at EVERY Monday session regardless – even when the appropriate team was playing away from home – as it gave me a chance to talk to

parents who were not involved elsewhere. During the second season of the research the Under 13 side was divided in two and this resulted in my attendance at either a Monday or a Tuesday night each week (and more often than not, both).

Interviews with the young people, the coaches, the officials and the parents at the ground were conducted in differing locations - dependent upon the individual being interviewed, since the place and territory (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) for the interviews had to be appropriate and in context with the interviewees own position within the club. On most occasions interviews with the young people were conducted just out of earshot, but within sight, of the others with whom they were playing or practising. The parents, coaches and officials were interviewed within the picket fence enclosure or on one of the benches at mid wicket (not far from the pavilion but out of earshot). With the young people this became a recognised 'down time' in which data collection could easily take place (as Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 also noted) and Chris began to use it after a batting session in order for the youngster to 'cool down a bit'. Initially interviews were conducted on an individual basis but during the second year, once a rapport had been gained, five sets of interviews were conducted in friendship groups in order to encourage and elicit more detailed information. The use of friendship group interviews is well established in qualitative research (Cohen & Manion, 1995). This focus group approach allowed a more dynamic approach to the study, and whilst it allowed the young people to be more at ease and to help spark conversation between them (as Bryman, 1996 highlights), it can be fraught with concerns of bias, misinterpretation and issues of dominance (Huber & Clandinin, 1992). However, the opportunity to develop and sensitively manage these interviews further complemented the individual interviews and observations in that it gave me a chance to further clarify issues and consolidate emergent findings.

The sample of interviewees within the club consisted of a total of thirty seven interviewees. Of the young people at the club, twelve samplers were interviewed in total (ten were interviewed twice) and six specialisers (all were interviewed twice). Ten parents were interviewed (six interviewed twice), of whom two were telephone interviews. Finally six coaches and three administrators were also interviewed twice. Whilst these numbers were dictated by attendance at the coaching sessions by myself and the interviewees (hence the two telephone interviews). These pragmatic decisions

were also backed up by the use of field notes in addition to interviews, and allowed me to revisit issues with particular individuals that emanated from comments noted during the interviews and the ongoing observations. With such a large number of participants it is difficult to go into too much detail about individuals however, there is more precise detail about the 'key' participants in chapters 4.2.3 and chapter 5.

Since interviewing is a key characteristic of qualitative ethnographic research it is important to acknowledge it as a major source of data. As Heyl (2001) reports, as part of ethnography it is vital that:

Researchers establish respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds (Heyl, 2001; 369).

The overall procedure for the study reflects the approach taken by many ethnographic studies (e.g. Sands, 2002). Data was collected throughout the two seasons (mid May to the end of August of 2001 and 2002) through the use of field notes from every coaching session and match that I attended (23 sessions in 2001 and 25 sessions in 2002). During this time the interviews (see above) were also conducted. In short data collection was continuous, and field notes were made at every opportunity to ensure that everything I observed or heard was noted. The semi-structured (tape recorded) interviews conducted with all of the participants lasted from around 20 to 30 minutes, and those who interviewed a second time (in most cases during the second season) tended to be longer as more detailed questioning was made of their earlier responses and from issues noted in the observations. The tapes were transcribed normally the following day and memos were made and themes identified from both the conversations and field notes (see chapter 3.5) In short, this grounded theory approach allowed the researcher to identify and explore issues that were noted in BOTH the interviews and observations in that they then informed each other.

Since this multi-method approach means observing and interviewing the people involved in the club it is clear that some pragmatic decisions need to be made in order to achieve this coherently. As I could clearly not go barging in on a situation and

interview people as soon as I first came into contact with them, I opted for the 'being around' approach of spending three to four weeks being seen, chatting informally and gaining the confidence of the participants. This was a pre-fieldwork phase of issue identification and abstract theory formulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). These were pragmatic decisions based around the research questions, the on-going interaction and the skills of the researcher. The theoretical aim of using interviews as well as observation is one of providing further collaborative data and adding one layer of information to another to build up a picture of the issues and, ultimately, to be able to interpret them. My aim was to produce a coherent set of questions and issues (founded in the literature) that could be explored during the observation. These questions could then be further refined as the data were collected and as the research developed. These semi-structured in depth interviews are key to research with young people (e.g. Weiss et al, 1996), coaches (e.g. MacPhail et al, 2003a and 2003b) and parents (e.g. De Knop et al, 1998). My aim was to keep the questions similar but to modify the way they were asked and the language used to make them relevant - clearly it would not be appropriate to ask parents detailed technical aspects concerning the coaching their child has received. The aim was to keep the questions and issues relevant and appropriate.

The interviews with parents, coaches and committee members all took place in the confines of Boughborough's ground and clubhouse (although I also interviewed two parents over the telephone since they rarely made it to matches). The idea of research territory was not as problematic as some educational research situations (c.f. Fleming, 1997), where 'neutral territory' was required because the club and ground were effectively neutral. However, it should be noted that the interviews were not solely data collection exercises, but were highly complex social constructions of self and identity (Collins, 1998). In this way it was also interesting to note, and examine, the social position each interviewee practised. This was evident by the way they behaved, where they sat and how they acted during the interview process. What was very clear from the data collection was the way that the interviewees positioned themselves. The 'old timers' and 'experts' (c.f. Lave & Wenger, 1991) were happy to be interviewed in and around the pavilion whilst the new comers and novices appeared uneasy in that environment and were interviewed on one of the benches around the pitch. Thus there

was an element of 'micro-territories' involved and, after a while, it became clear that it was easier to ask the subjects if they were happy to 'sit and chat' where they were, or if they would prefer somewhere quieter. In this way it could avoid the awkwardness displayed after an interview in the bar (the male domain) with one of the mothers:

That was not a well-managed interview, in retrospect Rosie was not comfortable and the whole thing was very 'yes no'. I think she thought she was taking up space, and the guys afterwards said about not going in to use the bar, so I think she was embarrassed about it. A learning experience – it was not her territory. (Field notes, 18th June 2001)

What is interesting to note is how much these interviews and discussions became part of the fabric of the two seasons I was there - they became synonymous with my presence and also a source of friendly banter:

Whilst I'd been interviewing Rosie, the other parents had purposefully stayed out of the bar area. When I came out of the clubhouse two of the parents (Roger and Nick) said – "ah you've finished" "is it safe to go and get a pint now then?, I've been gasping out here!" (Field notes, 18th June 2001)

As I approach the clubhouse from the car, have chorus of greetings and banter from two of the parents (Roger and Tony). "Oh no, here he comes again.....quick look busy, it's the Spanish inquisition!!". All meant in humorous way. Immediately see expression on faces of opposition parents who were looking at me curiously, and reply "Ah yes, I've been waiting to speak to you again Roger..." – to which he disappears into the club house at speed to the amusement of the other Boughborough parents (Rosie, Tony, another mother, and Jake). (Field notes, 20th August 2001)

Thus the interviews were a key part of the research process and were also useful for me to gain both trust and a rapport with the subjects. Since second interviews were inevitable it was important to keep them as part of the normal occurrences at the club (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

3.3.4 Participant Observation and Field Notes

The issues of participant observation in research are well documented (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, Sands, 2002). For this study, in order to gain a better understanding of the issues involved, clearly such an in-depth analysis is key to the quality of data.

Since this ethnographic study is based around this methodology, and my involvement central to this, it is clear that as Sparkes (1992b and 2000) points out, ethnography and the development of a research identity is vital to the process. The issue about being personally involved causes criticism from ethnographers with a positivist standpoint. The notion that participant observation is bound around a subjective interpretation of the data causes issues of validity and reliability to be central to this criticism. However, in order to gain understanding and an interpretivistic stance such an in-depth methodology is required. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) also argue that we cannot study the social world without being a part of it. This issue of bias is also central as the study is based around my own interaction with the environment and its interaction with me, as Tedlock, (2002; 455) explains “ethnographers lives are embedded in their field experiences”. In fact Van Maanen (1988) explains in some depth about the important distinction between the author and the reader, and how important it is that ethnography must consider the observed, the observer, the tale and the audience in its construction. Whilst this is not to say that such a confessional is correct, it is important to acknowledge ethnography and participant observation as fallible and problematic, rather than to reduce them to the theoretical notion that they are simply unreplicable narrative representations of events (Sparkes, 2000).

The role of the ethnographer is an important one and his/her behaviour, awareness and decision-making skills are key to the reliability and validity of the findings. In this instance I have attempted to be as objective as possible, whilst acknowledging that my own biography will have an effect upon this study. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) acknowledge the importance of being able to engage in a reflective approach to research. I clearly had a biography that meant I would be as involved in the generating of data as I would be with its collection. I would clearly become a fundamental part of the cultural scene at the club (Sands, 2002).

Participant observation is an integral part of ethnography and is central to the ethnographer-participant relationship and data generation. Participant observation itself has a rich history. James (2001a) identifies how child-based ethnographies were initially used to identify a child's behaviour and then later a child centred approach with an interest in social meanings. This means that my approach was multi-faceted and the aim was to understand how the children and adults (in the various positions they occupy) experience the club. James (2001a) also explains that ethnography is responsible for the study of children moving forward and for children being recognised as people in their own right. This has led to ethnography being the orthodox method of studying children. James goes on to say that "it may not be too far fetched to claim that the social study of childhood.....has only been made possible through the use of ethnographic approaches, for what ethnography permits is a view of children as competent interpreters of the social world" (James, 2001a; 246).

Clearly as an instrument within the research itself I would have an effect on the environment at every level both as a coach and as a researcher. Such acknowledgement of an insider account is to note that "there is no pure, objective, detached observation; the effects of the observer's presence can never be erased.....observers now function as collaborative participants in action inquiry settings" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000c; 634). This does not however remove the issue of potential bias from the 'over rapport' with subjects and situations (leading to potentially biased reporting) and to the 'glossing' of incidents when writing field notes retrospectively (Hammersely & Atkinson, 1995). In either case what is important to note is that this also says much about the reflexivity of the researcher.

The use of detailed field notes were central to the grounded theory approach to the thesis. The use of the pavilion (as a central point of activity) and the opportunity to move between groups of students engaged either in games or in practising meant that there was time during the coaching sessions to make brief notes about occurrences or conversations. These occurrences and conversations formed the major part of the field notes, and I was very careful to note discussions of topics to which I was party to (or overheard), as well as the events, reactions and dynamics of the things that occurred at each session (an example of these notes is identified in chapter 4.2.5). The brief field notes made at the time were then used to write more detailed notes at a later stage.

Much of the observation was conducted overtly and, whilst not having a clipboard and pen, many of the notes were made (from observation) with the use of a pen and small notebook. Observations were then written up (on my computer at home) in more detail later but it was felt important to catch the moment and/or comment as soon as possible after the event.

Emerson et al (2001) argue in detail that the nature of field notes is “primal even foundational moments of ethnographic representation” (Emerson et al, 2001; 352). In this case, as part of the study, field notes were taken in an organized basis – avoiding what Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) call the writing down of simply what you see and hear. Instead a varied approach was taken where I would cue myself into what was going on and make notes on the occurrences and situations. At coaching sessions, I would initially take a wide approach and observe the whole group behaviour and then focus on a particular individual or small group. This would also happen at games where I would watch the game and the participants in order to put them in context. In other situations, such as the bar, a more relaxed approach was taken and listening into conversations was vital. The key skill was the ability to be able to focus on group or individual situations, filter information and use my role as a coach to provide a conduit for this data to be received and recorded.

Whilst Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) identify in some detail the issues of the pragmatic taking of field notes, I found a consistent structure to this. Notes were written as soon after an event as possible - whether that meant me ‘searching for extra kit in my car’, running an errand, simply excusing myself from the group for a few minutes or walking to another group. More often than not they were initially hurried scribbles on pieces of paper (as Sands, 2002 found) which were then either elucidated further immediately after the session in the car (in a lay by 2 miles down the road) and then written up more fully once I reached home. Whilst it is impossible to remove oneself from the creation of notes (Sparkes, 1992a and Lyons, 1992), it is clear that this is where the initial interpretation of data begins and where ideas and questions are formed, reformed and adapted. Atkinson (1992) highlights that this means that field notes are highly selective and contain only what the researcher sees as important. This

selectivity and reproduction is a natural criticism but it does frame the situation as it was seen by the ethnographer and further outlines their role within that frame. However, there is clearly some positivistic criticism that can be levelled at this technique since it is essentially, a subjective approach.

As a coach I had the opportunity to mix with the age groups and was on hand to give advice, help out and generally act as a helper amongst the young people. Whilst this did mean that I was 'spread rather thinly', it did give me the opportunity to sit and discuss issues in some depth with different age group coaches. This became more important as the group I was working with became more involved in a back-log of matches and intense practices as the season progressed and they became more and more successful. This contact made the practical issues of making field notes easier as I became more used to my surroundings, the names of my contacts and the 'primary' and 'secondary' scenes in which I became involved (Sands, 2002).

Much of the observation work was conducted at a distance, as well as first hand, as I was asked to help out with groups, to offer advice and to get my hands dirty in practising. The ability to make notes briefly when there was some 'down time' was also useful as I tried to note the context, conversation and players. Research was also conducted from the pavilion – particularly with the coaches (after sessions), the match situations and the club committee members.

3.3.5 Ethical Considerations

There is a substantial amount of literature in sociology, education and sport that details the ethics, issues and pitfalls of conducting ethnographic research with young people. It is not my intention to detail these here but rather to look at theory and to relate my own experiences to that of other people. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) provide some key points about ethnography and young people and with the support of other sources (e.g. Mandell, 1991, and Fleming, 1997) these events and issues may be placed into context. It is my intention here to provide a detailed description of the reality of the research and the ethical considerations of the ethnography.

Generally, within educational research and research conducted with young people, there is a change in the way that their involvement is being seen and perceived in the process. Thomas & O’Kane (1998), for example, explain that a way of overcoming the ethics of research with children through a participatory approach is through the child’s own agenda. Similarly, Davis (1998) points out that children make their own decisions whether to participate and will shut the gates to their world if they wish. Mauthner (1997) considers as vital the methodological issues of consent, access, privacy and confidentiality when researching children’s lives and Cox (1997) argues whether children really have any choice but to comply?

Whilst using the rules outlined by the British Sociological Association (BSA), the use of informed consent for participants was possible. For instance, with the young people involved, a letter and consent form was established and given to all the parents involved in the club (see Appendices C and D). This informed consent is itself a problem within ethnographic research work, as through this type of ‘exploratory research’ (Phillips & Pugh, 1994) it is not possible to be entirely overt because the focus is not entirely explicit and the data gathered may lead to new areas of discussion. In fact, Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) endorse active deception where it will not harm or affect the participants in the study. In contrast Rees (2002) explains it as a fundamental theoretical dilemma:

It would clearly not be feasible for instance, for the interviewer to explain the motives behind each question to the respondent, quite apart from anything this would render the results worthless. “Informed Consent” is, therefore an impossibly tough requirement if these words are taken literally. “Half informed consent”, although more realistic does not have such an idealistic ring to it. (Rees, 2002; 146)

Throughout the entire thesis pseudonyms have been used for the village (and therefore club) and all of the participants within the study. Whilst Rees (2002) highlights issues of reflecting ethnic origin in pseudonyms (not an issue that was to emerge from this study) I felt it important to try and reflect age and background wherever possible through the use of common generational names. For example, to replace ‘Fred’ with ‘Tarquin’ or ‘Edward’ with ‘Kevin’ (as examples) carries much social interpretation for the reader, thus names were changed ‘within’ the social context. Inevitably, with

such complexity and anonymity, comes methodological danger since after time the respondents will become superficial fictitious bodies from which the researcher will become disengaged (Marvasti, 2004). Within this situation we are in danger of losing touch with the respondent and, even more concerning if the data has not been collected carefully, we are also in danger of quoting them out of context (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

The 'gatekeeper politics' that Sands (2002) encountered was also prevalent at Boughborough. From my initial meeting at the club it was clear that Paul (the Chairman) had an immediate interest in my work as he was in the process of looking for a career change to coaching or cricket development (see section 3.4.1 earlier). Whilst this meant that I had open access to the club through this link, ethically it also provoked a number of dilemmas that appeared 'without warning' (Rees, 2002). For example on one occasion:

Paul asked me if I'd write him a reference for a CDO [Cricket Development Officer] job today which caught me completely off guard. I think he saw my expression and said we'd talk later. I thought this through for the rest of the evening and could decide only that it would compromise me on every level (whilst I have links with the ECB I hold no kudos; how would it look if I did and was of no help; would it change our relationship/access if I did write one....the pitfalls were endless). Whilst it was an entirely selfish decision, and probably for all the wrong moral decisions, I had no choice but to politely decline. Paul was fine and I think had expected it – ironically I was left wondering if he'd asked me (out of politeness) for all the wrong reasons as well!! (Field notes, 11th June 2001)

Whilst these personal ethics were present, so was a degree of 'guilty knowledge'. Fleming (1997) discusses at some length issues he encountered in school and that this came from not only the deviant behaviour of pupils, but also the attitudes of some staff. In my experience at Boughborough, this ranged from the simplest 'gamesmanship' that occurred within some of the youth team matches (where for example arbitrary decisions were made by the coaches and umpires during matches) to the conspiratorial amusement found by both coaches and young people alike in the damage caused to cars near the nets during practices:

Chris said on our way past each other “well, we’ve dented a new BMW, this Rover and the back of that Land Rover. Not bad for one nights work!” [then ruefully] “thank God we put the bigger ‘cars parked at owners risk’ sign up last week” (Field notes, 16th July 2001)

Although this guilty knowledge is not by any means extreme, for the ethnographer it is the compromise between position, acceptance and trust against the issues of the seriousness of the situation and the action to take. In short, by my acceptance and lack of comment, I became a conspirator to all of the events that occurred.

During the study I also found myself caught between the opinions of two coaches (Dave and Chris) who were highly critical of each other’s coaching practice. This ‘feud’ meant that I had to try to ensure not only trying to spend equal time with each of their squads (to try to restrict any perceived favouritism) but also, to not take sides (at least visibly or verbally) when they were discussing (or even complaining about) each other’s practice. The compromising situations I found myself in were often when I had to mediate, with no wish to openly take sides, in case it were to jeopardise my relationship with the ‘other’ coach. This ‘positionality’ as a researcher and self-management is discussed further in section 3.5.3.

3.4 The Reflexive Researcher

This section aims to provide an insight into the cultural background of the researcher and how this directly affected the research (Sands, 2002) and to give a chronological insight into the research. It aims to provide a theoretical and pragmatic approach to the themes and issues within the research and to provide a conceptual understanding of how this issue became so prominent to the researcher - and why. It is a research process in which there are many inter-related factors, with numerous being bound up in the researcher’s own experiences and life history within the game. The reflexive researcher must identify the objectivity and subjectivity of his participation and acknowledge the fact that in order to gain a close understanding of the field he must become part of the phenomenon he is observing (Pollner & Emerson, 2001). Effectively he must (like Sands, 2002, xvi) “live the fieldwork”. In educational sociology Griffiths (1995) points out that the genre of autobiography is in part flawed

and that researchers should be careful when carrying out such research as “not all are epistemologically sound” (Griffiths, 1995; 175).

Since this is central to the entire thesis it is important to note that both the production of knowledge as well as the socio-historical, values, interests and location are shaped by the researchers own biography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), as much as by their individual cultural prejudice (Davis, 1998). In fact, Richardson (2000) identifies that reflexivity is more than just the way we research, it is the way we construct our identity and the social world around us. Moreover, Warren & Fasset (2002) identify how much we must manage our performance as ethnographers. They call into question “the role of the researcher, asking how he or she not only helps construct his or her own identity in and through the research project, but also how the researcher works to maintain the very identities and phenomena he or she thinks he or she is working to deconstruct” (Warren & Fasset, 2002; 575). They also carefully highlight that ethnographic identity is a performance and one shows how identity is “always a negotiation of time, place, and circumstance” (Warren & Fasset, 2002; 579). This attachment is important and Hubbard et al (2001) explain that emotionally sensed knowledge is indispensable in the research process, since emotion is a central part of our identity - thus emotionality (joy, frustration etc) is central to the lived reality of the ethnography although there is little guidance on how ethnographers should manage this. They go on to explain that there are also issues of researcher emotion - especially when subjects are in need of help or support. In a sporting context Sands (2002) reflects upon the issues of emotion in participant ethnography of sport and how these emotions should be aired to the reader. Hubbard et al (2002) further note that the nature of qualitative ethnographic research can be “inherently manipulative” (Hubbard et al, 2001; 129) since it is the exploitation of relationships and roles. In my case the problems between Chris and Dave proved an ideal opportunity for Chris to seek my agreement in his criticism of Dave’s coaching.

Dupuis (1999) notes that there is considerable difficulty for young academics to get over the obstacle of using “I” in research and she goes on to explain what she considers to be the key aspects of undertaking reflexive research. These are firstly, that it requires the conscious and deliberate inclusion of the full ‘self’. Secondly it must acknowledge and reflect the researchers empathy and connection to their world.

Thirdly it must acknowledge the collaborative role played in the research process by both researcher and participant and finally it means that we must research and report in different ways.

The cultural background of the researcher, his experiences and views are central to the interpretation and writing of an ethnographic study. Whilst it is not possible to undertake personality psychometric tests to include within a thesis to show this, it is possible that an understanding of the researcher's own history and biography will help the reader to identify this reflexivity.

3.4.1 The Biography of the Researcher

This section aims to provide an insight into my history and cultural background and elicit a chronological insight into the research. It aims to offer the reader an understanding and an opening into how, and why, I saw the club as I did, reacted to it as I did and ultimately could offer an account of Boughborough. It is an account of my 'lived identity' and how it affected the way I 'saw' and experienced Boughborough cricket club.

The entire story begins with me being born into a fairly affluent middle class family, my mother had been a home economics teacher until she became a full time mother (to my [late] sister, who was eleven years my elder, and my brother, older by seven years). My father was a former pilot and one of the UK's most senior design engineers with British Aerospace. On reflection we were comfortably well off and enjoyed two (UK) holidays per year, a large house and garden and my father's hobby – building and flying gyrocopters and micro-lights - and our own childhood indulgences. Whilst we were all educated at the local village school, both my brother and I later went on to pass the 11 plus and go to a selective grammar schools (Bishop Wordsworth's, Salisbury).

My cricketing narrative begins as a young boy at Primary school. I can remember being overawed by the local cricket club. The school's playground (whilst not exactly the quintessentially English village green) WAS the outfield of the cricket pitch, bordered and sanctioned by the fencing around the square and the boundary (marked by a creosoted line). The physical boundaries and barriers, the neatly clipped and

marked square, the nearby brick built pavilion (and later a shed style score box dug into the ground) were fundamental to my school upbringing, the playtime boundaries and my early fascination with the game. I recall many times looking through the windows at the old photos on the wall, the tables so neatly lined up for tea and the impossibly enormous tea urn on the kitchen counter. It was a place that appeared to have both history and life, a living entity that would wake from its dozy winter sleep, to bustling summer weekends.

When I was seven I can recall an old neighbour (who became a family friend through the cricket club, 'uncle' Rob) appearing on my parent's doorstep to find out what they thought about building a bigger cricket pavilion on the common. Whilst I don't recall my parent's response, I do remember thinking how great that would be, how I could see it from my primary school (just a hundred yards away) and how I could see myself playing there soon. At the time it seemed like I was going to have a pavilion to rival Lord's on my own doorstep!

By the age of eight, I was attending practice on a Friday night with the youth section, run by a rather disorganised group of well-meaning parent volunteers with some ability at playing, but little ability at coaching. Having been bitten by the bug I would spend my weekends wandering up to the games at the weekend (about a mile from my home) to watch. By this time my elder brother had begun to play for the club's second team. This created a sibling rivalry about runs, wickets and catches and, ultimately, it resulted in playing 'matches' in our back garden which we did on quite a few occasions. He spent a considerable amount of time bowling at me as, at the time, I continually bowled off the wrong foot making his batting somewhat pointless. There was one occasion where I hit a perfect cover drive (as he told me) straight into our lounge window. My father was furious and I spent some time having to help him replace the pane to my brother's glee. It is an incident we still talk about almost twenty-five years later with his point that, he still believes, it is the best (and only) shot I have ever played!

This period of innocence came crashing down when I was ten and I returned home from primary school to find my grandmother, father and a close family friend at home when they should have been visiting my mother in hospital (who had been admitted

for a minor operation). It turns out that she died of a deep vein thrombosis, rarely heard about in the early 1980's. Looking back my life stopped, but my cricket and solace within the game didn't. On reflection, it appears to have been the one stable institution in my life (as Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993 and Gilligan, 2000 also highlight). Whilst I am now aware (and was at the time) that there was a certain amount of selection nepotism due to my situation, it is something that I feel gave me a chance to develop and flourish. I was also given a number of other 'honours' at that time – from being invited to an NSPCC event in London to being player of the year in the local football team. In short, I began to owe an emotional debt to the game. I have few memories linked with my mother and cricket - but I do recall one of my early cricket practices where I was not selected for the team and walked home with my mother, father and brother whilst in tears, being consoled by my mother.

By the time I was eleven I was enthusiastically attending coaching sessions on a Friday evening. By thirteen, I was playing on a regular basis for the adult side and by sixteen playing at least four matches a week (2 adult games at weekends and one midweek – plus a youth game on a Thursday night). Not only did I become a regular, but I also found myself teaming up with my brother in many matches and, whilst I would hate to think of myself as having him as a sporting hero, his influence (particularly in the back garden) certainly sharpened up my reactions and stroke play. Whether this was through sibling rivalry or a genuine desire to be better I do not know, although there are certainly links to this brotherly rivalry within cricket (c.f. Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1997). One of my earliest competitive recollections was playing for the club's Second XI alongside my brother. I must have been about eleven at the time and, if my rose tinted spectacles allow me, struck about a dozen runs (batting at No 11) and took a 'blinding' slip catch much to the chagrin of the opposition. My brother had also bowled and fielded well and I seem to recall a player saying something along the lines of "*what's this – a family team?!*"

The next five years were spent playing sport - in the winter football, but more importantly, in the summer cricket. I spent more and more time at the ground watching matches, helping do the wicket, helping the wives and mothers do teas (an unconscious surrogacy they were happy to play along with on reflection) and playing youth and adult games. Both the camaraderie of the game and the structure and safe

environment of the club made the entire sporting endeavour a surrogate family for me. Whilst there was some organised and supportive links on the field of play from the adults – surrogate parents, there was also the sympathy afforded to me by the wives and the women involved in the club. The sanctuary of the club itself also added to this surrogate feeling.

This notion of family is highlighted by Giddens (1989) who points out the role of the family in the socialisation process - and there is plenty of sport related empirical research that also highlights this (e.g. Kay, 2000b). As well as discussing groups and organisations Giddens sees 'Primary groups' as "a small association of people connected by ties of an emotionally involving nature" (Giddens 1989; 275) and 'Secondary groups' as "people who meet regularly, but whose relationships are mainly impersonal...a committee or a club is a good example" (Giddens 1989; 276). However, he also goes on to highlight that "in actual social situations the distinction between primary and secondary groups is not clear-cut. People who regularly attend committee meetings together, for example, might become very friendly and spend time with each other informally" (Giddens 1989; 276). Frydenberg & Lewis (1993) and Gilligan (2000) also note the importance of sport for young males in their coping strategies. The whole experience, I think now, was part of a wider coping strategy and part of my socialisation through, and into, sport.

At sixteen I almost lost my right leg below the knee through an innocuous tackle whilst playing in an inter-school soccer tournament. The 'Compartment Syndrome' injury I sustained was particularly serious and I spent a fortnight in hospital with a real possibility that I would lose my lower leg and foot to gangrene (I actually had one quarter of my calf muscle removed to alleviate the problem). I still bear the ugly, thick scars and the marks of twenty stitches on either side of my calf where they had to release the pressure of the burst artery to get circulation back to my ankle and foot. A year of physiotherapy and recuperation followed and whilst this spelt an end to my other sporting activities (athletics and soccer mainly) it meant I could focus on the gentler cricket far more. Looking back I went from being a specialiser in three sports to an investor in one because of my injury - although I now play friendly five-a-side soccer but can no longer cope with running distances.

When I was sixteen my father moved out of the family home (a period of my life I still don't entirely understand) and my sister and brother-in-law moved in. Until I was firmly at university I 'lost' my home (as I did six years later when my sister died of cancer). This very fragmented family situation now leads me to think that I sought some kind of solace in this surrogate family and perhaps, that by helping in the upkeep of the ground, helping with teas and playing matches, I was unconsciously going through familial socialising behaviours in a club context. The close relationship forged between the locals who played for the club and myself (as well as the death of my mother) brought me closer to the club. I continued to play for the club when my brother moved to London to work. By seventeen I was also now playing three or even four adult games a week (as well as nets). This was further exacerbated by my secondary education. My school was over nineteen miles away and I was one of only a couple from my area to go there. This led to rivalry with the local 'comp' youths and a distance-alienation from school friends which I found difficult to surmount. This increasing club introversion and loyalty was highlighted in my early days at university where I would return home at weekends to play in matches (a round trip of over 200 miles).

By the time I was at University I had joined a local club side (for whom I played for about five years) and was almost immediately a team captain and committee member. At the end of my first undergraduate year in 1991 I decided that I would like to 'pay forward' (Siedentop, 1995) my experiences of coaching and did the NCA Coaching Certificate (as it was then) and then later the Senior Award. I found myself gainfully employed - firstly for a Local Authority doing children's courses, then by the County for County Coaching and, finally, at the famous Alf Gover Cricket School (or the Surrey Cricket Centre as it was then known) in South London. From 1993, until it closed in 1997, I netted, coached and worked in the retail shop. In total I believe I coached approximately 2,000 hours in that time - from group sessions to (mainly) 1:1 with a bowling machine. It was at this point that I decided to continue my studies and began an MPhil at the University of Brighton - looking at schools cricket and completing a case study of how the sport is experienced. Looking back I think this was perhaps a natural progression to where I am now - a focus that was never quite enough although one of my key findings was that of the influence of the family on the game (see Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1996 and 1997).

My girlfriend (now wife), would regularly 'accuse' me of spending more time at cricket than with her and she would spend match days going home and shopping with her family whilst I would spend it with my surrogate one playing the game. This continued when we moved to Devon in 1997 and I became Director of Youth Coaching at a very successful local club (c.f. Sandford, 1999) and also a senior coach with the Devon Cricket Board. The club was well organised and very well run and it, again, became a second home - such that if I were not playing we would almost always end up watching - or even travelling to away fixtures to watch. Throughout all of the time in Devon I played at least twice a week and, whilst in Devon, there were also nets and two evenings of coaching during the week - it was almost a full time job. The perspective of family in Devon was also obvious - the club had a vast number of father-son links, as it did whole family links (the club's standing joke was that the 'Smith's' and 'Albion's' [pseudonyms] could put out a single team to rival any other we had).

A further move to a full time academic post in Birmingham in 2000 cut short that association and any coaching links I had (until November 2002). Initially I played club cricket in a strong county league side but I found the club disjointed with very little family atmosphere. I had also become friendly with some club stalwarts from the village we were living in and, before long, I'd joined them and dropped down to a lower league club (more local) where the family link is extremely strong. In fact at the recent annual dinner my wife and I estimated that almost half of those involved in the club were in some way 'related'. However, the few incomers to the club (of which I was one of about five in the past few years) were still warmly accepted into the fold.

What is clear is that through the experience of writing and reflecting on the data for this thesis, I have actually begun to come to terms with my own views. Whilst being emotionally involved in the research through my experiences, it was not until the data was gathered and topics were looked at that the notion of the club as 'family', or 'home', actually sprang up. To bring the narrative up to date and include some views I recall in one of my early meetings with the club chairman at Boughborough in April 2001 was that he claimed the reason for the success of the club was "the family atmosphere". At the time I remember thinking how simple an explanation and 'get-out clause' that became and I failed to question it any further - as this is what anyone

involved in club sport would say, even myself. What I failed to do until now is identify how the club is experienced in such a light, how it becomes a family and how this atmosphere is produced. In short what is 'a family atmosphere', how does it work, what does it do and how is it created? How is the nature of the club a 'family' and how does my experience impinge upon this? - in fact this leads to questions further discussed in the data review chapters.

Whilst I became aware of the interest in playing and coaching, I also became further aware that there were some very different young people, parents and coaches who I encountered week in and week out. I came to question my understanding of these relationships – between coach, player and parent and the more I saw of this dynamic, the more I convinced myself that to make it work more effectively I needed to understand it. Having already conducted an ethnographic study into young people and cricket in an educational setting, it became clear that whilst, at that time, the political rhetoric ('Sport Raising the Game') focussed on school sport, there was an increasing need for knowledge and understanding of junior **club** sport. In addition, I felt that there was also a need for a wider appreciation of the experiences (both positive and negative) that young people receive from this informal grass roots instruction.

Throughout my coaching experiences (approx ten years), at every level, I have been something of an observer and, whilst, some of the previous research I had conducted (i.e. Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1996 and 1997) had begun to scratch the surface, this whole issue of the club experience for young people has never ceased to interest me. Whilst being able to discuss and observe general issues and individual cases, it became clear that a more systematic in-depth approach would need to be taken to elicit quality data. Having already conducted an educational ethnography (see Toms, 1996) of the sport, it was clear, and somewhat appealing, that an in-depth study of club would be appropriate.

My continuing interest in the socialization process, the need for further research into youth club sport and the desperate state of club cricket led me to approach (through a senior colleague) David Kirk at Loughborough University. My academic teaching post gave me the interest, commitment and 'time' to launch into such an in-depth

ethnographic study. My one requirement – in a region very new to me was to find a suitable club that would allow me unlimited access.

Having sat back and thought about my experiences in cricket as a young person it is clear that throughout my sporting life I have seen cricket clubs, for which I have played, as extended (or ‘surrogate’ families). Now that I begin to look through my data, and put together some substantive theory, it is clear that this issue occurs in some form for all of those involved at Boughborough. From my own research (Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1996 and 1997) it is clear that the influence of the family in cricket has been a major focus of my life and my academic research. From my own perspective my life narrative has revolved around the game, and continues to do so, in many ways. I feel that I have been socialised into life through the sport.

It is difficult not to explain this without getting into very personal narratives. Whilst it is not ‘physical’ pain on the lines of Sparkes (1996) or emotional trauma at an adult level, it is the process of writing a means of conveying "dialogue, emotion, embodiment and spirituality" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; 739) that underpin this section. It brings elements of my own life experience to the forefront. What is central to my understanding of the club as family is my own biography and background. It is an aspect that I will attempt to convey through the reflexive acknowledgement of my data collection and analysis.

3.4.2 The Researcher and Positionality

To begin this section it is important to note that (as section 2.2.1.3 on Social Positioning highlights) Goffman’s notion of role theory is going to be further developed in order to explain these issues within the parameter’s of Davies and Harré (1991) social positioning. Whilst this does not affect the underpinning theoretical premise on which this theory is based, the positioning of the researcher is far more dynamic than the idea of the role of the researcher. Thus (as Davies & Harré, 1991 discuss) it is the dynamic aspect of the encounters that formulate the position (through the language and conversation) of the various individuals involved. The position that I gave myself in the research was one of an interested adult. I was, as Lyons (1992) puts it, conducting research by just ‘being around’. Whilst this was not the case when I became involved in the coaching when they were understaffed or over crowded

(which in reality was quite often), it did give me the opportunity to consolidate my role. The issue of role is important (I have already discussed positions and roles in Chapter 2) and in this instance we are looking at the 'social positioning' of the researcher. Whilst Wellin & Fine (2001) discuss the many issues of role conflict and occupational identity in the work place, it is clear that my study (although not following this pattern precisely), can be alluded to in that manner. The ultimate aim was to use my role and **position** to help produce relationships where the participants could drop out of character and relax (Raffel, 1999). In short, the aim of the study was for me to negotiate a position (as opposed to role) within the club.

During the ethnography, it became clear that I had created multiple positions in the club. In a similar manner to Collins (1998), who found his longitudinal interview work in local government involved "dynamic social interactions wherein multiple dialogues are conducted between multiple selves" (Collins, 1998; abstract), it was clear that there were multiple positions that I held within the club. Collins (1998) himself felt, through his interactions in the interview situation over a two year period of research, that he was not just an anthropologist (as he introduced himself) but that the respondents had created a number of other roles for him. To them he also became an expert, a storyteller, a sympathetic ear, a biographer, a confessor, a counsellor, a confidante, a filter or go between, a co-conspirator and a co-performer. In short he found that within the interview situation he was being 'played' and 'inherently manipulated' (Hubbard et al, 2001) by his participants into these positions. Collins was clearly practicing multiple positions in his role as a researcher - depending with whom he was talking.

These positions are also visible in other research. Hayes (2001; 24) for example, in his work on decision making amongst Primary School staff teams, identified that he became used as a "Trojan horse to convey their ideas and concerns to the headteacher". Hayes (2001; 22) also cites Scheurich (1997; 62) in saying "the researcher has multiple intentions and desires, some of which are consciously known and some of which are not. **The same is true for the interviewee**" (with emphasis added). It is interesting to note how the same issues affected my own position as a researcher at Boughborough. Whilst I was used by both Chris and Dave as a 'Trojan

horse' to convey ideas and issues to the chairman (Paul), I also felt at times that I had become a pawn to legitimise their own coaching practices by being asked to agree with what each was doing:

A nightmarish evening with Chris and Dave today. I've been moved around the coaching chess board all bloody night. First Chris openly asked my opinion on whether after last night's debacle I thought the A team needed nets tonight, when he well knew that Dave's group were due in the nets (it didn't dawn on me at the time). Then Dave's group appeared and he was formally told that the "resident ECB expert" [i.e. myself] had suggested they ought to net. Having no idea of what had just occurred, I blindly walked into the situation to receive a frosty glare from Dave and a grin from Chris. Thankfully Paul appeared and said that since the Under 11's game that evening was not on they could use the artificial [Dave's preference]. It was not until the end of the evening when talking to Paul that I realized what had happened, and that I had been played by one and lost face with the other. I'll need to sticking plaster the relationship next week. (Field notes, 25 May 2002)

What is interesting to note is the way that both Collins (1998) and Hayes (2001) were each given an assumed identity in their research by their subjects. This is clearly linked into the reflexive nature of the researcher as well as the personal and social history of the interviewees. Whilst Huber & Clandinin's (2002) narrative study of schoolchildren and their parents further highlight these issues as they acknowledge and question the way in which the young people react to them – and ask "whilst we were positioning the children, how were they positioning us?" (Huber & Clandinin, 2002; 787). On reflection, it is interesting to see how many roles I played in the club and, in particular, how I became both a 'Trojan horse' and a 'go between' in the issue over the differences in coaching practice by the Under 13 coaches.

However, many of the issues of position came with the interaction within the club and my acceptance was grounded in my relationships with the key subjects (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This was noted quite early on in the study and was consolidated on one evening as the two field note extracts identify below. After that evening I

began to feel that I was an accepted part of the club and that a rapport had been established.

After clapping them in went for a coke in the bar (which I'll do more of each week) bought Paul a coke – had a chat about things generally and the awful weather last week etc. Club secretary came in with a letter – apologised for butting in and Paul read through it whilst I was there – quite openly, explaining as he went the issue to do with a result that wasn't phoned in, then the captain of the team writing a letter about it but without going through the committee. Was quite open with me on committee business, and not afraid to talk about the issues within the club. Colin appeared and said thanks for the last week coaching help – could he buy me a drink, how were things going etc – very friendly and helpful. Even down to the chorus of see you next week from the coaches when I left! (Field notes, 18th June 2001)

Paul also discussed bar rota with other committee members who were there and asked me “you don't know a blonde 18 year old nymphomaniac with huge tits who wants a job here do you?” – to which I countered quickly [with little thought] “sorry – my other half's got an evening job already” – which got quite a few laughs. It was spur of the moment banter – but it horrified me when I realized what I'd said. But what has that made me.....??? (Field notes, 18th June 2001)

The latter field note brings with it issues of identity, masculinity and Moffat's (1989) concerns with masculine 'room-mate' culture in ethnography, of appropriate behaviour and about “being smuttier than they were if I was not careful” (Moffat, 1989; 7, cited in Coffey, 1999; 50).

The initial responses from everyone involved, and the first misconception that they had, was that I was there in a specific position that located me within their experience. The young people thought I was a talent scout, the coaches that I was assessing their coaching ability and the committee that I was there to criticize and audit their club. Hammerlsey & Atkinson (1995) highlight this as the point where there may be mismatch of expectations and where the researcher could be expert or critic (or both).

In this instance the defensive attitude towards the club by some of the older members and committee may allude to that. At the same time as the research progressed it was also clear that this misjudged belief also affected behaviour. One coach, in particular, was convinced that I was there to check his coaching (he was a newly qualified coach). The notion of expert or critic is also interesting as I was often called in to give my opinion on a particular young player.

Watched the melee of 15 kids doing some fielding practice, and doing the usual thing of throwing the ball back rather than passing it back. Then had a call by one of the L1 coaches (Trevor) from the net (quite a nice feeling to be wanted – must have some sort of Kudos here somewhere.....!!). Asked me to look at one boy bowling off the wrong foot but with a leg break style action – not getting it in the right place. Worryingly easy to work out the problem and put it right (which makes me wonder about my knowledge and expertise compared to theirs?). Had a quick chat, got him to have correct grip, slow right down and bounce in from a wider angle to be side rather than chest on, and pivot on front foot. Worked a treat immediately – first ball he bowled moved a mile across the batsman! – to his obvious delight and to the “oohs” of the other coaches and rest of the group who watched – seemed to further enhance my kudos on the coaching side. Felt a bit like a fairy god-mother – appearing and only granting a few wishes before I disappeared again. Actually felt very guilty about it..... (Field notes, 25th July 2001)

This episode was a “fairy godmother” account (Den Hollander, 1967; 13 cited by Hammarsley & Atkinson, 1995; 81). Whilst this did not lead to my departure (as it cost Den Hollander), it did provide me with a level of acceptance within the club and, as time went on, this was to prove invaluable in my closeness to the teams, with the young people, parents and coaches asking my advice on issues. This is similar to Collins (1998) role as the ‘expert’ in his study.

Walked back across to the pavilion (teams had swapped around) a little bit taller with what I felt was a bit more kudos. Noticed that I deliberately didn’t make a big thing about the coaching tips – really does make me feel like a fairy god-mother.....Almost convinced myself to get further involved in the coaching..... (Field notes, 25th July 2001).

Hayes (2001) noted that much of the data gathered came from informal exchanges in the car park and this was very true for me at Boughborough. For example at the end of many of the coaching sessions I would find myself hanging back to catch people as they were leaving, and perhaps as their guard was down, since I hoped that they would have stepped out of the practice of their positions within the club. In this way, I hoped to gather additional data.

One of the other key aspects to the study and my acceptance at the club was through my impression management. I would always attend the sessions in the following way – a ritual and habit that I hoped would show me to be reliable and consistent.

All sessions started at around 6.30pm, so I would ensure that I was the first there at about 5.45 and would unlock the gate and park at the top of the ground by the hedge – giving me unobstructed views of the pavilion, nets, gate and car park. I could then write notes clearly and unobtrusively as people arrived. I drove the same car. My dress rarely differed, tracksuit bottoms, Pony 2000 Cricket boots, Devon County Coach cricket shirt (showing an importance but no local affinity) and (when cold) a Sandford CC tracksuit top. Since the coaches all had their Boughborough kit on, my main aim was to stand out. I did not wish to be perceived as a Boughborough coach, player or official. Similarly, I did not wear ECB or University clothes as I did not wish to be ascribed to them, nor the baggage that such a perception of me would bring. Whilst this is not on the same scale as Willis (1977), my aim was to look the part but not to fit in too well. It was a pragmatic decision to maintain a position somewhere between all those involved through my dress, behaviour and impression management. As an example of this and the way I tried to fit in, the following two extracts from my field notes highlight this complexity to both the club and the young people. Ultimately, this also highlights the position I ascribed to myself within these relationships and therefore the way I had to manage myself between the groups with these multiple positions of practice.

One of the under 12's asked me if I was really from the ECB scouting for new talent. I replied that I wished I was, but no I was a coach and a researcher [I had already decided against saying I was a lecturer or teacher for fear of the way they would position me as a figure of authority]. I explained that I was trying to find out what they thought of the game, why they played it and how

things could be improved. He seemed happy with that explanation and after a second of thought he said, “well you could get them to put more varieties of crisps behind the bar”, and then carried on in the nets. Later I discovered that he [Ben] had understood what I meant, but was a bit quick witted (like his father Tony). (Field notes, 4th June 2001)

A lady arrived to water the plants (Mrs Smith), she eyed me a little suspiciously and then introduced herself. When I said who I was she replied – “oh yes, I’ve heard about you – you’re the one from the great cricketing institution [I assume she meant Lords or the ECB] who’s here watching the coaching”. I decided not to correct her entirely – but explained that I was from Birmingham University and that the report will go to the ECB, and that I was looking at the kids experiences of the coaching more than the coaching itself. We then went on to chat about the state of Higher Education – her kids are at Birmingham... and she went on to criticise the way Birmingham works [creating another level of ethical dilemma for me!] We then chatted pleasantly about the cricket, the weather etc until a few minutes later the kids start arriving. (Field notes, 29th July 2001)

Fleming (1997), in his study of PE and schooling, found that trying to manage his appearance and behaviour amongst teachers and pupils caused many ethical dilemmas and that he had to be careful how he was seen by both parties. This was similar to my multiple positions and the way I practised them although, thankfully, since I was not in an authoritative environment or relationship with any of the subjects this was made easier.

With regards to my acceptance, I (like Sands, 2002) found some acceptance was by spending time talking to the coaches on an informal basis in the bar after a match or practice session. In a sense, like Sands’ (2002) research on college football players, I found that “the gift of beer – culturally relevant and appropriate to the demographics of the population – was given in exchange for interviews” (Sands, 2002; 39). However, in my view, it was more than that, it was a mutual understanding and a cultural expectation of the research process. Clearly, this acceptance relies on the

positions I was ascribed and was dependent upon the relationships with the others involved.

Arrive early 5.30 – and open gate to get in. Intend to read through transcribed interviews to get the bigger picture. Plan is scuppered as Peter and his son arrive at 5.40 for an U15 game against *****. Follow Peter across the ground to the pavilion with the intention of having a chat and interviewing his son. Both too busy “can’t help you now – some bugger’s lost the changing room key – could you have a look behind the bar and in the till for it for me?”. Dawns on me the amount of trust they have in me. Even though I’m not even a member of the club I have access to everything here (Field notes, 9th July 2001)

Arrive late at Boughborough having been in a meeting, but greet the regulars with a hello and find out what’s happening – Boughborough lost toss and are fielding. Tony also asks me if I know anything of league rules on light (it’s already getting dark), to which I can only reply “not really – it’s up to the discretion of the umpires and managers really”. Seems to satisfy them but get the impression they think I am something to do with the league committee or something (?). Roger walks out with my staple drink from his foray in the bar and a smile – “thought you might like this” (diet coke). Spend a few minutes chatting generally about the weather, the new school term, the golf degree (one or two had put 2 and 2 together on it and even seen me on the local and national news) and also the local beer festival that I’d mentioned to them a few weeks before. (Field notes, 20th August 2001)

Headed straight for the pavilion – and found Peter behind the bar as usual – first comment from him was – “my god are you back to do more??? How’s things going.....here I’ll get you a beer and we can catch up”. Realised my true level of access to the sample/club – I’m almost an insider, makes me feel like part of the team. (Field Notes 29th April 2002)

The way that I also became a member of the club to some of the parents was also interesting although, arguably, this was a case of over-rapport (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). There is no doubt that my interaction with those involved almost

ensured that I had 'gone native' in my research. An example of this banter and inclusion was noted within the first few months of my research:

Walking back to the clubhouse I'm made room for by the 'usual parents' sitting on the benches by the pavilion – Roger, Harry, Rosie, Louise, James (who leaves) and player/parent. Are there for whole evening and some drinking as things get a bit raucous – rude jokes flying about (I'd estimate them to all be in their late thirties or early forties). Rosie tells a story about her nine year old son who asked her on the way over what a "P-lesbian" is – she was dumbfounded until she realized it's "Plebian" and he'd found it in his Asterix book. Provides great hilarity to others and even the match stops to watch them laugh! (Field notes, 30th July 2001)

Whilst there is the positive, there was also an element of what Sands (2002) refers to as 'culture shock'. Moreover, he also notes that "this admission of shock and the description of the interaction between fieldworker and behaviour becomes an integral part of retelling the 'story' of the ethnography" (Sands, 2002; 34). As this is an interesting point, it is more interesting to note that in the middle class 'safe' world of club cricket I was shocked by one particular event, not so much the occurrence, but more the way it was dealt with by the coaches. In short I was embarrassed, but not only that, I was embarrassed that I was embarrassed!

As we were looking at the remains of the nets Matty turns up (first time I've seen him this year). Says hello briefly – "I heard you were back!" to me, and then says – "Yup – I reckon it was those f*****g Gippos from xxxxxxx who came down and f*****g did this. They must've even had the f*****g Allen keys to undo them. What the f*** are they going to do with them? There's not enough to put a f*****g scaffolding around their own f*****g dicks!". I was flabbergasted at the language and not sure where to look or what to do. So I said nothing (but noted my reflexivity in this situation). (Field notes, 28th April 2002)

When in the field the first experience of young people is one of an outsider or a coach, thus the positions that I gave myself were key. Impression management is a major aspect of acceptance and the adoption of a least adult role (Mandell, 1991) is important when gaining access to a sample of young people. Unlike an ethnography in

an educational setting (such as Fleming, 1997), it is important to provide an image to which all of the participants can relate. The position I ascribed to myself was that of a cricket coach and a researcher thus enabling me to fit in with the hierarchy but, hopefully, in a non-authoritarian role. It also gave me some credibility within the club from coaches, parents and the club committee alike. It was very much a case of what Lyons (1992) calls 'being around' rather than of being a 'participant observer'.

3.5 Data Analysis

This section will explain the way in which the data was analysed and then conceptualised (see results chapters). Whilst there are clearly many ways of collecting and analysing data in qualitative research (c.f. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a), the methodology adopted by this study involved the collection of qualitative field notes and interview material. Having also started from an exploratory research base it was clear that the best approach to gain an understanding of the situation at Boughborough was through a grounded theory approach – the use of theory to inform the data collection process (Williams, 2003).

3.5.1 Grounded Theory: An Explanation

The grounded theory approach is an inductive design where data are constantly gathered, theories deduced from the data gathered and then more data gathered to test the theories. This type of analysis and theory development is thus 'grounded' in the data collection (Gratton & Jones, 2004). The theoretical framework is based around the data that emerges from the project. In other words, the theory is "derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; 12). There are also two central tenets to grounded theory - firstly the importance of theorising close to the data and, secondly, the commitment to the development of theories (Marvasti, 2004).

Grounded theory works through the clear use of codes and memos where data chunks are evaluated then re-evaluated to develop, test, and then re-develop the substantive theory. It is a constant comparison of theory. This theoretical framework is one that involves two phases - firstly the open coding of data (i.e. it is data driven) and, secondly, the refinement and conceptual elaboration of the data established in the first

phase (Ten Have, 2004). This second phase then involves the writing of ‘memos’ that explain and conceptualise the ideas formed from the coded data.

Within qualitative methodology there are a number of arguments about the epistemological stance taken by many grounded theorists. Marvasti (2004) notes that the explanation of grounded theory used by the likes of Strauss & Corbin (1998) provides an objective approach to grounded theory where the collection of data are like “gathering gold nuggets of facts from the riverbed of data” (Marvasti, 2004; 86). However, there is also a constructionist approach to grounded theory, which places a more precise emphasis on the collected data and its analysis as the products of social interaction (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, Charmaz, 2002 and Marvasti 2004). My study more closely adopts the constructionist approach to grounded theory data and analysis where the symbolic interactionist approach to the situation being investigated assumes that there are multiple realities created by those involved (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

3.5.2 Data Generation and Analysis

Since the data was gathered throughout the study it was important that it was both transcribed, as well as analysed, to ensure that a grounded theory approach could be best employed. This approach also ensured that the data generated was analysed constantly such that field notes and interview transcriptions were written, reviewed and memos written in a structured manner (normally) the day following the data collection. The whole process starts with gathering rich ethnographic data using simple, basic questions. The data from these questions provides context and content about the environment and meanings of the subjects. The data gathered is then used to develop ‘understanding’ of the environment and situations (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

In relation to this study, as the data was collected, so the process of analysis began. Through the use of my experiences, field notes and interview transcriptions the data was coded and memos written in a way that enhanced and informed the generation of theory. Whilst my own reflexivity was also noted (and central to this process), it is clear that my participant observation approach and multiple roles allowed me to focus more closely on relationships and events that occurred and made the generation of

memos and themes easier. The close engagement with the data also made it easier to conceptualise an understanding of the club and the processes such that it was hoped to “sharpen the analytical edge and theoretical sophistication” (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001; 161) of my study.

3.5.3 Codes and Memos

The use of coding to aid the analysis of data and the generation of themes and theories is well acknowledged in the data analysis process (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, Strauss & Corbin, 1998, Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, Tedlock, 2000, Marvasti, 2004 and Ten Have, 2004). Coding is present in many forms of qualitative and quantitative data analysis and it is also well used and well documented within ethnographic research (c.f. Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). With grounded theory in ethnography coding is an interactional process and begins with initial coding of material, followed by an attempt to code everything found within the data. Charmaz & Mitchell (2001; 165) further explain that, unlike the approach taken by Miles & Huberman (1994) of setting codes beforehand, “grounded theorists adhere to the basic premise of developing the codes directly from data through an emergent process”.

The analysis and initial coding of the interview and field note material helped to focus the developmental process I was undertaking and, with the ongoing revision and comparison of data, the emergent theory began to take shape as themes from the data written up as memos (and also as diagrams). As these became more focussed, it was important to ensure that the data fitted the evolving conceptual framework so many modifications, diversions and ‘dead ends’ were made to the material until clear patterns emerged that could stand up to scrutiny (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The memos were of particular use in this part of the process and, whilst they were both written notes on themes as well as conceptual diagrams, they were both invaluable in helping to provide connections between the formal and the substantive theory as well as linking to the wider theoretical concept of Côté & Hay’s (2002a) developmental stages. Initially, the memos themselves took the form of linked ‘post-it’ notes and were then developed and refined into either models (or diagrams) or paragraphs of text to explain the link and development of the emergent conceptual theory. Charmaz & Mitchell (2001; 167) explain:

Memo-making is the crucial step between coding and a first draft... memos bring analytical focus to data collection and to the researcher's ideas... an ethnographer can play with ideas, try them out and check their usefulness by going back and forth between written pages and studies reality.

The continual review and development of these memos underpinned the data collection process and, where concepts and theories arose, further questions were asked to expand upon them. Thus, the data collection process became more focussed and these initial memos became the base that underpins the rest of the thesis through more detailed investigation and analysis.

3.5.4 An Example of Themes

This section of the chapter intends to produce a discussion of the way in which one of the themes (the notion of the family) was outlined by the participants and then analysed through the use of codes and then writing of memos throughout the data collection period.

The first aspect of this was through the identification of a particular theme – in this example, the family. The extract comes from an early interview with one of the young people at the club.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Family atmosphere?, parental influence</i></p> | <p>MT: What do you think of it down here?</p> <p>Ben: It's good it's a good family atmosphere and it's good fun. I like it 'cos it's friendly and mum and dad like it here and they're all really friendly and the grown ups ask you how you're getting on.</p> |
| <p><i>Sport as social occasion, socialisation of parents. Positive attitude to club</i></p> | <p>MT: What about your folks – why do they like it down here?</p> <p>Ben: They enjoy it. My dad likes coming down to the bar and having a beer and a chat, and my mum likes the atmosphere and the people. They think it's really nice.</p> <p>MT: Is it important to you that they like it here?</p> |
| <p><i>Practical help</i></p> | <p>Ben: Well yeah, 'cos they bring me down – they wouldn't bring me down as much if they didn't like it.</p> <p>MT: Did your dad used to play when he was younger?</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Technique and paternal encouragement</i> | <p>Ben: No not really, we've had a knock around in the garden. He never really took it that seriously. He's only just started getting into it since I've been coming here.</p> <p>MT: Your mum does the membership doesn't she. Does that help you?</p> |
| <i>Club involvement as an administrator</i> | <p>Ben: Yeah, it helps me get extra games.</p> <p>MT: Why do you say that?</p> |
| <i>Nepotism and 'accepted' club practice</i> | <p>Ben: If I play bad they still pick me because my mum does this.</p> |

Figure 2: Extract of Interview Transcript Showing Codes and Memos: 16th July 2001

The next level of analysis from this data and initial coding was to develop further sub-themes. From the identification that the family was an important part of Ben's experience of the club, it became clear that 'the family' was a central aspect of the club. Using this extract as an example, a further level of coding was conducted to identify how and why 'the family' was so important to Ben. At the same time the coding methods were employed elsewhere to test other data gathered.

In this example, the data and codes were reviewed in more detail and the next level of analysis involved linking the data to existing theory and writing a memo of thoughts and beginning analysis. It is clear that this notion of family was multi-faceted, so my initial memo was noted, extended and linked to other similar findings from other interviews and observations. This was done in such a way that the memos could be linked together to identify relationships and patterns within the data and, ultimately to begin to theorise and explain their existence. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) note initial memos are both awkward and simple. An example of an initial memo from the above interview transcript is shown below.

Ben clearly sees an important link between his participation and the support of his 'family'. This fits with a lot of the work of Kirk et al, Côté & Hay and Kay. Clearly there are a number of levels though, from the practical and physical to the family environment. There seems to be a number of aspects to this. There is this idea of a family atmosphere (this needs to be looked at in

more detail), and how the club works for these families. It's a social space for them as much as a club for Ben. Secondly there is the support given to Ben by his family – practical help (lifts to the ground, practice in the back garden, getting him games etc). This is similar to my findings in London (Toms, 1996). This needs more analysis to identify how this family-club link works and how important it is. (Memo of 20th July 2001).

This initial memo was then put alongside other similar memos and instances of these comments until a broader picture was identifiable and it was possible to develop a theoretical understanding of 'the family' issue. These memos proved to be the foundation blocks for the development of the key parts of theory outlined in chapters 6 and 7.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) also note that there are other techniques and visual memos and these take the form of diagrams. Early on in the data collection process I found it easier to work alongside the written memos by producing simple diagrams to help conceptualise the data that was being gathered. The first example of this (figure 3 below), is taken from existing theoretical work (Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1996) and explains the influence of the family on cricket participation. This was then used to aid the building of the theory and explanation of the family's role at Boughborough.

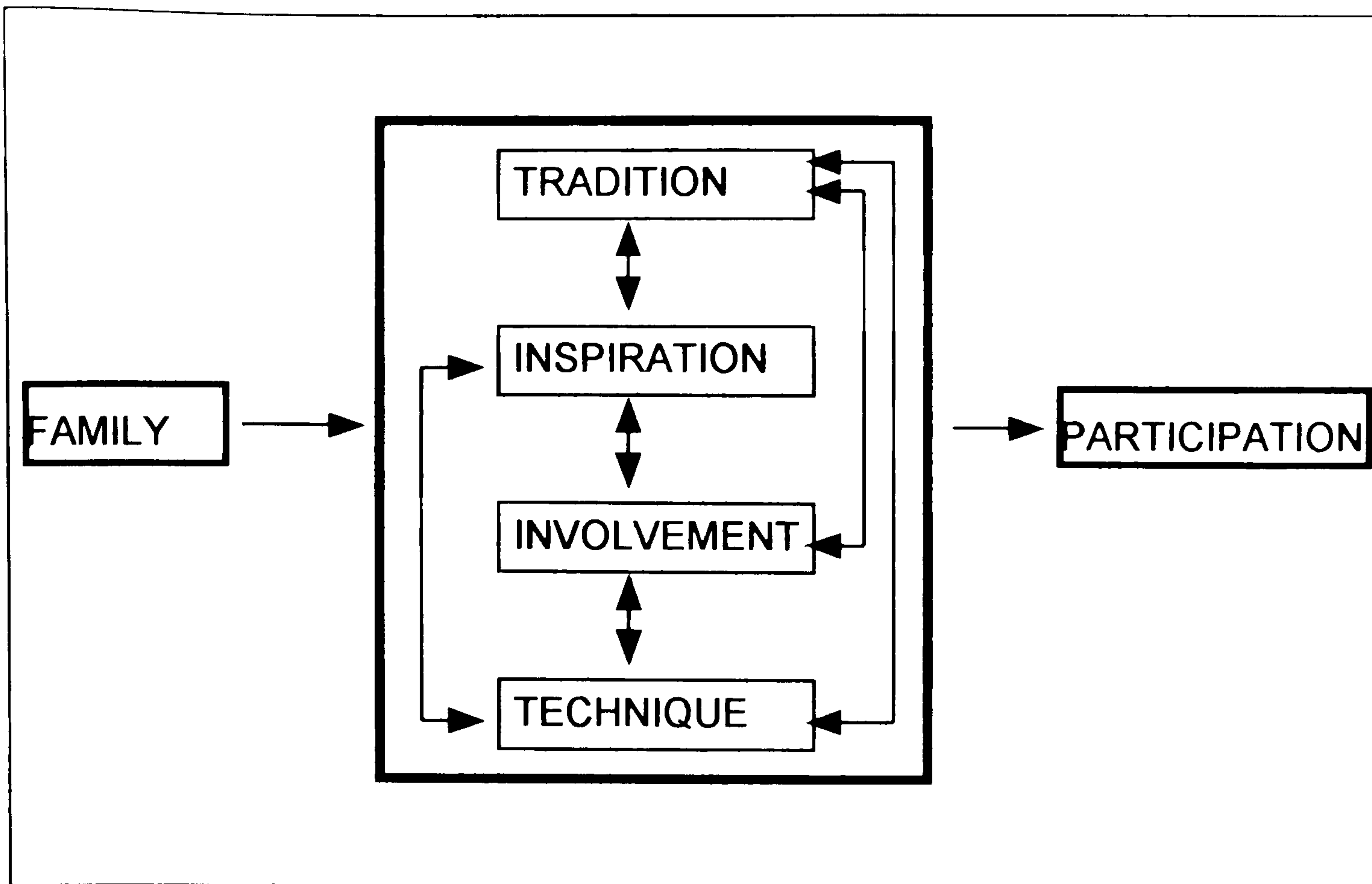


Figure 3: Cricket Specific Model of Family Influence upon Participation, taken from Toms & Fleming (1995) and Toms (1996).

A second example of this can be seen from a later stage of the study, when I was trying to conceptualise a link between the developmental stages at Boughborough and how a young person experiences the club and what affects their participation and attrition.

This model shows a progression and complexity missing from the ones shown above and begins to show the piecing together and development of theoretical awareness in the thesis, as well as a wish to explain to policy makers the needs and requirements of young people within the game. Thus this latter model shows a development of theoretical awareness as well as practical application.

Model of the development of experiences of U13 young cricketers at BCC (Against Balyi & Côté & Hay)

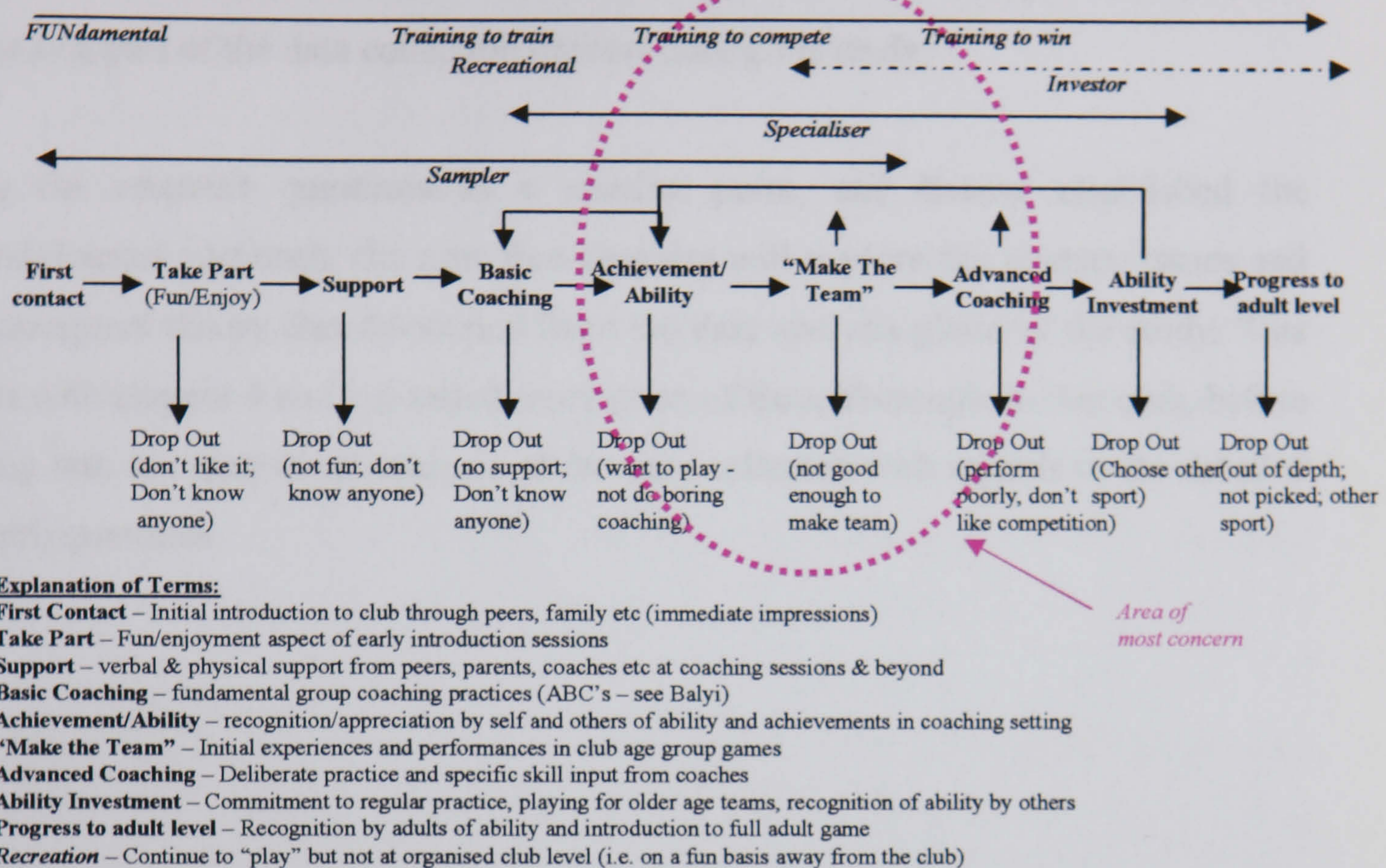


Figure 4: Example of a Conceptual Diagram: 29th October 2003

Through the use of both memos and diagrams it became possible to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework around a number of the issues. From these frameworks it was possible to theorise, refine and develop a clear understanding of the phenomena being investigated. It was through this method and the combination of substantive theory, data theory and further focussed data collection that helped refine the theories and explain what was occurring and why. In this way it was possible to 'gain closure' and evaluate the data that had been generated.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the research techniques used to gather and analyse the data, as well as providing some detailed description of the reality of ethnographic fieldwork at Boughborough cricket club. The chapter has introduced the key theoretical issues which confronted the researcher. It has explored in detail through examples how issues such as access, participant observation, interviews and ethics were dealt with and how this study 'fits' within the genre of ethnographic research on

sport. It also highlights in detail the researcher's reflexivity and background interest in the field. Finally the chapter has discussed the issue of the grounded theoretical analysis of the data, and has shown how the detailed thematic analysis took place as an ongoing part of the data collection process during the study.

Using the research questions as a starting point, and having established the methodological approach, the next five chapters will explore the themes, issues and the conceptual theory that developed from the data analysis phase of the study. This begins with chapter 4 and a detailed description of Boughborough cricket club, before moving into the theoretical analysis of the data collected with regards to the detailed research questions.

Chapter 4:

Boughborough Cricket Club

4.1 Introduction to the Chapter

Having identified the ethnographic methodology used in this study, this chapter provides an analysis of Boughborough itself. As the first data based chapter, this chapter intends to explain and put into context the 'field' of research. This chapter then aims to provide a description of Boughborough cricket club, and provide an insight into the context and reality of the sport of cricket. Much as MacPhail et al (2003; 254) point out, the chapter provides a broad description of the "complex patterning of social practices" at the club.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the club outlining its physical location and setting, before moving on to describe the club environment and its history. I then provide some descriptions and vignettes of the key characters, match results from the second season at the club, and then some examples of typical coaching sessions. Whilst to some extent the chapter provides a descriptive account of events at the club, it is important to notice the thread of themes (linked to the research questions) that exist in the week-by-week occurrences and situations.

Above all this chapter aims to provide readers with an insight into the inner workings of the club and to locate the reader within the environment itself. As Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) identify, this insight is provided by moving the field into the text and the use of description, vignettes and examples provides a context for the interaction and significance of the events within the community of practice.

4.2 An Introduction to Boughborough Cricket Club

This chapter is divided into five separate sections with the intention of producing an account of Boughborough and its members from the researcher's point of view. The intention is to provide a detailed description of the ethnography site and allow the reader to become immersed in the reality of the community of practice that is the club.

The first section begins with an account of the physical description of the club itself and the village of Boughborough. The second section looks in more detail at the narratives provided by some of the players, parents and coaches concerning the club. The third section introduces some of the key characters within the ethnography. The fourth provides a chronology of matches and results played by the Under 13 eleven a side team focussed around the 2002 season and the final section provides a narrative account of a typical coaching session at Boughborough.

4.2.1 The Club Setting

'Boughborough' pronounced as in tree 'bough' (a pseudonym) is a successful village cricket club with three main adult teams playing County league cricket on Saturdays, a local league and friendly team playing on Sundays, a midweek 20 over regional league team and an ad hoc midweek side to play touring teams over the summer months.

Until my first season the first and second eleven were in the upper echelons of their respective leagues. However, during my time at the club, they dropped down two divisions much to the concern of some parents who used it as a way of teasing me about the effect of my role there and that I was clearly 'the kiss of death' on them. More importantly, the club also has a thriving youth section with organised teams ranging from Under 10 to Under 16 and a girls under 16 side. They also offered a 10-week block of 'coaching' for the 7 to 9 year olds on a Sunday morning leading up to the school holidays. This was done on an ad hoc basis for those who turned up each week (including the coach).

The club is found within commuting distance of a large conurbation and is in a highly sought after village location. It is described by many estate agents in their property details as a "quaint English village from a bygone era" (Field notes, 29th May 2002). It appears to suffer from little crime and, although becoming a rich commuter village with more and more 'incomers', it still has the traditional village atmosphere (parish council, WI, summer festivals, church grass cutting rota, local milk and paper man etc).

The village itself contains many listed properties and houses range from thatched 16th century cottages to large Georgian brick built properties. Two of the pubs are 'black and white' and the Working Men's club, nestled next to the butchers, appears to be two cottages knocked into one. Further out from the centre and at the opposite end of the village to the cricket club (closer to the football and tennis club) is a small former council estate of about 25 houses of which the majority are now privately owned. Property prices in the village are around 25% higher than the county average because of its location. Driving through the village on my way to work also highlights the wealth of the area: of the two dozen properties with visible parking in front of them and on-road parking (many have garages and side/rear parking) it is unusual to see any vehicle that is more than 4 years old or 'cheaper' than a BMW. In fact most of the visible cars in the village are prestige or 4-wheel-drive. The following example taken from my field notes highlights this further:

Got to Boughborough at 5.30 in torrential rain, got to be the worst I've seen it for ages, drove slowly past the gates – no one there. Wrestled with my conscience (and better judgement) and thought I'd give them another 20 minutes and then go home if there was no sign of life. Turned round and went back and parked on a (very nice) side street in the village for a few minutes. Useful opportunity to get a better look at the village – some very large Tudor and Georgian buildings up for sale – must find out how much so thought I'd phone the estate agents numbers - £450,000 for the 4 bed Georgian, and £375,000 for the 3 bed Tudor apparently – bloody hell! (Field notes, 13th May 2002)

Boughborough is also a very popular village for some of the local city dwellers to visit and on particular village 'fete' days the roads in and out are impassable. The cricket ground is almost always used as parking for these events and very often matches have to be arranged or re-arranged around them. Interestingly the president of the club is also on the Parish Council and, to the consternation of the players, she will often dictate terms or events with the club. The village is also a rat run for many commuters (including myself) and the road that passes the ground is very busy from 8 to 9.30 am and 4 to 6 pm on weekdays.

There is a small nursery school in the village but there is no longer a primary school (which closed in 1998), and primary aged children are taken to the nearest primary school 3 miles away. School buses take the secondary aged children to the nearest large secondary school (6 miles away). Many of the young people in the village attend private schools, including a number who attend the school where my wife teaches. Others commute to the large and popular independent schools in the conurbation and in a nearby town (8 miles away). Whilst it is possible to see from the facades of the houses on the main street that the village was once full of shops, the only ones now in existence are a traditional butchers and a newsagent/village shop. There is little employment in the village itself although a small spring manufacturing business has been set up in a local building and there appear to be a number of inhabitants working from home (a financial adviser, an outside caterer, a solicitor and two architects). Nobody from the club actually works in the village and most travel out to work in the nearby city. At weekends and on some evenings the village receives minibus loads of (stereotypically) middle-aged men on an organised beer crawl – sampling a specific chain of pubs that brew their own real ale. At no time were any of these people seen at the club although it could be surmised that one or two of the ‘howzats!!’ and beeping of car horns during matches could be attributed to this group as they move on to their next watering hole in mid-afternoon.

The cricket club itself is situated at the edge of the village, a stones throw from the church, the 3 pubs and the small village green. As such, it does get a number of locals appearing to watch games in the later afternoon at weekends (if the pubs close). It is close enough for villagers to walk to but suffers from a lack of local support at times. It is not the only sports club within the village - there is a newly built clubhouse for the soccer and tennis club which is found closer to the centre of the village and this appears to attract more visitors on match days, as well as young people and trouble makers at weekends.

Physically the club is on a three-acre rectangular field. The wicket has 11 strips and an ‘artificial’ used by the youth section. The pitch boundaries take-over 3 edges and one end of the field. Even to get to the pavilion from any other part of the ground, such as the nets and practice or car parking area during a game, requires you to wait to the end of an over and walk in front or very close to anyone standing on the mid

off/fine leg boundary (see Figure 5). The field itself is agricultural land owned by the club president (and hence the reason she IS the club president) who lives directly opposite the ground across the B road. Cricket balls occasionally pepper her house and, whilst I was there, it was an in-joke amongst the predominantly younger adult players that anyone hitting the house got a free pint and on breaking a window was bought drinks all night - a kind of sporting rebellion against authority. The ground is well-maintained and as such always looks professional - with large covers for rainy days and one sight-screen at the lower end of the ground by the road. Since the ground is on agricultural land it is surrounded by a thick and thorny hedge on two sides, by farmland of the nearby dairy farm to the north and west, on the south by the B road and to the east by a fence overlooking a large vegetable garden/allotments.

The current pavilion was built in the mid nineteen-seventies. It is a wooden construction on a concrete base with a bar area/tea room and a small kitchen area with hatch. It also has two changing rooms connected by communal showers and toilets, a score box, a single ladies toilet, two gents toilets, a small roof overhang and a three foot high wooden picket fence around a small enclosure with benches (see Figure 6). The whole pavilion has been painted white and has a sloping fabric based roof. It is in a conservation area and it is unlikely it will be built upon or become surrounded by other properties, although the club anticipate there might be problems updating or rebuilding the pavilion in the future. The bar area of the pavilion is full of cricketing memorabilia, old and new club records and cuttings pinned to the wall, photographs of past teams, touring teams awards and league results as well as photocopies of newspaper articles and record score books. There is a large President's and Captain's board above the entrance and one small wall devoted to emblems and flags of visiting touring teams (from the UK and abroad).

My first experience of the club was as an opposition player. In fact it was my first game for my new club in the area. Having experienced Devon League and North Devon League cricket this was what I was used to – a typically rural club. I remember my first thoughts - a wooden pavilion with a bar, small, cold changing rooms and a pitch and outfield that clearly used to be a field. It was not an uncommon sight and as such left me with a feeling of grass roots rural cricket and a very traditional setting. Whilst my experience on the day was not entirely good (2 runs) I can say that I was

partly responsible for their relegation from the top division of the county league that season - a point that was to return to haunt me when some club players remembered this! It also meant that I had already inadvertently “cased the joint” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; 55). My playing links with the club in the next village was a good source of conversation and informal ice breaking – I had something in common and some connection to the club. I was not an ‘outsider’ as much as a local rival and this became an increasingly useful topic of conversation for my acceptance and credibility in the club. With match reports, league position and performances a good source of information, as well as another tool in establishing my credence as a cricketer and a good introduction to the inner workings of the club.

The practice nights take place on the artificial strip when matches allow, the net area, or the space in-between the pitch and where parents and visitors park their cars (see Figure 5). The practicalities of the coaching evenings (i.e. what match is occurring, how many young people turn up and how many cars are parked there etc), will often dictate what coaching occurs. Thus, the coaching tends to be run on an ad hoc evening-by-evening basis. Dave’s preference to use the middle and Chris to use the nets to practise means that with a match on and little other room, the practicalities become very difficult. For this reason, the club is looking for a second ground and has been discussing with the Parish Council and President about the use of the field opposite the ground.

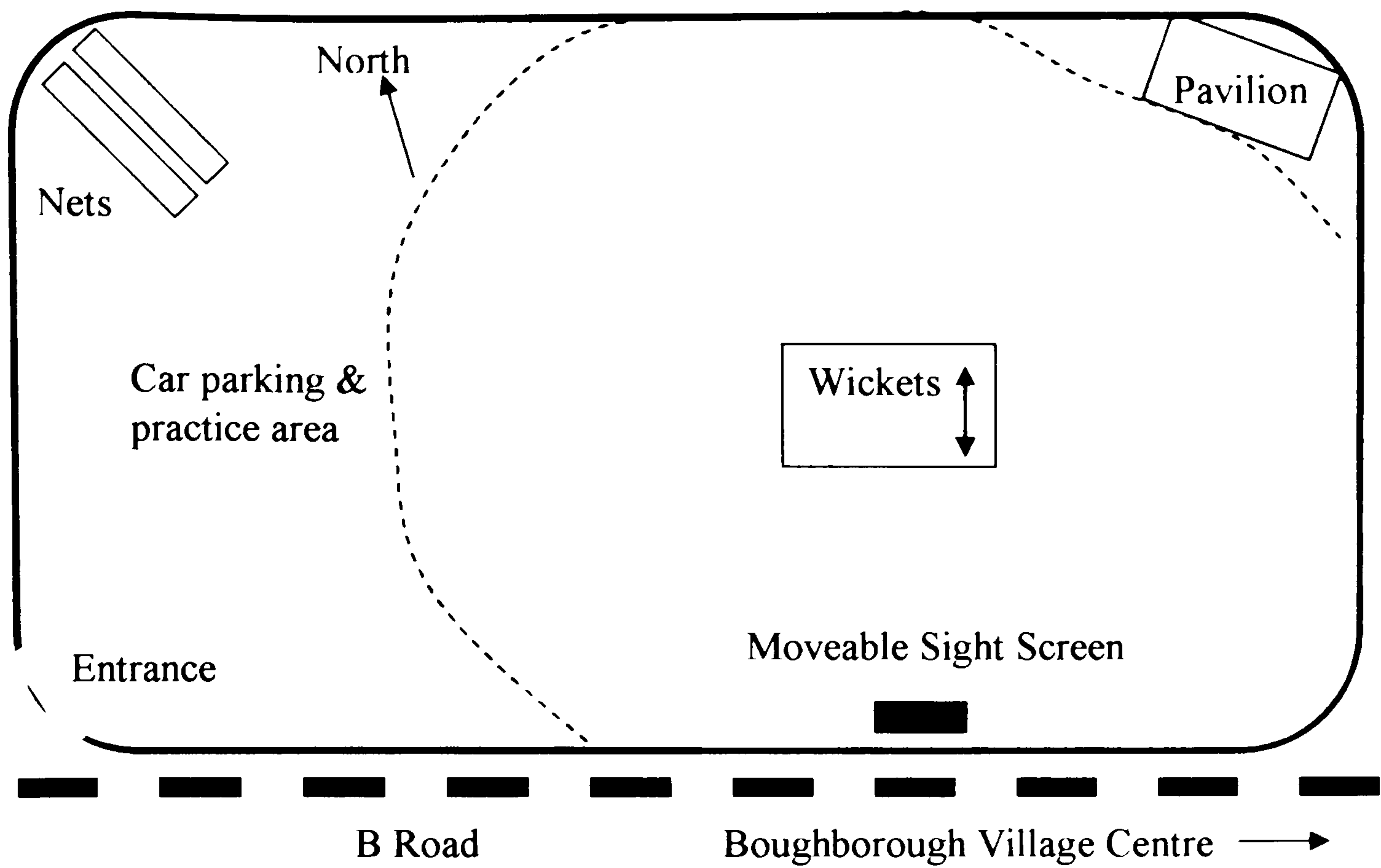


Figure 5: Boughborough Cricket Ground

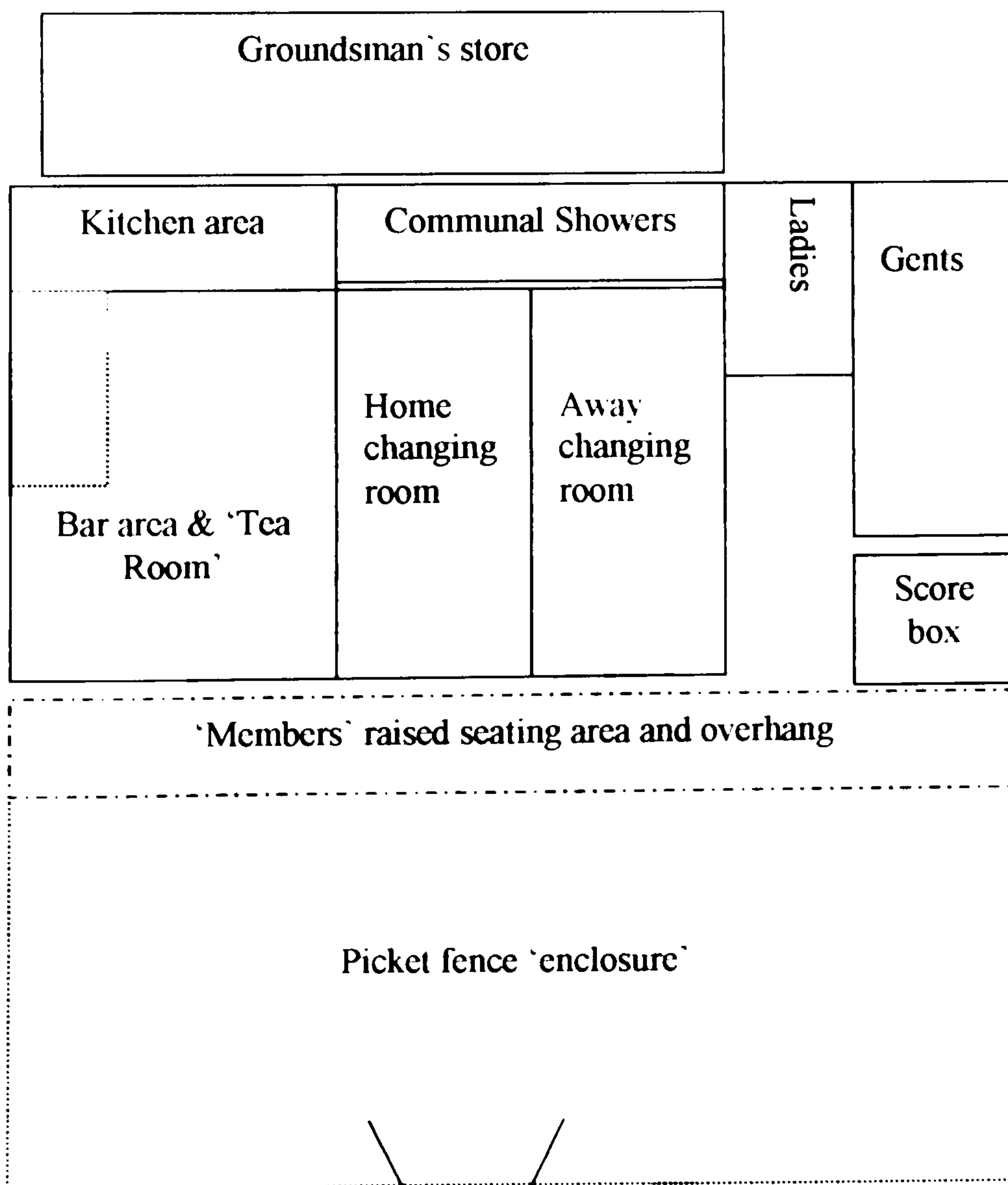


Figure 6: The Pavilion at Boughborough

4.2.2 Histories and Stories from the Club

This section intends to highlight the ways in which the players, young people and parents built the club's history and 'place' for me. It is essentially some examples of how the club was experienced, seen and constructed for my benefit through the narratives, stories and experiences of the people involved in it. These stories were told to me as events, dramas and simple reminiscences and take the form of both field notes and interviews. The field notes often emerged over a drink in the bar at the end of a coaching session, during a match or even during rain interruptions. The interviews were more often than not carried out on one of the benches around the edge of the ground.

It is an attempt to bring to the reader a better understanding of the history and workings of the club and also to show how the club was constructed for me (as an outsider) by its members. Throughout the first few months (and the entire first season) it was clear that the view presented of the club was very much of one through 'rose tinted spectacles' and it was probably not until I was accepted that some of the real issues became more apparent and were discussed.

4.2.2.1 Traditions, Successes and the (Re)Construction of Boughborough Cricket Club

The first genre of stories that were evident to me were principally based around the age and traditions of the club. This is something that is interesting since I clearly have no way to prove or disprove the stories and am entirely reliant on my informants. They highlight a social history that the club members (as it is they who provide this) construct, and have constructed, about the club. It is amazing to consider how often the phrase 'do you remember when' crops up in post match team conversation as the team's successes are relived and replayed by all involved. The romantic ideal of Boughborough's hey-days and the softening focus of time, I'm sure, have played their part in the way the club's history and weight of tradition was constructed for my benefit through these conversations. An air of nostalgia was also apparent in the way the stories were constructed. I had also been advised to have a "look around the walls of the pavilion" when I first arrived, clearly to gain an understanding of the sense of history and success at the club. The final story also links the way that the game is

played and seen socially by the players. (Please note that the field notes have been 'reported' as they were written and the interviews are verbatim).

Standing in the pavilion looking through the photos on the wall, Colin highlights from behind me at the bar about "the one just up there" of him keeping wicket at the County ground during a county cup final in 1979. "Those were the days here; we beat everyone, won the league, the cup and got into the village knockout last stages. We had a great team then – and I had my hair too! The scorecard is just next to it – we beat ***** by about 89 runs" [88 as it happens – but a good memory!]. "The whole village came down to the final it was a great day out, we had coaches full there. No-one's that bothered now though.....". Lost in thought, he left it at that and I watched him as he continued to dry the pint glass in his hand for a good 10 seconds – seeming to replay the moments all over again until he noticed me watching. Then he turned, embarrassed, put the glass above the bar and said "No ones bothered now 'cos we're doing so bloody badly!", and stomped out to fetch some more mixers. I couldn't help but smile about what were clearly the "good old days"! (Field notes, 7th June 2001)

Just as we were about to go, one of the VP's stopped Paul to say that one of the old guys from ***** had said to him "this is a proper cricket club – like the old days. You've got a real bit of old England here" (whether that was said for my purpose I'm not sure).....but it did lead to a few comments from various players who overheard - such as "it's not the club that's old and past it it's the players!" [laughter], and "if only the beer prices were still the same!" [laughter]. (Field notes, 18th June 2001)

I was sitting in the bar talking to Peter just before the game started when I was suddenly struck by the sight of the list of club Captains above the door. Whilst I admit I ignored Peter for a moment – I was staggered – there was one name with different initials covering over 25 years from the 50's to the 70's – and then the same surname cropped up in the mid 80's – 90's. "oh – yeah" said Peter who had obviously noted my line of sight "You ought to know that the club used to be a one family club. That's 3 generations there. They built it up

to what it is today really. None around now though, although most of them are Life Members” (Field notes, 21st June 2001)

It’s not a bad club, not a bad side, we’ve done really well in the past – just look at the handbook and you can see we’ve won the league countless times in our heyday in the 80’s. That’s when Dick was unplayable and Dave was just a human run machine. (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th July 2001)

Now there was a great player – a proper Gent he was a real bastion of the club. He died of cancer a few years ago 96 I think, yes the year my youngest was born.. He was a great character always telling stories about the war and how he played for the RAF and played against people like Bradman, Sobers and the like. I don’t think half the stuff he actually said was ever true, but you don’t argue with a 90 year old on things like detail do you? He was well known by everyone, and we still get the odd comments even now by opposition sides like it wasn’t the same without the “VC” around. We’ve even got half a dozen seats out there dedicated to his memory – and his tankard is still in the same place behind the bar.....just there [he points to it]..... It’s just sort of waiting for him to come in and have his usual Timmy Taylor’s. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 4th July 2001).

Met Peter on the way into the ground, he was saying about the old guy “Bert” who died a week or so back. They’d just had a service and scattered his ashes at the ground: “He’d only been down a couple of weeks ago – had had 3 pints of Timmy Taylor’s with the evensong lads [old boys] on the Friday. Diagnosed with colon cancer on the Monday, operated on by Thursday, dies of pneumonia on Sunday. Mind you he was 92! Had his ashes scattered over there under his favourite tree – at least I think he’s there.....hope there aren’t any young ones who come today – they might want to play sandcastles!!” (Field notes, 13th August 2002)

We had a good night Saturday night – like it used to be when we were a top side and before they brought in the drink drive laws. Phew.....I had to get a lift home and didn’t get up ‘til lunchtime Sunday. Still it was worth the trouble

I was in when I got home. It was a proper cricket celebration – even the oppo stayed for a while and we ended up finishing a barrel too! Just like old times really – except my head and body couldn't take it every week now! Don't get me wrong I'm not advocating drink driving, but the club was so much better when there was no law and people were sensible. Now they'll have an orange juice and then go home and go out from there. Sad really – it's killed many a club. (Dave, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

This weight of tradition and construction of the club's history (and therefore identity) is clearly interwoven with the present. The club's fixture card (for example) contains a full list of its honours on the very first page – establishing and venerating its own success to all who see it. The list of photos and cards on the wall also help this impression and it was difficult not to be impressed by this. Whilst these stories do reflect back on past success it is interesting to note how, to some, the club has changed and the behaviour of players has also changed. To some extent the focus of attention on the old days is a distraction from the problems the club is encountering at present. There are still some wistful comments about how the game and the people around it have changed.

It always has worked – it's always been a family atmosphere club, all the time I've been here...if you wanted me to sum the club up in 2 or 3 words I'd say 'family atmosphere'. [MT: WHY DOES THAT WORK?] "'cos then nobody else feels let down - it's not like we're the first team, they're the second team and they're the kids. My philosophy on the way you play a game of cricket – you come off the pitch and you spend time in the bar afterwards socially not just players but wives and kids as well. Some clubs now play a game of cricket and treat it like a football game and say we're finished now we're going. (Peter, Official, Interview 1: 4th June 2001)

It's gone downhill since we got relegated. It's all bickering and in fighting now from what I've seen. They can't get results at all now. Mark and I came down to see the last hour or so on Saturday and it was awful. They [Boughborough] needed about 215 to win and they were going OK at 120-2. Then one ran the other out and it got a bit nasty. They were swearing at each other, then the captain for the batting order, then for not scoring quickly

enough. They really fell down like a pack of cards. They only scored 143 in the end and the whole evening was spent bickering and arguing. From what we could hear most of the side had resigned by about 7.30. It was like going into a bloody war zone. Doors being slammed, arguments – it was embarrassing to see cricketers act more like footballers actually. (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002).

One of our more undesirable members who's 18, had a private party and this lad was totally obnoxious and he was asked to leave, but he wouldn't listen. They actually physically had to remove him, but unfortunately when they got him outside they fell over the picket fence at the front. He came back later with his dad after protesting that he hadn't done anything wrong and he wasn't drunk etc, and the police got involved and he got cautioned. We had to stand back and condone his actions. We then got a barrage of letters from this guy, and it hasn't been a pleasant experience for all concerned. I'm Chairman of the club and I had to deal with it. But I did feel pretty vulnerable, and he threatened to report us to the County Board, and I did try and speak to the secretary of the board. But what could they do about it – what they said was it is a private members club and therefore you have to abide by the rules and the laws of the committee.....I'm sure this sort of thing wouldn't have happened a few years ago. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

You are actually taking on a name of the village – even though I've organised the tours and everything, we're not going away as 11 mates like football, we're going away as 11 people representing Boughborough village. Which I probably find that as hard as anybody because I'm individual rather than I'm doing this for somebody's village, but you've still got to toe the line at some stage to make sure that the village name doesn't get dragged through the mud 'cos you are actually part of something that the village can be proud of. Maybe should be prouder – in my eyes the village should get more involved. (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

4.2.2.2 Humour, Camaraderie and Sociability: The Core of ‘Belonging’

Yet, whilst there are clearly stories of problems in the club, there is also the social banter and support that exists – and to some extent this ‘makes’ the atmosphere of the club. There are many stories and amusing anecdotes that make the club and it is clear that unless you are involved in these you are still an outsider. For example on one occasion at the end of a coaching session when a story was told, the field notes I wrote up the next morning had given me time to reflect upon it:

I was chatting in the bar when Peter tapped me on the shoulder and said “listen to this story.....”. Apparently the touring team they were playing this week haven’t been back for a few years – and there was a lot of interest in their return this Wednesday. Last time they were here one of their players was involved in an incident. They’d had a good game, and then had a very heavy night and had drunk the bar pretty dry. Since they were staying locally, the opposition had just wandered back in the early hours. That is - apart from one, who it seems was set up by his colleagues (as is staple to any cricket tour) and was found very early the next morning (still in a drunken slumber) by the neighbouring farmer (also a club player) in his milking parlour. He had a part of the milking equipment firmly attached to a certain part of his anatomy. The various on-cue punch lines from around the room also helped make the story and we all fell about laughing. Whilst this was only a funny story it was clear afterwards that it had been elaborated, repeated and refined each time it was told, and that everyone in the room had heard it a number of times before – they’d just been waiting patiently for the punch lines. For some odd reason it reminded me of the scene in the film “An American Werewolf in London” where the character played by Brian Glover recounts an oft-told and well-healed joke to the pub regulars about “Remember the Alamo”. I actually felt I was in part of a stage performance with the sort of story that is taken out, polished and then presented at each annual dinner to the embarrassment of the wives, but the mirth of the players! (Field notes, 21st July 2002)

Whilst the social side contains pleasant stories about the club there are also sad ones as the following stories highlight. Both revolve around the nature of the club and its supportive structure and both are central to glimpsing the social dynamics and closeness exhibited by its members.

During the game it turns out Tony and 3 or 4 others have to leave early tonight – surprise birthday party for a parent (Jake – Sean’s dad). To everyone’s surprise, Jake turns up looking down in the dumps – gets a pint and sits down glumly “I’ve been told I’ve got to get back tonight, she [wife] has booked a table for a meal. I only wanted to watch Sean play. I haven’t seen him play for a couple of weeks now.....I just wanted a quiet beer and to watch a game of cricket on my birthday”. Chris nearly chokes on his pint... “we can’t have you getting in trouble though can we...” And the jokes roll on until he goes about 15 minutes later. When he leaves they all burst into laughter, give him a few minutes, finish their pints and head off to his surprise party (Field notes, 6th August 2002)

The 1st team skipper arrives for selection - conversation turns to 1st team opening bowler who's 2 yr old Downs syndrome baby died last Thursday in his cot. Everyone took it personally (although some said mixed blessings apparently -Peter) - and the funeral service is tomorrow with the wake afterwards. "Everyone in the club is going [meaning playing members]", Paul is also the undertaker and is doing the service and has sorted it all out for the village church, other wives/mothers are sorting out food for after the service. "It's a real club thing - everyone has pulled together to help them through this. This is what this place is all about - a community who work together, play together and 'live' together in the village". He was from the village and she was from nearby so everyone knows them. Suddenly find the emotion - I don't know how to describe it really hits home - chokes me - and there's a realisation that this isn't a fictional nostalgic view - it really does exist. The conversation between them (Peter, captain, and a wife) becomes a little more personal and suddenly find embarrassed silences because (I assume) that I'm in there, so I make my excuses "see you at the game tomorrow at *****" and go out to watch the Under 10's finishing their game. (Field notes, 29th July 2002)

4.2.2.3 “You must be really rich then!” Village Cricket and Social Class

Some of the other key stories about the club revolve around some of the people involved and the perceived link between social class, cricket and the expensive place that Boughborough appears to be. There is clearly a self-fulfilling prophecy about

club membership and participation and the club now thrives on this social climbing basis. The first story acts as a view from inside the club and the second story illustrates how others perceive the club.

I work for an engineering company, one of the guys that works for us.....I've got a position of power at work..... Anyway one of the manual worker guys was saying about his kid playing cricket for ***** which is quite a rough club, and he said [Tony putting on a thick black country accent] 'oh yes, we played cricket last week. We went down this little road to this village, I ain't got a clue where we was goin', then we went down these side roads, past this little village, we went up this lane and turned right, and then there was this little ground'. Then he said 'when I got there I didn't feel right, this place was a bit posh, and it looked nice and it was in a little village in the middle of nowhere'. I said 'the direction sounds familiar - was it Boughborough?', and he says 'oh yes that's right it was arr', and I said 'that's where I play', and he said 'bloody hell you play there? - you must be really rich then'. And that's the sort of thing that goes on, that's the way people perceive you. Look at the car park most nights when coaching's on - there's a lot of money in this club". (Tony, Parent, Interview 2: 2nd July 2002)

5.40 - opposition kids appear with their parents. All have thick black country accents - a couple of them remind me of the Harry Enfield characters who are 'considerably richer than yow!' - as they talk constantly about themselves, their kids and their "wonderful 3 week holiday in St Lucia". Feel really sorry for the parent they're talking to. Mother dripping in gold, father tanned with a Gingham shirt buttoned up over vast pot belly! They'd ignored all of the notices about keeping cars off the outfield and drove their kid over in their new convertible Merc to drop him off and show it off to the other parents. Must be early 40's.....going in 20. The women look at the pavilion - rich one says (a-la Hyacinth Bucket but with a thick Black country accent) - "what a quaint little pavilion -needs a bit of paint and some TLC. but quite nice for a country team. Oh how pleasant[hanging] baskets"!!! (Field notes, 6th August 2002)

Where I came from there was a cricket club, but it wasn't for the likes of us, it was quite elitist then, I was brought up one of the local council estates, and we weren't welcome at the cricket club. But coming here now it's OK. I guess since we now live nearby and fit the bill more I suppose then that's fine. I mean we both work and we're doing well for ourselves – so why shouldn't we let them have a go at something I didn't – 'cos I came from the wrong side of town when I was a kid. (Harry, Parent, Interview 2, 2nd July 2002)

Whilst all of these stories provide a clear social impression of the club, its history, traditions, success and atmosphere it also shows that the club is a complex and dynamic 'living' entity. It should also be noted that there are few stories from parents (who are not club members) or the young people about the club apart from passing remarks on results or issues. It would be possible to surmise that the club's atmosphere and tradition is based around the inner core of players, stalwarts and officials. So perhaps some of these parents and young people are yet to provide more than a superficial account of what has happened because they are still new-comers or novices as opposed to the existing old timers and experts (Lave & Wenger, 1990).

4.2.3 Vignettes of the Key Characters

The aim of this section is not only to introduce some of the key participants in the ethnography but also to develop and create a clearer understanding of where they stand within the complex dynamics of the club. It will look at how they were introduced to me as an ethnographer and, to some extent, how they managed their positions and practice in my presence and how I perceived them as an ethnographer. This section is divided into three sections of vignettes – one about the coaches, one about the young people and their parents and a final one on the young people themselves (where their parents were not part of the study). As Hammersley & Atkinson (1996) note, the vignettes provide significance to the data gathered and help to explain the context in which they were noted.

4.2.3.1 The Coaches

The sample of coaches listed below and most heavily involved in the data collection were the ones with whom I had most contact at Boughborough. Whilst the club had around ten ECB qualified coaches during the period of the research there was

considerable discussion within the club about who was, or wasn't, actively helping or coaching within the club. The upshot is that the sample of coaches in the study (those detailed below) are the ones with whom I came into contact most and with whom I established a rapport over the two seasons and, ultimately, who were most active in the 'world' I observed at Boughborough. They are the key characters and, whilst other coaches were accessible during the study, the environment I observed at the club is based around those I encountered most. That is those who were most heavily involved in the under 13 cricket teams at the club. They were the key informants who were central to the study and were happy to be involved in it.

Paul is a 38-year-old undertaker who has played for the second, and occasionally the first team, but now rarely turns out for them due to coaching and family commitments. He has been at the club for 10 years and is the highest qualified coach the club has got (level 3). By trade Paul is the local undertaker and people recount stories of him in his younger days turning up to a match in a hearse with his full funeral regalia on and his 'coffin' of kit in the rear of the car - all for a dare. For the past two years he has been the director of coaching but has now taken on the role of club chairman. He has responsibilities in the county youth squads and because of these cannot attend every coaching session. He has a son who plays with the under 10 age group and helps out there whenever he's not busy elsewhere. Whilst this is good for the club and has helped more young people into the county team he has been criticised for his loss of direction and lack of support for the club by the other coaches. Paul does not live in the village but was born there.

Chris is a PE teacher at a large secondary school approximately 8 miles away. Quite large proportions (approx 2/3rds) of the young people at Boughborough attend his school (or one of its feeder primaries). Chris is a committed coach with his son in the group he coaches. He has been at the club for 17 years as a player and has coached and run teams over the past 15 years. Chris is a stickler for technique and is heavily critical of some of the other coaches. He emphasises technical ability and spends a lot of time during coaching sessions stopping and evaluating the young players. Chris is criticised by some of the other coaches for coaching in a teaching style. He is always at practices on time but disappears during the latter half of the season (most of August) to go on holiday abroad during the school summer break. During 2002 Chris

missed all of August as he went to the Commonwealth Games and then off on holiday straight after. Chris is always early at sessions – and ensures that everything is ready for the session to begin on time. During matches Chris would always umpire and score at the same time – regardless of whether there were other volunteers to help. He is most heavily critical (and vice versa) of Dave for whom Chris acts as vice captain in the Sunday 2nd team. During the second season there was a major change in coaching routine caused by these differences and the Under 13's were split into 2 separate nights to accommodate each coach. Officially this was a pragmatic decision due to other commitments but the underlying reason appears to be driven by differences of opinion, coaching style and pressure from some parents (see also chapter 7).

Dave has been involved at Boughborough for approximately 9 years having played at the club until he was 16 and then returned to it at 36. He has multiple roles and, at the time of the interviews, was second team captain, groundsman, coach and fixture secretary. Two of his sons play for the club - one in his age group and the eldest in the Under 17 side. Dave has been married for 18 years and has lived in Boughborough almost all of his life (he moved away for 10 years when he was first married). Dave works shifts as a security guard at a major manufacturing company in the conurbation approximately 12 miles away and lives in one of the former council houses on the edge of the village which he bought outright 4 years ago. Dave is very laid back and will often turn up to sessions late. During most of the first season everyone knew when his car was approaching because of the hole (and subsequent noise) from the old Maestro's exhaust. Funnily enough this acted as a bit of an inverted school bell for the young players he worked with – rather than calming down at the approach it would do the opposite and impromptu games and nets would dissolve into a free for all while everyone tried to have their turn. Dave would often turn up with a roll-up in his mouth and occasionally coached or umpired matches whilst smoking. He was heavily criticised by both parents and other coaches for being too laid-back and not giving enough technical advice.

Matt has only been at the club for 3 years and enjoyed the structure and support of the club so much that he decided to become a coach. Matt previously played football in a pub league team but found cricket's camaraderie, commitment and experience to be

much more enjoyable so he gave up football for cricket. Matt is single, in his mid thirties and travels 15 miles to get to the ground (which is closer to his work than to his home). Matt is a salesman working for large plastic manufacturing company. He is the club joker and a larger than life character who the young players think is great fun. He is always late to matches and coaching and turns up in a big multi-coloured jeep with music blaring out. Matt is fully aware of his limitations and sees his job as inspiring the young people and “persuading them that they are better than they really are”. Matt has caused some consternation amongst the club committee for trying to sell Boughborough ‘pyjama cricket’ kit, which the club’s traditionalists have poured scorn upon. This has not, however, dissuaded him from trying to sell them anyway (even to me!).

Peter is one of the club stalwarts and easily the main link and contact for me at the club. As well as being the initial gatekeeper – and putting me in touch with Paul - he was at virtually every coaching session and match, either running the bar, doing odd jobs or watching. In many respects he was my key contact and became my guide and mentor to Boughborough. Peter runs a dairy farm just outside the village with his brother and whilst, not a great cricketer himself (he admits), he plays occasionally in the midweek friendly and Sunday friendly side as it fits in with the milking. Peter is 50 and acts as the club’s league representative, and in the final year of the study became club chairman “’cos I’m here all the time anyway”. Peter is critical of some of the coaches and other players and is always at the centre of discussions. He often seems to be the arbitrator between coaches and parents.

From just a single reading of the vignettes of the coaches it is clear to see how very different they are and how they have different understandings, experiences and expectations of the game and how these feed into their positions and coaching practice. Chris, for example, uses his teaching experience to help coach technique, whereas Dave simply lets the kids get on with it. Whilst these differences highlight the different social positions held by the coaches (c.f. MacPhail et al, 2003a) they also show, and provide an insight into, how each coach creates their position and how they consolidate this position within the study.

4.2.3.2 The Young People and Their Parents

Initially this section will be divided into two, with the first part of these vignettes focussing on the samplers in the group and the second section on the specialisers. The young people discussed below are the key characters and informants who were involved in the study – they were the ones to whom I could gain access most easily and were the most forthcoming of the sample. To put this into perspective, the sample I case studied here are approximately one third of the group and, whilst I interviewed 90% of the young people, these were the key informants and (like the coaches) the young people (and parents) with whom I built up the best rapport. Whilst the others are mentioned or discussed elsewhere in the study, it is these individuals who elicited the most information about themselves and, as most ethnographers find, were the ones who were in the study environment on the most regular basis.

4.2.3.2.1 The Samplers and Their Parents

Alex is a 12-year-old sampler who left the club during the second year of fieldwork. He came to the club because he knew Ben from school and because their parents are friends. Alex continued to do rugby, swimming, cricket and tennis whilst he was part of the study. During the middle of the second season Alex left to join a local “old boys” multi-sport club of which his paternal grandfather was a past president – offering rugby and cricket (and also hockey). It is not known if he continued with these sports once he left Boughborough.

Alex’s parents are recently divorced and he lives with his mother. Boughborough is often used as a swap over point for them and, on a few occasions, both parents have stayed to watch as they have mutual friends at the club. Alex and his mother live 5 miles from the club whilst his father has moved another 5 miles further away.

James (father) is a self-employed accountant and his ex-wife (Jo) is a nursery assistant. James has a reputation within the club as being fastidious and out-spoken. (As an example on one occasion he left a match early to go to a council meeting about the provision of streetlights on a nearby C-road much to the amusement of the other parents). James is a ‘critical spectator’.

Alex considers himself to be an all-rounder but rarely makes the full team due to his lack of ability. James however, sees the situation from a different perspective and is

critical of the way the club coaches, selects and plays teams. James said from our first meeting that he was thinking of taking Alex to another club next year. Alex is more focussed on playing and having fun than nets or practices and his aim is getting a game for the team. He is a typical sampler.

Ben is a 12-year-old sampler who plays cricket and tennis in the summer and football and rugby in the winter. During the second half of the study he said he was going to give up the football and tennis to concentrate on the other two sports. He has been at Boughborough for the past 4 years.

Ben comes to every match when he's selected and all of the practices. Ben is either accompanied by his mother (Rosie), who has helped organise the youth section membership and finance (unofficially), or his father (Tony), now a general committee member. Occasionally they both come to games separately as Ben's younger brother (William - 8) is at cubs and because the evenings clash he is brought to Boughborough by his mother. William is thinking of starting cricket next year and giving up cubs. Both Tony and Rosie are 'current-official' committed members. Tony is a senior manager and considers himself a 'self made man' in a production company in a suburb of the city. He is proud of his humble beginnings and his company Mercedes and is known as quite a reliable and jovial character in the club. He will always be found standing by the door or sitting amongst a group of parents relaying stories or telling jokes. Ben has taken on much of his father's personality and is often the centre of attention of the group and is quite popular with his peers.

Both Tony and Rosie know that Ben is not a natural cricketer (and is much better at football) but are more than willing to support him at Boughborough rather than at football because of the positive social, psychological and friendship benefits they perceive here. All are aware that there is some hint of nepotism towards Ben's selection because Rosie does the membership – even if this is not stated directly. Ben is mainly a bowler who does his best with the bat (highest score of 7). He is not confident in his ability and is quite happy to be a follower. He prefers proper matches because once you're out you're out and cannot let the team down further. He is often put into the 8 a side teams because he is not good enough for the 11 a side. He prefers

playing to practice and is intent on fun and enjoyment in the game. He is a sampler in the way that Côté & Hay (2002a) define it.

Sean is a 12-year-old sampler who plays football, cricket and golf. He has been at Boughborough for the past 5 years and his dad used to play regularly for the second team until a knee injury forced him to retire. Sean goes to school with most of the others at the school where Chris teaches. Sean is seen as quite a talented young player but is rather headstrong which he himself admits. He attended two thirds of the practices and played in all of the matches he was selected for. He is quite happy to attend the club and socialise – as his father does - and prefers playing to practice and is one of the leaders of the clique (including Ben, Sam and Mark) who will go and smash a ball about in the nets at the end of the session whilst their fathers have a pint at the bar.

Jake (Sean's dad) is a forty-year-old estate agent who used to be a useful middle order batsman and occasional bowler for the second team but now concentrates on golf (due to his injury). He has also begun to take Sean with him so that they are now more likely to play golf than attend cricket. Whilst they live locally (the next village – 3 miles away) Jake only really spends time at the club watching Sean or catching up with his friends.

Sean is drifting towards golf and has become involved in the junior section at the private golf club they play at (14 miles away) where they spend most weekends. Sean it seems is likely to become a specialiser by giving up cricket as both he and his father acknowledge the time issues in being involved in both.

Edward is a 13-year-old sampler who plays rugby, golf, cricket and fencing in his spare time. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, Edward goes to the local public school and lives in the village (where his family moved to a large house 2 years ago). Edward quite openly admits to not taking the coaching seriously at Boughborough and mucking around – since he perceives the coaching at his school to be far more advanced and he learns there so plays about here. Whilst he is fairly talented, he lacks focus and is seen by some of the coaches as a pain. He attends practices sporadically but plays in all of the matches. Edward quite likes cricket but sees it as a past-time and something to do

– his main love is fencing and he intends to focus on that in the future, but currently he is a specialiser.

Edward's father (name unknown) is a solicitor and it his mother (Anne) who occasionally brings him down to practices. Since Edward lives only a few hundred yards from the club he tends to appear and disappear as he wishes.

Nathan is a 12-year-old sampler who attends a private school with his other brothers in the nearby city (near where his mother works). Nathan plays rugby and cricket mainly but he is also interested in music and plays for a large youth orchestra. Nathan's family situation (his parents are divorced) means that he can only make practices occasionally and matches on certain dates. His mother (Carol) is a part time fitness instructor and she spends much of her time arranging, organising and driving her 3 sons to their different hobbies.

Nathan is keen to play games, rather than practice, and spends much of his time at the club 'mucking around' with his old school friends (he went to the local primary school before moving to a private secondary school). He has been at the club for the past 3 years, although for the last year (since the divorce) he has been able to spend less and less time there.

Carol rarely makes it to practices or matches apart from dropping Nathan off or picking him up. In fact she was eventually interviewed by telephone – and that had to be arranged a week in advance to the hour! Nathan's situation really means he is still a sampler but with time pressures on all of the family it would suggest that he will have to specialise in the near future.

4.2.3.2.2 The Specialisers and Their Parents

Mark is a 13-year-old beginning specialiser. He has been at Boughborough for the past 2 seasons and has represented the county junior side on a couple of occasions. He has recently given up playing rugby, swimming and athletics to concentrate on soccer and cricket - decisions based upon perceived ability and time constraints. Mark apparently "lives and breathes" cricket and devours cricket statistic books to the amusement of his older sister and the rest of the family.

Mark attends practices and plays every week and is a key all-rounder and member of the team. He also captains it on a regular basis. He is both an opening bowler and a powerful number 3 batsman and is large for his age. At the point of the fieldwork finishing Mark was a regular player in the adult third eleven and occasionally in the second eleven.

Mark prefers the full 'proper' games because they put him in a position to do more and to dominate it. He is keen on improving and on structured 'deliberate practice' and competition. He is a specialiser but a fairly new one - therefore a beginning specialiser.

Mark's dad, Roger, is a regular attender and is a 'social spectator' and, although he works shifts (some late), he arranges them around Mark's practices and matches. He is a key 'driver' to games and beyond that he is happy to sit, observe and chat to other parents and partake in a pint of bitter. He is not keen to get involved in other ways than as a spectator. He will most often be found listening, sitting quietly with his pint, casting a critical eye over the game, the coaching or Mark's performances. He is a mild mannered, quiet man but one who is willing to voice an opinion.

Roger works full time for a manufacturing company in a middle management position in the nearby conurbation and the family live approximately 10 miles from Boughborough. He often works late and is on a shift pattern but has arranged it with colleagues so he does not miss practices or matches unless he absolutely has to. Mark's mother and sister very rarely attend matches or practices and I have only seen them once after they brought him back from a county junior game.

Sam is a 13-year-old Specialiser who has been playing rugby, football and cricket for the past 2 years. He is the oldest and biggest young player in the side. He has been at Boughborough for the past 2 years and is a close friend of Mark's. They go to the same football club and Mark is his understudy in goal for the age group team. During his second interview Sam said that he was giving up football because "the England coaches (U15) think I'll make it at rugby".

Sam's father (Barry) is a high-powered executive in a large multi-national corporation in the conurbation and rarely makes it to practices or matches (he is an occasional 'supportive spectator'). Sam is normally brought to games with Mark and ferried around in that manner by Bob. Barry is a Vice-President of the club - and has been since Sam started playing. Barry used to play rugby and cricket to a high level and was awarded colours by an Oxbridge University. As well as only seeing Barry on a couple of occasions I never came into contact with either his mother or sister at a practice or match.

Sam is a quick bowler and a 'big hitter' and is large for his age. He prefers the full game because he has more chance to score runs and take wickets. Sam is very focussed and is keen to learn more to improve his performance and get into the adult teams. He is keen to do as much deliberate practice as he can and his motivation is on competition and winning. He is, in short, a specialiser.

Reuben is a 13-year-old specialiser who plays tennis and football at county and regional level. He is also a talented cricketer and has been at Boughborough for the past 3 seasons. However, he attended practices sporadically and only played four games in 2002 because of his tennis commitments. Reuben goes to school with a couple of the other players but at the rival school to Chris's.

Reuben is not keen on the practices – he'd rather play - but he does listen and is clearly used to technical coaching. Nick (Reuben's father) is a 37-year-old PE teacher at his son's school and he became involved in the club through his links to Chris - his opposite number. Nick played rugby at a semi-professional level before concentrating on teaching and is keen not to push Reuben into any particular sporting activity. Nick helps out occasionally but is clear that he does not want the extra hassle of being involved in the club or the coaching.

Reuben's focus on soccer, tennis and cricket make him an early specialiser – and Nick notes that his success at tennis is likely to pull him away from cricket in the near future as the competitions and pressure increase.

What is evident from these young people is that they have very different and diverse experiences of the club. Their participation and involvement is a microcosm of their wider experiences but these wider experiences both inform and dictate their own positions in the club and their overall experience of it.

Both the young people and their parents are clearly not a homogenous group. Since all of the young people above are in the same age group squad it is evident that the differences in expectations, attitudes and needs of these young people and their parents are vast. Underlying all of the data is an assumption that these young people also have their own social positions and this is reflected in their attitudes towards playing and practising the game.

4.2.4 Success at Boughborough: The Second Season

During my second season at Boughborough the Under 13 squad were playing both 8 a side and 11 a side matches on midweek occasions. Whilst I attended every Monday/Tuesday night game it was not always possible to attend re-arranged matches or weekend matches (which were mainly the 8 a side ones). During the season I saw all but two of the Under 13's nine eleven a side matches (including reaching the cup semi final and winning the County (North) league) but only a handful of the A and B 8 a side matches (held on a Sunday or Monday PM). During the season the A team (the elder ones/specialisers) won their league and were losing finalists in the county cup and the B team finished third in their league. On a number of occasions some of the better young players (Mark and Sam) also played for the Under 14's, 15's and 16's when they were short of players.

The following is a record of the results for the 18 over eleven a side matches played during 2002 season. During these occasions time was spent interviewing and talking to parents, coaches and the young people.

League: Boughborough beat Team A by 36 runs:

 Boughborough 104-6 (Mark 37, Sam 25, Charles 14)

 Team A 68 all out (Sam 3-13; Mark 2-15; Liam 2-18)

League: Boughborough Beat Team B by 5 wickets:

Team B 74-6 (Mark 4-19; Sam 1-26)

Boughborough 76-5 (Sam 27 not out; Mark 24; Reuben 15)

Cup Round 1: Boughborough beat Team C by 9 wickets:

Team C 29 all out (Mark 4-9; Sam 3-5; Steve 1-6)

Boughborough 30-1 (Sam 16 not out; Mark 10)

League: Boughborough beat Team D by 72 runs: (did not attend)

Boughborough 141-4 (Mark 47; Sam 29; Reuben 18; Liam 14 not out)

Team D 69-8 (Sam 4-22; Ben 2-18; Mark 1-9)

Cup Quarter final: Boughborough beat Team B by 19 runs

Boughborough 97-7 (Sam 19; Charles 12; Liam 10; Reuben 10)

Team B 78 all out (Mark 4-12; Sam 2-20; Reuben 1-25)

League: Boughborough lost to Team E by 39 runs

Team E 106-3 (Ben 2-35)

Boughborough 67 all out (Liam 13; Charles 9; Ben 7; Sean 7; Nathan 6)

League: Boughborough beat Team F by 5 runs

Boughborough 63 all out (Mark 19; Charles 9; Liam 8; Sam 8)

Team F 58 all out (Sam 3-11; Mark 3-15; Ben 2-20)

League: Boughborough beat Team G by 14 runs

Boughborough 91-8 (Mark 45 not out; Daniel 14; Liam 11)

Team G 77-5 (Mark 3-17; Steve 2-27)

Cup Semi-Final: Boughborough lost to Team H by 10 runs (*Sunday*)

Team H 138-6 (Mark 2-28; Sam 2-33; Reuben 1-27)

Boughborough 128-6 (Sam 39; Mark 35; Liam 17 not out; Charles 14; Ben 5)

League: Boughborough beat Team I by 5 wickets

Team I 34 all out (Sam 5-7; Liam 3-7; Mark 2-14)

Boughborough 35-5 (Mark 17 not out; Charles 11 not out; Ben 2; Joe 2)

| Results: | Played | Won | Lost | No Result | Result |
|----------|--------|-----|------|-----------|---|
| League: | 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 | Area league winners |
| Cup: | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | County losing semi-finalists eventual winners) |

Leading Averages:

Batting: Mark 234 runs at 39.0
Sam 163 runs at 32.6

Bowling: Mark 28 wickets for 138 runs at 4.9
Sam 23 wickets for 137 runs at 5.9

This section identifies not only the success of Boughborough's Under 13 team but also the total dominance by two of the young players – Mark and Sam scored almost 2/3rds of the runs and took almost 3/5ths of the wickets to fall during the season. Most notably in this regard the only team they lost to in the league (Team E) was when neither Mark nor Sam were playing. Whilst it is interesting that the success is based around the two most talented players, in retrospect, it was always identified as a team effort and their performances were accepted as much as expected.

In a sense this highlights the issues of the dominance of talented players in the game over others. However, it also highlights the success of those who have become specialisers over those who have not. It is also interesting to note the coach's response to this success – Chris identified it as “a team success – they all did their bit and performed well all year. They're a credit to the club and I'm proud I coached them” (Field notes, 2nd September 2002) - despite the fact that he'd missed all of August to go to the Commonwealth Games!

It should be noted that both Sam and Mark also play adult cricket and that Mark is seen as the club's next prodigy. Throughout the 2003 season he was also playing

league cricket in the division below the one in which I play - and for the 2004 season have just been promoted.

4.2.5 An Example of a Typical Training Session

This section illustrates a 'typical' Monday or Tuesday night training session during the 2001 and 2002 seasons. Its aim is to give the reader a better understanding of the practical workings of the club and how the training session was seen through my own experiences and observations.

The example of a training session highlighted below begins to offer an insight into some of the key aspects of the data that were generated in the study. It begins to explore some of the major themes found in the total material collected about the club. It attempts to show how the club is seen as a family environment, as a place a parent can leave a child to meet its father and as a place for young people to play. It also shows the coaching practices exhibited by the three main coaches and the complexities of these beliefs and relationships, the attitudes displayed and felt between the samplers and specialisers in the group, the general organisation and disorganisation of the coaching sessions. The following extract is a typical evening at the ground and is provided in an unedited version direct from my field notes.

Arrive at the ground at 5.30pm, stop to undo number padlock on the gate (it still amazes me that the code [club's founding year] is carved into the gate just inches from the lock!) and drive to the top of the bank overlooking the pitch and away from the nets. Reverse the car to the hedge and open the driver's car door – my "I've just got here and am about to get out" position (to make people aware I'm there and for me to be 'open' about my presence).

Right on time at 5.45 a Volvo pulls up, Alex [sampler aged 11] gets out with a bat and ball and the car disappears again – leaving him there on his own! [apart from me that is...]. A couple of minutes later an old BMW appears and a middle aged man (James – parent) gets out – Alex runs up, gives him a quick hug and asks him to bowl. As it turns out James and his wife are divorced and this is one time James spends time with his son – and they use it as a 'safe' exchange point apparently. Dad bowls to an increasingly frustrated son who cannot hit the ball – or when he does it is cross-batted

and into the netting. Alex spends more time complaining he cannot hit the ball because its not bowled properly than on his own technique. Dad says a few encouraging words but carries on as before. He is one of the coaches fiercest critics but clearly has no awareness of technique or coaching himself! [This is a weekly occurrence, the same thing happens – almost like clockwork or Groundhog Day!].

By 5.55 a couple of the older lads turn up (Mark and Sam), and take residence in the other net – largely ignoring Alex. There's no shift in behaviour and when dad gets tired and says to stop – Alex just hits the ball into his own net having thrown it up himself. Rather than take part with the others (who are team mates), he clearly prefers to play himself and avoids any confrontational or ability based personal situation. (Both Mark and Sam are specialisers, Alex is a sampler).

By 6.00 three more boys and a girl have turned up and play in the net with Mark and Sam and Alex gets himself involved (finally), as the male parents (James and Roger) chat and wander towards the pavilion. They acknowledge my presence with a hello and carry on deep in conversation about something happening locally.

By 6.15 there are around fourteen kids and accompanying parents – but no coaches. They quite happily get themselves sorted into 2 nets and robustly try and hit each others bowling as far as they can. As usual Mark and Sam succeed, and based on their obvious ability end up running the nets. There is an “I'll bat until I'm out” school playground mentality and once they're in (they both bowl well), there's little chance for the others and their interest begins to peter out.....

6.27 Another five boys turn up from one car and rush straight to the nets as another car pulls up with 2 more. The mothers get out and start to chat, while the boys (mainly samplers) begin to catch up with each other. Sam and Mark give up in the nets and offer someone else the chance to bat – taken up quickly by Alex and Joe (samplers) Neither last very long to Mark and Sam's bowling so they end up swapping straight back. Alex does hit one ball back over Sam's head (more luck than judgement) and does a sort of celebratory dance on it.....but sees Sam running in to bowl from where it ended up and jumps out of the way anyway! None of the boys wear any kit for this, and whilst they're only using windballs it still hurts!

6.36 A 'knackered' old Montego appears, pulls up sharply and Dave gets out, still puffing on a cigarette. The boys in the nets stop and look to him (as their coach) for advice. He starts to chat with the mothers and then Mark asks him "what are we doing?". He "replies you're in the nets tonight so get the stuff for it from the pavilion, I've got a game to sort out". Receives a mixed reaction and Mark, Sam, and Reuben (the key specialisers) jog over to get the kit and stumps. The others (Alex, Ben, Charles, Joe, Steve and Daniel) take the chance to get back into the nets and play amongst themselves. Dave quickly notices and tells them to help the others with the gear, but they ignore him and continue, and Dave does nothing else but keeps on chatting.

6.43 Two more boys appear who are too young for the age group (9 or 10) and the car they get out of turns round and goes immediately. Dave now nearby says to me "you see what we've got to put up with.....bloody baby sitting, they should be here on a Sunday with the other young ones not a Monday night". The two boys stand around for minute or two near the nets, then one of them gets out an action toy figure and they both run off towards the pavilion. Dave – "I have no idea who those kids are or what they're doing here.....you couldn't find out could you?".

6.45 Wander over to the now open pavilion passing the boys on their way back with the kit. They say "Hi" and continue off. I catch up with the other young boys who are playing with their action toys on the fence. I'm just about to say something when Rosie Bridges appears and says "don't worry about them, I'll keep an eye on them, my youngest boy will be here soon anyway....". Go into bar and grab a can of Coke and a quick chat to Peter – spend five minutes reviewing the weekend's cricket and having a general chat (he's the 'key' gatekeeper....). As we're standing there Matt appears in his truck with a load of new kit and spends 10 minutes bantering about buying the clubs new pyjama style kit and the problems he's had. He should actually be helping Dave, but seems happier being jovial and funny here.

6.55 Leave them to it and walk back over to the nets. Dave has managed to get the nets split into 2 groups – who happen to be the good ones (Mark, Sam, Reuben, Nathan, Sean, and his son Daniel) and the 6 remaining (weaker) ones. As I get there

he says – “I see Matt’s finally turned up, he might get here eventually. Still, now you’re here you can coach these [weak ones] – I need to do some work on the wickets, so I need to get the stuff ready now. I’ll get Matt to come over later”. Have been well and truly stitched up! Begin by checking everyone’s OK and knows what they’re doing – and worrying about the safety! Chris turns up and starts to help, as does Trevor (both normally do the other group – but have had their away game cancelled tonight). They immediately come over to see what’s happening (I always think with some suspicion about what I’m doing there.....). The conversation immediately revolves around the men’s matches – the first team lost again, much to the clubs chagrin – “They were bloody 67 – 7 chasing 220 – what chance have we got of staying up [2nd XI is tied to 1st XI] if they can’t bloody play a decent game of cricket”. Looking at the resigned body language the kids go quiet while Chris is ranting – Matt sees this and tells them – to get on with it – but the group are rather subdued.....

Chris asks if I’d like to get away to do “more of the Spanish Inquisition?!” – slightly relieved I say “yes” – and both he and Matt start making their mark on each net. Bowling order, batting order, padding up etc.....kids seem quite happy – so leave.....As I walk over to the pavilion, the younger group are doing some fielding – stop to watch for a minute. Clearly there is an issues with numbers here – whilst the older ones are being controlled quite well within the nets situation, it is Dick with these. He is struggling to keep up. There are approximately 15 aged between about 7 and 11. As I watch he tries to set them into 2 teams to do a simple catching game – this takes about 5 minutes as even once they’re numbered 1 or 2 they still go with their friends regardless and on the first attempt the teams are 10 v 5. Exasperated he calls for a hand and one of the parents nearby intervenes and helps sort out 2 teams. The practice then gets under way about 4 minutes later – and at least 3 of the boys have wandered off to look at something in the hedge nearby and one has sat down to tie his shoe laces. The whole thing begins to fall apart. Then 2 boys begin to push each other in a mock fight and everyone stops to look – resulting in a complete breakdown of the exercise. Throughout Dick goes from shouting encouragement to standing in desperation with his hands on his hips. In total the exercise took about 12 minutes from starting to set up to the end. Each child probably had the ball in their hands twice in this time. Dick separates the two by shouting and threatens to exclude

them from the game – in the mean time the parent spends time showing one of the boys how to catch and doing some individual practice with them.

Seemingly exasperated [he later confided that he'd only come to look in at the club tonight, and found some of his younger ones he normally coached on a Sunday here, and got roped into doing something with them. Despite his protestations "*they shouldn't even BE here tonight*", he reluctantly went ahead for a short time]. Dick and the parent begin a game of continuous cricket, with the 2 sides as they were and Dick bowling. Within minutes the focus of the group is intently on participating and hitting the ball as hard as they can. A completely different group to the one he'd tried to give deliberate practice to earlier..... "*it's the only way to get them all involved, and it's a hell of a lot easier to manage*".

7.30 Spend 10 minutes chatting to Chris and Peter in the bar – they're complaining about the lack of help from parents and the situation Dave has been landed with. Chris: "it shouldn't happen if they're organised properly – their session's on a Sunday so how the hell can the parents come up and leave them on a Monday too? It's taking the piss and we're being taken for granted". Peter: "Yeah, but we can't turn them away can we, else they won't come at all – all we need is for more players to become coaches and then we can cope". Chris: "That's the clubs problem not ours – we're stuck trying to do the best we can for our kids – the clubs got to think bigger instead of letting us do the work and them getting the praise....".

As I become pulled into the debate – I knew this would happen! ...Peter: "What do you think Martin? This is what you're doing here anyway – finding out about us and how it works....." Reply to say it's complicated and not easy to identify...

Some parents walk in and the conversation quietens and ask "was it something we said?!" as they come in. Chris replies "No – we're just moaning – and I must get out there with my lot again".

7.50 Walk back over with Chris to take over in the nets while Dave goes off to sort out team issues – and chat to his group - and we discuss A level PE issues on the way. Return to observe and interview some of the U13's in the nets – end up being "stuck"

with the ones who are coming out of batting. They're hot and tired and are more interested in getting a drink than being interviewed.....

Spend 20 minutes with the dictaphone on, listening and observing some of the coaching comments (mainly from Chris), and the comments from the kids...

“Your bowling technique is like Pinnochio on a piece of string” (Chris to Joe)

“Hit it don't just swipe it!! – how many times have I told you before?!”
(exasperated Chris to Liam)

“You still need to look behind your left hand though Seth – it's pretty good though” (Chris)

“Brendan you still need to pick your bat up a bit earlier” (Chris)

“Make sure you move across to it so your head's over the ball” (Chris to Joe)

“There's an awful lot of giggling and laughing going on behind me.....”
(Chris to group)

“That was ping through there and you're hands go through it – no not a block – hey, throw your hands through the ball – that's it, a bit more than that ... eh come on you're not stirring porridge.....come on keep that elbow up and push through it go on show me.....up and push through “woof”.....that's it” (Chris to Mark)

“Hey up [boy bowls ball too high into scaffold at top of net] - second service”
(Chris to Joe)

“Has it gone through [ball in net] go and find it – yes you bowled it son – it'll be long walk home otherwise” “Have you found it yet Liam – you're not going home 'til you have.....I would have advised a bat with you” (Chris to Liam)

“Well played a nice shot Nathan.....Not too much bottom hand Nath” (Chris)

“Now your bat turned then – you gripped it too tightly with your right hand and not tight enough with your left. Your left hand should steer the bat not your right hand turning it at the end” (Chris to Sam)

“Who bowled that [ball smashed back] go and fetch it – it deserved what it got” (Chris to Alex)

“Ben the human howitzer [boy who threw ball high last time].....Ben you’re letting go a little too early” (Chris to Ben)

Chorus of “when the snow man brings the snow” in the background amongst U13’s aimed at Chris (I think). Can only assume dandruff????!!!

“I’m bowling now” “no it’s my turn” “no me” “but you did a minute a go” bickering by U13’s

Trevor getting angry with group about bowling short “how would you like to get one in the throat...?” – “nah I’d just smash it for 6 every time”

“What’s that on the floor there?.....pardon?.....[sweet wrapper].....**shift it!**” (Chris to Sam)

“You’re swinging the ball a long way – but you must start it about middle” (Chris to Sam)

“Oh Reuben what sort of shot was that [lobs return catch to bowler] that was absolutely dreadful –come on lad, concentrate!” (Chris)

“He’s been messing about doing all sorts [spinner I coached last week]” (Chris about Joe)

“Hey – quit being stupid and keep your eye on the ball” (Chris to Liam)

“Liam [bowled walking away from stumps leg side] why did you go backwards? You are not an Italian General!!” (Chris to Liam)

“Well bowled Mark! - I like it, I like it” (Chris)

“That’s not fair he’s had so much time in there” (U11 boy [Reuben] to no-one in particular)

“Alex why didn’t you play in the match today?” “’cos it was under 11” “no it wasn’t it was under 13 – you can’t even get in that side - you must be crap” “didn’t want to play in it anyway”.....bickering between Alex and Sean (go to same school).

“Hey your head’s up in the air, yeah? Keep your head down and play a proper shot”. (Chris to Nathan)

“Nathan, I want to see that off drive now – come on!!” (Chris)

8.40 Have done four interviews – two quite good, one very good and one that was hard work – just “yes or no” and so quiet I doubt it’ll show up on the tape! Also have cramp where I’ve been sitting on the grass too long!! Interviews went OK – a bit difficult as the best place to do it (near the cars and in full view of those in the nets – meant interruptions, but the benches were taken by parents and the pavilion a no go. Chris and Dave are getting the kids to clear up – some are going and it takes Chris a few minutes to get them together to find out who can/can’t play on Thursday. After much confusion he gives a raised eyebrows and says over to me “I’ll end up having to phone them all anyway – so I don’t know why I’m bothering now!” This is the time to observe the kids and peer groups, and spend 5 minutes just watching them go – seeing the identified peer groups playing in the nets (the specialisers Mark and Sam) – even when Sam’s dad appears to take them “just a few more minutes!”. Four of the samplers (Ben, Sean, Joe and Alex) have gone to get sweets and see what else is happening at the club house. 5 others get straight into their parents’ cars and speed

off. Liam is helping his dad clear up and Daniel is wandering over to the pavilion out of ear-shot of his dad who wants a hand to get everything (stumps, kit etc) brought in.

8.55 As it gets dark, the coaches all end up in the bar, a few parents (the usual crew) left chatting and their kids playing outside. A heated selection meeting is going on and there are arguments about the 1st team for this weekend. The rest of the coaches begin to get involved and the day's coaching is quickly forgotten as they discuss an individual who is very talented but unreliable. The first team captain doesn't want him to play until he's played more in the seconds and the seconds captain says no because he's too unreliable and doesn't want to turn up with only 10 at the next game.

9.15 Most of the coaches begin to drift off, spirits dampened by the coaching. Matt: "I'm mentally and physically knackered" and the selection. Chris: "The selection policy is a disgrace". Chat to Peter about the evening and about the coaching sessions as we walk out to our cars. He explains the history between some of the adult players (Dave and Chris) and their views which means it's almost impossible to make a decision without someone having their nose put out of joint – and that counts for the coaching too. "There is a lot of animosity between some of the coaches – as you've seen. There are different focuses, parents want different things for their kids and they are all competitive in different ways. No wonder there are so many clashes. It doesn't help when the guy who's meant to be the director of coaching is never here to make any decision on that".

9.20 Depart – leaving Peter to lock the gate.

This 'typical' coaching session is intended to highlight the informality and ad-hoc approach to coaching and the disorganised reality that is grass roots club cricket coaching. Whilst Boughborough may not be typical of a large number of clubs across the UK, the practical challenges it faces with multiple youth teams, lack of practice space and time, lack of coaches and a reliance on the weather and on other matches is a reality. Alongside these are the positions and practice of the young people, their parents, and the coaches - as well as the ad-hoc 'on the night' nature of coaching that most employ. Altogether, these highlight what are realities in junior club sport (similar to those expressed by MacPhail et al, 2003a and 2003b).

What should be noted from this typical session is the interaction between all of the parties involved which goes on to explain the nature and experience of what this club actually is.

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

Through the use of ethnographic techniques this chapter has provided an in depth and detailed description of the club as a community of practice. It has provided a context for the research and hopes to make readers more familiar with the environment, the club and the participants and the way they practice the club. It also identifies a wider perspective on what a sports club is and how it operates as a voluntary organisation. Whilst the thesis (and indeed this chapter) do not claim to provide generalisable accounts that will occur in all other voluntary youth sports clubs, it does I'm sure, reflect some of the practices that occur on a regular basis within junior sports clubs in the UK.

Having established that the club is a community of practice, having described its environment, and having introduced some of the key characters and their practices, the narratives from this chapter now progress into the theoretical and conceptual analysis of the data. Drawing on the developing theoretical work of Davies & Harré (1990), Kirk and MacPhail (2003) and Lave & Wenger (1991) the next chapter will analyse and explain the way in which the club is socially constructed as a community of practice through the social positions and practices of the various people who contribute to it.

Chapter 5:

Social Construction: How Positioning and Practice Constructs the Club

5.1 Introduction to the Chapter

Whilst the previous chapter has put the field of research into context with examples of the Boughborough environment, this chapter contributes to the thesis by providing an analysis of the theoretical concepts of social construction and positioning. Through the work of Davies & Harré (1990) on social positioning, and Kirk & MacPhail's (2003) development of this theory in a sporting context, this chapter also brings in Lave & Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory in an effort to better explain the way in which the social construction of the club is achieved. Using the social positions of 'sampler' and 'specialiser', the chapter begins to outline how the young people's position on the development continuum affects their participation and construction of the club. The chapter begins with an analysis of the practice and construction of the club and this is followed by an analysis of the young people as samplers and specialisers. It also examines how these young people position themselves in the club environment. The parents are then identified as practising the positions of spectators, helpers, committed members or non-attenders. The coaches are considered to be either altruistic or egoistic - and also as privileged selves, and finally some of the other club members are identified as being club bastions or old boys.

Within this framework the chapter will look at how the club as a community of practice, is socially constructed and experienced through the positions practised by its members. It will look at the complexity of the relationships and positions within the dynamics of the community of practice and it will highlight how important the commitment and investment of some people within the club is to their own positions.

5.2 The Practice and Construction of Boughborough Cricket Club

The main aspect of the data to be examined is that of the club as a setting and as an environment in which the game is played. However, the initial focus is that of how the club is both constructed and practised by its 'members'. This requires a detailed

analysis of the positions held and practised by these members and how, through these, they construct the club.

As we have already seen in Chapter 2.2.3, the work of Kirk & MacDonald (1998) who developed Lave & Wenger's (1991) 'Situated Learning Theory' is helpful in discussing this social construction and the dynamics of the interactions and relationships at Boughborough. It also shows the development of role theory into a more dynamic context. Identifying how membership of the club helps to construct it is not easy, but in order to conceptualise these interacting practices and relationships, it is important to draw upon Lave & Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning as they apply it to the notion of communities of practice. Whilst Kirk & Macdonald (1998) use this theory with reference to physical education, it is clear that some analysis can be made of the theoretical concepts with Boughborough. For example, this suggests that the process and degree of participation within the community of practice is dynamic and progressive and is also allied to the social position and construction of the club. Thus, more experienced and full participants in the club hold different relationships and positions with the other participants. They become a coach or official within the club and are therefore more closely involved than those who are peripheral participants in the club (the community). Each participant will therefore construct the club differently.

Through the 'participation in the community of practice' it is possible for an individual to gain knowledge of the required skills, techniques and discourses associated with that community. Using this knowledge, they can then build up a position and identity for themselves within it. Coupled with this knowledge is the issue of how the relationships and situated learning of the young people at Boughborough occurs. It also highlights how some individuals' practices play a larger part than others in terms of what is perceived to be legitimate and acceptable club practice. Individual practice of the club is linked to social positioning and identity so it could be argued that those young people who exhibit specialising behaviour will have a more profound wish to learn than those who exhibit sampling behaviour. Since both sampler and specialiser are distinct social positions, this identity is further linked to the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice'.

In terms of the club this legitimate peripheral participation identifies those who are further down the continuum to being 'full participants' of the club against those who are 'peripheral participants'. This degree of membership can be linked to individual identity more than ability in some cases. However, the young people who might be seen as 'full' participants or more experienced participants when compared to the samplers (and more often than not these are specialisers) tend to have particular expectations about coaching and learning environments at the club. In some cases they also have a particular disregard for some of the samplers who do not reflect this specialising behaviour. The relationships that the more experienced participants (the specialisers) have with the less experienced and more peripheral participants (the samplers) is then reflected in the positions they practise (see section 5.3 for more detail). Thus, those who are further down the learning trajectory in the community of practice have different learning needs and wishes to those who are at the start of the learning trajectory (the peripheral participants). In other words the more experienced participants have more involvement than the peripheral and less experienced ones. The more experienced participants tend to be the ones that reflect the legitimate and acceptable practice of the community (created by the club's adults). Legitimate and acceptable practice in the club is based around learning and, to a certain extent, talent. Those who reflect these practices tend to be specialisers. Specialisers hold more kudos than samplers through their practice and performance, and they construct more deeply involved positions as players than the samplers. The peripheral participants (more often than not samplers) are therefore marginalised and their learning trajectories are flatter than those of the specialisers. Since sampling and specialising are both distinct social positions, this means that samplers would 'normally' be more peripheral than full participants because full participation tends to suggest that someone has made a conscious decision to specialise and has a set of relationships that facilitate full membership of the community of practice.

This notion of participation should not be confused with the more pragmatic issue of being a 'financial member' of the club although, again, there are inextricable links and financial structures that highlight this. Membership at Boughborough has a number of categories which range from senior (£50 per year), junior (£20 per year), family (£30 per year) and social/non-playing (£10 per year). Linked to this membership are issues such as cost and relative involvement. Those on the periphery

of the club will naturally pay and expect less whilst those who are full members will pay the most and expect/contribute the most. The manner in which the peripheral and full participants construct the club will clearly be different depending upon their own positions and also their relationships with the other participants. This is therefore inextricably linked to the degree of participation an individual has in the club and how they practise their social positions.

Boughborough cricket club (like any sports club as Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 highlight) is a very complex entity to understand. It is clear from the literature review that there are complex practices involved in the club from a number of different individuals. It is the interaction between the individual's own position and the practice of their position that effectively dictates the construction of the club. In other words, the club is constructed through an individual's interactions and the "dynamic aspects of encounters" (Davies & Harré, 1990; 43) of their practice and experience. As Chris (one of the coaches) explained early on in the study:

The club is what you make of it really. We're lucky, we [players and coaches] all see it in the same way and have the same passion, that's why it works here and has been successful (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

Through Chris' use of language (i.e. terms like "we") it is possible to note that his understanding of the club is one of a homogenous unit and that the interaction of the players and coaches, who have similar positions and practices, has created this success. He identifies that there is a core of important others, those who are full members of the community who, with a unified approach, have begun to socially construct Boughborough. However, Chris's construction is one that has multiple layers. These layers come from his experiences of success and failure, his relationships as a parent, player and coach to the other coaches, parents, and young people. This view of the club is clearly more complex than Chris initially identifies and it seems that his focus is on the outcome more than, perhaps, it is on the process.

During my time in the club it became clear to me that some people viewed the club as having been ostensibly created by a number of key people - the knowledge and enthusiasm of Paul, the coaching willingness and direction of Dave and Chris and the support of a plethora of parents. As one parent highlights:

They [Paul, Dave and Chris] really have made the club what it is. The coaching and organisation has been excellent, the atmosphere is good, the boys love it, it really is what the club is all about (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

However, what should also be noted from this is that the parent's construction of the club is different to that of the players and coaches. This in turn highlights that the club is a multi-layered phenomena. Louise's construction of the club is typical of many of the parents who are peripheral participants in the community and it is one based around the parents' own position (see section 5.4). It differs in that parents perceive, and relate to, the club in the position of a sports consumer (making a purchase decision [c.f. Green & Chalip, 1998]) and base their construction of the club in terms of (coaching) service received and the organisation of the youth section. Louise's satisfaction and construction of the club is highlighted through her son's experience. To her, the club IS the youth section.

We can already identify that individuals conform (through social conventions) to certain positions which they both occupy and practise. We also understand that different people, depending upon these positions, construct the club differently. It is therefore interesting to note that whilst the junior section of the club was flourishing, the adult sections were relegated during the two seasons I was there. Thus while the junior side of the club was perceived as generally very good by everyone, the lack of success by the adult side was, to those involved (the coaches and players), very bad. An example of this can be seen from the field notes:

I went into the bar for a chat to Peter and found 2 meetings going on. On the one side was a selection meeting for the adults sides and on the other Paul, Chris, Matt and a couple of parents were chatting about the next cup match for the Under 12's. As I stood at the bar talking to Peter, a heated discussion was taking place about the selection of a long standing first team player, who was going to be dropped to the second team. The arguments about whether he'd actually turn up and play or take umbrage and leave the club exemplified the situation with the team. The other group had stopped and were listening as the debate raged. Then almost to diffuse the situation (I imagine) Chris piped up and said "Don't worry about that git, he wouldn't even make it into our under

12 side anyway, he can't bowl for toffee!". After a stunned silence, a few laughed and the selection meeting went back to discuss other players. It wasn't until afterwards that I realised that there were almost 2 clubs in there that night: a successful one, and a struggling one. It was the same club but with two very differently constructed faces. (Field notes, 27th July 2002)

This example highlights that "people engage in different ways with the club, and so have sometimes different understandings of what the club is" (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003; 26). What is clear from this is that the way the club is perceived by those who might be seen as peripheral participants is based almost entirely upon the pictures painted by the coaches and other parents and the success of 'their' part of the club. It is (in a sense) a 'shop window' construction. Rosie (another parent involved in the club and one who is closer than most to being a full participant of the community) identifies that parents who are close to being 'full participants' see the real situation:

When you look at the club as a parent it seems really successful. It's only since Tony's been involved that you find out how the club is really doing. The coaches don't tell you how badly the 1st team are doing – and why should they? It would probably put some parents off (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

This social construction of the club then is multi-layered (as Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 highlight) and is based around an individual's social position in the club and highlights the "layering and diversity of meaning" (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003; 26) that can be created. However, to the peripheral participants (some of the young people and parents) there is some homogeneity to their construction of the club and this (as the quote by Louise highlights earlier) is based around the peripheral position they hold.

Since the club is the main setting for youth sport in the UK and since we can identify that it can be practised in different ways, the notion of 'club' is clearly a complex theoretical notion that requires more detailed analysis. In understanding the way that the club is constructed by the various parties involved it is important to begin to identify and analyse the positions that those involved practice.

5.3 The Young People

One of the initial key findings of the study revolves around the issues and differences between the 'samplers' and 'specialisers' within Boughborough. Côté & Hay (2002a) highlight that there are marked differences in motivation, emphasis and training 'needs' between these two stages of development. What was most notable with the sample of Under 12's was that group displayed both sampling and specialising behaviour patterns. In short, there were young people with differing abilities, needs and motivations in the same age group, being coached in the same way and being part of the same team. Inevitably, these differences led to conflict, tension, unfulfilled expectation and exasperation from both groups. However, as we will see in the following sections, the individual nature of the sport and the dominance of ability often 'papered-over' these cracks where the more able were concerned.

Throughout the study it became clear that the young people constructed the club in a number of different ways. There were numerous positions, it seems, that these children held and numerous relationship structures between the club, their parents and each other. The multitude of possibilities of this, bound by the players ability, motivation, history of sports participation, support networks and relationship with (and to) the coach show just how complex and multi-layered this experience of the club could be. At the same time the issue of membership of the (club) community was also present and, it must be noted that, generally the samplers (and their parents) were mainly 'peripheral' participants of the club but the specialisers (and their parents) were more likely to be 'full' participants. This highlights that one aspect of the transition stage from sampler to specialiser is the degree of involvement and participation in the club of the player and/or his parents (see further individual analysis in chapter 8).

Within these positions are clearly attached issues of friendship, fun and competition - as well as competence, learning new skills and improving. All of these are issues identified by the numerous participation surveys (e.g. Kremer et al, 1997) as being central to young people's participation in sport. In some cases these have been specifically identified in cricket (Spink & Longhurst, 1990).

The complex issue of peer dynamics and interaction is clear within the data and, whilst there are positive experiences of friendship here, there are a number of tensions. In this instance they are related mostly to the mixed ability and differing positions held by the young people. Clearly, with a mixture of samplers and specialisers in the same team, there is inevitably a mix of ability, interest and involvement. Where there is a mixture of ability, there is also a clash of coaching practice with coaches either focussing on the strong or the weak - their own coaching and playing ethos comes to the fore. This is then exacerbated in the reactions of the young people who (identifying the issue as one of ability) will often reflect conflict towards the others within the group. This is because their own expectations are not being met and they see themselves as being held back by the coach's focus on the wider needs of the rest of the group.

The different positions practised by the young people are very similar to those found by Kirk & MacPhail (2003). The overall sample (of 18 in total) exhibited sampling and specialising behaviour (according to the concepts outlined by Côté & Hay, 2002a). The way that the young people reflected Côté & Hay's model is bound up in the positions that they practised and this, in turn, is bound up with the expectations of their parents, the coaches, the club and each other. Finally, their construction of the club is based upon the dynamic relationships that affect upon their position.

5.3.1 Samplers and Specialisers: The Development Continuum

Within Boughborough there was clearly a continuum of young people playing for the age group side. This continuum ranged from samplers, to beginning specialisers and then finally to full specialisers. These were noted by their motivations to practise, their commitment and (initially) by the number of activities they took part in (as Côté & Hay, 2002a identify). However, it should be noted that the transition from the sampling stage to the specialising stage is not as straight forward or as simple as Côté & Hay (2002a) propose. Firstly (for example), there are issues of differences between the organisation and practice of youth sport in the UK, Europe and the USA and it is clear that this concept requires further development. Secondly, one of the key tenets of their theory is that as a sampler moves to being a specialiser there is a focus on fewer sports - having to give up a sport for time reasons does not necessarily mean that the young person has moved onto the specialisation stage, since they can still be

samplers within two or three activities. Thus Côté & Hay's (2002a) concept and the notion of moving from one stage to another, based simply on the number of sports played, is simplistic and requires further consideration and analysis.

Overall within the age group team and of the core of 18 young people in the study, at least 12 were identified (mainly through the number of sports they played) as being samplers. One of these, Joe, was typical of the others in his weekly routine:

I do cricket on a Monday, Tuesday I do Judo – but that's only until I start doing kick-boxing soon, Wednesdays I play piano and scouts, Thursdays every fortnight I have a tennis lesson, Fridays I have another tennis lesson.
(Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

In a similar manner to the findings of Kirk & MacPhail (2003), this sampling behaviour highlights the number of sports that were being tried out by some of the young people and that sport was just one of the options for them in their free time. Joe is clearly a peripheral participant of the community and cricket is just another activity in his already busy calendar. His construction of the club then would appear to be one of an activity-based environment more than anything else.

Within the sample the beginnings of specialising behaviour was also noted and Nathan claimed he was actively going to make the decision to focus on fewer sports (and therefore exhibit specialising behaviour):

I'm going to give up tennis to concentrate on cricket and football next year
(Nathan, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Mark (a beginning specialiser) identified that he had already done this:

I gave up rugby this year to concentrate on cricket and football (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Charles (a full specialiser) identified that he had done this some time ago:

I gave up swimming 2 years ago - I only do cricket and rugby now (Charles, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Whilst these are a number of young people who highlight that they have given up a sport in favour of other ones it is less clear how much this decision was made on early specialising behaviour and how much on practical time considerations. Moreover, as Kirk & MacPhail (2003) note, there are a number of activities that vie for a young person's time and it is not unusual for the young people to be forced to choose between sports (or other activities) because of the clashes and ever-extending seasons.

I tried tennis a couple of years ago, I was OK at that but I was getting picked for cricket so I had to stop it. I tried golf but I gave up after a bit [WHY?] just didn't have the time really. Now I play football 2 times a week and cricket most of the other times – train once and play 2 or 3 times a week. (Brendan, 12, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Yeah a couple of them say things like you should come back to football 'cos you were really good. I was thinking of going back but I don't think I will. Plus it [training] clashes with my cricket matches on a Sunday (Seth, 12, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

It should be noted that the reasons highlighted by both Brendan and Seth of 'time' and 'clashes' does not necessarily mean that they have moved onto the specialising stage, but that they have been forced to reconsider the sports that they can still sample. In other words, there is neither indication nor proof that the other characteristic behaviours of the specialising stage (motivation, training and deliberate practice) are apparent with this reduction in sports. This highlights that Côté & Hay's (2002a) model should be approached from a multi-dimensional level as it is currently under-developed.

The differences between the samplers and the beginning and full specialisers within the same group was also a point of contention. Since the positions that some of these young people practised were linked with their own expectations and motivations for being at the club. As Côté & Hay (2002a) and Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight, the motivations for the samplers at Boughborough were mainly to have fun, have deliberate play and meet their friends:

I've got even more friends since I came down here (...) and I like to play the games rather than do practising (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

The parents of some of the samplers also recognise that it is an opportunity to socialise and learn new skills and that for their children it is a “good experience all round” (Georgina, parent, Interview 1: 9th July 2002). Within this idea of socialising, it is important to note that almost all of the samplers either played other sports together or knew each other through school or family friendship and in almost all cases this is how they came to be involved in the club:

He came here because he goes to school and plays for a football team with some of the boys and they invited him here. Plus we know their parents (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

The early and full specialisers however, have different motivations and expectations. Whilst they are also involved in the club for social and peer-friendship reasons, there was also more evidence for them being there to play, improve and compete:

I’ve been here for 3 years now and I’m getting better and taking more wickets and scoring more runs. We haven’t been beaten yet this year either (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd July 2001)

There’s a group of us [Mark, Daniel, Ben, Steve, Liam, Nathan] who’ve been here since the start. We all get on and we play well together (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

However, once the friendship and peer group relations are taken to one side there are clearly tensions and divisions within the group and these are based upon the coach’s construction and practice of the team through his experience of their coaching and playing. This is bound up within the deliberate play and deliberate practice experiences set up by the coaches of the group, as well as the expectations of the coaches, young person and parent.

Whilst the work of Côté & Hay (2002a) is based upon individuality of performance at a top level, it is clear that there are problems and issues within the age groups between those who are samplers and specialisers. This is also manifested in the coaching practices where there is criticism that more time is spent coaching the more able individuals. There were some undercurrents of discomfort within the group and this

was manifested with the 11 a side and 8 a side games. The 8 a side matches were played in pairs so each batting pair bats for 4 overs to score as many runs as they are able. If they are out during those 4 overs their score is reduced by 8 runs. Each team starts with 200 runs and must score as many as possible. It was in these games that the conflict came to the fore, since the aim was to score as many runs as possible without losing a wicket. In a sense it is, as Paish (1994; 45) explained “the skilful excel, but the mediocre become disillusioned with the game”, and at Boughborough this was ever more evident with these games as the following quote highlights:

If you get out and lose runs you feel much more worse 'cos you could lose the game more and then you let everyone down (Daniel, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

The issue of ‘letting the side down’ and being under pressure means that there are specific tactics involved as damage limitation exercises. So whilst the 8-a-side is intended to give more people a chance to bat for longer the coaches pick their pairs in such a way that they will have a good player with a weak player with the express tactic that the good player should be on strike as much as possible. This appears to reinforce the issue of ability as Ben highlights:

8 a side puts people off 'cos you keep losing runs, and if you're out once it puts doubt into your mind as to whether you're going to be out again. I'd rather be out once just like in real cricket (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

The expectations are highly ability based but also have a tinge of peer support and friendship within them:

If you get out they don't really mind, but if you score a run they clap and cheer!! (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

At the other end of the spectrum, whilst there is some recognition by the specialisers of the sampler's ability, there is also some exasperation about the lack of technical ability and (perhaps) commitment that the more able players feel is lacking from the others.

They don't always turn up, and they never listen (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd August 2001)

This apparent resentment is felt again by the parents of those deemed specialisers who see their own children being held back by others and will often blame the coaches' practice for this. The clear frustration this causes within the club is exacerbated in the 8 a side match where the inferiority of the younger players is further highlighted when batting in pairs. The team member's perspective is always the same, disappointment when the weaker player is on strike and relief when he survives an over. Despite this, it is interesting to note that the weaker players do not mind on their return – in fact relief is often the first thing they discuss on their return:

I'm glad when it [8 a side batting] is over. You let the team down more than yourself. (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

For the young person, re-negotiating their position after such an event is central to being successful in the group, and although there is little real conflict, whatever the result the young players seem to return to their normal routine with little direct concern.

Once you've had your bat you just have to get on with it again (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Kirk & MacPhail (2003) clearly highlight the two positions (of sampler and specialiser) at F.A.C., and it is clear that these are also reflected at Boughborough. Moreover, there are also a number of personal positions that these young people take - those of 'children of committee members', 'children of coaches' and 'children of players'. Whilst there is, inherently, no difference between whether these are samplers or specialisers, it is apparent that there is a link between those whose parents are 'full participants' and those young people who are specialisers in the game. In other words, from my data, it would appear that there is a link between parents' involvement in the club and being in the specialising/investing stage of the game and being 'full participants' of the club community. There is also some evidence to identify how the young people construct the club through these particular positions.

The 'children of committee members', whilst not actively using this position for any social gain, are clearly aware that it helps provide credence to their place in the club and they adopt the position of a full participant of the community - a young person

known to the other players with unrestricted access to the club's facilities (such as bar). To both Daniel and Liam (in these examples) the fact that their fathers are relatively full participants within the club means that they have access to the adult area of the club (the bar) and therefore a position further down the participation continuum than those young people who do not:

'Cos dad does the ground and the fixtures I know most of the grown ups here. I'm always in the bar having a coke with them and they're all really friendly (Daniel, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

I like the bar, and we always go in there after the game so dad can talk about the teams for next week and I talk to the other [adult] players (Liam, 11, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

These experiences of the club, voiced by both Daniel and Liam, highlight an additional layer of their construction of Boughborough in that as young people they already have access to playing and training but their construction of the club has developed further. They are no longer on the periphery of the club and identify themselves as participants of the club since they have access to the bar. In other words, their construction of the club is more deeply informed and detailed than those who are peripheral participants. In fact, they construct the club as a multi-layered interactive experience as Liam further highlighted:

It's great being able to come here, we can play, practice, go to the bar, watch the games, talk to people and you really feel like you're part of this great big organisation. It makes you like feel important and like you belong (Liam, 11, Interview 1: 23rd July 2002)

Liam's construction of the club, through his position, shows an awareness of the diversity of opportunity. To him the club is not simply a place to learn and play sport but it has wider social implications and structures.

With regards to this notion of the committee member parent, Ben notes that there is nepotism towards him from the youth team selectors and, whilst he is passive in this decision making, the position held by his mother is an influential one in the club. Ben's construction of the club is broadly similar to Liam's, and since his parents are

full participants of the community, he is aware that his ability does not necessarily preclude him from playing matches and that there is:

If I play badly they'll still pick me 'cos my mum does the membership (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

For the 'children of the coaches' there are also slightly different issues. Again, with both Liam and Daniel, here it is interesting to note that they hold another dynamic position (although there are also coaches in the club with children who are not committee members). This additional position, as the son of a coach, also brings with it baggage and responsibility as Liam points out:

He always gets me to help and clear up and stuff, plus he's harsher 'cos he's my dad (Liam, 11, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Whilst Liam highlights having to help out, the comment on him being harsher is interesting since it revolves around Chris' expectations of Liam's performance, and his deliberate practice. Daniel on the other hand, is put into a position of importance by his father (whilst acknowledging some nepotism):

I'm captain – and that's not 'cos dad coaches us, but he does say I'm a good captain (Daniel, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

The way that the club is constructed by these young people is clearly based around the positions that their father's practise in the club and, as we have already seen, the kudos they gain from this.

For the 'children of the players' it seems there are more complex issues and positions for they see themselves as not only better players:

Dad shows me how to play the shots better and we always practise in the garden (Steve, 11, Interview 2: 28th May 2002).

They also see themselves as young-adult club members (and therefore full participants of the club):

They were one short last week so I played.....and afterwards dad let me have a drink after the game in the bar! (Nathan, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

This adult acceptance is a key aspect to both the young people's playing positions, as well as their construction of the club, as Mark highlights:

It's good when you know all the players, 'cos they talk to you and make you feel part of the club more (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd July 2001)

Since the players are already 'full participants' of this community, their children construct the club on a relationship level with the other adult players there (similar to those with parents as coaches or with positions on the committee).

It should also be noted that the young people also ascribe themselves positions based on their own inherent talent and ability in comparison with their team mates:

I'm the main bowler in the team and that kind of gives me respect from the others (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd July 2001)

I don't like it with the 8 a side, I'm always with Sam who is better than me. I can hear them [team-mates] moan whenever I'm on strike.... (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

As Kirk & MacPhail (2003) found, the 'samplers' and 'specialisers' display different behaviours. They also hold complex and dynamic positions within the club and this is also linked with their own construction of the club. This multi-layered practice of a position reflects the young person's developmental stage, ability, participation and closeness to the workings of the club. For example, both Daniel and Liam (despite being 'samplers') construct the club through their own experiences, which in turn reflect their own positions. Thus, a young person who only attends practices (and is a peripheral participant) will have a very simplistic construction of the club compared to one who attends practices, plays matches, has a parent involved in the club and, is accepted and known by the other players. It is the positioning of the young people that informs their construction of the club and whilst this is multi-layered and dynamic, it is also progressive.

This construction then goes from the 'peripheral participant':

It's nice here 'cos we do lots of cricket, and the ground is nice (Seth, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

To the ‘full participant’:

I love it, I get to play, practise, talk to people and go to the bar (Liam, 11, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

The notion of the club as a setting then is important since it is constructed in this way by the individual’s positions within it. The more involved and the more experienced a participant they are, the more complex the relationship they have with the club. This itself is echoed in the next section concerning the parents.

5.4 The Parents

The parents at Boughborough occupy a number of positions and also construct the club differently. Kirk & MacPhail (2003; 33) describe the parents in their study as “self as.....” parents and they acknowledge that the positions they hold can be multiple but are, first and foremost based around the ‘self as parent’ position where their interest is focussed around their child:

I come here to support Mark really, and we both enjoy that (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002)

At the same time it is also clear that, because of the nature of the cricket club and the way that it is run (see chapter 6 for more explanation), there will be multiple positions taken by some individuals within this. An example (and probably the most extreme one) is Dave (a parent, coach and committee member):

I’m second team captain, groundsman, coach, fixture secretary... and I do the coaching as well (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

It should be noted that within the club every coach (except for Matt) was a parent of a child in their team. However, in this section, I intend to focus solely upon the other parents, the ones who do not coach.

In a similar manner to the young people, the parents occupied a number of community membership positions and were identifiable as peripheral and full participants of the club. At the same time as occupying a degree of membership, the data also suggests that there were a range of different social positions available to the parents at

Boughborough. It should be noted that, unlike Kirk & MacPhail (2003), at least six sets of parents attended in family groups (although at times travelling in two cars and leaving at different times). Four of these attended in this way on a fairly regular basis but when they did not, there would be at least one of them in attendance. Using Kirk & MacPhail's (2003) parental types as a starting point, but with a number of clear sub-groupings within them, the main parental positions identified at Boughborough were: the spectator ('supportive', 'critical', 'social', and 'clueless') who tended to be a peripheral participants, the helper ('practical', 'domestic', 'financial', and 'technical') who tended to be full participants, the committed member ('ex-official' and 'current-official') who tended to be full participants and the non-attender ('sporadic' and 'complete'), who were predominantly peripheral participants.

Each of these positions is discussed in the next section and it should be noted throughout that there were parents who occupied more than one position. What should also be noted is that (like the young people) the parent's construction of Boughborough is based around the position that they hold and their degree of membership of the club community. In a similar way to the findings of Kirk & MacPhail (2003) this construction also appears to be based around the length of time their child has been at the club as much as their developmental stage (although these are also inextricably linked).

5.4.1 The Spectator

The Spectators at Boughborough appeared to occupy a number of positions ('supportive', 'critical', 'social', and 'clueless'). In each case the spectators attended most of the training sessions and most of the games and all but one were peripheral participants. During the fieldwork eight separate parents were identified and interviewed as spectators and, of these, a number highlighted their social position in relation to their interactions and construction of the club.

Roger has been attending Boughborough with Mark for the last three years and Mark is a beginning specialiser. Roger attends every session and match and positions himself as a 'supportive' spectator. He is a peripheral participant and is not involved in the club in any formal way:

I must admit I see my role very much as a social member offering my support to the team only as a spectator I'm afraid... (Roger, Parent, Interview 1: 4th June 2001)

James, on the other hand, is far more critical. He is not happy about the coaching and openly admits he comes down to see his friends and because Alex can also see his. James positions himself as a 'critical spectator' and like Roger is only a peripheral participant.

I come down here 'cos Alex enjoys being with his friends here. I don't think they coach very well here – and I've said so – but we come down because of our friends. (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Both Jake and Harry attend the sessions as social spectators and, whilst they don't comment upon the coaching, they are happy to position themselves in terms of the socialising. In fact their construction of the club as a setting to meet and socialise is very much bound up with this:

I come down for a pint and a chat – as well as to watch Sean practice or play (Jake, Parent, Interview 1: 27th August 2001)

We don't get much chance to see friends now – so it's nice to come down and see them here in a nice environment on a nice sunny evening. (Harry, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002)

Rachel however is, by her own admission, a 'clueless' spectator. She has been bringing Steve down since the start of the season and, whilst she admits cricket is an anathema to her, she is happy to watch him with the other younger players (samplers) and talk to other parents. She is, however, aware of the cliques within the club and is not confident to go to the bar or pavilion in case she is intruding. Since she identifies herself to be on the periphery of the club, her construction of the club is both superficial and simplistic and is based around observation more than participation. She is a peripheral participant as the following quote highlights:

It's a nice place to watch your child play cricket. I don't know anything about the game and it's a complete mystery to me [laughs], but it's nice to come here after work and talk to other parents. (...) I wouldn't go to the bar though, the

parents over there all seem a bit cliquey. (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

5.4.2 The Helper

In the case of Boughborough the four identified helpers took on positions such as helping to set up the session ('practical'), organising drinks for between innings - usually mothers ('domestic'), transporting players to games ('financial') and scoring or umpiring (technical). The 'helpers' were also 'spectators' in that some of them attend every session and each of them started out as a 'spectator'. They have moved from being a 'peripheral participant' to being closer to a 'full participant' of the club.

Patrick has been at Boughborough for about two seasons and his son Brendan is a beginning specialiser. Whilst he admits he doesn't like to interfere or start coaching, he is quite happy to help out when asked and positions himself very much as a practical helper:

I've started to help them set up the nets or move the screens when I'm here. It helps the coaches and it means the kids get more time. I've even done a bit of umpiring once when they were **REALLY** desperate (Patrick, Parent, Interview 1: 16th July 2002 – with emphasis added as it was expressed.)

When he can make it to practices, Trevor also helps out and is happy to assist the coaches. As a former P.T. instructor he can "sympathise with them [coaches] sometimes with everything they've got to do" (Trevor, Parent, Interview 1: 25th June 2001). He tends to help set up practices and to use his skills to help work with a group when playing small games. Whilst he clearly tries to distance himself from getting heavily involved in the coaching, he does position himself as a helper.

Georgina (whose son has been at the club for two years) is more than happy to help out during matches. As Kirk & MacPhail (2003) note with their helpers, there is a significant gender identity issue and this is echoed by the gender stereotypical positions held by the women at Boughborough. Georgina identifies her position as a domestic one and highlights the gender stereotype of the men being unable to remember this menial task:

It all started when they didn't have any squash on a hot day – so I volunteered to go to the garage to get some. Now I've sort of become the drinks lady for them! I don't mind – it's just one thing they [coaches] forget sometimes. (Georgina, Parent, Interview 1: 9th July 2002)

Georgina's construction of the club is thus bound with gender stereotypes yet she is happy to conform to this dominant club ideology.

Tim is a helper whose son also plays for the team. Tim's contribution to the running and organisation of the club is one of technical help:

I don't mind book work, it means I can watch the match and make a small contribution, and Chris'll buy me a pint for my troubles! (Tim, Parent, Interview 1: 20th May 2002)

However, Tim also owns a large people carrier and is aware that he has become affectionately known as the 'team bus driver':

The kids have started to call me Otto [after the bus driving character from The Simpsons] because I drive them to games!! 'Cos I work for myself [accountant] I can make sure I get to matches so I tend to take half a dozen of them each week. (Tim, Parent, Interview 1: 20th May 2002)

It is interesting to note that Tim's position of bus driver is one that has been created for him by the young people and yet it is one he is happy (and flattered) to ascribe to. In each case the parents here have very different understandings of what the club is when compared to the spectators and their realisation that Boughborough is a 'situated learning environment' (c.f. Kirk & Macdonald, 1998). This has meant that they have developed their position in terms of their perceived needs and construction of the club. As Kirk & MacPhail (2003) also note, there is a significant gender divide between the positions that were occupied by these parents and these were clearly linked to both the wider gender identity and the socio-cultural nature of the sport.

5.4.3 The Committed Member

With regards to the committed members, it appears that there were two types here - those who were ex-officials and those who were current-officials. In each case these

committed members have developed through the ranks of peripheral and full participants of this community. There were only two identifiable ex-official committed members at Boughborough, much like at F.A.C. (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003). In a sense this is an odd position within the club as the majority of those who could be defined as committed members had multiple positions and were (it appears) normally coaches.

Nick (a PE teacher) would count as the only real committed member who did not play a major part in the club. Nick's son (Reuben) is a talented specialiser. Nick's position in the club is of an ex-official:

Well I used to play a bit, and I did a bit of coaching and I used to do the fixtures – but I've given that up since Reuben has been playing sport more seriously [the last 3 years]. I just don't have time to commit now – but I do try and help out when I'm here and when Reuben isn't playing County Tennis.
(Nick, Ex-Official, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

Nick also still plays when he has the opportunity and has an experience of the practicalities of the game and the club, but now, admits that currently he is in no position to foster a more official post in the club. His construction of the club is clearly one of having been a key full participant of the club to one where he has gradually stepped back out of the structure. This construction is one of experience and multiple and diverse positions and requirements.

Barry on the other hand does still play but, with a recent addition to his family, he has had to temporarily give-up the post of Treasurer at the club. Whilst his son (William, 11) still plays for the team and is a beginning specialiser, Barry has identified that he has taken a step back from the position he held:

With family it's difficult. My wife doesn't work and looks after the two we've got plus the new baby, so I'm now ferrying them around more which means I don't have time to be involved at the moment. I'm sure that'll change in a few years and I can get back into it. (Barry, parent, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Both Nick and Barry are in a position that existing family relationships and requirements take precedence over their support for the club although there are clear

connotations that they will return to it. Both, like Kirk & MacPhail (2003) experienced, had previously some significant and extensive commitment to the running of the club.

On a more formal level Tony is a current official at the club and has been involved ever since his son (Ben) came to the club with his friends two years ago. Tony and his wife Rosie began as peripheral participants but soon got to know other members and became more involved, latterly as vice presidents and committee members. They have moved from peripheral participants to full participants of the club community. Tony is an outspoken and outgoing character and was invited onto the committee to help seek out sponsorship money for the club. Whilst he is critical of the coaching, he sees his place on the committee as one that will benefit the club and, indirectly, his son as well. In other words he has ascribed himself multiple positions as a critical spectator and current-official and, more generally, as a parent.

I don't mind getting sponsorship – talking is what I'm good at! But the more money I can bring into the club, the more coaches they can provide and the better the coaching will be.....They're not coaches, they think they're coaches, but they are managers, they are managing a team of kids. They are organising people to be picked up, they are organising venues, they are organising how people play, who plays this, who plays that, where to go, when to go, they aren't coaching – that is managing. So in effect these guys are going away on a coaching course and coming back and not being coaches but mini managers. (Tony, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002)

Interestingly, Rosie (Tony's wife) has also become involved in the club as the youth membership contact and administrator.

I don't see myself in that way at all really, not a club official – I just see myself more as one of the lad's mums who helps out. I mean I know quite a lot of the mums, as having one child at ***** and one child at ***** I know quite a broad range of mums. I don't really see myself in an official light. There's another lady who helps, and we've been invited up to meetings in the working men's club. They thought we should be there when they decided how to divide up the age group teams for the year. They're actually very official here, when you get amongst the coaches it is – but in terms of

parents and helping out it's different. If I were to say I saw it informally I don't mean that I do it casually – it's done properly. But it seems like it's a natural thing to do help them out. (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

Rosie's position in the club, as she readily admits, is an administrative one and whilst she is happy to help out, she does not see it as an official position within the club. Her construction of the club is one bound up in the male hierarchy including the meetings held, ironically, at the local working men's club.

Again the construction of the club by these full participants is more advanced and encapsulates, not just helping out, but the day to day running, administration and future of the club.

5.4.4 The Non-attender

The non-attending parents were fairly easy to identify in the sample but far more difficult to access to interview. In the end, it was identified that there were two types of non-attenders: those who very occasionally went to a session, the 'sporadic non-attender' and those who never attended a session, the 'complete non-attender'. These were identified mainly through interviews and also through the observations and critical comments of the other parents and coaches. Of the four family groups identified, all of these parents were from the sampling group and all were identifiable as peripheral participants of the club. Of these, the only ones I managed to successfully interview (by phone) were one mother, (Carol) a 'sporadic non-attender' and one father (Graham), a complete 'non-attender'.

Carol had been recently divorced (just prior to my first season at Boughborough) and was a mother of three who works part time in the fitness industry. She appeared financially stable and throughout the duration of the research was seen driving a convertible Saab Turbo with personalised number plate. All three of her children attended the local Private School and had their own hobbies. As Carol identified, her sporadic non-attendance was not the result of choice but of practicality:

The older one plays at school, and often I don't get back until late, the middle one is into music and drama. Very rarely do we have conflict – they're very accommodating and they realise we're in an awkward situation. I can't

remember that there's ever been an argument or anything over it. I support them mainly through transport by car, I fetch and carry I sometimes go and watch and I don't watch every game 'cos I work. I have to get all sorts of things organised – I do fitness classes and massage also I have to work around that, and I also work around my children's lives. What we do to make things fair is we have a big diary so we put everything in at the start of the season and we try to fit things round that. If a game is postponed and it's awkward we often get one of the other parents to pick him up – or he can stay with them if he has too. Everything is booked around it. He prefers not to miss anything if he possibly can but sometimes he just has to lump it. He's a team player and I support him in that, so we just have to our lives around it. (Carol, Parent, Interview 1: 27th August 2002)

Whilst this non-attendance is entirely understandable because of the complexity families now face in their relationship, time management and sport situations (c.f. Holroyd, 2002 and Kay, 2003), it does not deflect from the criticisms that the parents themselves know they face at the club and the social stigma that non-attendance also provides.

I don't know any of the other parents – which is bad really. I know there are some that stay and some that drop their kids off like I do and go – but I can't comment, only on the fact that they may well be in a similar situation to us or they have other commitments - but they don't want their son to miss out on his cricket. I also know that I get criticised for not supporting him – but I am in the only way I can. (Carol, Parent, Interview 1: 27th August 2002)

Graham, on the other hand, has similar reasons for not attending. His son, Sebastian, has been at the club for one season already and they have attended an end of season social. However, as Graham points out, like Carol there are practical and economic reasons:

My wife and I do shift work, she does days and I do nights. And Monday to Friday we hardly see each other, plus we have a 2 year old. I just can't get to Boughborough without having to try and arrange babysitting or taking time off – and it's too much hassle. Seb always gets a lift in with Joe as we live right

next door and I wouldn't want our situation to stop him doing anything sport related. (Graham, Parent, Interview 1: 16th July 2002)

Like Carol, Graham is also aware how this looks at the cricket club:

I see some of the parents when Seb plays football on a Sunday – I think most of the cricket team play for ***** colts too. So they're always talking about the cricket but they never really say much to me about it. It's almost like they think I'm not interested – but I am. (Graham, Parent, Interview 1: 16th July 2002)

This practical problem is clearly not unusual in sport or after school sport, as Kay (2003) highlights. As Kirk et al (1997a and 1997b), Green & Chalip, (1998) and Kay (2003) all highlight there is a cost to families for playing sport and, in some cases, parents are willing to compromise for their children. In these cases, clearly this is at a cost to a normal family and home life. For each of these, I think it is also important to note that some of the parents also have a position ascribed to them by their children and highlighted earlier.

It was also interesting to note that the parents who were committed members tended to be the ones who were most critical of the non-attender parents and clearly felt that if they were putting themselves out to help then the other parents should do as well. It was only Rosie who had any sympathy with them “we don't know their background, they've probably got little ones to look after” (Rosie, Parent, interview 1: 18th June 2001) - as opposed to the more common stereotype offered by the majority of the other parents (and coaches):

Those sort of parents are a waste of space – no support for the club, or for their kids. They just treat it like cheap babysitting while they go late night shopping. I think it's disgusting. (Roger, Parent, Interview 1: 4th June 2001).

The non-attenders were clearly on the periphery of the club and their degree of membership (because of their lack of attendance) was minimal. It was also very difficult to identify how they constructed the club, apart from superficially, as a place where their son played the sport.

5.5 The Coaches

The key coaches with whom the research was conducted were Dave, Chris, Paul, Peter and Matt (all of whom were directly involved in the age group teams in which their own sons played). However, throughout the ethnography, a number of other part-time coaches or helpers sporadically appeared and were either interviewed or became part of the field-notes. These were: Trevor, Rob and Dick. Clearly all of these coaches were full participants of the community and, in the same way as the teachers highlighted by Kirk & Macdonald (1998), these coaches were instrumental in the community practice of the club.

This section does not seek to look at the highly complex relationships between the coaches (as in Jones et al, 2002). However, it does intend to produce an analysis of the coaches, their construction of the club and how they practise their (multiple) positions.

All of the coaches were clearly committed volunteers (even with other agendas) and, whilst there was some homogeneity within the way in which they constructed the club, each practised the position of coach differently and they all had their own opinion on the construction of the ideal athlete parent (c.f. Kirk & MacPhail, 2003).

Of the key coaches in the club it was clear that all but one (Matt) were coaching because they had sons who played for the club (c.f. McCallister et al, 2000). As Dave explained, whilst intimating that he practised multiple positions as both a parent and a coach:

Everyone who has done the coaching course has got kids playing, that's what pushes you in. They can see that they've got potential and if no-one else is going to do it we'd better do it. (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

In the same way as the coaches identified by Kirk & MacPhail (2003), each of the coaches at Boughborough was heavily critical of the others' ability to coach, organise and interact with the young people. In fact, the disagreements led to a clear division between the coaches and within the age group section (see chapter 8).

Whilst the coaches did appear to practise the club and their coaching style very differently (as those at F.A.C. did), there was clearly an appreciation of the overall result:

Yeah – we do disagree about the best way to coach and what’s wrong with that? I’m a PE teacher I make no excuses for that - but I can organise kids and know how to coach them. Dave isn’t and in my opinion can’t. But we’re both heavily committed to the club and the kids so we do things our own way. The end result is kids playing cricket – so where’s the loss in that? (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

In each case at Boughborough it was clear that the coaches ascribed themselves the position of committed volunteers, people who were working directly with the young people and their parents for the overall good of the club. However, whilst the coaches were committed volunteers, they were also parents, committee members and other administrative officials. Each one (excluding Matt) considered their coaching position to be about helping their team and, indirectly, their son. These multiple positions, and therefore multiple practices, also further highlight the diversity of meaning and the potential for conflict and tension as Kirk & MacPhail (2003) explain.

The practices of the coaching positions also reflect those of F.A.C. At Boughborough the coaches saw themselves as being on the front line and highlighted that they were practising their position voluntarily:

This is where cricket starts, and we sacrifice a lot to make sure it keeps going, but its worth it with the kids (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

There were, however, a number of relationships within this that needed to be managed. These were based around the young people, the parents, each other and the club. Each coach constructed their own relationship with the young people and their parents and this appears to have been based upon their own ‘explicit’ positions. An example of this was Chris who as a PE teacher practised his coaching position on a technical and authoritative level. In contrast Matt’s inexperience with working with young people meant that he practised his coaching position by acting as a humorous elder brother.

However, whilst there were differences in these practices there was some acceptance from the coaches that the ‘end result’ was the same. It would be useful, in this case, to look at the coaches in more detail in order to examine their positions, coaching practice and their construction of the club.

5.5.1 The Altruistic Coaches (Dave and Matt)

Dave has been involved at Boughborough for approximately nine years, having played at the club until he was sixteen, moved away and then returned to the area and the sport at the age of 36. Dave has multiple positions in the club and, throughout the study, was second team captain, groundsman, coach and fixture secretary. Two of his sons play for the club, one in his age group and the eldest in the Under 17 side. Dave has been married for eighteen years and has lived in Boughborough almost all of his life, although he moved away for ten years when he was first married. Dave works shifts as a security guard at a major manufacturing company in the city approximately twelve miles away.

Matt, on the other hand, has only been at the club for three years and enjoyed the structure and support of the club so much that he “decided to do the level 1 and give something to the kids” (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 8th June 2002). Matt was previously a footballer and played in a local pub league but found the camaraderie, the commitment and the game to be ‘like a social drug’. Matt is single, in his mid thirties and travels five miles to get to the ground (which is closer to his work than to his home). Matt is a salesman working for a large plastic manufacturing company.

For both coaches the key to their practice was that they felt that the young people should come first.

It’s all about giving them an experience of the game, not turning them into the next Michael Vaughn (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

I’ve not got the best cricket knowledge out of everybody, but what I believe I’ve got is man management and also a good sense of humour which the kids hopefully relate to. It’s about making it fun after all – that’s why I tend to clown around (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2002)

In fact, both acknowledge that this is the key driving force behind their coaching. However, they have been criticised by other parents and coaches alike as being too disorganised with unstructured coaching sessions which lack both technical and tactical depth. The self management of both coaches also highlights this. Dave often smokes whilst coaching or umpiring matches and Matt is invariably a quarter to half an hour late to any session. From the coaching sessions it is clear that neither plan, nor discuss their sessions and this is reflected by the comments from other coaches, parents and young people alike.

There is also another element to the practice of this coaching 'team' - that they are both focussed on results and winning. Somewhat ironically, their laid back approach to coaching is not transferred to a match situation:

I like to think that they go out there to win. I believe winning is more important than everything. Not at all costs – fairly but if you can encourage people to actually think about winning they've got more chance than they have if they didn't – but they must enjoy it (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2002)

They're here to play and win matches. I pick the team so the majority of them are the best players so we can win. That's what it's all about – winning. (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

This attitude has also caused problems between the coaches and the parents and Dave admits that he has been blunt and up-front with his explanations to the young people:

I've taken them in the dressing room and explained to them why some of them only are there for fielding. I've also said to them that that could go all the way through their cricketing career that they could be just specialist fielders – but I hope they'll turn into better batsman/bowlers.....[how have they reacted to that?]....most of them have been alright, but there's the odd couple of parents that I've heard talking behind my back, but if they want to say anything they should say it to me not speak in a loud voice so I can hear it. Maybe I haven't been fair on some of them – but some of them their attitude at coaching hasn't been 100%. (Dave, Coach, Interview 1:13th August 2001)

Both coaches see themselves as child and competition focussed. They also see themselves within the club as committed volunteers (as Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 similarly highlight at FAC). Matt identifies his position as a club member and a committed volunteer and his coaching practice appears to be based around the wider good of the club:

My role in the club – I don't have one – I just see myself as somebody that if they need something doing they'll ask and I'll do it. I'm more interested in getting the club to where it should be so it means that coaching kids at a younger level that's what it takes. (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18 June 2002)

Dave, on the other hand is a key member of the club and as such is irreplaceable. He acknowledges this and also that there are few others who will actively help. He identifies his position(s) as being integral to the day to day running and success of the club.

Sometimes my wife tells me I should just stop and see what happens. No pitches, no coaching, no games - it'd be like World War 3 without me! In the hierarchy I wouldn't like to say – I just do it 'cos I enjoy it. There aren't many who do help. (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

Since qualifying as a coach last year, Matt has only worked with Dave so the realities of the coaching situation are expressed in terms of his initial experiences and these are reflected in many of his practices it seems. Both Dave and Matt's ideas of the 'ideal athlete' are based around commitment first and ability second although there are complexities within this since they see coaching as being fun and fairly laid back.

We're here to make it fun and they mess around sometimes but we're also here to play to win (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2002)

For the ideal parent they are clear that the ones who currently help (e.g. the club's parent 'helpers') are central to this construct – and they abhor the ones they call the 'babysitters':

Most of the parents are fine – they help like Tim does. But there are just some who drop the kids off and come back later and we have to run a bloody crèche for them (Dave, Coach, Interview 1:13 August 2001)

Both Dave and Matt coach the younger part of the age group which is made up predominantly of samplers but some of these young people are noticeably beginning to progress to the specialising stage and this is causing some issues:

Last year they were fine and happy to play, but this year they're some who want to do more coaching than playing –and its difficult with a mixed group (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2002)

I had a parent who wants his son to go into Chris's group – he said something about him not learning anything. So I've let him go but I don't like them accusing us of not coaching (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

5.5.2 The Egoistic Coaches (Chris and Paul)

Chris is a PE teacher at a large secondary school, approximately 10 miles away. Quite large proportions (approximately two-thirds) of the young people at Boughborough go to his school (or one of the feeder primaries). Chris is a committed coach with his son in the group he coaches. He has been at the club for seventeen years as a player and has coached and run teams for the past fifteen years. Chris is a stickler for technique and is heavily critical of the altruistic coaches. He emphasises technical ability and spends a lot of time during coaching sessions stopping and evaluating the young players. His overall ethos is that the only way to get the best from the game is:

By educating the coaches, educating the children and by educating the parents (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

Paul is the highest qualified (level 3) coach in the club and the club chairman. He has responsibilities in the county youth squads and, because of these, cannot attend every coaching session. He has a son who plays with the under 10 age group and helps out there whenever he has the opportunity. Whilst this is good for the club and has helped more young people into the county team, he has been criticised for his loss of direction with the club by the other coaches:

Paul is Chairman, but I don't think he puts enough time into it. We need to address that. Paul is a good coach but either he's going to put all his eggs in this basket or he'll need to put time in elsewhere. (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

I also think Paul's pulled in too many ways. If you actually analyse what's already happened he's got his enthusiasm for coaching through Boughborough, and yet if you analyse how much he does during the summer – it's negligible. He's got a county colts team to coach – which is fine, I'm quite happy that he's doing that – but it is definitely to the detriment of the juniors at Boughborough that he is the most technically qualified coach and should be doing it. (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

In fact Paul admits this problem quite openly

I don't think it was as structured as it was last year. That's probably a criticism of me and my part as I haven't been getting that involved, and now as the chairman with someone else (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

The concentration on the technical instruction is a reflection of the older group these coaches tend to work with and, also, with the group of Under 13's who might be deemed specialisers.

They both practise their position in a similar way and look for commitment and respect from the young people but are happier (than Dave and Matt) that the teams should be mixed ability:

I am definitely against a win at all costs approach, certainly in all junior cricket I think there are kids who are slow learners to begin with and will stick at things and gain their success later through their love of the game, as opposed to people who've got initial success for a number of reasons – it might be early physical growth, it might be a head start due to their education establishment and it might be that they doing it for their parents. At the end of the day it's got to be because the child wants to play it. It's interesting to watch I can tell the ones who'll carry on playing – the ones who are definitely going to be the future of this club and there aren't as many as other people perceive (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

It's all about giving them a game, not winning all the time. Many of the kids here now aren't great cricketers, but they'll make great club members in the future (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001)

This far more egalitarian, yet technical approach (arguably stemming from Chris's PE teaching experiences) itself offers some complexity. Both coaches are clearly more 'aware' of the wider implications of their position and appreciate that, in their opinion, there is a long term goal here rather than short term success. This statement from Chris about the parents highlights this issue:

Some parents just see it as how successful they are immediately, not the long term game and therefore the shouting and saying things that might be contradictory to the coach due to their ignorance of the game or what is required at a certain time. There are one or two. On the whole the parents are quite good in that sense in that they realize what is being done. (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

However, between them, there are some issues and complaints as Paul highlights concerning Chris's background:

Well, I'm sure you've probably noticed - there's one coach that I'm having a bit of a hard time over, but that's just his background I think him being a sports teacher. I think it's a traditional way of teaching and picking kids out thinking that they're still at school kind of thing, so his background is of teaching for 20-25 years, so his methods are very traditional and he perhaps doesn't realize that coaching has moved on from that (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

The issues seem to be that Chris practises his coaching position in a very authoritarian 'teacher' style that is equitable in participation and focussed on technique. In contrast, both Dave and Matt practise their coaching in a laid-back manner, based on fun but emphasising competition. Clearly these approaches encapsulate different expectations and reflect different notions of coaching practice.

Looking Côté & Hay's (2002a) model, it appears that Chris is closest to fulfilling the requirements of the beginning specialisers but may lack the competition and winning edge. Whereas Dave and Matt, with the mainly samplers, are there for their focus on ability and winning. What this does highlight is the difference between the two practices and the way they are identified by the coaches.

Chris identifies the 'ideal athlete' as one who will listen, learn and:

Be focussed enough to practise the correct shots than just hit the ball as hard as he can ...they must also know they're part of a large team (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

Paul is the same, but is more aware of the wider implications of this:

The ideal kid is one who wants to be a long term member of the club, who'll play throughout their life and be on the organisational side as he gets older. We want them to learn, improve and play – it's like a life long thing. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

In a similar way to the other coaches, they also know the ideal (and non-ideal) parent:

What I really don't like is the ones who use it as a babysitting service. The rest are fine, the best ones are normally the ones who've got kids and we can rely on to help at matches and things – but we don't have enough of them, you can never have enough of them (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2001)

But at the same time Paul also recognises the issues involved from a club perspective:

There are one or two people [parents] who do a lot of jobs within the club, and I'm quite keen for more people to get involved. Purely from the fact that it cuts down the workload, and if you've got more people doing less work you tend to get better quality of service. The problem is finding those sorts of people who have the time to put that sort of commitment in. In fact the parents in a way are an untapped resource – the problem is actually getting them to step forward and volunteer for a job (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001)

To summarise the coach's perspectives, it is clear that the positions they adopt and the practices they display are not always congruous with the notion of altruism or egoism. Whilst Dave and Matt are far more relaxed in the coaching, they are far stricter and more focussed on winning, whilst Paul and Chris are far more focussed on technique and participation. This dichotomy suggests that there are a number of variables that

need to be taken into account when constructing the notion of the perfect coach and more empirical work needs to be conducted on this.

The coach's construction of the club as a setting however, is also clearly very different from that of the young people and the parents. Since the coach's practices are what some of the parents and young people base their own construction of the club on, it is clear that the coach's practice is vital. The coach's practices are clearly diverse and yet their construction of the club as a learning community is broadly similar. More work needs to be conducted to identify how key this practice is for the construction of the club. What is identifiable however, is that the position practised by the coach also brings with it conflict.

5.5.3 Coaches as Privileged Selves

As Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight, the coaches all positioned themselves as committed volunteers who were putting something back into the club. They also appear, through the construction of their identity within the club to hold a certain amount of autonomy, importance and relationship with the others there. Whilst they have different and complex approaches to their interactions and coaching, their main aim is ultimately the same result. In a similar way to what Kirk & MacPhail (2003) identified, the coaches appear to have the licence to construct the ideal young person and coach. However, it is clear that some of the more committed parents at Boughborough felt that they were able to construct an opinion of the coaching practices themselves:

I don't think you would get into roles of conflict, because if there was a coach working with Dave and his team was all of a sudden bowling fantastically better, batting fantastically better, Dave would be chuffed because he'd be saying yeah look at my boys. He's a good cricketer and the problem is all these guys are good cricketers, all play cricket and they're good at doing it, but I don't think they're coaches. It's like having footballers made managers. A good footballer doesn't make a good manager and a good cricketer doesn't make a good coach. If you tell one where he's going wrong, he might say "You don't want to do that again" or "You want to control the ball a bit better", that isn't teaching them. (Tony, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002)

5.6 The Club

The members of the general club committee who were not coaches are more difficult to position. Whilst there is clearly an element of snobbery and “a case of us and them” (Roger, parent, interview 1: 4th June 2001), the multiple positions are such that most of the committee I could actually speak to were also coaches. However, of the two I did get to speak to in some detail, Ted and Keith, they were able to construct a position much like those of the parents. They were it seems, peripheral participants despite being heavily involved in the club in the past. It seems it is possible on this basis that whilst it is possible for a degree of membership to increase (from peripheral to full), it is also apparent that this degree of membership can also decrease over time as both Ted and Keith personify.

5.6.1 The Club Bastion

Ted was a former player who still plays the occasional game in the Sunday social side but at 57 years of age felt his playing days were over. He used to open the batting for the first team for about 25 years and has topped many league averages over his time (there are numerous pictures of him around the club). In his post as club secretary and a member of the selection committee, he spends a fair amount of his time at the ground but only for specific meetings. Whilst he is entirely supportive of the coaching, he does not play any role in it, or wish to: “I’m too old for that lark, it’s for the youngsters to do now” (Ted, Official, Interview 1: 20th May 2002). He now sees his position in the club as one of maintenance and smooth running:

My work is all behind the scenes really. I’m not on the pitch now so I just help the club go through things, answer letters and do the work with the league. The practical stuff is for the rest of them now – I don’t get involved any more. (Ted, Official, Interview 1: 20th May 2002)

Ted is one of the club ‘bastions’ who is more focussed on the practical and administrative side than some of the other adults in the club.

5.6.2 The Old Boy

Keith, on the other hand, has been in the village since he took early retirement from the army fifteen years ago. He occasionally played when he first came to the club but took on the post of Vice-Chairman when he couldn’t play any more. He is around 65

years old. He rarely visits the ground, despite living within a few hundred yards, and his only contact, apart from meetings, is apparently when anything of importance happens. He clearly felt he was not needed and that this was just a hobby in which to be involved (echoing the likes of Holt, 1998, and Hill 2002 when discussing the class influence on club sport):

I've got many interests - business ones, and I still do things for my old regiment so I'm quite busy. The cricket club is always here when I come back so I don't interfere, but I do like to do my bit for it when I can (Keith, Official, Interview 1: 27th May 2002)

Keith could be described as an 'old boy', since he reflects the middle class attitudes towards running the club (as Hill, 2002 highlights).

Both of these members undertake very different positions and see themselves very differently in relation to the way they have constructed themselves in the club. Neither has much to do with the young people, but both identify an importance and, perhaps, a status in their position at the club.

5.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore and develop the theoretical notions of social construction and positioning and legitimate peripheral participation in order to explain how the club is socially constructed by its participants. Throughout this chapter, it is clear that the overall construction of the club is dynamic and involves members of the community of practice contributing to the social construction of the club in multiple positions. Each person who practises a position can also practise it differently. Thus, the overall construction of the club takes place through a combination of individual's practices. The diverse positions these participants practise show how dynamic their relationships are, and how complex the social construction of Boughborough is. What is clear therefore, is that the multiple and complex notion of social positioning is vital to understanding how the club is socially constructed.

The chapter highlights how the club is a complex community that incorporates multiple relationships and practices. This dynamic community of practice is therefore able to adapt and change as new participants appear and others leave. It is this change

that highlights how people understand the club differently according to the social position/s they practise, and how these practices can create conflict such as the coaching disagreements that Dave and Chris highlight in section 5.5 as well as change. The participants also invest different amounts of time and energy into the club (e.g. Dave the coach, see sections 5.4 and 5.5), and can practise multiple positions (coach/ parent/ Old Boy). These investments lie behind powerful emotional connections to the community of practice as Dave highlights with his own personal experiences and those of his son.

Finally this chapter identifies how the club is a key site for the gathering of knowledge that is part of a community of practice. It is a source of learning about how to play cricket and how to be a cricketer. More than this it is also a source of social positioning for parents. As Green & Chalip (1997) highlight, parents are also socialised through their child's sport, so those parents who engage with the club (and are full participants) are more likely to be part of this learning process and better understand themselves what it is to be a cricketer.

Through the analysis of the data, this chapter has established that the club is a social construction. As this chapter has already highlighted much of the positioning at Boughborough involves parents as well as coaches and young people. The following two chapters look in more detail at the role of the parents and family in the practice and success of Boughborough. To be precise, the next chapter looks at a particular form of this social construction of the club, the analogy of the club as a family.

Chapter 6:

Boughborough Cricket Club and the Family

6.1 Introduction to the Chapter

Following the previous chapter in which it was established that Boughborough is a social construction of its members, this chapter introduces the analogy of the club as a family - a particular way in which Boughborough was constructed by its members. The chapter provides evidence to suggest that the club is practised in a way similar to certain types of traditional nuclear families. Through the analysis of the data and the linking of the conceptual theory to the research questions this chapter will explain how this analogy and experience of the club is constructed by its participants.

The chapter begins by looking at the analogy of the 'club as a family' and how the issues of structure, organisation, self esteem and commitment that are attributed to family practice are similar to the practices that exist at Boughborough. The chapter then proceeds to look at the issue of commitment and then cultural and gender hierarchies through the use of the qualitative data. Underpinning this chapter is the sociological theory of the family and building upon the concepts of social positioning and legitimate peripheral participation. The chapter discusses how Boughborough is practised by its participants and also how it is experienced as a community of practice.

The chapter examines the social positioning of participants within the analogy of the family and looks at their practice in terms of the time they invest and the emotional connections to the family. The chapter will look at some of the key concepts from the previous chapter through the 'lens' (Lave and Wenger, 1991) of the club as a family.

6.2 The Club as a Family: *"It's like a big family here..... "* (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd July 2001)

The role of the family in the sports participation and socialisation process of young people is well documented and well researched particularly at elite level (e.g. Rowley & Graham, 1999, Côté, 1999 and Kay, 2000a). Families provide a range of forms of support for young people in sport and this has been the focus of many psychological

studies on fostering positive experiences such as reducing aggression in sport (Widmeyer, 2002), task and ego orientation (Carr et al, 1999), motivation (White, 1998 and Horga & Stimac, 1999), self-efficacy (Côté & Hay, 2002b) and emotion (Cox, 1999). There are also studies that focus on the psychological pressures placed on young people by their family (e.g. Hellstedt, 1990, Colley et al, 1992, Hultsman, 1993, DeKnop, 1996, Lee & Maclean, 1997, DeKnop et al, 1998 and Kanters & Tebbutt, 2001). These tend to dominate the focus of research although, there are also a number of sociological pressures felt within the family unit. These wider pressures involve practical considerations such as time and social cost (e.g. Kirk et al, 1997a and 1997b).

Thus, whilst there is a plethora of psychological research into the family influence in sport, it is mainly through the work of Kirk and colleagues in the UK and the *Values and Norms in Sport Project* (De Knop and colleagues) in Europe that the empirical focus has begun to look at club and family links in youth sport. The forms of support that they identify surround the roles of parents in the club including spectating, transporting, officiating, helping, fundraising and coaching (Kirk et al, 1997b). Whilst these are not mutually exclusive (there is a much wider debate to be held on socialisation, family history in sport etc), they form the backbone of the family role in sport. This has further been developed through Kirk & MacPhail (2003) into social roles and social positioning. However, what cannot be ignored are the multiple support forms that have been identified and the complex social dynamics involved in family support for youth sport.

It must also be noted that the family is central to any discussion of young people and club sport and, as Kay (2003; 23) explains, “there is an absence of up-to-date empirical sports research that incorporates in any way at all *family*”. Aligned with this is Kay’s further acknowledgement that the family influence is rarely acknowledged in sports policy literature and it is possible to identify a fundamental lack of knowledge about the whole sports club process in the UK. Kay (2003) explains that, since the latter quarter of the twentieth century, many social divisions (i.e. gender, class and ethnicity) have caused inequality in youth sports participation. Her summary of findings highlights that there are social constraints on women’s time and participation compared to men’s. The socio-economic links to education, opportunity and

participation (linked to the view and role of sport in the family context) also has an effect. Kay (2003) cites Harrington (2003) in saying that middle income young people spend almost three times longer participating in organised sport than their lower income counterparts and the ethnic and cultural background of young people and, indeed, the cultural role of the family also has an effect upon participation. Kay (2003) also explains that there are some inconsistencies in the way that sport is offered and that there is still a lack of participation in sport by those young people from non-traditional (or nuclear) families, and those from a low income background. Kay (2003) further highlights that over the past three decades the contemporary notion of the family has seen vast change and increasing family diversity related to employment, social policy and the changes in the structure and composition of the family unit (divorce, lone parents etc). This diversity of family form and practice has an effect upon the opportunities of young people to participate in sport and the type of family that generally gain access to community based sport.

With regards to cricket, whilst there is currently little empirical evidence to link income, participation and club sport, the socio-demographic detail that does exist suggests that cricket is played by a disproportionate number of those in the higher socio-economic groups (Reid, 1989) and these figures are still representative today (Marqusee, 1995 and Mintel, 2000). Linked to this, Coleman (2002) argues that the better educated a person is the more likely they are to volunteer at club level. In fact, in his study he found that half (50%) of the sample of county youth coaches were educated to degree level or above (with 80% to at least A level standard). Since it has been found that there is a link between educational attainment and the 'traditional' family (c.f. Gittins, 1993), then there is a correlation between cricket, the family and education. This is further explained when Kay notes that "sports research into the family assumes the traditional model of the family" (Kay, 2003; 8). However, whilst this model of the family may be both old fashioned and outmoded, it is still an ideological one that is perpetuated by the club members in their construction of the game and of the club.

The notion of the family was a prominent feature of the data collected at Boughborough. The way that those involved in the club talked about the organisation and practice of the club came across in two distinct ways. Firstly an analogy that the

club can be seen as a family in the way that it reflects some practices of certain (ideological) types of families and, secondly, that it is socio-historically a family club (organised, run and 'dominated' by generations of a number of local families). In this instance it is apparent that there is a dominant family form behind it, an ideological one that is perpetuated by the club members in their construction of the club. This reflected dominant form of family ideology then worked to position some of the groups of individuals within the club (the coaches and parents in particular) who influenced club practice and policy. This dominant force, at the same time, managed to marginalise, exclude and alienate others - in particular those who did not conform to this ideology. They therefore ultimately shaped the kinds of experiences the young people had of cricket within this setting and also in the overall construction of the club.

The social construction of Boughborough thus reflects this dominant ideology and the relative success of the youth section is bound in with this self-perpetuating construction of the club. In short the club's over-arching 'family atmosphere' (encapsulating the notions of the 'club as family' and the 'family club') has dictated its success and popularity amongst like-minded parents and young people. The data in the following sections highlights this and also strengthens the argument that, not only is the sports club a key place for sports participation to occur, but the more the club reflects this notion of 'family atmosphere' in its practices the more successful it is likely to be and the more likely it is that the young people will continue to participate in this supportive environment. However, at the same time, the marginalisation of those young people and families who do not reflect these values is likely to have a detrimental effect on their participation. As the family unit continues to change, the club's reflection of the traditional family unit reflects the cultural and social history of the game. Those who do not aspire to these are marginalised, excluded and alienated. To both succeed and participate at Boughborough it would appear that a traditional family background is essential.

Since Kay (2003) already notes that there are socio-economic and familial links to participation in sport, and cricket (like golf) is seen as a middle class sport then the middle class values are reflected by the sport and the club. In other words at Boughborough, these middle income (and above) families who reflect the ideology of

the club present a self-perpetuating ideology that those from other socio-economic groups find hard to permeate.

The notion of a dominant sporting family typology reiterates the increased need for social, moral and financial support for young people within the game. When these 'requirements' are traced back to opportunity and, with the sports club identified as the key site for participation, it is clear that in the UK to access and participate in sport it is essential that a young person can gain access to a sports club, however this access often comes at a social, financial and time cost.

The increasing notion of the developmental perspectives in sport which include the family support networks also highlight this. Côté & Hay (2002a and 2002b) have defined developmental perspectives that make assumptions on participation and support for the young people to continue to play.

With regards to the construction of the club, it is clear that as Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight, clubs are constructed in different ways, where there is a clear link between family support, coaching, and the club environment and support networks. In this way there are also some links to the notion of 'the family'. Since parents are the key element in both the socialisation and participation process (Côté & Hay, 2002b), issues of the family and family environment are evident and, as I have mentioned elsewhere (Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1996), the family plays this role in a number of ways. Moreover, the key elements are those of the physical, social and moral support that the family is able to provide and that the club can also provide. As the literature review identifies, the Parsonian notion of the onion-structured family unit is outdated and as Holstein & Gubrium (1998) point out, the meaning (and understanding of the family) is linked with how it is socially constructed and accepted within society. Thus the notion of the family is dynamic and has different meanings to different people. This is further supported by Kay (2003) and Smith (1995) who highlight that there are also dysfunctional aspects within the family. Stability and order are the desired effects but often conflict and disorder demonstrate the dysfunctional family traits.

6.2.1 The Analogy

The following section introduces one of the main data findings of the study and the underlying way in which the club was both constructed and experienced by the young people within it. Since much of the data collected seems to highlight how the club is perceived and experienced by those within it (and constructing it) as having a 'family atmosphere', on further analysis it became clear that this resulted from the way in which the club was constructed and practised by many of its members. Importantly, it also became evident that the practice of some aspects of the club resembled some of the key practices of some types of family although, when taking note of Kay (2003), it should be noted that this type of family resembled the traditional model of the family. It will be argued that this reflected the practice of the club members who were (for the majority) from this traditional family model themselves, thus reflecting and reinforcing the dominant family ideology. However, at the same time, this therefore creates patterns of interaction within the club.

6.2.2 Club Practice and Family Practice

It is generally acknowledged that the family is of key importance to both the socialisation and participation of young people in sport (Kay, 2003). It must also be appreciated that any adult run voluntary sector organisation with young people in it has its own (often historical) structure and unwritten code of practice (c.f. Middleton, 1986 and Nichols et al, 1998). Since, in the case of Boughborough, all of these volunteers are also parents it is perhaps natural that the practices they exhibit for the club will be bound around their practice as parents, a commonality they share and exhibit in their coaching, organisation and social position in the club.

Within the club environment it was possible to identify a number of practices that might be thought of as similar to the practices of certain types of family. For instance the club practice is similar to family practice in that they reflect similar functions and values. It has already been noted that the conceptual model of the traditional family unit is outdated (Cheal, 2002) and that the reality of family structure (and its diverse and complex construction) has an influence on sports participation (Kay, 2003). Moreover it should also be noted that, as Fallon & Bowles (1997) highlight in their study, the traditional family structure is more positively influential on sport and leisure participation than a non-traditional family structure. The next few sections

explain in more detail how the practice of the club resembles certain types of family and also how this ideological view of the family as a unit is perpetuated within the club.

6.2.2.1 Structure: Behaviour and Practice of Positions

The first concept that needs some detailed analysis and explanation is the concept that the club is structured in ways that are similar to those of a family unit. In other words the way that the club creates some of its own atmosphere and 'practice' (through the interaction of the adults within it) is similar to the way in which a family behaves and practises family life. Initially, my interpretation comes from the conventions of a functionalist standpoint but it should also be considered that, whilst the notion of the family is often seen as a supportive, caring and informal, it also has structured power relationships (many of the traits that are identified at Boughborough). It cannot be forgotten that there are also negative traits such as domestic violence, as well as psychological and physical abuse. Whilst this account of the club as family does not seek to gloss over such seriousness or attempt to show a naïve or simplistic account of this relationship, it does wish to show the similarities of these theoretical concepts. As one parent noted with regards to the behaviour and practice of the coaches:

It's interesting just people watching sometimes, you can tell the coaches that have kids [Dave and Chris] because of the way they tell the kids what to do. Matt doesn't and he seems to encourage them more. It's like they're the dad's and he's the big brother (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

This functionalist standpoint is a yardstick from which to highlight how the club differs from the modern view of the contemporary family. It is a development from the Parsonian structure to a post-modern interpretation of how the family as a unit has diversified. To begin with, in order to make a comparison between the family and the sports club, we need to identify key aspects of theory. Firstly there is the structure of the family, a concept that began with Talcott Parson's heavily criticised and simplistic notion based around the nuclear family and the positive family stereotypes. Whilst his analogy of the 'relationship onion' is quite useful, it is clear that society has changed and that Parson's notion of the family is now consistently seen as both a romanticised ideal and also an outdated and increasingly unusual reality (Bernandes, 1997 and Cheal, 1999 and 2002). Functionalist theory also makes the claim that society

“assumes the existence of a single reality, a unified society and clearly defined social phenomena such as ‘the family’” (Bernandes, 1997; 198). However, whilst we acknowledge and appreciate that the nuclear family is still a powerful image in most people’s minds (Bernandes, 1997), it appears clear that the functionalist nature of the relationships within Boughborough are a reflection of this and the clubs romanticised history as well as an expectation for the families who bring their children down to practise and play. The majority of these families (it must be highlighted) live in these nuclear family situations, as far as the researcher can gather, and therefore reflect, adopt and promote the positive functionalist values that exist in the club.

Whilst there are plenty of warnings in social science research that serious studies must appreciate the diversity of family life and the influences of class, culture and background on data collection (Smith, 1995), what appears to be clear at Boughborough is that within the ‘family community’ of the club there are a number of different family structures. In the case of cricket (and perhaps this is linked further with the class, history and realities of time and finance required for the game), the club acts like a cultural community in which the young people (and their families) reflect the functionalist values, norms and dispositions of the club. This analysis is similar to that of Zevenbergen et al (2002) whose study of junior golf club cultures emphasised the familial habits that were congruous and reflected with those of the club. Cheal (2002) highlights that within family sociology there is also a more appropriate symbolic interactionist approach where there are multiple meanings within family relationships and that family life and behaviour is negotiated and re-negotiated around these interactions. It is this symbolic interactionist approach that is the key to this, an understanding of the complex relationships and interactions that produce social relationships and the micro-structural theory of the club. It also appears to reflect the notion of power relationships and dominant family structures:

The whole thing is run like a cohesive unit, we all pull together and get things done. Paul organises it like I think he tries to organise his wife and kids!
(Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

The functions of the club in this way are also highlighted by MacPhail et al (2003a) who point out that sports clubs are now a major aspect of the socially supportive environment for young people. This is now becoming even more inextricably linked

in inner city areas within sports development policy (e.g. Nesti, 2001) where sport is being used, not only as means of social inclusion, but also in the development of community relationships (the new families of the 21st Century?).

The structure of the family cannot be discussed without acknowledging the issues of power hierarchies, gender and positioning. Through a wider approach this is detailed further in section 6.3.2 of this chapter.

6.2.2.2 Club Organisation: Physical Socialisation

Whilst acknowledging the functions of club sport (e.g. Siedentop, 1995), it is important to know the ways in which clubs provide other socialisation needs and functions for those involved in them. In the case of Boughborough, developing Zimmerman's points on the functions of the family as a unit, it is possible to draw some comparisons with family sociology and the club. Zimmerman's (1988) functions are identified as comprising:

1. Physical maintenance and care of group members
2. Addition of new members [through procreation and adoption]
3. Socialisation of the children
4. Social control over members
5. Production, distribution and consumption of goods and services
6. Maintenance of motivation and morale [through love]

Whilst there are clearly some aspects here that may not be entirely appropriate for the club, there is evidence from the data that supports these functions within the traditional model of the family as being similar to the practices at Boughborough.

Firstly, in this context, is the notion of 'physical maintenance and care of group members'. This particular aspect of Zimmerman's theory revolves around the physical nurture, development and care of the family group. This notion is based around the key aspects of health, welfare, economics and survival of the unit - arguably this is similar to Boughborough's relationship with its young members. Kay (2003) highlights that it is the middle classes that focus more on sport and sports clubs and the ethnography at Boughborough illustrates that the majority who attend the club appear to conform to middle class stereotypes. This is further supported by Armour

(2000), who notes that Adonis & Holland (1997) identify cricket (as well as golf) as having middle class appeal.

The physical maintenance in this instance will be argued to be similar to the success-based requirement for technical competence and skills development in cricket, as opposed to basic physical and physiological care. At Boughborough there is no doubt that the key aspects for the young people to participate are ones of health “it’s good to play and it helps me keep fit in the summer” (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001) and skill learning and technical competence “I’ve learnt new techniques so I don’t get out so often” (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001).

The physical care is also echoed by the parents and centre around concerns such as safety. For some parents, the physical care of the young people helps identify the difference between Boughborough and other more formal situations (such as school) in their duty of care. In fact the way in which the parents (albeit the mothers) act maternally in this situation is also highlighted in the second quote:

If he were to get hurt I’d trust the other parents here to sort it out – not like school where they just bandage them up and tell them to get on with it (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

After another minute or two the ball gets thrown in (too high for the keeper) and hits Luke (??) on the side of the head. Immediately collapses in tears – everyone still for a minute before any movement to get towel/ice etc. Then one of the other mothers rushes into the pavilion for some ice and a towel, and gathers him under her wing and takes him into a corner of the pavilion. As she goes past she says audibly to me – “they’re bloody useless fathers round here”, as they continue to drink their pints and the practice starts all over again (Field notes, 23rd July 2001)

This type of environment reflects the nature of the gender stereotypes and the club’s reliance on women to carry out the care and nurture, whilst the men (coaches) continue with the practical aspects of the game. This is a reflection of the club’s ethos and atmosphere and highlights the care for the group members. Further discussion upon the social, psychological and spiritual care of the group is given later.

The second function of a family unit is that of the addition of new members. This section reflects the idea that a successful organisation attracts more members. Whilst there was clearly no shortage of new young players:

I think we're up to saturation – with the size of the club we've got now and the one ground we're going to struggle... (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

Paul also acknowledged that part of the problem was the influence of the club and the family atmosphere that the club had fostered which is reflected when:

Some of the parents speak to other parents and we suddenly find more kids here every week. They're breeding! (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001).

The parents themselves highlight this and, whilst in some cases, there is an element of sibling additions “when Evan's old enough he'll come and play here – like Ben is at the moment” (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001). There is also the awareness of the complex and conflicting link between the environment and the attention their child receives:

We've said to friends about how good the club is and how good the coaching is and how friendly they are, and like both Daniel and Keith now come down. But now they're telling their friends so we're going to have too many here to make coaching impossible (Nick, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

However, once you identify that the majority of parents come from commuter-belt areas where property is expensive, their children attend small village schools (and in a few case public schools) in areas of high income then the attraction of the club to like minded parents becomes much of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The coaches also highlight that it is the peer networks and family links that provide the main bulk of young players and, it just so happens, that these semi-rural schools have 'exclusive' catchment areas:

Most of the boys here are friends and have come from the same school or have parents who play. It's that type of sport – it attracts those who are like minded or have a family link to the game (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

For the club this opportunity and addition of new members literally means an increase in membership but also financial provision, safety and support for the young players. As Paul points out

The new members pay their membership, and we spend that on getting more players qualified as coaches to coach them (Field notes, 26th June 2002).

However, this economic argument does not always carry weight in the club. There are concerns from both of the coaches about the number of young people attending and from the parents who are worried their child will not get a game or will become left out in big groups. As with families, the increasing size puts increasing constraints on the club. Whilst still seeking a second ground for the club, the strains that this puts on the coach-parent-club relationship is obvious from the data gathered:

They just want more kids and more money for the club. We've got to coach more and more of them and it doesn't work (Matt, Coach, Interview 2: 18th June 2002)

There are just too many kids now and it's not workable (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

These practical problems are ultimately issues of being the victims of their own success and, throughout the study, the criticisms began about the number of young members and the cricket provision for them. In fact it is clear that no provision was made for this and that the committee, whilst buoyed with the success and increasing membership, were stuck between a rock and a hard place with how to deal with it.

Thirdly there is the notion of socialisation. It is useful here to consider more carefully the socialisation literature and how young people are socialised into, and through sport. In the UK and parts of Europe this very often means club sport. Whilst Kay (2003) provides a secondary analysis of data to explain the role of the family in sport in three distinct ways - as an agent for sports socialisation, as a provider of practical

support for sport and as a source of differentiation in sport, it is clear that the family is the primary source of socialisation. The other key sources of socialisation revolve around school, peers and sports clubs (e.g. Hendry et al 1996). It is this key link to sports clubs and their importance in this process in both the socialisation and sports socialisation process to which the data now points.

Whilst socialisation per se is seen as being the “Process whereby individuals learn skills, traits, values, attitudes, norms, sanctions, knowledge and dispositions associated with the performance of present or anticipated social roles” (McPherson 1978: 222), it is clear that parents, coaches and young people identify these functionalist ‘life skills’ as being aspects that they inherit. In other words they are being socialised into sport – as these parents highlight:

It’s certainly done his self-esteem and confidence a lot of good – A LOT OF GOOD. As a mum – and rather an old fashioned mum I think. it’s good to see him with an interest in something outdoors. (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001 – with emphasis added as it was expressed)

It’s healthy for him to be out here, playing with other lads in a sport he likes playing – making new friends and learning social skills really. (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

He’s really learnt now – not just cricket but how to make friends and get on with other adults and things like teamwork (Nick, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

As well as this, there is the theory of being socialised through sport, and with a sport like cricket it is not just the physical skills but social basis and baggage (e.g. phrases like ‘its just not cricket’ etc) that are as important to many parents. Most of these skills come from the idea that cricket is a good way of learning life skills – like patience, organisation, tactics and leadership:

It’s a good way for them to learn about the game and themselves. Like waiting your turn and about rules and when to walk and – generally, like about gentlemanly conduct (Roger, Parent, Interview 1: 4th June 2001)

They have to learn to lose well as well as win graciously. It's not a bloody football attitude and that's good for them. (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

We brought him here 'cos we like the etiquette and values the game offers – it's typically English middle class (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

Thus the club clearly offers a situation in which the young people are socialised into a structured environment and into multiple relationships - as well as being socialised into and through the sport. The club offers another opportunity for them to ascribe to the values that the sport offers and that the club can deliver. In this respect this is similar to the process that young people go through when they are socialised within a family.

Fourthly, there is the concept of social control. This is an aspect that is largely an approach to avoiding dysfunctional behaviour and can be seen as means of social control. Whilst families (through a mainly functionalist socialisation process) offer this, so does Boughborough in a very different and much more voluntary manner. At the outset, the behaviour of the young people is under scrutiny and, whilst this does depend upon what each coach 'lets them get away with' (in the same way that styles of parenting and individual parents differ), the result does have an affect on how the coach is perceived:

There is a difference in attitude with some coaches. With Dave they'll try anything on, but with Chris – because he's a teacher, they barely put a foot wrong (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001)

However, in a similar manner to many parental units, opinion is still divided about how the young people should be treated and what behaviour is expected from them. This in itself, as we shall see later, leads to direct conflict between coaches and parents within the club.

They're here voluntarily and they're learning, therefore they should behave and listen (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

They're not at school so does it matter – we don't want to put them off coming? (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2002).

Even the young people themselves take notice of this and are aware of the differences: It's just they never tell you off. If you have done something naughty they never tell you off harshly. At football at school they're a lot stricter. (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Well I think – I don't know why but I take it more seriously at *****. I might get really told off there if I'm stupid or maybe dropped from the team. Here I can be a bit silly and get away with it. (Charles, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Any such breakdown of the unit or infringement on the club clearly has a marked affect on the club. An example of this involved an incident that occurred where the scaffolding poles that make up the frame for the nets were dismantled and stolen one evening:

It's sickening, it's like having your own home broken into and we can't do anything about it. The police know and we think we know who it is but there's nothing we can do but get some more poles and try again.....there's no bloody evidence either [Peter: club official] (Field notes, 28th May 2002).

Whilst this doesn't show anything dysfunctional 'within' the club, it does highlight the fragility of the family environment when under pressure from external sources. The reaction to this intrusion was very much one of horror and disgust as if it was the members' own home that had been violated.

The control of the members can also be seen in the way that authority is dealt with between the coaches and the young people. As a sport it is clear that cricket has an ethos of gentlemanly conduct, non-physical contact and fine motor skills. In order to utilise and instil these with the young people involved there is also an element of coaching control. The notion of discipline and authority in club sport is a difficult one. Issues of voluntaryism, commitment and notions of 'fun' make this an extremely complex situation. This notion of coaching practice is seen in more detail in Kirk &

MacPhail (2003) and was highlighted further under the notion of 'social positions' in the previous chapter.

Whilst the young people are happy for it to be a relaxed atmosphere (although they do highlight the 'nice' and 'nasty' coaches using the criteria of discipline), both the coaches and parents see it differently:

The whole point of cricket is that it is a discipline sport. You can't play unless you have self-discipline - that's ridiculous. Can you imagine trying to play with a group of kids who've got no discipline?! It'd be impossible to do anything with them (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

I like him playing cricket because it's a gentleman's sport. They're so much nicer than these swearing footballers you see on TV. Here they get to learn about the game more and get to appreciate each other as team members (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Whilst here are different understandings of the need for self-discipline in the game (and what exactly that means), it is clear that the young people see it very differently. From their perspective they appear to want friendly coaches who don't have a big issue with discipline and this is where the internal conflict starts.

Initially (as Martin et al 2001 highlight), there is a certain amount of resentment to control yet also a hint of what the young people feel they can do to behave. Indeed in a similar manner to Zevenbergen et al (2003) it is the values of the club that dictate this. In some instances the coaches are seen by the young people in a positive light:

It's just they never tell you off. If you have done something naughty they never tell you off harshly. At football they're a bit stricter (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Yeah 'cos they say get out there and win. Here it's longer and more fun. Here they talk to you and make it fun to come down. Matt - he always comes out with a joke and he always mucks around throwing jokes in when you practice. He's younger as well and - he's just funny (Daniel, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001).

They could get to know everyone the same as they know me. Always saying hello to them - its just I feel a lot better with the coaches and I like them more because they're friendly and say hello. (Ben, 12, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

This social control is also linked to the coaching practice and positions the coaches adopt (see later section on positioning). Overall, the immediate issues of control are those related to the accepted social practices and norms of the club - again, linked to the club's history and background.

Finally, there is the aspect of the function of 'production, distribution and consumption of goods and services'. Initially, within the family sociology, there is the notion that the family is a distributive system. It is the means by which things like food, transport, shelter and money are distributed to those who are not active economically - in this case the young people (Bernandes, 1997).

In the case of Boughborough, the key goods and services are those of cricket. The club provides and supports the game and also the development and experience of it. In short it is similar to the family analogy in that it is:

Part of the service we provide here - coaching. But we also have a good bar that serves drinks and chocolate, we used to do things like jacket potatoes - we had a microwave. And of course the ladies provide teas for the opposition teams. It is a bit of a cottage industry really I think sometimes. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

Finally, the last aspect of the part of the function analogy is the notion of 'maintenance of motivation and morale through love'. What is abundantly clear within this function, is that the club provides an atmosphere for motivation and morale for confidence building to occur. As MacPhail et al (2003a) highlight from a MORI poll, 80% of adults believed that sport is vital in the developmental processes of young people and the over-arching belief that sport is a good way of building confidence. This is reflected by parents, coaches and the young people themselves as the data suggests:

Also being in the team, and batting and bowling and getting a few wickets and a few runs has really boosted his confidence. When he comes home from a match and that's happened – he's about 2 feet off the ground, and he's really got something to say about himself. It's been tremendous in that way 'cos he's getting a lot of confidence out of it – it's really marvellous (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

When we first started the kids had never played, and we hardly won any games at all, it didn't do their motivation or confidence or anything any good. Since we've been winning sides the change in the way they play and the way they behave has been vast (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001)

Since I've got better at bowling I like it now. 'Cos I take wickets I think yeah, great! So I want to do even more. It's been great this season (Ben, 12, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

This motivation and morale (confidence) can be seen here on two distinct levels. On the first level - as the physical ability and skill competence and all that comes with that from the club and the second, is the life skills and general motivation and confidence this brings.

'Cos they're friendly to you, you know they'll back you up if you've got any problems. They'll always be there for you when you're down here (Daniel, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

6.2.2.3 Club Self-Esteem and Moral Socialisation

Cheal (2002) highlights that there is a good deal of research into the values held by families. One such Cheal mentions is by McDonald (1995) who studied Australian families. The study investigates their family values, and drew attention to issues of autonomy, intimacy, achievement aspiration and social acceptance. Within Boughborough (in a slightly different context to the adult orientated relationships in the family) it is clear that a similar set of McDonald's values exist within the club structure. There can be an analogy with the values the club exhibits and those that the family exhibit.

This first aspect of these values is found with autonomy. In the field of the sociology of the family this is identified as being “the personal independence which enables people to direct their own lives” (Cheal, 2002; 20). This autonomy of the individual is far easier to understand from an adult’s perspective, where an adult will have choices for things like employment and marriage. For a young person however, it is more complex but also clear that there is ‘some’ autonomy within the club around friendship groups. Both Weiss et al (1996) and Gold (1999) note that there is a degree of autonomy for young people in a club when it comes to choosing friendship groups and peers. This is reflected by some of the comments among young players (and in particular the samplers):

I chose to come here 'cos my friend Ollie comes here. Dad wanted me to do rugby – but I prefer cricket (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

We gave him [Sam] the choice of doing whatever sports he wanted. He chose cricket so we're here supporting him as much as we can (Barry, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Whilst choosing friends and sports does not appear to show a huge amount of autonomy, clearly within the context of young people, the opportunity to make these decisions is an important aspect of family life (Morrow, 1998 and Cheal, 2002).

There is also autonomy within the sport (to an extent) with the young people making a choice of the role they want to play. This is often ability based:

I'm a bowler more than a batter, so I've said to him [coach] I want to bowl more (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Dad wants me to be a 'keeper like he was – but I'm really a fast bowler and that's what I want to do (Seth, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

Whilst this autonomy is really the opportunity to make decisions that lead the family group, there is clearly also an aspect here relating to a decision to continue or cease participation. There is also a clear element for the young people here of how they wish their parents to behave and to not interfere:

We like coming down here – even if he doesn't want us to watch him play. We promise to sit and chat to parents unless he wants us to really watch (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

Sometimes dad is so embarrassing – he shouts to me when I'm bowling and I hate it. I keep telling him to stop but he doesn't! (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

As well as the purchase decision involvement, the autonomy of playing the game comes from the type of kit the young player has. Many like the prevalence of some types of trainers. There is also an element of trend and fashion that also permeates youth cricket:

We've given up buying him new kit. A bat was a bat when I was young, but now it's got to be a Duncan Fearnley or a Stac bat – 'cos that's what his friends have got! (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

This autonomy also leads into friendship groups and being in a position to identify, if not follow, your friends to a club. For a young person it is rare to attend a club in which you don't know anyone or have any friends and any young person who is pushed into that situation (and therefore isn't necessarily making an autonomous decision) is likely to drop out:

I wouldn't have come here if I didn't know anyone (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

That lad last week - he only came once and he didn't know anyone and wasn't introduced to anyone. I think the kid was on his own throughout the whole time, his dad had told him to come along and try it. What kid would've wanted to put himself in that position? (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002)

The peer group and the choices of the peer group are clearly influential and that autonomy within the family to choose an activity is also important.

The second viewpoint is one of intimacy. In the analogy at Boughborough, it is clear that the intimacy felt by the young people is one of 'peer intimacy' as Weiss et al

(1996) highlight. Their data highlighted that, as one of a number of positive aspects of friendship in a sport setting, peer intimacy occurred in five separate ways, all of which were evident at Boughborough.

(a) We disclose our thoughts/feelings to each other

It's good 'cos like Sean and I tell each other everything. We're best friends
(Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

(b) We feel comfortable with each other

I like it here 'cos all my friends are here, we get on and we always chat to each other (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

(c) We understand each others feelings/thoughts

We know what each other thinks so we get on like being brothers (Ben, 11, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

(d) We trust each other

We've known each other since we were little which is why I came here. He's a friend who I trust (Sam, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

(e) We have a bond with each other

We're best friends at school and all the time (...) Mum says we're like inseparable (Ben, 11, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

Whilst the sample at Boughborough noted the club provided them with friendship groups, or had helped create them, on closer inspection many of these friendship groups are multiple, complex and require more detailed research and analysis.

It is not just the young people who share this intimacy, the club is also a haven for parents away from the chores of home and other domestic responsibilities.

It's nice to come here and relax. At home we don't have time to sit and chat but you can here (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

There are also the parental friendship groups as well that are seen as important to the parents. In one case, a few years ago, apparently a divorce and second marriage also occurred between two of the parents who were bringing their children to the club.

Thirdly, achievement aspiration in terms of Boughborough is also evident. The young people want to, and aspire to, achieve as young cricketers. This is also evident from what their parents also say and propose for their children at the club and, ultimately, one of the key reasons for participating in sport. In a family context this is clearly linked to achievement within education, work and economics. This element of aspiring to achieve is linked directly to the interest, ability and performances of the young people and this comes from the parents, coaches and young people themselves.

In this instance there is a great deal of data that suggests how important the value of achievement is, both for the individual in terms of learning and applying learnt skills and for the team in terms of performance. For example, as one parent neatly sums up:

We want him to learn and play to the best of his ability. It's about him succeeding and doing the best he can. We always tell him if he can achieve something that's hard to do he can achieve anything (Georgina, Parent, Interview 1: 9th July 2002)

With regards to the young people themselves, they see achievement in a number of different short, medium and long term ways:

I want to just go out there and blast loads of sixes (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

I'm aiming to get into the county team and do well at the trials next week (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd July 2001)

I don't mind that I don't play 'cos I'm still quite young for the team. I want to play all the games next season when I'm older. (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

There is no doubt, as De Knop et al (1996) highlight, that similarly to family life, there are also pushy parents who aspire for their own children and are not happy when they don't achieve.

I was really disappointed with him last week – and I told him. He batted poorly, played a stupid shot and then bowled like a fool. He can do better, and I'm sure we will next time (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Away from the performance achievement nature of the game, there are also some parents who have a more holistic approach to the achievements their son has and reflect Siedentop's (1995) ideas of success:

It's not just about playing the game and being the best cricketer in the team. It's about being the best they can be and doing their best (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002)

Within the team, and amongst the young people, the key achievements remain those of physical performance on the field or 'personal bests'. These are the measuring points and the bases on which they claim, and counter claim, the sporting superiority:

Sitting behind the lads as they wait to bat all I can hear between 4 of them (Ben, Sean, Alex and William) is how many 4's they scored in the game last week, who hit the biggest six and who hits the ball hardest. Whilst most of the claims were clearly untrue (I was at the game!), the issue didn't seem to be one of truth as much as of reputation (Field notes, 20th August 2002)

This measurement of performance as opposed to that of doing their best, is common in youth sports participation literature (and even in youth cricket - Carpenter & Coleman, 1998). The issue is that, within Boughborough, the levels of achievement run through from deliberate play to deliberate practice and at each stage of Côté & Hay's (2002a) stages there is a change in focus of achievement. Those in the sampling phase see playing games and hitting the ball hard as key to their success, whereas those in the specialising (and investing) phase sense achievement through overall performance, runs scored, wickets taken and the wider aspects of their performance.

When I went out there and hit that ball – that was great! Everyone shouted, it didn't matter that I got out next ball 'cos I hit a four! (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

It depends how I played really. When you bat in a game it's not like the nets where everyone tries to whack it as hard as they can. Out there you've got to play carefully and score runs but not get out. That's my aim now. (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

The coaches, on the other hand, have different ways of measuring not only their success "we want to win the league this year – we only just missed it last year" (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001), but also the young people's achievements "It's about them learning and being able to do the shots" (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001). Thus achievement is sought, defined and actually achieved in different ways for different people within the club.

The final analogous value is that of social acceptance. As with all aspects of socialisation, one of the key things is social acceptance within a specific or general community environment. In this case it is a cricketing community.

At Boughborough being socially (and sportingly) accepted is an important aspect of belonging to the team. For not only is there being accepted by the peer group and the team, but there is also a certain amount of kudos for being accepted by the adults in the club (and therefore being an equal in the adult centred world). This social acceptance seems to work on a number of levels - as part of the practice group, as part of the team, as part of a peer group and as part of the wider club. For the parents there are also a number of other acceptable positions to belong to, and aspire to, as well as cliques that are evident.

As Zevenbergen et al (2003) highlight in their study of Paradise Golf Club, acceptance is bound into the reflection and adoption of the values of the club. The young people who aspire to these, and behave accordingly, are socially accepted. Those who do not behave accordingly, are not accepted. Ultimately this is marked with membership of the club as junior and, later, senior members. It is in this approach that many prestigious organisations and professional bodies (e.g. the Professional Golfers' Association) maintain their standards of membership. At

Boughborough there are clearly different levels of social acceptance – from being ‘part of the team’ to being seen as an adult by ‘playing for the men’s side’.

It is the acceptance through talent and ability that gives them the kudos within the club – highlighted by one incident from my field notes. Mark returned from a county cricket match looking downhearted. After about five minutes he is on a completely different planet:

Boughborough lose toss and put in. Have a disastrous start – 10 – 3 quite quickly. Ollie B opens much to the amusement of himself and everyone else – Tony pissed off “at least he bloody volunteered – no one else wanted to”. Got a round of applause when he scored 1, then got bowled. Came back not unhappy – “at least I didn’t get a duck”. Mark and his mum appear – everyone clamours to find out how Mark did (scored 6 but didn’t bowl). Everyone asks him if he can get his kit out and play – “we need you, you’re our best bat.....”. Appears to like the adulation and awe that this has given him.

Roger not that happy – feels Mark didn’t do himself any favours “is that all? what a waste of time, you’ve blown it now haven’t you?” Mark’s mum highlights that “he’ll be able to go to winter coaching now” – doesn’t seem to brighten the mood...(...). Everyone gives Mark attention – especially as he’s been picked to play for the 2nds on Saturday “on merit”. Not very forthcoming but seems to enjoy the attention. Ironically one of the coaches who appears at the game with the opposition was the guy in charge of Mark’s county team – must have links with the team they’re playing today in the cup. Roger goes to have a “chat” with him – Tony/Jake/Harry look at each other and say “poor guy!” (Field notes, 2nd July 2002)

This incident highlights the peer and club acceptance that Mark has achieved through his ability (and clearly the support of his family) within the club. He has fulfilled both aspects, acceptance from his peers and, ultimately, the adults by his selection in the men’s team.

There is also a level of social acceptance in the social field with the adults and with whom they talk, and are seen with, and thus ultimately forming friendship groups. As

has been discussed earlier, there are a number of issues of social acceptance that form part of the social positions the members of the club ascribe themselves to.

6.2.2.4 Space, Physicality and 'Family' Commitment

In family sociological theory there are a number of definitions about what the 'home' actually is. For example, Cheal (2002; 157) highlights it as "a private space in which family members can interact with one another without external interference". On a more theoretical note, Morgan (1996) highlights how the home is both a public and a private space and this is reflected in different types of formal and informal behaviour. Clearly the home is seen as a place where informality (normally) rules and where the space is comfortable, non-threatening and relaxing (Cheal, 2002). It is in this way that Boughborough is seen as being similar to a home environment:

I came back this year 'cos its nice and its like coming back home (Mark, 12 Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

The issue of the club being a home zone is also an interesting one and, whilst this notion of acceptance and understanding is well acknowledged in sports socialisation literature, there is little that actually describes how this occurs. What is clear from the data is that there is a link to not only a comfort zone, but also to an allegiance and commitment to a particular team or club (as Yair, 1992 notes for runners, and Carpenter & Coleman, 1998 note for young cricketers). Principally it is most noticed amongst those who are 'specialisers':

I s'pose he's come back because it's the comfort zone really isn't it, he knows everybody, he did well last season and is a key member of the team, and there was never a question really of him going anywhere else. He's really committed to it here (Roger, Parent, Interview 1: 4th June 2001).

The physicality of the club and the facilities have also been referred to as similar to those of home by some of the young people.

It looks just like my granddads lounge - a bit tatty and old fashioned but quite friendly (Daniel, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Dad says that the changing rooms sometimes look like my bedroom. Messy but at least mine's not full of grass! (Mark, 12, Interview 1: 3rd July 2002)

It is also interesting to note that the bar is traditionally the hub of activity at the club. Most meetings occur in it - such as selection, managers meetings and the AGM. The bar seems to work on a number of levels for different people.

For the young players it is a valuable resource centre for sweets, crisps and drinks. It also has a place as a male (player) dominated aspect of the club. It is also a place of sanctity and is perceived as a place of 'friendliness'.

I like the bar and the woodwork on it. It looks nice and it says that the cricket club has been here for quite a while. It shows that different people have been down here at different times (Daniel, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

The bar plays a crucial role in this environment - or 'family home'. In one sense, it highlights the non-playing focus of the club and, at the same time, is seen by many in the club as the meeting place and social space (Hill, 2002). However, for newer (particularly adult) members of the club it is a barrier to their environment, an artificial construct that puts many parents off. Many regular parents and coaches wonder about this (intensely masculine) environment and why new members (particularly parents) don't use it. Conversely these parents feel very awkward using the bar - and would rather give their child some money for sweets rather than go in themselves:

I don't like to go into the pavilion - you feel like you're intruding in someone else's house. They're a bit cliquey and you can't just walk in and be one of them..... If ***** wants some sweets - I'll give him some money and let him get them (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

You can see the noisy ones by the clubhouse - which sort of puts me off going there really. It'd be like going into a noisy pub on your own (Rachel, parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

Although the parents don't see it as that:

They should come over and say hello rather than sit in their cars and watch. We won't bite them (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002).

I think some parents don't want to come down here because we're here - we're not sort of one of the in crowd really - there isn't one!" (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

The bar is effectively the 'public' area at the club, the one presented to the visitors, hence the photos, mementos and match reports. As Morgan (1996) highlights it is the public face, and in a house this would be the neat and tidy front room - the social space. Daniel's earlier comment about it being like his granddad's lounge is interesting since Morgan (1996) also identifies the age/class links of these spaces and social mores. It is also clear that there are public and private areas at the club. Looking at my own relationship with the club there were clearly spaces that I could enter as an outside member of the club (the bar and ground), as well as places I couldn't (changing rooms, kitchen area, score box, and behind the bar). This is also apparent and reflects the behaviour and standing of the other members of the club and the committee members – and quite how far these boundaries go and how they are crossed.

This notion of commitment has been identified in young cricketers in the specialising stage by Carpenter & Coleman (1998). A similar study of runners by Yair (1992) identified key commitment levels in what he called 'Professional', 'Semi-Professional' and 'Amateur' levels (similar to Côté & Hay's 2002a, developmental stages). James (2001) also highlights that team loyalty with young people is a key aspect of the socialisation process (we know Mark has been at Boughborough since he was nine). James noted that the influence of the fathers on this commitment was greatest, echoing Roger's sentiments. This commitment then, it seems, is more focussed on the specialisers through their ability-based performance. In that respect it is commitment based around physical competence at the sport.

Sam is back again because he's good at the game. He knows he can get a game each week and he hasn't gone anywhere else 'cos he knows he will always be playing (James, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002)

On the other hand it is interesting to note that those in the sampling phase have very different commitments to the club. The commitment is more peer orientated:

He's **very very** loyal to it here and to all his friends; he has a lot of friends and feels very comfortable (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001 – with emphasis added as it was expressed).

He came back because all of his friends from last year were here. He wasn't going to leave the club and lose his circle of friends, they're like family to him (Nick, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

Whilst we have already seen that there is a plethora of research into the family and commitment, the value of the friendship relationship within the club is a source of productive leisure with desirable citizenship potential (Wright et al, 2003).

There is also the sense of membership, belonging and informality – which with a structure such as the family is an important part of belonging and, with a club, continuing their participation:

And I think he'd be quite comfortable just sitting here with a glass of lemonade or throwing a ball about in the nets with another boy. It is quite a supportive social side for the kids as well - they really are members of the club rather than boys who play for the team (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

The club and ground is considered to be a safe environment for many of the young people by their parents, coaches and themselves. They often perceive it to be a playground and are happy to informally play there whilst their parents watch. This is especially noticeable when all of the young people interviewed highlighted that they played in the garden at home (see also Toms & Fleming, 1995) and that is where they picked up the early skills for the game and also where they continue to play now.

It is interesting to note that this is legitimised by Côté & Hay's notion of 'deliberate play', since the young people discussed here are at the younger age of the under 13 group:

They let us have a muck around in the nets if we're early, just bowling and batting and doing slogging really (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

He treats it like our garden at home. Comes along and starts playing with his friends. It's very relaxed here and they just get on with it (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

This relaxed atmosphere appears to add to this notion of home and family at Boughborough:

He likes the camaraderie. He enjoys all the social side - he's more than happy to stay longer if I want to have a drink he's got a load of friends here who he's quite happy to play in the nets with. Now it's the summer holidays there's no rush to go home. He likes it when they've all had a game and they're all sitting there. He's a bit disappointed sometimes all of a sudden when all the kids have gone. That may be a bit of this us and them - when the parents are dragging the kids away rather than staying - 'cos they feel a bit uncomfortable here (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

and also:

It's a focal point of the community of the village. I would imagine people come here not necessarily for cricket, but to have a natter and a couple of pints, for the social side, rather than specifically for the cricket (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Since many of the parents will come and watch and make an evening of it, there is considerable support for the club as a central social space away from work, home and other responsibilities. To many of the males it is "a place to escape to at the end of the day for a quiet pint" (Tony, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002).

6.3 Power Relationships

One of the most interesting elements of the study (and one that needs further and more detailed empirical investigation) is that of the power relationships that are evident within junior club sport. Whilst these are inextricably linked to the roles and (often multiple) social positions held by those within the club, there are clear lines and divisions of power amongst the club as a whole, and amongst the different groups that make up the club as an entity itself. This section intends to explore and provide supporting data for the argument that there are a number of layered power

relationships at Boughborough and that there is some acknowledgement that these power relationships are analogous with the power relationships in the traditional notion of the family.

6.3.1 Hierarchies at Boughborough: Tradition and Gender

The first aspect of this family-power relationship is the hierarchical structure found within the club. Much of this is bound within the club's history and background. As such, my first indication of the hierarchy within the club came within the first few weeks.

There were Peter, Chris, Paul and myself standing in the relative warmth of the clubhouse after a coaching session. The general conversation revolved around numbers of children and how to deal with any increases. This 'committee' (all of whom sit on the committee) mentioned the lease of the field from the lady opposite and the club's initial conversations with her about using the field behind (currently planted for wheat) as a second ground to relieve the pressures of space. "It's never going to happen" (Chris); "Why not?" (MT) "'Cos that woman - don't get me wrong she's great for the club - but she's got us by the short and curlies. We'll never expand unless we get the go ahead from her. It's like no matter what we do here we're answerable to her all the time". (Field notes, 20th May 2001).

This appears to be an unholy alliance between the patriarchy (male dominated committee) and the club's matriarch. As club President the afore-mentioned woman has a great deal of influence concerning the running of the club. She holds an honorary position through her inherited ownership of the club ground (paid by a peppercorn rent), and has considerable influence in that she can exert what can and can't happen at the club (a youth section is a must in her eyes as her son plays!). Whilst I doubt it is uncommon to find this, it is clearly a reflection back to the periods highlighted by Brookes' (1978) analysis of the game when village clubs were often set up by the bourgeoisie on land they themselves owned, and as Heald (2004) notes, they were run by the 'squirearchy'. This is indeed true in Boughborough's case, the origin of the club is pre 1860's when they played their matches on privately owned land, as indeed they do now.

The notion that cricket is male dominated is also interesting and the club is perceived by some to be very insular and sexist (c.f. Middleton 1986):

There is a committee of men who sit and drink and chat - with a token woman to do the teas. So much for the new men of the new millennium! (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001).

However, this concept, whilst expressed negatively, is a very traditional (even Victorian) perception of the sport - that it is male run, dominated and exclusively for males. The recent introduction of a girls' team appears quite novel to some but has also been taken with a hint of scepticism by others:

It's good that they now cater for the girls, it's just what the club needs (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

It's good – but then it is linked to funding - so the idea's good but the thinking behind it I think is dubious and based around getting more money for the men's sides..... (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001).

Most interestingly, in the context of this statement, the underlying direction of the club and key decision-making is very much down to the club matriarch (the President) and the operational running of the club is conducted by the men, but using women (specifically identified as the 'bar girls' and the 'cleaning woman'). The irony and dichotomy in the club appears to be the tension between what Middleton (1986) calls the sexual geography of the club, as well as, in this case, the organisational boundaries. This is reflected by Morgan (1996) in the notion of the home where the boundaries are 'kept and looked after' by the women, reinforcing gendered and unequal stereotypes.

The club also has its own social structures and Victorian history. From looking at the photographs and club boards it is clear that over the years the *chairmen* have included three retired Senior Army Officers, one doctor, a J.P. and a County Councillor. This itself has echoes of Holt (1998) who identifies similar patterns in a golf club in London where not only committee membership, but also club membership, was based upon status in society. Interestingly the club's emblem is based upon a typical farm-workers' harvesting implement.

There are some parents who acknowledge these class links and yet are critical of the way that the club is run:

It's like an old school tie club to me. Whilst I'm sure there's nothing wrong with that it doesn't help others if they want to join in [James, Parent] (Field notes, 28th July 2001).

Whilst this comment refers to what may be considered the cliques within the club (which occur at all levels), there are also issues to do with the exclusivity and difficulty in gaining entry to this 'close family'. The Victorian social hegemony and cricket history of 'gentlemen and players' are still played out in the club. The gentlemen (committee members and players) still have a social hierarchy and structure that is apparent today.

There'll always be the snob factor.....which probably made the club the way it is (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

Whilst there is a wealth of literature on the history, social history and development of cricket in England (e.g. Brookes, 1978), there is little that can shed light on the history, development and importance of a cricket club within a small rural community (such as Boughborough), apart from anthropological and historical accounts like Middleton (1986). Toms and Fleming (1995) highlight the importance of 'Tradition' in a familial sense with participation. They also note that a family history of involvement is also significant to a young person's initial access and sustained participation in the game itself.

There is also a notion of preserving the history and sanctity of the club and, with it, the village. There are countless fictionalised (as well as true) accounts of 'cricket on the village green' in front of a thatched pub, surrounded by spectators – however, this does little for the understanding of the realities of village cricket. Indeed, whilst Boughborough has three main pubs in its small village, the club committee still meets regularly at the working men's club almost the furthest from the ground itself. Hill (2002; 133) highlights the class-based pub sports and sports organisation during the post war period and highlights that there were sports clubs for 'middle classites' as well as for the working class. It is interesting to note the juxtaposition here. The club uses the working men's club rather than the more expensive and 'eating' pubs in the

village. This is similar to the observations by Middleton (1986) concerning the local and incomer pubs in the Yorkshire village she studied. It is the rural roots that the club appears to personify here and, whilst the members and players are predominantly middle class, the club's history and tradition still locate it as a working class club. This is similar to the way that Smith (2002) explains his father's participation in the game in nearby Coventry. This type of tradition provides a dichotomy of views, since both the club members and committee see it as

A little bit more tradition and people are very conscious that the environment is protected and that the local interest is looked after rather than just being a cricket club where things aren't cared about. But the tradition of the club perhaps prevents it moving on. (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

At the same time there are instances around what exactly this means to the club. Within the clubhouse the pictures of teams going back to the 1960's are on display and it is possible to trace many of the current older players through the photos (to their embarrassment). The club also contains photocopies of older documents, such as scorecards and photos of the erection of the current pavilion dating back over thirty years. This type of tradition, which is linked to the very nature and ethos of the club, is one of its driving forces and the reasons that many actually become members:

We bought Joe here because it is so nice and so traditional. It's sort of unchanged unlike some of the other really big clubs. That's why they are so popular with kids here - their parents want them to play traditional cricket (Georgina, Parent, Interview 1: 9th July 2002)

The name of the club was also identified as being important, even to the players who go on tour (normally to Devon) – a high spirited and alcohol fuelled trip for the men only (women are traditionally, and strictly, not invited). This masculine image is not new, but it does highlight links to the working class mentality of escapism.

Thus there appears to be evidence that the club has been constructed over time and its current position and ethos is one that members aspire to and respect, and even reflect this in their practice of the club. As there are in the traditional nuclear family, there are, apparently, clearly defined gender roles in the club. These are very similar to the ones Middleton (1986) discovered, where the club is divided into two areas - the bar

and the ground where the men will 'work' and the tearoom, the preserve and safe area of the women. It appears that this balance maintains the hierarchy and status quo at Boughborough.

It's a good job we help out here. The men are useless at running the club (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001).

As well as this division of labour that is evident in family life (Cheal, 2002), the physical division of the seating and the three tiers is reminiscent of many club grounds (e.g. Middleton, 1986). The women and young children sit on benches at the front of the picketed area, the male parents on the seats and benches further back and the club members and clique parents on the veranda or in the bar. In my own interactions with the club, through conversation with players and committee members, there are 'tea ladies' and a published rota (with no male names on), the bar girl (a local girl paying her way through college) and the female cleaner. This is reflected in what the women linked to some administrative and membership positions for the youth section explain:

We just came up for that summer and then the following summer and then we ended up doing that paperwork job. He volunteered me (Rosie, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

The committee [men] have given us our roles and title in the club - not that we want them - we're the youth team helpers. Although it does make me think if it was a man doing the same job they'd be the database managers! (Katharine, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

Whilst the club prides itself on its friendliness, there is still an air of mystery concerning this masculine patriarchal place. In a similar manner to Middleton's (1986: 130) observations, there were clear gender appropriate places in the bar and around the pavilion. Whilst she notes that at the club she observed that the "men sit on the right of the French windows while the women sit on the left". at Boughborough the sexual geography was only slightly different:

Looking at it [the club] the women sit on the benches in front of the pavilion, and the men stand around on the veranda and near the pavilion/bar door

(normally with pints in hand) - which could actually be quite intimidating (Field notes 18th June 2001).

A lot of parental banter going on with the fathers.....Sitting at the back of the pavilion you can see the sexual geography of the place. Women sit on the right hand side as you look out, men on the left hand side - as do the players, scorer etc. I've noticed this all the way through the study - more pronounced now. Under the overhang are the club members in a sense..... (Field notes, 8th June 2002)

This gendered space is very much a reflection of home and household life and is recreated in the family culture at Boughborough.

6.3.2 Hierarchies at Boughborough: Cultural Roles, Dominance and Passivity

Having looked in some detail at the way in which the club hierarchy and structure is similar to that of a traditional nuclear family with gendered power relations, it is also important to look in some detail at the way the young people feature in the club relationships.

From the data it is evident that there are clearly dominant and passive voices within the club. The dominant voices (and therefore positions) are exclusively held by the coaches and the passive, and marginalised, voices held by the young people and the majority of the parents. This dominance is clear from the simple adult-child relationship in the coaching and is also supported by the expectations of each group:

I expect them to turn up and listen, take part and learn. They're not at school so they should be switched on if they want to be here. We're here to coach and tell them what to do. It's not like school where I can send them on a run, but we have expectations on how they should behave and I certainly won't allow them to answer back (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

Whilst these coaching power relationships are also highlighted by Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and again in detail by Jones et al (2004), it is the acknowledgement that the coaches' power is deemed as unquestionable, leading to circumvented issues (see chapter 8) and undercurrents of personal conflict.

Now they'll have a go at me – 'cos I say things about Dave. They say if you're critical about him then why don't you do something about it? It's easy to criticise the coaches, but it's because they're called coaches, they have some immunity to what they do. If you know any better you do it – sort of attitude. (Tony, Parent, Interview 2: 2nd July 2002)

Whilst this conflict occurs and parents find it difficult to have anything more than passive and supportive voices, it is interesting to note that this acceptance of these values means that those who attend the club with their children are happy to be subordinate and to acquiesce as the club culture dictates. On the other hand, the parents who do have dominant voices are either pushed away from the hierarchy and club (e.g. James and his son Alex, see later), or are co-opted onto the committee (e.g. Tony).

For the young people however, the issue of power is more straightforward. Since they are all at the club voluntarily to learn, there are few issues of power conflict and as Zevenbergen et al (2002) also note, the culture required to play the sport requires a subordinate approach to the coaches, they are happy to comply. Those who do not aspire to this dominant ideology leave. Dave highlighted this:

We had one kid who wouldn't listen, keep quiet or behave, so I took him to one side and told him he wasn't wanted. It might be a bit harsh but you've got to think of the rest of them. He didn't fit in, no-one wanted him there so I had to do something before the other parents complained. (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 13th August 2001)

This culturally accepted subordinate role is also apparent with the young people:

I think we come here to learn how to play cricket better. I listen to the coaches more than anyone else and they help me do better. They know the most and they all play..... (Sean, 12, Interview 1: 25th June 2002)

Linking these issues with the analogy of the family highlights the culturally accepted patriarchal dominance. The coaches are the fathers (and in most cases they are), the parents, the passive mothers and the young people are the subordinate children. Since

all of the individuals comply with this ideology to a certain extent, the relationship is characterised as being like a family unit. As one parent noted:

Well the male coaches do the active work, we help out behind the scenes and the kids are the centre of attention. It's just like a normal family situation really, I think that's what I like about it. (Rachel, Parent, Interview 2: 30th July 2002)

This cultural traditionalism really reflects the functionalist and stereotypical nuclear family to which Parson's alludes. However, it must also be noted how simplistic this notion is and yet the organisation, running and functioning of the club does reflect the gender laden tradition. In short the club's construction can be seen to reflect the clear roles and a space occupied by mothers, fathers and children and as Rosie highlights this traditional family atmosphere is the key attraction of the club to many of the parents.

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has established that Boughborough is socially constructed by some of its participants as being similar to a family. Through the use of existing theoretical concepts from family sociology and the linking of existing family-sport literature and data from this ethnography, the chapter has shown that there are similarities in the views of the participants that the practice at Boughborough reflects family practice. In short, the data supports that Boughborough is socially constructed by its members as being similar to a certain type of family. At the same time, the way that the parents and coaches practise their positions in the club also helps create a family environment. This family-like culture is self-perpetuating and the club attracts those people from a traditional nuclear family background, whilst unconsciously discouraging and marginalising those from non-traditional backgrounds. In short it can be argued that Boughborough's success as an environment for young people to learn about cricket and become cricketers is due to the family-like culture that exists at the club. This family construction of the club is perpetuated by parents who ascribe to the values, beliefs and support networks found within a traditional nuclear family. The club is therefore constructed like a family. It is a community of practice that functions as a social entity by mutual engagement (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As the chapter highlights, the club as a source of knowledge and learning exists through the joint enterprise, engagement and self perpetuation of its participants. The club as a family therefore can be seen to exist on a number of levels. The practices that I have identified within this chapter show that there is a large degree of emotional connection to this community of practice. This emotional connection comes from the young people who actively participate, the parents who see the club as a social and supportive space and the coaches who have an attachment not only with their own children in the coaching group but also with their position as a coach within the context of the whole community of practice. The time and energy these people invest at different levels (depending upon the social positions they practice) also highlights the strength of this commitment. The engagement of these full participants within the community of practice is more than just because of the game, it is the social and emotional link that they reflect and practice that is so similar to the traditional notion of the family. In short, the way that Boughborough is practised by its participants reflects a community of practice which is very much like an ideological construct of the family.

Having established that the practices of the club can be socially constructed as being similar to those of certain types of family, the next chapter continues on the theme of the family, and analyses how the club is also perceived to be 'a family club' by its members. The chapter discusses the social and historical background and traditions of the club through the data gathered to explain how Boughborough is also socially constructed as a 'family club'.

Chapter 7:

The Family Club

7.1 Introduction to the Chapter

Following on from the previous chapter where it has been acknowledged that Boughborough has been socially constructed as if it is a family, and a certain type of family, this chapter continues the theme of the influence of the family on Boughborough. The chapter follows and examines the notion of the 'family club' and how the practice, history and workings of the club portray that image. This notion is related to the generational continuity of participation and the development of the club itself. The distinction between the two notions ('club as a family' and 'family club') is important to outline here. Since the club is not just constructed by its members as being practised 'like a family', it is also practised as a family club.

Throughout this chapter the way that the club is constructed by its participants as a community of practice is important. The way that the social and historical nature of the club and the support networks are constructed by those who practise the club at different levels is also important in understanding this notion of the 'family club'. The chapter moves from the 'historical' nature of the club, constructed through stories and narratives from the players, coaches and other full members. These emotional connections and the time invested by many people in their practise of the club ensures that there is camaraderie and a community spirit within the club.

The chapter will be developed through the analysis of the interviews and observations from the ethnographic data. The first section for example looks at the historical and traditional nature of the club, its development and the familial strands that underpin its existence. The next section looks in detail at the social support offered by the club in its widest context, and the final section examines the way in which the sense of community of practice is achieved through the club's own social construction.

7.2 The Family Club

The first section of this chapter identifies the social history of the game and its impact at Boughborough, the second looks at the social support at the club and the final

section at the social construction of the club in terms of its background (rather than its positions highlighted earlier).

7.2.1 History and Tradition

Whilst sports clubs are seen as key parts of life in Britain, there is little evidence to ascertain what they are or how they work. Historically the sports club (or voluntary association) is “a classic British cultural form stretching back to at least the eighteenth century” (Hill, 2002; 130), and, even recently, they were defined as the life-blood of British sport, reflected now by the political interest and policies of DNH (1995) and DCMS (2000). Houlihan & White (2002) highlight the increasing pressures placed on voluntary and amateur organisations via the courts and the increasing trend of litigation and also the reliance on club sport as the future of British sporting talent is showing a marked increase. These twin pressures are not unique to Britain but indicate the problems, shift and changes of the historical and social traditions of sport in this country. The management theory of organisations indicates that there has been a change from mutual aid to service delivery in amateur sport and, therefore, an increase in complexity in organisation and management and a decline in volunteers (Nichols et al, 1998, and Horton-Smith, 2000).

Nichols et al (1998) cite Hoggett & Bishop (1985) to identify sports clubs as being set up by people with mutual enthusiasms. Nichols et al (1998) also offer further detailed explanation that a large (1,250 member) ‘old boys’ club was a mutual support organisation run on a personal level, whilst a smaller athletics club (639 members) was a service delivery organisation priding itself on its professional approach and well-organised and structured activities.

Boughborough itself can be seen as a mutual support organisation: “We’re all here to play cricket and enjoy it – that’s the clubs history” (Peter, Official, Interview 1: 4th June 2001). It is run on an ad-hoc basis by its members and committee. There is a strong social link with many of the players and families having known each other “for years and years” (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002) and very often socialising together outside of the game.

In a similar manner to most voluntary sector sports clubs in the UK, membership of Boughborough is quite small. Interestingly there are no 'precise' figures for this, which says a lot about the organisation of the club (but it is believed to be around ninety or so), and like most clubs (as Nichols et al, 1998 highlights) the club is run on an:

Informal basis where people come and go. We only really charge membership to those who play, and parents who come here on a regular basis pay a token figure [£5] or are persuaded to become VP's [£25] (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 16th June 2001).

The individual nature of the club, unlike the larger European Multi-sport clubs, is not unusual in the UK (Nichols et al 1998) but it does provide a drain on resources and a reliance on volunteers. The nature of sports clubs in the UK is that they are historically run by amateurs in a mutually beneficial manner. In the case of Boughborough, the ethos of the club is one that is reflected by the members and parents involved:

The club is old [150 years], and although it's run in the same way – by a small group of like minded people – it's still steeped in tradition and that's reflected on the outside. (Peter, Official, Interview 1: 4th June 2001)

I would say it's a traditional village cricket club. Because it's been here from 1863, it's an integral part of the village society, and there are a tradition of village people and the people who move into the village becoming more involved in it. (Chris, Coach, Interview 1: 25th June 2001)

That is not to say that this is necessarily positive, since the club is criticised for being "run by amateurs" (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001) and for "being stuck in a social time-warp" (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002). The traditionality is something that for some is seen as old-fashioned. Matt, a coach for example refers to it as:

It's still an old fashioned club, but I think it's moving away from the village mentality of keeping it local to more the scenario of a proper club. The sooner it does the sooner it'll develop and be successful. (Matt, Coach, Interview 1: 18th June 2002)

What is clear is that the club is a historical entity that has been pretty much unchanged in structure for over 100 years. It has been run throughout its time by a committee of mainly local people and the current committee is almost entirely (eleven of fifteen) from the village. All of the current committee are current parents or players (with the exception of two ex-players), with the president - the only female - as the only non-player. All of the other committee members are either players, ex-players, parents or coaches (or a combination of these) and over half have sons playing in the youth sides. As Hill (2002; 131) puts it, sports clubs can become a “self-perpetuating oligarchy, run by a committed minority”.

The club is constructed, it could be argued, in a similar way to a family group on a number of levels. Firstly, it is useful to note Cheal's (2002) views of family history that identify it as only natural that a family has a number of relationships that work well together and the overwhelming priority is that these relationships are continued in order that family life can continue as unrestricted as possible. Such a ‘nuclear family’ as the club represents is based around the relationship of the grand-patriarchal figures of the club committee. They are ultimately the long-term decision makers (the policy makers), the coaches act as the patriarchs (dealing with the coaching sessions) and the young people are simply the participants or ‘children’ in this concept. The second construct analogy is that the smooth running of the unit and, ultimately, its survival is based upon these interactions and no breakdown of this. As Paul points out:

It's a well-run club. All the committee have known each other for years – that's why it works so well. Our only problem has been the resignation of the treasurer – but that is hopefully going to be solved by one of our old players coming back here to play anyway. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001)

Whilst one of the key aims of the club is to provide a “positive family atmosphere” (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001) for the club, its tradition itself is one of village and family orientation. The social history of the club is impressive and it is this history that attracted some to the club in the first place:

There's an awful lot of people involved. It's far, far bigger than I ever thought. It's not just turn up with your kit and a few balls and play – like football – it's

quite a large organisation, with a massive history that goes back donkey's years. (Tony, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002)

We brought him here 'cos it's an established club and it's been going a while. It's a good club too. (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

As well as the historic nature of the club, the participation in club sport is linked to a number of positive outcomes as well as social situations. These include health (e.g. Dovey et al, 1998), income (Kirk et al, 1996), social policy (Kay, 2000b), formal and informal educational benefits (e.g. Vanreusel et al, 1997) and the positive (and negative) support of the family (De Knop et al, 1995 and Kay, 2000a).

Throughout the entire data collection process the key aspect of the club that stood out most was the nature of how the club was like the family environment and construction. Kirk & MacPhail (2003; 26) identify and acknowledge how the club chairman at F.A.C. sees the club as a “family club (...) a family environment”, this echoes the statement made by the club Chairman at Boughborough:

It's a family club and it's an attitude that we're keen on keeping. We offer a family atmosphere, which works for our players, members and their families – as well as helps encourage the kids. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 1: 14th June 2001)

Whilst there are echoes of the family within F.A.C., Kirk & MacPhail (2003) explain that this emphasis provides problems for their analysis of the parents' position. The following sections intend to identify the nature and construction of the club and the way it is experienced as a familial 'sacred unit' with all the problems that this entails. It does not seek to problematise the social positions held, but more to explain how the club is constructed as a 'family' unit and what this means to those who are participants in its experiences.

7.2.2 Social Support

The club plays a central role in the social support of the young people. The theoretical and empirical academics explain the functionalist nature of club sport in offering positive socialisation experiences to young people (e.g. Hendry et al 1989). Yet,

within the context of the notion of 'club as family', I would like to propose that there is an inherent family behaviour within the club through the close-knit community and support networks there. These support networks are experienced in a number of ways ranging from support for participation to spectator support and also social gatherings. There is a unique knitting together of all of the participants.

This does not just include playing. The social community support also exists off the field and away from the club itself. I think the easiest way to exemplify the closeness of the club and its support networks is the following extract from my field notes.

1st team skipper arrives for selection - conversation turns to 1st team opening bowler whose 2 yr old Downs syndrome baby died last Thursday in his cot. Everyone took it personally (although some said mixed blessings apparently (Peter) - and the funeral service is tomorrow with the wake afterwards. "Everyone in the club is going [meaning playing members]", Paul (Chairman) is also the undertaker and is doing the service and has sorted it all out for the village church, other wives/mothers are sorting out food for after the service. "It's a real club thing - everyone has pulled together to help them through this. This is what this place is all about - a community who work together, play together and 'live' together in the village". He was from the village and she was from nearby so everyone knows them. Suddenly find the emotion - I don't know how to describe it really hits home - chokes me - and there's a realisation that this isn't a fictional nostalgic view - it really does exist. The conversation between them (Peter, captain and a wife) becomes a little more personal and suddenly find embarrassed silences because (I assume) that I'm in there, so I make my excuses "see you at the game tomorrow" and go out to watch the Under 10's finishing their game. (Field notes, 29th July 2002)

Even now, when I think about it, the emotion is not directed at the parents or child (I had no idea who they were) but more with the way the club members rallied round to offer support and the fact that there was a closeness that belies such a stereotypical masculine club. However, there was also an instance of having ashes scattered at the ground, much as some people (generally the older generation) have kept ashes at home:

Apparently he wanted his ashes be scattered there. It's actually quite touching that people think so much of it here, and it makes you realise exactly what this club means to some people (Peter, Official, Interview 2: 20th May 2002)

Whilst Kay (2000a) highlights the impact of sport on the social and emotional life of families of top level young athletes, this idea of interclub support is a key one. When it comes to the notion of social support however, it is clear that the centre of this notion is with the young people themselves and they see the support networks (family, coaches, and spectators) as key to their experiences.

I like it here 'cos they always clap you in and say well done - even if you didn't do well (Ben, 12, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

They're really nice here - they talk to you like you belong to the club. They're friendly and always support you and help you if you want (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2002)

I hated it there – it wasn't as nice and friendly as they are here. This is more like home (Nathan, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

The coaches and parents are really good. They're very gracious and understanding and will go out of their way to be nice and supportive to the kids (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 18th July 2002)

The supportive nature of the club and parents shows a strong awareness of the needs of the young people and also provides a positive personal environment for them

This type of support, on a verbal and practical (playing) level would seem to be obvious and links parental typologies (see De Knop, 1995). However, it is most important to identify where there have been experiences of other clubs. The narratives and language the young people use to explain their bad experiences always appear to hinge around the social relationships with adults within the club.

It's not run down like some - there isn't a miserable old bloke who runs it - like *****. Normally when you come on a Monday night it's Peter behind the bar and he always has a chat (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Yeah, I go in for a drink and a sweet after training. They're friendly here and find out what you've been doing or what you've learnt - there was an old man at ***** club who I didn't like. Every time I used to go into the bar - we went in after one game it wasn't open yet and he said "go away go away". I didn't go in there again and I hated the clubhouse (Charles, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Whilst this is very much a non-coaching social situation, there were also accounts of bad coaching practices at other clubs which they contrast with their own experiences:

At my last club they used to just shout at you whatever you're doing. They shouted at you even if you're doing it right or wrong. Here they're nice to you and they tell you things but they don't shout at you. They tell you a lot of things like you're doing right or wrong. So they tell you nicely (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

They're friendly and they don't shout at you they tell you nicely, and explain to you what you've done wrong and how you can improve it. My friend had a coach and they played against us yesterday. They lost and their coach shouted at them for 25 minutes after the game! (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

There appears to be an inherent fear of conflict and adult orientated 'failure' for these young people. This is best explained by one parent, who pointed out about her son's experience of grass roots football:

He played for ***** and it was run by a very well meaning parent who had very little knowledge of the game really. The coaching was poor and they just lost every game of the season and it just felt like it was too demoralizing for a ten year old. The guy couldn't coach, couldn't control the kids and was shouting and screaming at them all the time. It was a farce - so we took him out of the club. (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

These types of experience are extreme versions of a coaching position (c.f. Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) and show bad organisation, practice and coaching for all of the wrong reasons.

However, it should be noted that this social support is not just for the young people. The parents (and other adults) see the club as a means of support:

We like it here, my husband has played for years, now it's my son and we have really good friends in the club. I know this will sound silly, but it really is an extended family. You notice that when our son calls his coach 'uncle' sometimes! (Louise, Parent, Interview 1: 18th July 2002)

There is also the social nature of the club as a place for the adults to meet up with friends and often to see their extended family:

My cousin plays and so my dad comes to talk to my uncle. They'll sit and have a beer and talk about things. We only really get to see them at cricket (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

My dad likes coming down the bar and having a beer and a chat, and my mum likes the atmosphere and the people. They think it's really nice (Sam, 12, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

I come along and use the bar more as a social thing as much as anything else (Harry, Parent, Interview 1: 2nd August 2002)

This data concurs with previous work that I have done (c.f. Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1996 and 1997) that looks at how the family is involved in club cricket. Whilst having no express intention to look at this in any more detail, it is clear that the data consolidates my previous viewpoint and this is an area that I believe needs further research.

7.2.3 The Social Construction of Boughborough Cricket Club

This section aims to re-examine family theory within the context of the structure of the family and the structure of the club. As Hill (2001) highlights, this oligarchy can be seen on some levels as being identical to the structure and functioning of the family unit – as this section will explain.

Middleton (1986) identifies the central core a cricket club can have within a village and Smith (2002) considers the role the club can have within family life. Since cricket

is by its nature a game that does have a social cost (in respect of time) it is not uncommon to find children at matches with their mothers, watching husbands or boyfriends as they play. To many club cricketers this is not new – and I'm sure that at any game of cricket you will find children emulating their fathers whilst they watch in a manner that emphasises tradition, inspiration, involvement or technique (Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1997).

The majority of the sample in the study identified the club as providing a 'family' atmosphere. Within this it is interesting to note that only a small number of those I interviewed/spoke to come from a non-nuclear family background (i.e. a non-traditional family). Only two of the young people in the sample were from one-parent families and all of the coaches and parents I spoke to (apart from the two divorcees and the one single coach) came from a traditional family unit. Perhaps it is the tradition, time, history and cost that mean the game is only accessible to those who have the 'correct' sort of socio-economic background. It is arguably a 'purchase decision involvement' (Green & Chalip, 1998) for parents that comes at a social and financial cost. To one-parent families there is a clear social cost (as Harrington, 2003 cited by Kay, 2003 highlights). This can be explained when looking at the transcript from one divorced mother, a thirty-eight year old fitness instructor, recently divorced from her wealthy husband and now bringing up three teenage sons - all of whom are at a private school and the youngest (Nathan) is a very good sportsman:

The older one does plays at school, and often I don't get back until late, the middle one is into music and drama. Very rarely do we have conflict – they're very accommodating and they realise we're in an awkward situation (...) What we do to make things fair is we have a big diary so we put everything in at the start of the season and we try to fit things round that. If a game is postponed and it's awkward (...) everything is booked around it. He prefers not to miss anything if he possibly can but sometimes he just has to lump it. He's a team player and I support him in that, so we just have to live our lives around it (...) I think it's annoying when matches are cancelled and you're on the way there – 'cos it messes up all of our plans, but that's just one of those things. Nathan gets disappointed as we've planned it meticulously for that night, and it means he might miss the rematch. But he completely understands

it's difficult in our situation and we deal with it as a family team. (Carol, Parent, Interview 1: 27th August 2002)

Whilst Nathan and his family are keen to keep these links it also echoes the participation time for sport highlighted by Hasbrook (1986) and Kay (2003). In fact there were no families from low income backgrounds in the club at all. Moreover, it was clear from my first day at the club that it is situated in a wealthy area (see chapter 4). Whilst the shortage of people from low-income families is apparent, it is interestingly juxtaposed with how 'visitors' experience the club and locate themselves within it. The notion of social climbing was also apparent at Boughborough and, whilst this was very much a parental issue, it is interesting to note that they experience this through their child's sport. The traditional notion of cricket, the cost of equipment, the time and the pervasive link of schooling and the game are still evident and this echoes Hill's (2002) 'middle-classite' observation. Whilst cricket is commonly seen to be a sport dominated on and off the field by public school boys, it could be argued that now it is more emancipated. Since the organisation of sport is typically and historically conducted by the middle classes (c.f. Hill, 2002), there is some evidence to agree with this (e.g. Middleton, 1986) and the cricket club has become a means of social climbing within a social arena (Hill, 2002).

Not only is there a hint of social climbing by belonging to the club, but also an awareness of what it means to belong to an old and prestigious organisation. This is echoed by another parent when talking about her son's experiences of Boughborough compared to where he plays football:

Their behaviour was appalling – I mean I've seen parents get on the pitch and grab another child. Their language was atrocious F-ing and all that sort of thing at the referee –and it was just a children's game. Really cruel comments like "you give him a good kicking" and we had to come away from the district sports trials – we were so cross with the parents and the way that they were behaving. They were really rough parents – most from council estates I think and they were all.....like.....sort of single parents I think or had had a number of kids with different people. And it's just like they were trying to live their sporting failures – because they've obviously failed – they don't know how to

deal with it. It's awful – I think the best thing you can do for your children is to encourage them to enjoy it for what it is. It's completely different here - the setting here looks lovely – I think there's nothing better. It's very much a family thing cricket is, that's what I like about it, like if you have the men's team the wives are involved. I think I have a sense that anything that can involve the whole family is lovely. It's the traditional – it's lovely – and it is superficial really – but I just think it's really nice. It's a game where there's no physical contact – and I quite like that and it's a very skilful game so it's all about using those skills like catching and hand-eye co-ordination. But it's still healthy and [laughs]quintessentially English!! I feel like I should have my picnic basket and rug here to sit and watch. (Rachel, Parent, Interview 1: 30th July 2001)

Whilst this example clearly illustrates Rachel's view of the cricket club – compared to the football club – it suggests that there is MORE of a link to the way a family works than perhaps with other games and, maybe, that is part of the over-riding decision making process to join the club. However, this is clearly a romanticised vision and, whilst it may be one that is regularly portrayed on chocolate boxes, soap operas and rural documentaries, it requires far more evidence and theoretical investigation. The reality however, is one that is infinitely dependent upon the family unit to ensure its survival. A cricket club with no wives, no youth section or aspiring young sons is one that will die very quickly. This is reflected in recent E.C.B. policy on the life and future of cricket itself (ECBCA, 2003).

That Boughborough can be identified as having a family atmosphere means that a careful analysis of the structure, content and practice that is involved in the club needs to be appreciated. Clearly, to create a 'family atmosphere' is more than simply welcoming parents and children along. In the case of Boughborough, perhaps it is the structure, functions and values that the club provides that help give it such a family atmosphere. Whilst the family is a social unit defined as one that is focussed on the socialisation and well being of the young people within it (Bernandes, 1997) and with a social space that is called home – the analogy may be easier. The key to this understanding is the way it is described by all concerned in both an emotional and psychological (as well as a physical) sense.

In order to develop the theory, it is clear that a simple model such as Parson's 'onion' is a useful starting point. However, it is also important to notice and to note the interactionist approach to the changing relationships that occur within the club. For example, the club is not a static environment and in order to understand the multiple layers that exist, we need to have a greater understanding of the relationships involved.

The first and key relationship within the club is between the coach and the young person. This relationship is one that works on a number of levels. The coach is clearly the centre of this relationship and the young people are keen to follow his lead. This is similar to a patriarchal family relationship and the coach can be seen as the information giver and practical teacher - positions that male figures have been ascribed in the past in sport (c.f. Toms & Fleming, 1995).

I like, listen to what he says and take note 'cos he's our coach (Sean, 11, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

I take more notice of him than my dad 'cos he [coach] has played more and knows how to do the skills (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Within these relationship boundaries both functional and dysfunctional relationships occur and this is apparent by the way that the young people like or dislike their coach. For example, those who enjoy the relationship they have with their coach tend to base this around their expectations of what they should be receiving, i.e. the 'samplers' are after fun, and the 'specialisers' are after technical information:

You've got people like Dave and the other coaches who tell you exactly what to do. He's like a proper coach and they tell you advice (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

Chris has helped me the most - 'cos I know him the best and our parents are good friends... I like them all but Chris is my favourite (Liam, 11, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Dave - he's friendly and he tells you what to do in a friendly way. He always gives you a second chance and he sticks with you. He's helped me out most of

all – he’s always there to help you out. In the game he’s always saying things like slow down or keep it there (Nathan, 11, Interview 1: 9th July 2001)

Yeah, if you’ve got a problem he’d be easier to approach. I think he’s a better coach – he’s better tactically and he teaches you how to set fields and better ways of bowling the ball. (Reuben, 12, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

On the other hand, there are also relationships that are dysfunctional and, more often than not, these are based around the coach’s competence, ethos and ability:

He doesn’t make it as nice or fun as the others (Joe, 11, Interview 1: 2nd July 2001)

I don’t like the way he always picks on a few to do things [e.g. bat first in nets] – and we don’t get a chance (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Dave doesn’t give us any help really. I want to learn how to play my shots better - but he doesn’t really help or tell me what I’m doing (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Chris never taught us much new really – he just taught us long barrier and stuff (Sam, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

This is clearly a very simplistic approach to understanding the club’s structure. The key concept is that those involved in the club are part of a large family community. This is based around the positions that those involved in the club practice and the way that these interactions create an atmosphere, a set of relationships and, ultimately, a structure for the club.

7.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided evidence that as well as the analogy of the club as a family identified in Chapter 6, there are historical and practical links to the family, and that the club is a family club in a number of ways. Through its social construction it has

become a family club that provides many social support networks and experiences that are linked directly to attracting families to the club. In conjunction with the analogy of the club having similar practices to certain types of nuclear 'middle class' families, then it should hardly be surprising that the family club is central to the ethos at Boughborough.

Like the previous chapter, the emotional attachment to the club, the stories that have constructed the club's social history, and the social support it provides identifies that it is more than just a learning environment. For example the way that the club is constructed by both players and parents as having 'a good cricketing pedigree' and being 'a traditional village club' is important to its survival. The family club theme is also most apparent in the incident of the funeral of a player's son and the scattering of an old players ashes, where the club comes together to support each other and act as a family-community.

Having established that the social construction of the club is linked directly to the analogy of the family, the following chapter highlights and explains how the sports club experienced is constructed by the young people involved in it. Through the use of detailed vignettes and details of critical incidents and reactions, it aims to identify in detail the practice of some of these young people and looks at their reaction to a particular coaching issue, the critical incidents in their stages of participation, their expectations and finally their construction of the club and of their participation.

Chapter 8:

The Construction of the Cricket Experience at Boughborough

8.1 Introduction to the Chapter

As we have noted in the previous data chapters, the sports club experience is a complex and multi-faceted one that works on many levels (as Kirk & MacPhail, 2003 highlight). The previous data chapters, when taken together, build up an account of the way that the club is experienced by the young people and through these experiences we can identify evidence that supports a developmental perspective on socialisation into club sport. The way that the club is constructed as being similar to a family environment or family club has been identified in a number of ways. Firstly through the young people's social positioning as samplers or specialisers, secondly through the social positioning and practice of the important and influential people around them (their parents, coaches and peers), thirdly through the young people's participation as peripheral or full (in relative terms) participants of this particular community of practice. The development of this theory shows how these issues are linked and points very clearly to the way in which the sports club experience is constructed.

This chapter will highlight the experiences of being a 'sampler' or a 'specialiser' at Boughborough. It will link the theoretical concepts offered by Côté & Hay (2002a), Kirk & MacPhail (2002) and Lave & Wenger (1991) to the young people's experiences within the club. This explanation will be achieved through a case study analysis of four young people from the club. Using their participation and involvement in the club and a particular incident that occurred, this chapter investigates how specific young people construct their overall club experience. It builds upon the complex multiple relationships and positions they practise within the club, their extent of membership within this community of practice and explains how these interact to construct both an experience of the club and also how the young people construct themselves as cricketers.

The first section looks at the young people's socialisation from a developmental perspective and participation in the community of practice. The next section investigates in detail the incident and the young people's reactions to it. The next section identifies other critical incidents that affected their participation. A further section highlights their expectations and experiences within the club emphasising their participation, each other, the coaches, their parents and the club in general. The final section attempts to explain each young person in terms of how they construct themselves as a player of the sport.

From the broad theoretical concepts outlined earlier, this chapter now focuses upon a number of specific players' experiences in order to create a clearer understanding of how they socially construct their experiences of Boughborough cricket club.

8.2 The Young People

The following section is aimed at introducing the four young people of the group on whom this chapter focuses. This is intended to show their own individual structure and agency within the club and how their interactions with others, as well as a particular event, has shaped and dictated their experience of the club and their own positions within it. The four young people were chosen as four of the regular attenders. They were all in the same age group and were accessible to talk to and observe. However, they were not always in the same coaching group, neither did they play for the same Under 13 side. Each spent some social time at the club after practices and matches. In short they were the most convenient and easiest group to collect data from throughout the study.

This section intends to introduce the young people in the context of their attendance and participation and, although most have been identified and mentioned elsewhere in the thesis, this section (and indeed chapter) intends to put them into the context of their experience.

8.2.1 Alex: The Sampler Who Dropped Out

Alex is a twelve year old sampler who left the club during the second year of fieldwork. He came to the club because he knew some of the other children from his school and because their parents were mutual friends. Alex continued to swim as well

as play rugby, cricket and tennis whilst he was at the club. He also exhibited typical sampling behaviour and was more focused on playing and having fun than nets or practices. During the middle of the second season Alex left to join a local 'old boys' multi-sport club of which his paternal grandfather was a past president. This offered rugby and cricket (and also hockey). It is not known if he continued with these sports once he left Boughborough. However, it is interesting to note that whilst this choice of new club may be pragmatic, the peripheral participation that he held at Boughborough (through his sampling behaviour) as well as his father's fastidiousness ensured that he was marginalised by both coaches and other young people and neither could become full participants of the community of practice. In a sense, Alex's legitimate ('genuine') participation at the club was called into question because of his sampling behaviour. To those full participants who occupied positions at the club (the coaches and some of Alex's peers), his attitude and 'larking around' meant that he could not be taken seriously. In short he did not exhibit the type of behaviour that would see him achieving acceptable practice of the club on their terms (as an 'ideal athlete'). However, Alex's new choice of club not only brings with it family influence and a sense of both tradition and involvement (Toms & Fleming, 1995), but also an opportunity through the membership and influence of the grandfather to gain kudos at the new club. Something that was unlikely to have been gained by either Alex or his father at Boughborough.

Alex's parents divorced the previous year and he now lives with his mother. Boughborough is often used as a 'swap over point' for them and on a few occasions both parents have stayed to watch as they have mutual friends at the club. Alex and his mother live five miles from the club, whilst his father has moved another three miles further away. James (Alex's father) is a self-employed accountant and his ex-wife (Jo) is a nursery assistant. This use of Boughborough as a neutral and 'safe' family area further helps the club and family analogy from chapter six. The use of the club as a safe exchange point and neutral venue with mutual friends reflects Zimmermann's (1988) notion of physical maintenance and care of the family. At the club, as well as participation, there was a sense of safety, support and a familiar 'comfort zone' for all of them. The analogy of the club as a family is further reinforced here, yet since there is an element of 'disagreement' between James and the coaches, there is a marked stand-off in their relationship.

James has a reputation within the club as being fastidious and out-spoken. As an example, on one occasion he left a match early to go to a council meeting about the provision of streetlights on a nearby C-road much to the amusement of the other parents. James has already been identified as a ‘critical spectator’ (see chapter five), and this is what meant he and Alex were kept as peripheral participants by both the coaches and other young people involved.

Alex considers himself to be an all-rounder but rarely makes the full team due to his lack of ability. James however, sees the situation from a different perspective and is critical of the way the club coaches, picks and plays teams. James said from our first meeting that he was thinking of taking Alex to another club next year. As this was also known to the coaches, they rarely took notice of anything James said, thus Alex was further marginalised by the coaches through his father’s threats. Because of Alex’s sampling behaviour and his coach’s egoistic approach (see chapter 5.5.2) to technique, there was a clear conflict of expectations. Allied to his father’s critical spectator approach, this meant that Alex’s experience of the game was heavily bound up in his father’s social position as a critical spectator. As such he reflected this behaviour throughout the study. Since it has been identified that the parents are most influential in participation, they can also be influential in drop out and attrition. In this instance Alex’s move to another club could count as drop out from Boughborough, but not necessarily the sport.

8.2.2 Ben: The Sampler

Ben is a twelve year old sampler who plays cricket and tennis in the summer and football and rugby in the winter. During the second half of the study he said he was going to give up the football and tennis to concentrate on the other two sports. He has been at Boughborough for the past four years and, like Alex, he prefers playing to practice and is intent on fun and enjoyment in the game. He clearly reflects sampling behaviour.

Ben attends all of the practices and every match that he is picked for (as well as some he isn’t). Ben is either accompanied by his mother (Rosie) who has helped organise the youth section membership and finance, or his father (Tony) – now a general committee member. Occasionally they both come to games separately as Ben’s

younger brother (eight year old William) is at cubs and because the evenings clash. His father brings him to Boughborough. William is thinking of starting cricket next year and giving up cubs. Both Tony and Rosie are 'current-official' committed members of the club and hold relatively important positions. In this way they are full participants of the club and contribute to the every day running and organisation. This membership and position is reflected in Ben's attitude, participation and acknowledgement of the nepotism about his participation. It seems that both coaches and young people acknowledge this as acceptable because his parents are full participants. Whilst Ben is still a sampler, his acknowledgement that he will be specialising from next year and the fact that he is very at home with the club suggests that he is hoping to become a 'full' participant at Boughborough (see chapter 5.2). It is likely that his parent's full participation and their social positions have influenced him to make this decision to specialise. Not only that, but the relationships he currently has with his peers and the coaches in the club further reinforce his wish to consolidate his participation in this community of practice. Because he attends regularly, tries hard and is willing to play whenever asked he shows legitimate participation and, unlike we have seen with Alex, this is acceptable behaviour for this community of practice.

Tony is a senior manager and a 'self made man' in a production company in a suburb of the city. He is proud of his humble beginnings and his company Mercedes and is known as quite a reliable and jovial character in the club. He will always be found standing by the door or sitting amongst a group of parents relaying stories or telling jokes. Ben has taken on much of his father's personality and is often the centre of attention of the group and is quite popular with his peers. Both Tony and Rosie know that Ben is not a natural cricketer (and is much better at football) but are more than willing to support him at Boughborough than at football because of the positive social, psychological and friendship benefits they perceive here. All are aware that here is some hint of implicit-nepotism towards Ben's selection because Rosie is involved in the membership co-ordination, although nothing is ever said explicitly. This secure family unit reflects and reinforces the analogy of the club as a family. In fact with their roles as sponsorship co-ordinator (Tony) and administrator (Rosie) they really do reflect the traditional parental roles of the breadwinner and the 'home' organiser.

Ben is mainly a bowler who does his best with the bat (highest score of 15). He is not confident in his ability and is quite happy to be a follower. He prefers proper matches because once you're out you're out and cannot let the team down further. He is often put into the 8 a side teams because he is not good enough for the 11 a side.

8.2.3 Mark: The Beginning Specialiser

Mark is a twelve year old beginning specialiser. He has been at Boughborough for the past two seasons and has represented the county junior side on a couple of occasions. He has recently given up playing rugby, swimming and athletics to concentrate on soccer and cricket - decisions based upon his perceived ability and time constraints. Mark apparently lives and breathes cricket and devours cricket statistic books to the amusement of his entire family. Mark prefers the full 'proper' games because they put him in a position to dominate the match. He is keen on improving and on structured 'deliberate practice' and competition. In this way he is a beginning specialiser.

Mark attends practices and plays every week and is a key all-rounder and member of the team. He also captains it on a regular basis. He is both an opening bowler and a powerful number three batsman and is big for his age. At the point of the fieldwork finishing Mark was a regular player in the adult 3rd XI and occasionally in the 2nd XI. In this way Mark is moving down the learning trajectory to becoming a 'full' participant in the community of practice through his legitimate and acceptable practice and also his cricketing talent. His attitude and genuine participation reflect the 'ideal athlete' concept held by the full participants of the club which legitimises his participation. The kudos that he received after playing for the county junior team also highlights this.

Mark's dad (Roger) is a regular attender and is a 'social spectator' and although he works shifts (some late) he arranges them around Mark's practices and matches. He is a key 'driver' to games and beyond that he is happy to sit, observe, chat to other parents and partake in a pint of bitter. He is not keen to become involved in any other way than as a spectator. He will most often be found listening to Roger, sitting quietly with his pint, casting a critical eye over the game or the coaching, or commenting upon Mark's current performance. He is a mild mannered, quiet man but one who is willing to voice an opinion. In this way Roger is a full participant although, whilst he

does have a position as a spectator, he prefers to stand back and observe rather than contribute. Roger's participation is also established through Mark's own performances and full participation.

Roger works full time for a manufacturing company in a lower management position in the nearby conurbation and he lives approximately ten miles from Boughborough. He often works late and is part of a shift pattern but has arranged it with colleagues so he does not miss practices or matches unless he absolutely has to. Mark's mother and sister very rarely attend matches or practices and have only been seen once by the researcher, following a county junior game. In this way Mark's parents can be seen to be supportive and again reflect the family analogy. In fact Roger has noted that Mark sees it more as a home and comfort zone that he knows and is happy to be part of.

8.2.4 Sam: The Specialiser

Sam is a twelve year old 'specialiser' who has been playing just rugby, football and cricket for the past two years. He is the oldest and biggest young player in the side. He has been at Boughborough for the past two years and is a close friend of Mark's. They go to the same football club and Mark is his understudy in goal for the age group team. During his second interview Sam said that he was giving up football because "the England coaches (U15) think I'll make it at rugby" (Sam, Interview 2: 28th May 2002). Sam is a quick bowler and a 'big hitter' and is big for his age. He prefers the full game because he has more chance to score runs and take wickets. Sam is very focused and is keen to learn more to improve his performance and become a member of the adult teams. He is keen to do as much deliberate practice as he can and his motivation is on competition and winning. He is in short, a specialiser. However, Sam is still a peripheral participant in the club despite being a specialiser. Whilst he engages in the wider club when he has to, the lack of parental support he receives means that the relationships he forges with other adults at the club are limited. Coupled with this, his father's absence means there is very little parental contact with the club. Sam's participation is based upon his raw talent, although as the coaches have highlighted he often takes little notice of their instruction and plays his own game. Sam is not quite the 'ideal athlete' in their terms and, whilst his participation is genuine on the field, he holds a lower place to Mark on this 'continuum'.

Sam's father (Barry) is a high-powered executive in a large multi-national corporation in the nearby conurbation and rarely makes it to practices or matches (he is an occasional supportive spectator). Sam is normally brought to games with Mark and ferried around in that manner by Roger. Barry is a Vice-President of the club and has been since Sam started playing. In order to achieve this status Barry contributed £75 to the club – perhaps his contribution to the club when he cannot attend or help. Barry used to play rugby and cricket to a high level and was awarded colours by an Oxford University College. As well as only seeing Barry on a couple of occasions, I never came into contact with either his mother or sister at a game. Sam's involvement with the club on a day to day and familial level is through Roger and Mark.

8.3 The Incident

In order to help understand the unique experiences of these individuals and the way in which they practise their positions, it is helpful to discuss their reactions to a particular event that occurred during my time at Boughborough. As with many narrative events, I will introduce the topic and discuss it from the various viewpoints expressed within my field notes before bringing in the young people's views. The intention is to highlight the social complexity and effects of the decision, then go on to build up a picture of the reactions of each of the case study young people before explaining in more detail about them at a later stage. Initially the incident is described by the researcher and then 'set up' by the use of extracts from field notes and interviews to give the reader an understanding of the complex dynamics of the situation.

At the start of my second season at Boughborough the large group of Under 13's had been divided into two – apparently for practical reasons. The parents were informed at the first session and it seems that this decision was based upon a number of factors – most importantly, they were told that “due to other commitments the coaches couldn't do both nights” (Paul, Chairman, in field notes 29th April 2002). It was decided that it would be better to divide the young people into the older ones on a Monday with Chris and the younger ones on a Tuesday with Dave. Whilst I was not overly surprised about this change, it had been clear that there were two very separate coaching 'camps' within this age group. Both Chris and Dave practise their coaching positions differently. This clash of position, practice and personality had caused a

number of problems the previous year with arguments over selection, matches and who would use which facility (nets, pitch or practice area) on each night. The resolution of this conflict was simple and pragmatic to the club: they either had to move coaching nights or split the coaches from their child's age group, or leave it as status quo and risk further conflict and disruption. It is interesting to note that it was only really the full participants in the community of practice who knew and acknowledged, the real reason behind the decision and the peripheral participants seemed happy to accept the explanation.

The continued diplomatic line that was toed by Paul (the club chairman) to the parents was that it would "also help alleviate time and space pressures on the coaching side and would mean that both coaches could continue their own coaching practice and could run 2 teams – Chris the 11-a-side and Dave the 8-a-side" (Paul, Chairman, field notes 29th April 2002).

Tuesday night was practice night for most of the ones I'd spoken to last year (U13's) 'cos Dave now couldn't do it - as Monday, Thursday, Friday night were for pitch preparation and Wednesday a late night at work. The other half of the group [Chris's] would still be on a Monday (Field notes, 29th April 2002)

Whilst this was the official version that was explained to the parents it was clear that there were, and had been, underlying tensions, complaints and issues with the coaching practices of both coaches. This was clear and obvious to the full participants of the club who were coaches, committee members or parents. As Paul pointed out:

I'll be perfectly honest – there is conflict between the groups and there are 1 or 2 kids that don't want to play for one manager, and there are good kids in the other side who don't want to play for the other one. We haven't really looked at why this has happened, it just has. I think one of the reasons was more of a favouritism issue where they felt that a certain coach had overplayed their favourite players at the expense of others in games. It might also be that they know the one coach better than they know the other one. 'Cos one's a teacher he tends to have all the ones who go to his school. It's just a symptom of human nature I think, and I don't see that there's any difference in the

standard of cricket that they are playing. (Paul, Chairman, Interview 2: 8th July 2002)

The two coaches themselves identify slightly different stories about these changes and as Chris highlights:

The U13's split into A and B teams was done partly with the requests of certain parents in mind that they didn't feel..... they weren't too happy with some of the things that had gone on last year, and wished me to coach their children rather than someone else. These weren't done on ability (as people say), they were varied which I thought was interesting and I couldn't work out why at first, but I do know now. It was lack of opportunity to do certain things.... If I said that David got 4 stumpings last night and they've got [Dave's lad] behind the stumps. It puts everyone in a difficult position - we've played together for years, we know each other socially, we respect each other as people – what can you say? It's an issue that we've all circumvented! Monday night I've kept them together basically because it suits me to do it to coach them then and it suits me 'cos I've got my time to play Saturday, to have a match Sunday morning, coach on Monday night – after tennis which stops at 6, there's a game at school on Tuesday, athletics Wednesday, a cricket match Thursday and a game of golf for myself on Friday. It's purely pragmatic, but it's not been bad, I've had 10 or 12 lads who have worked together well, and we've used the artificial at school and set up fielding and batting drills 'cos the bounce is uniform. I got some of the other juniors along too. The trouble I think we have here is that the other kids [Tuesday night] don't get the technical coaching that they should do and they won't until I get them. They don't get any technical stuff at all and they won't improve enough. It's not good enough really – I think they play too many matches. It puts a burden on the U13's. They've got enough cricket and no time for practice. It's a balance between matches and coaching – it's pointless playing a match and knowing or identifying weaknesses and not being able to rectify them or work on them. (Chris, Coach, Interview 2: 25th June 2002)

Dave on the other hand provides his own version of events:

It is difficult 'cos I don't want to interfere in another age group, plus it's going to be at the same age group as mine as well next year, so it might clash – it probably won't 'cos I'm hoping to split mine up next year. I've got my thoughts on what I want to do next year – I don't think Monday nights have worked – I don't think there's been enough coaches on Monday night. I think the U11's haven't been looked after this year. We may be being selfish but we've said we're going to have a separate night, because a lot of times we've come here and you need 2 of us. My style is to bring them out here [onto the pitch] anyway – I think they learn more from the game that way. The technical side, I probably leave it to the winter nets – if they're doing something wrong out here we'll go and correct them – my style is not to try to interrupt all the time technically like they do – I don't think the kids can take it all in at once. I think they just switch off. We're going to have a different night – and we've chosen Tuesday, 'cos on a Monday when we come down Andy often has to go and do 30 U11's which to me is stupid. I think generally it's the parent's really. They don't like the way Chris coaches – probably because he teaches PE (Dave, Coach, Interview 1: 4th May 2002)

In each case both the young person and parent volunteered information about the situation at interview – which was followed up by more in depth questioning (although this was not a focus of the study it was an 'incident' that occurred and proved a useful discussion point).

8.3.1 Reactions:

The following sections highlight and explain the reactions to this incident from the perspective of each individual young person and their parents.

8.3.1.1 Alex: The Sampler Who Dropped Out

Whilst Alex showed little emotion about the change "I don't mind, I still get to be in Phil's group so that's OK" (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001). His father's views were very different. As a sampler, Alex had already expressed his interest in a number of other sports and he wasn't always happy with his experiences or the coaches. In fact he compared it with his experiences of another sampling activity:

It's OK but I don't like the way that [Dave] keeps picking the same people to play and no-one else gets a game. Some of them are like better, but they do get to play all the games – even the games that aren't really important like friendlies. I'd like to have a game in the friendlies. It's not exactly like you're going to get paid for winning or losing when you're 11 or 12. I don't mind not winning – I just want to get a game. Like now when I'm not getting any games. Like I've had 1 game this season – no 2 games this season. It made me feel a bit sad, and it's like he's [Dave] not going to let anyone get any games (....) at rugby everyone goes along to the matches and everyone gets a least 15 minutes of the game. (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Alex's views are clearly mixed. On the peer-group side he is happy to be with a friend, yet on the more competitive side he is unhappy with the way in which teams are selected 'unfairly'. As a sampler his key motivation is fun and enjoyment but team membership is also at stake. This move to a Tuesday however, was the cause of some practical problems to begin with and ones that have affected domestic relationships:

We've had to swap around when I see him, and I can't have Alex all weekend plus Mondays now – but at least I can still get to see him down here. Jo has found it hard as it's another night away – but the more I can help, the more I see of him! (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

James could be termed as an overcritical parent under De Knop et al's (1998) criteria and he had a lot to say about the coaching, the selection and ultimately Alex's participation at Boughborough.

It was a good idea to split them up – they weren't all getting games, so now they should be able to have 2 teams – with the older and younger ones in each. It'll mean they get more attention too. (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

However, at a later stage the conversation had changed – as the expectation of the A and B teams did not turn into a reality for Alex in James's eyes:

I have had arguments – more like moans - to Dave about some of the ones who don't play but are good enough to play but they've been left out. I'm here most weeks and you always get the kids in tears if they're not picked. Alex has

only been getting a few games, mainly 'cos I said something to Dave, but I know kids here that aren't still getting games. Their parents are a bit disappointed as well, I know for a fact 'cos I've heard them talking about it together. The way it was set up with an A and B was to get 2 teams out, my impression was for that, but again there's one manager who seems to be taking over everything – Dave – he's taken a lot of responsibility and its all been put on to him and there doesn't seem to be any back up for him from other people. (James, Parent, Interview 1: 23rd July 2001)

Whilst this quote also highlights the lack of higher level support, it does also show the complexity of the expectations and agendas held by all involved. Since these expectations are linked to the level of participation, the fact that neither James nor Alex accepted the practice of the coaches highlights both their peripheral participation and the limited social positions they held.

8.3.1.2 Ben: The Sampler

Ben was not worried by the change of group as he continued to be in the Monday group and because his mother was involved in the membership. He was quite happy to be there to play and since his parents were able to bring him on either night there was no pragmatic issue for him. Since he had already expressed that he was going to specialise in the game his decision and participation was not affected by training clashes with other sports.

Ben's perception of the incident was that it didn't matter to him - as he preferred Chris as a coach because his parents know him and he also teaches at Bens' school. However Ben was also aware what staying with the older age group would mean:

Well I don't mind it really, but I don't like facing difficult bowling when we're in the nets, and it means you have to learn more and get it right. I'd rather be playing games and things, but I don't mind as long as I don't do badly. (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Ben clearly sees a reliance on ability whilst with the better players and feels comfortable being in that group. His closeness and full participation in the club ensures that he has both a link and some kudos with the other players.

To Tony and Rosie there was little change as it was the same night although, since Tony had been most critical of what he perceived as a lack of coaching by Dave, he was happy with the change of coaches:

I'm glad he'll have Chris now, 'cos Chris does a lot of technique work – and that's what he needs to get better ... and we know that they [Chris and Dave] have had a few problems between them (Ben, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Since both Tony and Rosie are full participants in the club through their existing involvement, there is a sense of acceptance and satisfaction (more than conflict as James had) with the coaches. The acceptance of this change (which did not adversely affect Ben) highlights their awareness of the relationships within the club and the need to ensure that conflict is avoided within the 'familial structure' it has.

8.3.1.3 Mark: The Beginning Specialiser

Mark is largely unaffected by this change and Chris has been coaching him throughout his time there. Chris also teaches him at school. He has had a number of sessions with Dave however, but he does admit that it is an improvement now the group has been divided:

It's better now – we actually learn more now, and we don't have the other kids [samplers] mucking around, which means we get more practice. (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Mark's motivation is one of competition and deliberate practice and even Roger is happier with the new situation although, he also highlights that it's not ideal and that he now loses out on some of the socialising:

It's better for Mark now as he gets more focused coaching - the only ones who do have a problem are the coaches, only the fact that they can't come on the same night which I suppose in an ideal world in my opinion everybody would be here together to foster team spirit. I know they're still in the 8's situation and Chris has got one team and Dave's got the other, but I think it would be better if they were on the same night. I don't think there can be any argument about that. Because not only from the lads point of view but also from the parents who like to come down – like Nick who I used to like a good chat to.

Now the only time I see him is when I bump into him in the pub at ***** – which is once in a blue moon really. (Roger, Parent, Interview 2: 20th May 2002)

Mark's attitude to the change is one that highlights the confrontation of expectations between the samplers and specialisers at Boughborough. His view is clearly that it is a good thing the teams have been split and he can now get more individual coaching from a more technical coach "Dave just told us what we did wrong – Chris shows us" (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002). In Mark's early specialiser eyes the change of practice and focus has been great – it also means that some of the other boys who "don't try hard enough and 'muck around when we're trying to practise" (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002) are in the other group. These are mainly samplers and include Alex amongst them.

Since both Mark and Roger are full participants, it is interesting to see their engagement on more than just a practical level. Both Tony and Roger acknowledge the issues of coaching practice and technique, whilst James earlier highlighted simply opportunity to play.

8.3.1.4 Sam: The Specialiser

Sam was almost entirely non-committal about the change and chose to focus on how it affected his performance more than how it changed the peer networks. Since he (like Mark) has mainly had Chris as a coach he has little to say:

It means we will get more proper practice so I get to bowl more in the nets 'cos there's fewer of us, but I don't really see how else it's changed things (Sam, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Since Sam is a specialiser but also a peripheral participant in the club, he appears to be both unconcerned and unsure about how this change will affect him apart from during the practice sessions. His lack of close engagement with the club infers that he is not overly worried. Since he has also explained that he is keener on playing rugby, such a minor change will probably go unnoticed.

Due to Barry's lack of availability it was not possible to gauge his views. Although since his engagement with the club is so limited and as a peripheral participant, it could be assumed that he would not hold an informed opinion, since he rarely participates in the club environment.

8.4 Sampling and Specialising: Critical Incidents and Moving From One Stage to Another

Within the participation spectrum at Boughborough and with the experiences of the incident highlighted above, it is clear that there are often focal points that influence both participation and attrition at the club. However, this also affects the move from one phase to another. As Côté & Hay (2002a; 487) highlight in their study, the key critical incidents between the young people moving from the sampling to the specialising phase are:

1. Positive experiences with a coach
2. Encouragement from an elder sibling
3. Success
4. Enjoyment of the sport

From the data gathered concerning these four young people, it seems that this transition period from the sampling to the specialising phase is one that is led by a number of interdependent incidents - all of which are linked in to the degree of participation they hold:

1. Positive experiences within the club/sport environment (parents/coaches/peers)
2. Negative experiences within the club/sport environment (parents/coaches/peers)
3. Success or ability
4. Enjoyment of the sport
5. Pragmatic/practical choice
6. Familial influence: tradition, inspiration, involvement, technique

Whilst these are defined as 'critical incidents', this implies that they are individual, one off, 'immediate' occurrences that dictate behaviour. In fact, whilst this does and can happen, this is not the case here and the critical incidents referred to here occurred over time. In fact, Côté & Hay's (2002a) term 'incident' is perhaps a misconception, and the phrase 'critical episodes' (since they occur over time with the complex

multiple interaction of others) would be more appropriate. However, for the sake of this chapter the terminology used will continue to be critical incident, although many will have happened over time on possibly a number of occasions.

An example of an 'immediate' critical incident is highlighted below. It is one in which I was an unwitting instigator and it was partially the cause of a new young player's attrition from the club.

I got caught up at the start of the game by having to do a short warm up with the team. Dave caught me and I was put in awkward position of having to do it while he sorted out the wicket. Went OK, and just tried to do some basic stretching and some cardio-vascular work. The kids weren't too keen but followed it, and I have no idea who half of them are so could say very little to them if they weren't taking part! (Field Notes, 11th June 2001)

Well there was a lad who played I think it was the Monday, and no-one really seemed to talk to him, but I don't think he was introduced to them you see by the coach. He turned up and they were sitting here. I think it was you took them for the warm up [!!] it was that lad who came over to the warm up late, and no one seemed to know who he was and no-one seemed to talk to him. I said to Dave to find out his name and introduce him to the team. But he just turned up, trailed into the changing room after them and I think no one spoke to him. I think that obviously needs looking at. I mean new players coming into the club to make sure that they are introduced into the team situation. Because that's the worst thing, if no-one talks to you, you think well, I don't want to come down here again 'cos no one spoke to me. I notice he's not here this week, I bet we won't see him again. (Nick, Parent, Interview 1: 18th June 2001)

This example of an incident is interesting, since the young person involved was clearly not even yet a peripheral participant of the club (he was a new comer in fact), then he was unlikely to return after such an experience. Coupled with the lack of a welcome and lack of family atmosphere to him and not being introduced in such a way that he would have been able to establish a social position within the team, it is unsurprising that he was never seen again.

With regards to positive experiences and incidents, there is a wealth of literature on motivation and enjoyment as a key focus on sports participation (c.f. Coakley, 1998), as well as the wider social environment being key (Horne et al, 1999). Similarly, there is also research that examines the negative side to sports participation and, ultimately, drop-out (e.g. De Knop, 1997). In the same way linking awareness (and acceptance) of success and ability is also evident.

The pragmatic choices behind sports (which are also important) have also been discussed (e.g. Kirk et al, 1997a and 1997b) but as youth sport in England becomes more demanding on time and commitment (e.g. Jackson & Nesti, 2001) and with other pressures such as school work (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003), this further reduces options and decisions need to be taken. It is interesting to note that at Boughborough the issue of choosing to specialise appeared to revolve around the clash of sports or a preference for one activity – there was no mention at any level of a young person giving up a sport because of homework commitments. Whilst Kirk & MacPhail (2003) note that this is present in their sample of 14-15 year olds, it could be argued that this was not present because of the pressures at that age were not evident on this slightly younger sample. Nevertheless, it could also be argued that the role sport plays for these young people is more important to them and their families that time and money constraints are foregone over the importance of participation. In many cases it seemed that the young people were forced to make a decision between sports.

There is also the issue of familial influence. Côté & Hay (2002a) identify it as ‘encouragement from an elder sibling’. It is clear from much of the data gathered here (and elsewhere) that it is more likely to be a parent, in this case the father. Whilst I have written about this elsewhere (Toms & Fleming, 1995 and Toms, 1997), it is clear that the family link is important and that parents in highly complex and technical sports are the first point for training, practising and giving the basic skills.

For this aspect of the chapter it is important to focus upon the two specialisers within this group: Mark and Sam. Moreover, it is also important to look at the current experiences for Alex and Ben to see how they are comparable and identify these transitional critical incidents within their experiences.

8.4.1 Positive Experiences Within the Club Environment

The positive experiences and ‘critical incidents’ within the club that were noted by the case study individuals mainly revolve around the accepted key aspects of sport - fun, friendship and play.

Alex’s positive experiences within the club environment were mainly found with his peers and, in the context of leaving the club, he noted that whilst he would be missing his friends from Boughborough, he also had friends (and indeed cousins) at the new club. Throughout the study he was more interested in playing with his friends and being in the same teams as them than he was on playing the full game. Whilst he felt that he was a good player (‘that’s what dad says’), his key motivations for being there were more social and familial than anything else. However, as a peripheral participant in the club he was always alienated in both practice and match participation.

Similarly, Ben’s experiences were linked with his parents’ involvement in the club and the practical and emotional support they offer. He attended practices for cricketing and social reasons and clearly identified his enjoyment being based around the interactions with his friends more than his ability at the game. As a full participant he was able to fully experience the social side of the club and was accepted by both coaches and his peers through his parents’ positions and participation.

Mark, on the other hand, has clearly had positive experiences in the club and these are linked directly to his success and ability. His father, as we’ve already seen, is very supportive. He gets on well with Chris (who is also his PE teacher) and there is mutual respect from both. He also has close friends at the club so it is his ‘comfort zone’. Whilst he does note that there is some enjoyment for him with his friends, unlike Alex or Ben much of the enjoyment seems to stem from his (and the teams) own performances. His early specialising position and full participation in the club exacerbates the positive experiences.

Sam (like Mark) expressed his positive experiences alongside his performances and the practical nature of the club more than the social nature. Unlike the others in the case study, his father rarely attended and it seems that this was a hindrance to his

positive social experiences. As such Sam appeared socially limited within the group and a peripheral participant - although his specialising behaviour and ability helped him establish a strong social position in the club.

These incidents here are entirely positive and, whilst the difference in the focus of enjoyment between the 'samplers' (socially based) and 'specialisers' (ability based) is evident, at the same time the degree of participation that each had in the club is also important as this dictates the social position they hold.

8.4.2 Negative Experiences Within the Club Environment

Alex's negative experiences revolved mainly around the coach whose attitude, selection policy and practice tended to marginalise Alex. However these views were based around his father's highly critical perception of the club. In that way he was partially influenced negatively by his father's presence and whilst he had not specifically chosen to leave the club, he knew that was his father's intention for him. Their peripheral participation, because of James' critical views and Alex's sampling behaviour, meant that there were (in reality) few friends for them at the club and that the supportive family atmosphere had broken down with their experiences.

Ben noted that his choice of cricket and his positive experiences of the club were put into context by his negative experiences of the football club he had previously attended. In comparison with the positive experiences he receives at Boughborough there was plenty said about the football club and how it was not felt appropriate for him. The only negative experiences he felt at Boughborough were based around his ability and lack of success but they were realistic in that he knew he was not (yet) a cricketer (see section 8.6). His full participation in the club meant that there were very few negative experiences for him, hence his continued participation.

Mark's negative experiences of club sport appear limited and, whilst he has just given up swimming, athletics and rugby, he had not said anything about the club's he played at or the experiences he had there. His only negative experiences at Boughborough revolve around the conflict in participation and practice between the 'sampler' group and the few specialisers. He also highlighted that he'd given up athletics because he felt it too "boring and repetitive" (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002). Like Ben,

his full participation and social position within the club meant that his experiences were generally positive.

Sam did not give any examples of negative experiences at Boughborough, although he did mention in some detail the lack of organisation at the football club for which he'd played, especially compared to the structure of Boughborough. Like Mark, Sam did feel some negativity towards the samplers and was more vocal in his criticism of them. He also mentioned the problem in interview that he felt 'held back' by their lack of ability. Sam's peripheral participation meant that he experienced little at the club but the coaching and matches but he was quite happy to be a specialiser in his performance. Again, like both Ben and Mark, his experiences of the club were mainly positive.

Clearly for all (apart from Alex) the negative issues were outweighed by the positive ones and for all concerned the critical incidents were not extreme. Only Alex could be said to have been adversely affected to the extent of dropping out of the club. These experiences are also clearly linked to the degree of participation and social positions each young person held.

8.4.3 Success or Ability

Alex's success and ability were limited and, whilst this was noted by the coaches, other parents and his peers, his self belief that he wasn't given enough chance to excel ultimately led to his attrition. The vital nature of ability in the game is well documented (e.g. Paish, 1994) and, with Alex's ability belying his self-belief, it is difficult to see Alex continuing in the game for any length of time.

Ben however, is more realistic about his ability and acknowledges that he is not one of the better young players at Boughborough. Whilst he himself admits this (as well as the perceived nepotism behind his selection) he sees greater value from the club and what it represents than perhaps he sees in himself as a player. Scoring a run, taking a catch or even taking a wicket are things that he strives for – more so than a consolidated performance that one of the specialisers would be looking for. Success for Ben comes very cheaply and is rarely put into focus as there is an acceptance in the group of his ability (which provides him with a comfort zone in which to hide).

The coaches have also said that it is players like Ben who will be the next generation of club members.

Mark, on the other hand, (as we have seen earlier) is a talented young player who thrives on this ability and he has gained a great deal of kudos from his peers, parents and the club. This was highlighted through his county selection and through his regular selection for the adult side. Mark's success at the game clearly made him choose the sport and he has clearly moved onto the 'specialisation' stage through this.

Sam enjoyed the competitive nature of the sport and being quite tall and 'known' as a fast bowler I'm sure added to the kudos. His enjoyment he freely said was "taking lots of wickets and blasting lots of 4's and 6's" (Sam, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002). His enjoyment, success and ability (similarly to Mark) are inextricably linked. However, as he notes, when moving on to the 'investment' stage, it may well be that he opts to give up cricket in favour of a sport in which (it seems) he has even more talent - rugby.

There is a clear link between an awareness of ability and measurements of success for these young people. Mark and Sam are clearly able to measure their ability against the rest of the group. Ben is aware of his limitations but is happy with the small successes he receives. Alex's inflated cricketing ego clearly makes the attainment of success based on his ability a difficult objective to achieve. Thus this type of critical incident can be experienced very differently, depending upon ability, social position and degree of full or peripheral (legitimate) participation.

8.4.4 Enjoyment of the Sport

Alex's views of enjoyment seem to show that there was clearly an interest in the game since he attended most weeks (although it was a cross over point for his parents). He also expressed a sense of enjoyment through socialising with his close friends and fun through the deliberate play that he focussed upon. His enjoyment (like most samplers) was through the fun and playing side of the game and once the game or practice became more competitive, or in deliberate practice situations, Alex would be the first to lose interest in the task.

Ben clearly enjoys cricket and rugby over the other sports. It would appear that this is linked to the social aspect and values of the game as well as the inextricable link to the family unit. His enjoyment is in participating and scoring a run. He is very keen on deliberate play (he is a natural fool and enjoys the un-pressured attention) and he tries with deliberate practice but his main focus of enjoyment appears to be through the wider social aspect of the game and the club.

Mark's enjoyment of the sport is also apparent. His enjoyment is based around his ability and awareness of the game and is borne out by his enthusiasm to play. He is always the first there and the last to leave.

Sam also enjoys the competitive nature of the sport and he freely said he enjoyed it most when he was scoring lots of runs and taking lots of wickets. His enjoyment, success and ability are inextricably linked.

It is interesting to note (and this reflects Côté & Hay, 2002a) the way in which the critical incidents have developed between Ben (as a sampler) and Mark and Sam (as specialisers). For Ben his enjoyment is still very much intrinsic (as he bases his enjoyment on small successes) whilst for Mark and Sam the enjoyment was more about being the best player and dominating the game. This comparison of ability appears to be a central theme of the specialising stage when compared with the sampling one. The degree of participation also has an affect, as clearly both Ben and Mark are more successful in the club environment than Alex or Sam, although Sam is more successful on the pitch. It would be easy to make assumptions on future performance and would be interesting to speculate that Alex will drop out of the sport completely. Ben will become a club stalwart and will play regularly for a second or third team. Mark will become a good player and play first or second team cricket and Sam will focus on rugby, but perhaps play the odd game of cricket in the future.

8.4.5 Pragmatic and Practical Choices

One of the most obvious of the critical incidents, when moving from one stage to the next, is that of the decisions behind choosing one sport over another. With the way that organised team sport for young people is arranged over weekday evenings and weekend matches, there is no doubt that any young person wishing to specialise must

make a pragmatic decision to give up one sport in favour of another, purely because of the logistical clashes of practices and match timings.

For Alex, his sampling stage is about to take on a new dimension and, ironically in leaving Boughborough, he may be in a better participatory position. The new club he is going to attend is a multi-sport old boys club in a nearby conurbation. The club has facilities, teams and youth squads for rugby, soccer, cricket and hockey all of which are (apparently) sympathetically timed for the young people to be able to take advantage of all of the activities without having clashes. The impending move would also put him closer to his paternal grandfather, to his father's own 'new' home and, on a practical level, make it easier for all of his family. This complex familial (yet pragmatic) decision highlights this as a critical incident within the sampling stage which will probably extend it until he decides to specialise.

Ben's element of practical choice is not as obvious. He acknowledged that his tennis had clashed with cricket so much this season that he was likely to give it up next year, even though he did not want to. He also mentioned that there were clashes between football training and cricket and that, at the moment, whilst cricket took priority he did miss playing football. However, his parents increasing social links to the club are another reason that he attends and participates and they see the social benefits of cricket far outweighing the football club's pull. They were also very concerned that they wanted their younger son (William) to grow up in a nicer cricketing environment than in a football environment. Ben's practical choice then is directly linked to his parent's concerns and developmental wishes for him and his younger brother.

There is an element of practical choice displayed by Mark which is more to do with giving up rugby for football than with cricket. Although he does acknowledge that this rugby choice may impact upon his cricket in the future. The clashes he noted between practising and playing football and rugby were clear and, with Sam conceding his place in the football team to Mark (in Sam's move to rugby), there was a practical reason for his focus. Mark's love of cricket, as he himself also noted, meant that there were no clashes with the summer sport at all.

Sam said little about the practical issues, although he (like Mark) acknowledged that there had been clashes between football and rugby and that he had chosen rugby because that is where he felt he could go further. However, he ultimately noted that he knew he would have to make a decision in the future on which to focus and felt that he would probably choose rugby over cricket. This critical incident shows the awareness (if not the beginning) of Sam's move into the investment stage.

These critical incidents highlight the difficulties of young people in sport and, in many cases, the move from sampler to specialiser is an enforced one when clashes and commitments to a number of sports mean that the young person has to make a choice between them. In this instance it could be argued that this transition is not actually by free choice but by pragmatics. Ironically it is Alex, in his attrition from Boughborough to a multi-sport club, who may make the best sporting move whilst those who are multi-talented (Mark and Sam) are forced to make decisions to give up activities. This would appear to add weight to the argument that the multi-sport club is more appropriate to the development of young people and that the system in the UK is actually detrimental to young people who are then forced to choose between activities at arguably too early an age.

8.4.6 Familial Influence: Tradition, Inspiration, Involvement and Technique

The final critical incidents again revolve around family influence and, in particular, issues around tradition, inspiration, involvement and technique.

Alex proffered a sense of wishing to emulate his father in playing for an adult side and saw him as a source of inspiration and tradition within the game. The involvement his father has is important, since Alex has occasionally played for the friendly side when they have been short. James has also taught Alex some technique, although for all intents and purposes Alex has either taken little notice or has been taught poorly from what I saw of it.

For Ben, whilst his father does not play, both Tony and Rosie have been instrumental in Ben's involvement in the team by getting involved themselves (arguably causing selection nepotism). There is, however, an element of technique in that Tony plays the

game in the garden with him and helps him with the basics although Tony professes to know very little about the technique of the game.

Similarly for Mark, Roger admits he's never played the game at any club level, but there is still an element of technique in his experiences and familial influence as Roger has (up until recently) played in the garden with Mark bowling at him and then batting against him. Roger has also helped Mark's involvement by initially introducing him to the club and supporting his development at every level through his own attendance.

It is interesting to note that of all the young players at Boughborough, Sam is the only one whose father really had some success in sport (with Oxford Blues in rugby and cricket) although, with his high powered job and his age (I would estimate at around fifty), he no longer plays. Sam has explained that when he was younger they played a lot in the garden and that they have a lot of memorabilia at home from when his dad played. He also proudly mentioned that playing sport was in the family and that he had cousins and uncles who had played to a high level (especially rugby). This then covers all of the aspects of his family tradition in sport, familial inspiration, involvement (particularly in the club) and the technique he was shown at a young age.

What this section has hoped to highlight is how very different the young people's experiences are and how these critical incidents in their early sporting lives may have a profound effect upon their transition from one stage to the next. The culmination of their experiences leads to the pragmatic choice of activity which they can pursue, although this choice itself can be an enforced one.

8.5 Expectations and Experiences

The four individuals all highlight very different expectations and experiences of each other as well as their parents and coaches. This provides a highly complex interactionist example of the multiple ways in which young people experience the club, as well as providing an insight into the ways they construct the club experience. The data generated about these four in particular comes from field notes, interviews and observations.

The importance here is to build up a narrative of what I saw of the young people and how they reacted to situations. It is an attempt to build up an understanding of HOW these young people react to the same environment through their own expectations of it. These expectations take on a number of headings:

1. Practice and Participation
2. Other young people/players
3. Coaches
4. Parents
5. Club

8.5.1 Practice and Participation

Alex has always been very keen to play rather than practise and does not like the practice session with the better players. He also likes a fair turn when it comes to playing and this is exacerbated by what he (through his father) identifies as nepotism and selection issues. His expectations are that he should play most, or at least a fair proportion, of the games whilst the coaches' expectations of him are that he should try harder, play around less and take notice of what they say. His sampling behaviour and peripheral participation seem to indicate to the coaches that he is not serious enough for them. His father's critical approach to the coaching does little to help the relationship either.

Ben also prefers to play rather than practise and as we've seen before, he accepts that he is not the best player but there is some nepotism towards selecting him because of the job his mother does. His expectations are to have fun at the practices, to try and get better and to play whenever he's asked to. In fact, he tends to meet these short term expectations on a weekly basis.

Mark reflects the characteristics of the specialiser stage in both his practice and his participation. He seems to give 100% in both and is aiming to make the adult sides. Mark's expectations are that practice and matches should be challenging and should help his development as a young cricketer. The expectations of others in the team are that he is their match-winning player and this is reflected in their reactions and attitude towards him.

Sam (like Mark) is focused on his deliberate practice, although he is far more concerned about hitting the ball hard and bowling as fast as he can than he is about his technique. Sam is probably the most feared bowler and batter at practice sessions, purely because he has a good eye for the ball and he relies on aggression more than technique. His expectations of practice sessions are to learn, but also to intimidate, and this is reflected in the game expectations. Sam is more vocally dismissive of the samplers and will confront those who he sees as playing around more than trying to practise.

8.5.2 Other Young People/Players

The other young people involved appear to work on three levels for Alex - his peers, his rivals and the older (specialising) young people. He has a number of close friends at the club (the reason he has stayed there so long). He is aware of other young players who he feels shouldn't be playing and that he should be given a chance to play. There are also the older players who are the core of the team and who he doesn't really know. They see Alex in a number of different ways: as annoying, as a waste of time and as unfocussed.

Ben's experiences at Boughborough are distinctly different from Alex's, although they are both samplers. The familial difference and acceptance of the non-critical nature of this experience has clearly produced different expectations and realities, even though Ben has the same cricketing ability as Alex. The issue of nepotism is also reflected by some of the others and cited as a reason by Alex for not getting in the team. Ben has quite a wide circle of friends at Boughborough (mainly from school) and, like his father, is very outgoing and quite self-effacing. The other players see him as funny and a laugh and are quite supportive of his lack of ability because he tries hard. His expectations of his friends are as supportive peers and this is something they seem to see as reciprocal since Ben was identified by most of them as a friend they had at the club. Ben is also a full participant and as such has kudos within the club amongst the young people.

Mark is (privately) not keen on the ones who are not focused and are only there for fun (i.e. the samplers). Mark also has some strong friendships at the club (Sam). He is well respected by the others and clearly finds the lack of challenge at practices a

problem, whilst the others in the group see it the other way. There is a lot of respect among the young people for Mark and his expectations of the others are high but he appears happy to sit back with the group and be non-confrontational on issues of ability.

Sam, like Mark, seems to lack the challenge given by the others and is quickly frustrated by the samplers who are more interested in playing around. Because of Sam's stature, there is plenty of respect for him amongst the group and they expect him (like Mark) to produce the match winning performances. Amongst the rest of the team there is an expectation and impression that Sam is an 'all or nothing' player and he will either be very successful and will score a lot of runs quickly or he will be out first ball. The same is reflected in his bowling which will either mean plenty of wickets or him conceding lots of runs. It is interesting to note that the rest of the group fear his inconsistency (especially when batting in the nets) more than they do his pace or aggression.

8.5.3 Coaches

The coaches at Boughborough to Alex (and his father) are a problem and the clash with Dave was cited (by his father) as a major element in Alex's decision to leave. His lack of selection for games, his father's criticism of the coaching style has brought this issue to a head. On the other side, the coaches perceive Alex as lacking in focus and commitment and also prone to ignoring their instruction. Their perception of his father as a 'whiner' (it is his father who has caused problems for the coaches it seems) means that Alex is not welcome and will not be missed. His expectations are that the coaches are there to help him play and improve, whereas the coaches see themselves there to facilitate competition and practice and "if he [Alex] cannot stick it, then he shouldn't be there" (Chris, Coach in field notes, 27th June 2001).

Ben knows his coach (Dave) very well and goes to the same school as his son. Ben's parents also know Dave and his wife through school. Ben gets on well with Dave and finds him laid back and quite easy going. Both Dave and Matt acknowledge that perhaps they are biased towards him but think he's a 'nice kid'. His expectations of the coaches are of learning and their expectations of him revolve around the positive effort he puts in - which impresses them since 'he always tries his best'.

Mark's expectations of the coaches at Boughborough are that they should be able to help him improve his game and play in both the adult club side and county junior sides. This is an expectation of training and deliberate practice. The coaches acknowledge this and, to Chris, he is the ideal athlete in that he is talented, he listens and he corrects and learns the technique. Whilst Mark is frustrated at the lack of ability of some of the others, he and his father appear pacified by the 'extra technical attention' he receives (to the chagrin of James, Alex's father).

Sam's expectations of the coaches are fairly lax in that he does expect to learn more, but doesn't really mind. The coaches however, seem to find Sam very frustrating and whilst they can rely on him to give 100% effort, his reliance on his raw ability and his good eye for the ball means he takes little notice of their technical advice and Chris has just given up mentioning it.

8.5.4 Parents

James (Alex's father) is a critical parent and has a lot to say about the coaching system. However, he has a long standing reputation as a 'Victor Meldrew' character amongst the other parents and this has reflected on Alex and the way he is perceived by some of the parents. Alex expects his parents (his father) to take an active part in playing and coaching him and James also sees this and is trying to get him more games in his friendly side.

Since both Tony and Rosie are heavily involved in the club, Ben receives a lot of support from them and is happy that they are involved. This gives him a way into the club (he likes being able to go into the bar for sweets and a drink and be known by the other adults). Some of the other parents see him as "quite a character, just like his dad" (Roger, Parent, in field notes, 8th May 2002) and there is only negative feeling to this nepotism from James. Ben expects his parents to be there to support him and take him to games, whereas they have few expectations of him apart from him trying his best and enjoying it.

Mark has little expectations of his parents, possibly because Roger always attends, although he does like his dad to be there to see how well he does and always looks for

reassurance and advice from him after a game. Roger, on the other hand, has high expectations of the coaching and how it will help Mark reach his goals. He is however, happy with Chris's coaching practice and feels it will meet his expectations of Mark's performances.

Because Sam's father Barry is away a great deal and his mother has other responsibilities, Sam has low expectations of what his parents can offer him in terms of support and he realises that it is not possible for them to attend matches. It would appear through his continued participation that Sam's family are happy for him to do so, although Roger pointed out that Barry thought he would become a rugby player in the future.

8.5.5 The Club

The club to Alex is a complex place. Not only is it where the parental 'handover' takes place, but it is also one where conflict exists - between his father and the coaches and between Alex and some of the specialisers. At the same time some of his friends from school also play, so it is a very confusing place for him and ultimately not a happy 'home' environment. Alex's expectations of the club, from what I could gather, were almost entirely social and participatory and, since they appear to have not really been met, it was inevitable that he would drop out.

Ben sees the club as very much a cricketing place and, through his parents' involvement, as a way into an adult environment. His expectations of the club are quite complex as he likes to go there to play and learn and see his friends and socialise. These are expectations that he seems to meet on a regular basis. Since he has no high expectations of playing for the team, he always sees it as a bonus when he is selected.

Between them both Mark and Roger acknowledge the importance of the club in Mark's cricketing and social development. Since Mark now plays for the adult sides, it is even clearer that the distinction of becoming an adult cricketer and being allowed into the echelons and cultures of adult cricket are acceptable. Roger himself admitted to not minding if an adult player bought him a shandy - something they would clearly not do at an age group match. Mark's expectations have clearly shifted in this

environment, as have those around him, and his change of focus from the club being a place to learn to a place he can now compete alongside the adults is interesting.

Sam has always seen the club and organisation as secondary to his participation. To him it is a place to change and have a drink or sweets from the bar. Since he has not played adult cricket yet, this acceptance and expectation has not been introduced to him (unlike Mark). Sam appears very unaware of the club's role and place and is focussed on playing to such an extent that he exacerbates these expectations through his attitudes towards the 'samplers'.

What this section has tried to do is introduce, and begin to identify, the individuality of the young people towards what are ultimately the same experiences and to highlight the interactionist approach to investigating the complex participation relationships. It is clearly an area that requires more in-depth analysis and perhaps more focussed individual case study work. It is clear throughout that the degree of participation and social position they hold has a significant impact upon their participation and attrition.

8.6 The Construction of 'Self as Cricketer': 'Going to Sport' and 'Engaging in Sport'

Throughout the data collection it was very interesting to see how the young people identified themselves and constructed themselves as young cricketers. Whilst all of the young people have been socialised into, and through, the sport it is important to note that the way in which they construct their identity as young cricketers is very different. As Kirk & MacPhail (2003) highlight, there is a multiplicity of self within each position held by the young people. This construction of self is also made through the other people involved, as much as it is from the individual young person. As well as holding the position of sampler or specialiser, the legitimate and peripheral (or full) participation within the community of practice is also important to the construction of each young person's cricketing identity. As we have seen earlier, their social position, legitimate participation and peripheral or full participation dictates how they construct the club, and therefore how they construct themselves and their cricketing ability within it.

With regards to forming an identity in sports practice, little research has been conducted. Anderson (2001) however studied a group of young people in Denmark and focused upon their 'identity' formation between a gymnastics club and a capoeira (a type of martial art) school. Her findings identified that the informal club produced young people who were 'going to sports' and 'consuming sports' as opposed to the more structured school where they were 'engaged in sports' or being 'consumed by sports'. It could be argued that the way in which the young people position themselves which is located in Côté & Hay's (2002a) model means that the samplers are 'going' and 'consuming', whereas the specialisers (through the more formal structure of deliberate play and deliberate practice) are 'engaged in' and 'being consumed by' the sport. Anderson (2001; 245) also points out that perhaps the focus on particular ideas of instruction and formal setting "may create a sport setting where children interact as children rather than 'sport persons in the making'".

With the four young people there are very different views concerning how they are young cricketers. The notion of 'playing cricket' is likely to mean different things to different people depending upon the context and how they define it (is it a full match with proper umpires and players, or the stereotypical kids with a tennis ball and a dustbin playing in the garden or on a quiet street?). Being a cricketer is a similar issue and is built around the perceptions of self, ability and how others reflect these through social position and participation in the club's community of practice.

8.6.1 Alex: "I play the game, so I'm a cricketer"

Alex 'plays the game' and has turned out for his dad's friendly side once before. Alex considers himself to be a cricketer because he has played with the adults. This seems to suggest, like Spink & Longhurst (1990) identified, that youth or modified cricket was not 'real' cricket. Because Alex has played in an adult side (albeit extremely limited) he felt he was therefore a cricketer (much like I felt when I had done). Yet Alex's ability is limited and his 'sampling' experiences are currently broad. With regards to the concept of being a good cricketer, his argument is about being able to hit the ball as far as possible and "score fours and sixes". Interestingly this is something that so far he has only achieved a couple of times, but that does not seem to matter because he has played for the adult team. He is also at the same time a rugby and tennis player, as well as a swimmer. He sees himself as doing these activities

rather than perhaps what they embody. His perception of being a good cricketer appears to revolve around what his father says to him about his ability.

Dad says I'm good 'cos I've played for an adults side, so I must be. I play the game so I'm a cricketer! (Alex, 11, Interview 1: 16th July 2001).

It is interesting to note that Alex only constructs his cricketing self through his experience with his father's team. His peripheral participation and lack of what the full participants would see as 'legitimate participation' at Boughborough has meant that he has become marginalised. This in turn has affected his experiences at the club. Alex is a cricketer in terms of the way he has constructed an identity through his father. To the more experienced participants at Boughborough, Alex is not a cricketer at all.

8.6.2 Ben: "I'm Not a Cricketer Yet"

Ben's construction of self is slightly different. He acknowledges that he is not very talented and he talks about becoming a good cricketer, whilst he currently only 'plays' the game. This is perhaps highlighted by his selection issue, his limited ability (only slightly better than Alex) and the fact that his parents talk about him becoming a cricketer in the future. In short he seems to identify himself as a cricket 'player' – but not a cricketer and sees himself becoming a cricketer as he improves.

I'd really like to be good at cricket, but I'm still learning how to play the shots and bowls and things. I'm not a cricketer yet but I hope I will be soon. (Ben, 12, Interview 1: 16th July 2001)

Ben's legitimate participation and 'full' participation at Boughborough, coupled with his parents social positions within the club mean that there is a certain amount of acceptance and allowance for him at Boughborough. As we have noted earlier (section 8.5.3) Ben's genuine attempts in both deliberate play and deliberate practice have meant that his participation has been accepted by the full participants of the club – 'he is a trier'. This acceptance is reflected in his construction of self and clearly he knows that he has time to become a cricketer. His desire to become a cricketer is based upon the other full participants of the club (such as Mark and the other adults he knows) and he wishes to become a cricketer in their terms (i.e. in the acceptable terms of the full participants of the community of practice).

8.6.3 Mark: “They Make Me Feel Like I’m a Cricketer”

Mark ‘is’ a cricketer, and his construction of self highlights this. This is confirmed through his obsession with Wisden records books and the fact that he lives and breathes the game and is always playing or practising. Coupled with his selection for Boughborough men’s 3rd XI, his county junior trial and his performances throughout the season, Mark embodies the notion of being a cricketer within the group. This is further highlighted and reinforced by the acceptance of the other young people, the coaches and the club with regard to his performances and the kudos that this gives him. He reflects the ideal legitimate participation of the full participants of the community of practice. He calls himself a cricketer in interviews because he has constructed an identity as one which is reinforced by those around him.

It’s great to play for the club and the men’s team and county and things. It’s like here [Boughborough] you get respect and they make me feel like I’m a cricketer. (Mark, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Mark’s position as a specialiser, his ‘full’ participation in the community of practice and his legitimate participation mean that he fulfils the ideals of the club. His ability reinforces this such that he is an ‘ideal’ young cricketer to the coaches in the club. His construction of his cricketing identity is based around the other full participants’ own views of him.

8.6.4 Sam: “I’m a Rugby Player and a Cricketer”

Sam also considers himself to be a cricketer - as well as a rugby player. This is based partially on ability, but also upon the way that he is perceived by his peers within the club and how they react to his performances on the field. Because he bowls quickly, hits the ball hard and is physically bigger than them he is clearly given respect and as they see he (like Mark) is one of the best cricketers in the team.

I guess I play rugby and cricket a lot really, and I’ve played for like the district and stuff, so I suppose I’m both a rugby player and a cricketer. (Sam, 12, Interview 2: 28th May 2002)

Sam has raw ability and, whilst he is a specialiser, he is also a peripheral participant of the club. His construction of self comes from his representative honours and not from the club itself. His relatively peripheral participation (when compared to Mark

and Ben) means that he seems to have a distant relationship to the club and little concept of his performance in their terms.

It would appear that in using Anderson's (2001) metaphor – Alex and Ben are still 'going' to sports", whereas Mark and Sam through their acceptance of the formal structure and practice of sport, are 'engaging' in sport. However, more importantly it is clear that both Ben and Mark are 'more experienced' and more legitimate participants at the club (in terms of what the full participants of the club see as acceptable practice) than Alex and Sam. It is this participation (through their social position) that has helped create their construction of self as cricketer in terms of Boughborough cricket club.

8.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has sought to highlight some of the experiences of specific individuals at Boughborough. It has shown how each of these young people experiences, interacts and actively practises the positions they give themselves in different ways. The chapter has begun to explain the complexity of these interactions and ultimately how some of the young people at Boughborough base their participation or attrition on the dynamic overall experience they have at the club.

In attempting to explain the construction of the cricket club experience at Boughborough, this chapter draws upon the theoretical concepts of social positioning and situated learning from the previous data chapters to develop and explain the experiences of the young people and their construction of their cricketing identity. Through the data collected, it is clear that the construction of this 'total' experience is complex and multifaceted. The experience is based around the social position both the young person and 'his' parents hold at the club and the degree and extent of their legitimate peripheral participation (based upon their positions and the club). Underlying these conceptual issues are the more pragmatic day to day critical incidents that impact upon both the developmental stage and social positioning of the young people. As we have seen, the change of coaching night, the positive and negative experiences of the club and the expectations of those involved are all influential on the young people's experiences of the club. As we have also identified those people who are full participants in the club tend to be more accepting of the

practices (and changes to practices) that occur (e.g. Mark), whilst those who are more peripheral and less legitimate in their participation are both less accepted within the community of practice and far more critical of any changes (e.g. Alex and his father). It is this sum total of experience that also leads to the construction of an identity of 'self as cricketer' by the young people and it is important to note how this identity is constructed within the concept of legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice. Both Ben and Mark construct themselves as cricketers from the point of view of the accepted practice expected from the full participants in the club (the coaches). Whilst the more peripheral participation of Alex and Sam is highlighted by the way they construct their participation in terms of other people. For Alex it is his father and for Sam his coaches from other sports.

Having established that the social construction of the club experience can be identified through the use of theoretical concepts, it is important to develop these arguments in terms of sociological theory, sports policy, coaching practice and future research. It is to these wider arguments that the thesis now turns in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 9:

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The previous five chapters have attempted to develop some of the central theoretical tenets that underpin the study. The data generated in the study links in the developmental stages of youth sports participation (Côté & Hay, 2002a), the social positioning and social construction of the youth sport experience (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003) and situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as it can be applied in a sports context (Kirk & MacDonald, 1998). Moreover, the chapters have highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of the sports experience for young people and the important multi-dimensional characteristics that explain participation at this level.

This final chapter will revisit the research questions which have underpinned this thesis and will examine some of the key issues that have been identified within it. In addition it will also discuss the implications that these findings have on existing policy and provision, as well as the theoretical and sociological developments the thesis raises and the implications for future research. In order to achieve this, the next section re-introduces the research questions and is followed by a description of how this concluding chapter sets out to explain the key issues in terms of the questions posed.

The first section of this chapter outlines the research questions in detail. The second section provides a summary and overview of each individual research question in connection to the data analysis chapters. The third section of this chapter looks at the implications of this study on a number of fields and the final section examines and discusses the future areas of research identified in the writing of this thesis. Finally there is a conclusion to the chapter.

9.2 The Research Questions:

The research questions on which this thesis is based (and which can be found in more detail in chapter 1.5) are briefly recapped below.

1. Can Côté & Hay's (2002a) theoretical model of 'sampling' and 'specialising' help us develop our understanding of participation in this particular situation?
2. How is a sports club experienced by the young people within it (and also their parents and coaches)?
3. What are the young people's learning trajectories within this community of practice?
4. In what way does the family have an influence upon the club?

9.3 Overview of The Data Analysis Chapters

This section of the chapter provides a summary of the data analysis chapters through the initial research questions (outlined above). The first of these sub sections looks at Côté & Hay's (2002a) developmental perspective on socialisation and participation (research question 1). The second builds upon these social positions with the wider use of Davies & Harré (1990) and Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and their acknowledgement of the development of role theory to the more dynamic approach of social construction and social positioning (research question 2). This looks in detail at the way in which the young people, their parents and the coaches positioned themselves in their practice of the club and also the way that their practice constructed the club itself. The third section (and research question 3) continues to build upon the theoretical concepts of the previous two and examines the issues of Lave & Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory within a sporting context. This also develops Kirk & MacDonald's (1998) work within Physical Education. The fourth section re-examines the key notion of the family within sports participation and re-visits the practices and characteristics that are evident within Boughborough cricket club. Using research question 4, it links in family and sports sociology to provide an account of the reality of the club as a complex and dynamic entity. The final part of this section then draws together the four research questions and findings in an attempt to outline the overall way in which the club is experienced and constructed by those young people within it. The chapter then leads on to the overall implications of the research, before being concluded.

9.3.1 Côté & Hay's (2002a) Developmental Perspective on Socialisation

The developmental stages of sampler and specialiser were identified within the study as being social positions which were practised, constructed and held by the young people. Through the analysis of the data gathered in question 1 it was noted through the study that these were not simple or discrete categories, but more a dynamic continuum of socialisation and participation. As we saw with Alex, Ben, Mark and Sam whilst they were similar to Côté & Hay's (2002a) categories of deliberate play, deliberate practice and motivations to participate within the sampling or specialising positions they practised, it was clear that this notion of participation was simplistic and lacked a dynamic multi-dimensional approach that was the reality. Whilst the theory was indeed borne out within this study, it was clear that the reality was far more complex and the position of sampler or specialiser that these young people practised was directly affected by a number of other factors. Côté & Hay (2002a) identify that their theory is multifaceted and that there are many other agencies involved in this socialisation process, yet they do not explore these in detail. At Boughborough it was clear that the main aspects of this socialisation process were complex and were linked into the interactions, experiences and transitional moments between the young people, their parents, the coaches and each other, as can be seen in the differing experiences of Alex and Mark. This in turn also affects their participation (in Mark's case) and attrition (in Alex's case) from the club. However, how these interactions occurred and what they meant was not always clear. This leads onto the use of the notion of social positioning to develop and explain these interactions in more detail and identify how the club was constructed and how each individual within the club constructed their own identity through the social position they practised.

9.3.2 Social Positioning in Club Sport

The second research question highlights the issue of social positioning. Kirk & MacPhail's (2003) use of Davies and Harré's (1990) theory of social positioning is also important here. Kirk & MacPhail (2003) analyse how social positioning has an affect upon sports club participation and also how people create and practise a social position within the organisation, structure and practice of the club. Through the identification within this thesis that the young people, parents and coaches all construct the club as a place of participation, then themselves within the context of the

club within a social position (which is done through the dynamic interactions of those around them). The club itself is constructed and practised in a similar way to certain types of traditional families (a construction that appears to be self-perpetuating). As we saw in the case of Ben, his family's whole experience of the club clearly reflects these traditions through the positions they practise at the club.

The parents, coaches and young people practised a number of different (often multiple) social positions within the club environment. For example, an extreme case we have seen is the coach Dave who practises a number of positions within the whole club organisation, from groundsman to coach and father. Each individual also constructs each other in specific ways (for example the coaches construct 'the ideal' young cricketer or parent) and underlying this are each individual's expectations of the club, reinforced by the social position(s) that they practise.

It is clear that the overall construction of the club is dynamic. This then involves members of the community of practice contributing to the social construction of the club through the social positions they practise. Thus, the overall social construction of the club clearly occurs through the interaction of individuals' practices.

The club is a complex community that incorporates multiple relationships and practices. This dynamic community of practice is therefore able to adapt and change as new participants appear and others leave. It is this change that highlights how people understand the club differently according to the social position(s) they practise and how these practices can create differences of opinion amongst the members. The research question also highlights how social positioning is a source of learning for those within the club environment and how this learning is directly related to the notion of situated learning theory.

9.3.3 Situated Learning Theory: Legitimate Peripheral Participation in a Community of Practice – the Case of Boughborough Cricket Club

The development of the theory of legitimate peripheral participation into a sporting context was first proposed by Kirk & MacDonald (1998) within the realms of physical education. In developing this further through question 3 it is clear from

Boughborough cricket club that it can be seen itself to be a 'community of practice' to which the young people and their parents aspire to gain membership.

The data clearly shows that at Boughborough there is a link between social position, peripheral or full membership of the community of practice and participation. It seems that the closer the young person (or their parents) are to being full members of the community of practice, the more likely they are to ascribe to the club and play. Both Ben and Mark are clear examples of this. At the same time, those who could be seen as peripheral members are more likely to be marginalised and will drop out (as we saw with Alex). These experiences and relationships also help to show another level to the dynamic stages of sampling, specialising and dropping out. There is also clearly an argument to link together specialising and 'full' membership of the community of practice with sampling, drop out and peripheral membership.

Whilst this concept is multi-dimensional and dynamic the community of practice at Boughborough is clearly complex and revolves around its construction as a club and as a particular learning environment for the young people within it.

9.3.4 The Role of the Family in Sport

As I have shown within this thesis there is a wealth of empirical evidence that explains in detail the role of the family in the sports socialisation process. I have also identified the importance of the family members in the construction of the club through the practice of the social positions they hold. It is widely accepted that the family is one of, if not, the most influential factor in the sports participation process of young people (c.f. Kay, 2003). The way in which the parents at Boughborough interact with both the young people and the coaches can be seen to have created a dynamic interface, with those parents who are closest to being full members of the community of practice providing the most support to their children. The link between 'family' membership of the community of practice and continued participation seems irrefutable, as we have seen with the support networks offered by the parents of Ben and Mark. However, as we have seen with Alex, parental involvement is not always positive.

Through research questions 2 and 4 the data has shown that Boughborough cricket club is socially constructed by some of its participants as being similar to a family (as Ben, Mark and their parents have highlighted). Through the analysis and the application of existing theoretical concepts from familial sociology and family-sport literature it is clear that the construction and practice of Boughborough appears to reflect family practice. Boughborough (it seems) is socially constructed by its members as being similar to a certain type of family. This family-like culture is self-perpetuating and the club attracts those people from a traditional nuclear family background, whilst unconsciously discouraging and marginalising those from non-traditional backgrounds. In short it can be argued that Boughborough's success as an environment for young people to learn about cricket and become cricketers is due to the family-like culture that exists at the club. This family construction of the club is perpetuated by parents who ascribe to the values, beliefs and support networks found within a traditional nuclear family (such as Tony and Rosie highlight). The club is therefore constructed like a family. It is a community of practice that functions as a social entity by mutual engagement (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, it must also be noted that a certain amount of caution should be used when discussing the concept of the family. As Cheal (2002) highlights in family life, and Kay (2003) notes with regards to sport, the diversity of family structures and cultures found in the UK make it very difficult to generalise, and the notion of family that is highlighted in this study is not necessarily one that reflects society. This notion of a traditional nuclear family is one that is becoming less prevalent in society (Cheal, 1999), so we must be very careful in the way that this notion (and its variants) are used.

It is clear that the club (as a source of knowledge and learning) exists through the joint enterprise, engagement and self-perpetuation of all of its participants. The club as a family therefore can be seen to exist on a number of levels. The practices that I have identified show that there is a large degree of emotional connection to this community of practice. This connection appears to exist with the young people who actively participate (e.g. Ben), with the parents who see the club as a social and supportive space (e.g. Tony and Rosie) and with the coaches who have an attachment not only with their own children in the coaching group but also with their position as a coach within the context of the whole community of practice (e.g. Chris). The time and energy these people invest at different levels (depending upon the social positions

they practise) also highlights the strength of this commitment. The engagement of these full participants within the community of practice is more than just because of the game, it is the social and emotional link that they reflect and practice that is so similar to the traditional notion of the family. In short, the way that Boughborough is practised by its participants reflects a community of practice which is very much like an ideological construct of the family.

Within the findings there are also historical and practical links to the notion of the family and it was possible to identify that the club is seen as a family club in a number of ways. Through the clubs social construction it has become identified as a club that provides many social support networks and experiences that are linked directly to attracting families to the club. The data also shows that the emotional attachment to the club, the stories that have constructed the club's social history and the social support it provides identifies that it is more than just a learning environment as we have seen with the examples of the death of a club stalwart and a player's child in chapter 7.

9.3.5 Club Participation: A Summary of Young People's Experience at Boughborough

What this thesis has begun to explain and explore is that young people's experiences are clearly a product of the interactions, social positions and degree of membership that they have at the club. The linking of all of the research questions helps show that these experiences are both complex and multi-faceted. It is clear that the way the young people construct their identity and participation is rooted within their interactions with others and the practice of their social position and construction of the club environment. At the same time their level of experience at the club and relative distance down the learning trajectory helps identify if they are peripheral (e.g. Alex) or full (e.g. Mark) participants of the community of practice. These are also influenced by their parents, coaches and other young people they come into contact with.

In attempting to explain the construction of the cricket club experience at Boughborough, it is clear that the construction of this 'total' experience is both complex and multi-dimensional. The experience is based around the social position

both the young person and his parents hold at the club and the degree and extent of their legitimate peripheral participation (based upon their positions and the club). Underlying these conceptual issues are the more pragmatic day to day critical incidents that impact upon the developmental stage, social positioning and practise of the young people.

As we have also identified those people who are full participants in the club tend to be more accepting of the practices (and changes to practices) that occur, whilst those who are more peripheral and less legitimate in their participation are both less accepted within the community of practice and far more critical of change. It is this 'sum total' of experience that also leads to the construction of an identity of 'self as cricketer' by the young people and it is important to note how this identity is constructed within the concept of legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice. As we have seen in the case of the young people, Ben and Mark construct themselves as cricketers from the point of view of the accepted practice expected from the full participants in the club (the coaches), whilst the more peripheral participation of Alex and Sam is highlighted by the way they construct their participation in terms of other people, for Alex it is his father and for Sam his coaches from other sports.

9.4 Implications of The Study

This section of the concluding chapter aims to draw conclusions from both theory and data in a way that will make it applicable to the academic and youth sport world. This will be done by reflecting upon the implications of this study on sociological theory, developmental socialisation in sport, as well as the wider implications on sports policy, participation and practice. Finally it will look at the implications for cricket and the development of cricket clubs and youth sections.

9.4.1 Sociological Theory

This development of theory within the thesis has implications for sociological theory generally, and sports sociology in particular. To focus on sports sociology, the broad conceptualisation and linking of theoretical concepts in order to understand the socialisation process of young people in club sport is a new perspective that develops the existing key works of the likes of Jones et al (2004) in sports coaching. Through

the connections made between Côté & Hay's (2002a) developmental stages, Kirk & MacPhail's (2003) social positioning in junior sport and Kirk & MacDonald's (1998) view of situated learning theory within physical education, it is possible to begin to explain the experiences and developmental socialisation of young people in club sport. At the same time such an approach may also be useful in the wider context and inform the wider debates around sociology as a means of exploring complex educational or social environments in which young people (as well as adults) interact. The use of developmental theory, social positioning and situated learning theory leads to a multiple theoretical approach which requires further application in sociological research.

As an interpretive ethnographic piece of research, the thesis also adds to the existing body of knowledge on sport. More importantly however, it adds weight to the limited research that has been conducted into grass roots sports organisations and young people's participation.

9.4.2 Developmental Socialisation in Sport

The thesis has shown that Côté & Hay's (2002a) developmental theory is appropriate and exists within junior club cricket in the UK (in this instance at Boughborough). Since the work of Côté & Hay (2002a) is based upon elite performers, this work really follows and consolidates the work of Kirk & MacPhail (2003) on grass roots junior sport.

The implications of the thesis for developmental socialisation is one that hopes to show that the socialisation process into sport is a complex and multi-faceted one, but that it is possible through the multiple theoretical approaches of social positioning and situated learning to understand better how socialisation into sport actually occurs. This approach can then be taken further, developed and refined to create a more precise theoretical concept of 'developmental sports socialisation' rather than the complex and disputed approaches that currently exist.

9.4.3 Sports Participation, Policy and Practice

The implications of the findings of this thesis are also important, as well as being fundamental to the ethos behind the work. Clearly in order to help increase

participation and avoid drop-out at junior club sport level, it is important to raise this developmental socialisation perspective with policy makers and coaches at all levels.

With regards to coaching, it is felt that both coaches and coach educators need to be informed not only of the issue of developmental stages and mixed stage groups, but also the importance, and a basic understanding, of the dynamics that exist within their club situation. It is hoped that to make coaches more reflective and aware of the needs of the young people involved will make it easier to ensure their continued participation. Perhaps, for example, the creation of mini clubs within clubs will aid the identification and membership of a community of practice.

The practice of the social positions taken by the coach and the coach's interaction with the parents, young people and club are also important. The awareness and management of these social positions in the wider context of the club need to be explained and explored by coach educators and coaches. The implications of how people practice their (often multiple) positions is important in the wider aspect of coaching.

There is also the importance of what appears to be (within this study) the notion of the family environment. The importance of such a positive environment is clear, however the dynamics of how it is constructed and practised needs careful attention by those involved in it. Linking into De Knop et al's (1995) approach it is clear that parents have an important part to play in its construction and self-perpetuation, although it must be noted that this can at one and the same time be both welcoming and marginalising.

9.4.4 Cricket

The implications of this study for cricket are also interesting. I have identified the issues of mixed developmental stage groups and the modified game as being detrimental to all involved. The traditional use of age groups to delineate teams may also be inappropriate, especially with regards to the particular aspects of Côté & Hay's (2002a) sampling and specialising stages. The differing motivations, needs and deliberate play and practice mean that age group sides with young people whose behaviour reflects each stage are complex and potentially problematic.

The findings indicate aspects that can help inform the wider debate on cricket coaching and the development of sound youth sports club policy (as De Knop et al, 1995 exemplifies). The awareness of these understandings at grass roots level will help to provide a sound policy for youth development. Whilst the policy on the participation of young people should be seen alongside long term athlete development, the implications of understanding how the club works and how it is experienced is important in ensuring the next generation of young players can develop at every level.

9.5 Recommendations for Future Research

It is clear from this thesis that there are a number of key areas that need further examination and consideration on a theoretical level. There are also clearly a number of practical recommendations for further study linked into this. Since the thesis was intended to have both conceptual and practical use I have every hope that this will be applied within any future work that I, or others, undertake.

Following the work of Kirk & MacPhail (2003) and MacPhail et al (2003a and 2003b) it is important that further research is conducted at grass roots community-based sport level. As such, more work across sports, and at different levels, needs to be conducted to help inform academics and coaches of the way in which the dynamic complexity of the sports experience occurs. This will mean further individual and multiple theoretical works to examine the affect of sampling and specialising on participation, the influence of social positioning and social construction, and the situated learning theory approach to club sport participation. Whilst each of these individual theories need to be expanded upon, the multiple theoretical approach is also useful in providing an overall sociological picture of participation. As such the ‘multi-theory’ approach taken by this thesis needs to be deconstructed and developed in context.

9.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to link the data with the research questions that were the central core of the study in order to provide a complete picture of the findings from the thesis. Through the development of the research questions and the overview of the

data chapters, it is possible to see the direction and contribution made by this thesis in the wider concepts of sociology and more particularly the sociology of sport.

Through the use of a number of interlinked theories, the thesis has set out and answered the key questions on socialisation and participation of young people at Boughborough cricket club. Through the analysis of the data the notions of social positioning and legitimate peripheral participation were identified as valuable concepts in trying to identify and understand the dynamic and complex socialisation process into sport. The thesis identified that the multiple interactions and multiple dimensions of these concepts are significant in mapping out and understanding the sports club experience. Through the development of these concepts and the combining of formal and substantive theory and data, the chapter has also identified practical and theoretical implications for the study as well as identifying some directions for future research.

Before the thesis is concluded it is important to bear in mind the limitations with the study. Whilst a period of two seasons appears to be a long time, in order to better understand the developmental process, a longitudinal study needs to take place. The reflexive nature of this type of ethnographic work also needs to be taken into account and, whilst I make no apology for my own background, it is important to be aware that the generalisability of such a study needs careful consideration. In that sense, and from the valuable experiences and lessons I have had in undertaking the research, this thesis can act as a catalyst for further work that I intend to do in the field.

Postscript

During the 2004 cricket season (and two months prior to the submission of this thesis) my club were to play Boughborough third eleven. Whilst one match had already been cancelled earlier in the season, the final league game of the season allowed me to catch up with Paul and Chris who were playing on the Boughborough side.

It was interesting to note from them that over the intervening two years things had panned out as expected for the young people case studied in chapter 8. Mark was now playing regularly for the 2nd eleven and was opening the batting and bowling first change. He had also represented the county junior side on a number of occasions. Sam was only playing occasionally when rugby allowed, but was (at the time of the match) on an elite youth rugby coaching weekend at Lilleshall. Ben was playing regularly on a Sunday for the men's side and according to Chris had improved dramatically, to the extent that he was regularly scoring 20's and 30's in the friendly side and would normally have played in this game – but was on holiday. His parents (Tony and Rosie) were still involved in the club doing committee work. Through school Chris had also heard that Alex had given up playing sport at weekends and was now focussing his attention by becoming involved in a local ATC squadron.

Of the core of eighteen young people at the start of the study, ten continue to be involved in the game at the club and of these five on a regular basis with the adult sides. Even at this point it is important to say that I feel these young people should be followed up and interviewed about their continued participation (or drop out) all over again.....

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Introduction to Cricket Club Contact

Dear

Further to our conversation last night, I am writing enclosing a number of details and forms for the proposed study at Boughborough CC. They are yet to be finalised and are of course open to comment from yourself as well as other youth committee/committee members.

Hopefully this will give you a good idea of what the study is based on, and also the reasons why it is being conducted. There are a number of specific sections enclosed:

1. Information for committee members
2. Information for parents/guardians and the children themselves:
 - (i) Information letter for parents
 - (ii) Plain language statement
 - (iii) Consent form

I hope that these will make it clearer, and I would welcome a meeting in the very near future with yourself and perhaps other youth committee members to discuss these issues, before we move on from there.

I would be very grateful if we could find a mutually convenient time when we could meet and chat over this, and when I could also give you/the committee an opportunity to raise any other issues/questions you may have. Please feel free to give me a call at work on the above number, or at home on *****. (Or if you require further clarification, please contact Professor David Kirk at Loughborough University on 01509 *****). My email address (if that's any help) is m.r.toms@bham.ac.uk.

Many thanks and I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Yours Sincerely

Martin Toms

APPENDIX B

Young People's Participation in Organised Club Cricket

(Information for members of the Boughborough Cricket Club Committee)

- (1) Background to the Institute of Youth Sport/Martin Toms**
- (2) Current need for specific research on junior sport individuals**
- (3) Why Boughborough ?**
- (4) Benefits to Boughborough CC**
- (5) Expected timetable of events**
- (6) Level of assistance required from Boughborough CC**
- (7) What Boughborough CC can expect in return**

(1) The Institute of Youth Sport/Martin Toms

The Institute of Youth Sport (IYS) was established in 1998 as a result of the close partnership between the Youth Sport Trust and Loughborough University. The IYS aims to provide the best in education, training, research and development of youth sport. This project is being conducted as research towards a PhD at Loughborough University by Martin Toms, under the supervision of Professor David Kirk (Beckwith Professor of Youth Sport).

Martin is himself a Senior ECB Coach, and has experience of coaching at club and county junior level in Surrey & Devon. He is currently a lecturer in Physical Education & Sport Studies at the University of Birmingham, Westhill. He has also been involved in research into participation with the ECB, and has conducted similar research in this field. It may also be of interest that the ECB are aware of this research project and have described it as “important to know why young people drop out of cricket and what, for them, is a quality cricket experience”.

(2) Current need for research on young people in sport & cricket

It is important that we learn more about young people, their families, and their participation in sport clubs in order to understand and improve the quality of young people's experiences. This research study will focus on individual players from the

Under 11 & Under 13 age groups, and will investigate their experiences of the club and the coaching process as well as the factors that affect their participation (and drop out) - taking into account social, economic and cultural issues. The initial study through the coaching sessions and 2001 season, will be followed up with a similar one in 2002 looking at the retention of the young players, and also the drop out rates (and reasons behind these). We think that it is important to include siblings, peers, parents, coaches and other significant people within the study - in order to obtain a complete picture of young people's experiences in cricket.

(3) Why Boughborough CCC?

We are approaching Boughborough to ask for the Club's participation in this project because of your strength and reputation for recruiting and developing junior players. The position of the club – with both a rural and urban catchment area – is also important, since this could be argued to reflect a “typical” cricket club and youth section.

Boughborough also has a strong coaching section and good facilities to encourage participation, as well as a strong adult side and good progression opportunities.

(4) Benefits to Boughborough CCC

We believe there are a number of benefits to the Club that can result from your participation in this project:

- Involvement in current and much needed research concerned with young people's participation in cricket (and sport *per se*).
- Access to information of specific interest to Boughborough CC. This may include information that will allow the Club to better support talented youngsters.
- Information on how the structure and organisation of the club affects the experiences of young people in the game.
- Information on the individuals who play the game at Boughborough.

(5) Expected timetable of events

- **Spring – Autumn 2001** The main study. Martin will attend the majority of the spring and summer coaching sessions, and also some of the youth team's matches.

He will observe the sessions, “shadow” the groups and begin interviewing the players, coaches, officials and parents involved at the club.

- **Spring – Summer 2002** The second stage of the study will focus on interviewing and observing those who continue to play at the club, and also those who have given up playing. Again this will involve players, coaches, officials and parents.

(6) Level of assistance required from Boughborough Cricket Club

Assistance from the club will be required initially in four areas;

- Advise the researcher on the coaches of the age groups who are prepared to be 'shadowed' by Martin throughout the season. The shadowing would allow Martin to get to know the individuals in the group and consequently approach parents and young people who might like to contribute to the project.
- Identify active members of Boughborough CC Committee who are involved with junior sport (10 - 13 year olds) and are prepared to contribute to the project. This may include coaches and parents.
- Inform the researcher of any events / meetings that deal with the junior sport age group.
- Support a letter from Boughborough CC / IYS/ Martin Toms that explains the project to the children of the club and their parents and coaches.

(7) What Boughborough CC can expect from the researcher

- An experienced researcher sensitive to working in the field of young people.
- No intrusion into the running of Boughborough CC.
- Informed consent being obtained from parents / guardians of young people who choose to contribute to the study.
- Participants informed of the objectives of the project.
- Participants' involvement in the project is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.
- All information on the club and participants is confidential / anonymous unless agreed otherwise.

APPENDIX C

Young People's Participation in Organised Club Cricket (Information for Parents/Guardians)

Dear Parent / Guardian

During the next 18 months a researcher from the Institute of Youth Sport at Loughborough University (currently a lecturer in Physical Education and Sport at Birmingham University) is planning to investigate young people's involvement in sport clubs and, in this particular instance, young people's involvement in Boughborough Cricket Club. The researcher is Martin Toms (he will also be supported by Professor David Kirk).

The purpose of the study is to learn more about young people, their families, and their participation in sport clubs in order to improve the quality of young people's experiences. The study will focus on individual young cricketers and the factors that affect their participation (or drop out), taking into account social, economic and cultural issues. In other words it is designed to find out how and why they continue to participate or drop out of organised sporting activities.

At the same time it is the researcher's intention to include in the study siblings, peers, parents, coaches and other significant people in order to obtain a complete picture of young people's experiences of the club and of the game.

We have already approached the Boughborough CC committee who have agreed to provide access to the Club for the purposes of the study. Any involvement regarding yourselves or your son / daughter in the project will require a member of the research team seeking consent directly from you.

Yours sincerely

Martin Toms

David Kirk

APPENDIX D

Young People's Participation in Organised Club Cricket

Plain Language Statement & Consent Form

What is the study about?

It is important that we learn more about young people, their families, and their participation in sport clubs in order to improve the quality of young people's experiences. This research study will focus on individual young cricketers and the factors that affect their participation, continued participation or drop out from the sport (in the 9 –13 age range). This will also take into account social, economic and cultural issues. It is important that the study also includes siblings, peers, parents, coaches and other significant people in order to obtain a complete picture of young people's experiences in the game.

Who will the study involve?

The study will involve young males between the ages of 9 and 13, who participate in coaching and/or age group matches at Boughborough Cricket Club. The study is interested in young people at all levels of performance, from beginners to recreational and elite performers.

What will the researcher do?

The researcher – Martin Toms - will observe coaching sessions of the Under 11 and Under 13 age groups for the whole of the 2001 season. Throughout this period he will also attend coaching and committee meetings (predominantly to do with the youth section), talk to players, coaches, parents and club officials, and generally observe the goings on in the youth section of the club.

During the 2002 season he will revisit the coaching groups and do follow up interviews/observation with those who are willing to continue being a part of the study.

How will the study affect you?

At some time during the study Martin may also need to collect more in-depth information. To do this we may ask you to talk with him on an informal basis at a

time and place that is convenient to you. He may also need to talk with your children who participate in the Club's activities, and will seek your permission to do so in advance.

PLEASE NOTE: Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.

Young People's Participation in Organised Club Cricket

Boughborough Cricket Club

Consent Form

I give permission for my son/daughter _____ (*please print their name/s*) to be involved in the above research project. I am aware that this involvement will include observations and audio-taped interviews by the researcher during and after the coaching sessions/matches (or perhaps at a later stage during the study).

I also understand that in giving consent for my child's involvement, I may also be asked to contribute to the project. I understand that Martin may need to contact me/my child at some time during the duration of the study, and I will allow him to contact me through Boughborough Cricket Club, or by providing him with contact numbers myself if he cannot access me at coaching sessions/matches.

I understand that all participation in the project is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw myself and my child/ren from the project at any time.

Parent / Guardian's signature _____

Parent / Guardian's name (please print) _____

Date: _____

Please return to Martin Toms when completed