

**Kicking Crime Into Touch: An ethnographic
exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for
supporting Positive Youth Development in
the youth justice system**

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**Kicking Crime Into Touch: An ethnographic exploration of
rugby union as a vehicle for supporting Positive Youth
Development in the youth justice system**

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Abstract

This thesis undertook an exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for Positive Youth Development (PYD) in a youth justice context. The English and Welsh youth justice system has become increasingly dominated by strengths-based practice, including PYD: an approach that seeks to support young people's short- and long-term personal development by using external mechanisms. Sport is routinely presented as an ideal context for PYD because it has the potential to facilitate the development of competence, confidence, connection and character.

The sport of rugby union has been identified as a potential vehicle for facilitating self-development, and in principle, appears well suited to PYD. Rugby union's core values include teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship. It has been increasingly utilised as a mechanism for positive change within youth custodial settings; however, there is a paucity of research that explores its potential for PYD in a community setting. This thesis addresses the gap in the research by exploring the effectiveness of rugby union as a vehicle for PYD in a community setting.

The site for this research was the Kicking Crime into Touch project (KCIT): a two-year project funded by Comic Relief. KCIT delivered rugby union to young men working with youth offending teams across Greater Manchester, England, each of whom had received a community sentence. This thesis explores the contribution of rugby union to PYD among justice-involved young people. Young people's attitudes toward rugby union as a direct consequence of participating in KCIT are also explored. The masculine values embedded in rugby union and their impact on the sport's potential to facilitate PYD are considered alongside this. The findings are drawn from an 18-month ethnography of KCIT, including participant observation, interviews and a focus group. Participants included justice-involved young people, youth offending team workers and rugby coaches.

The primary finding of this thesis is that the appropriateness of programmes such as KCIT as a vehicle for PYD in a youth justice context is limited. The inherent disempowerment of justice-involved young people by the youth justice system undermines their participation in sporting programmes. This limitation was found to be further heightened by the use of rugby union as a sporting activity. Rugby union was culturally disconnected from the lives of the young people in this thesis. The social interaction and activities experienced by young people within a rugby union context, and the masculine values embedded in the sport have the potential to both support and compromise PYD. Programmes such as KCIT, and more broadly rugby union, can be used in a youth justice context to support PYD; however, careful consideration should be given to how and why they are delivered.

This thesis concludes that a bespoke PYD model is needed if rugby is to be utilised effectively as a sporting activity to support PYD for justice-involved young people.

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Declaration

No portion of the work featured in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification at Manchester Metropolitan University, any other university, or any other institution of learning.

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List of abbreviations

Table 1: List of abbreviations

CJS	Criminal Justice System
CFOS	Children First, Offenders Second
DAF	Developmental Assets Framework
HMYOI	Her Majesty's Youth Offending Institution
ISS	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University
P	Participant
PAF	Personal Assets Framework
PYD	Positive Youth Ddevelopment
R	Researcher
RDS	Relational Development Systems
RFU	Rugby Football Union
SfD	Sport for Development
YJ	Youth Justice
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJS	Youth Justice System
YOI	Youth Offending Institution
YOS	Youth Offending Services
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Preface

While completing this thesis, I worked with young people between the ages of 14 and 18. This naturally encouraged me to reflect on my childhood, and how I came to be in the position I am, sat here conducting this research. This reflection led me to conclude that my own life, were it not for the support of a few influential individuals, could have easily been a very different story. One that would not have culminated in my undertaking of this PhD.

I was born and raised on a council estate in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire – Chickenley, to be precise. Although if anyone had asked during my younger years, I'd have said Earlsheaton, or 'near Ossett': two adjoining areas that wouldn't have left me subject to ridicule and victimisation. My mum and grandma raised me and I have seen very little of my father. I was OK at school but was always told I could do better if I applied myself. Throughout school I excelled at sport. Yet I struggled elsewhere, in particular with English, a lesson in which I spent most of the time stood outside the classroom for being disruptive. English just did not work for me, and I found reading and writing incredibly frustrating. During my second year at university, I was diagnosed with dyslexia. This diagnosis made sense and explained a lot, such as why I have always preferred visual and verbal ways of learning, and also why I tend to be good at creative thinking.

Throughout my teenage years, despite being likeable and popular, I was unsure where I fitted and who or what I wanted to be. I spent most of my evenings hanging about in the park being mischievous and could occasionally be found setting fire to bins, throwing eggs at windows and generally being a nuisance. During this period, I found rugby and fell in love with the experiential thrill of hitting people and being hit; violence made me feel alive, and rugby gave me a place to belong whilst allowing me to use my physical gifts to craft an identity and earn respect. In my younger years playing rugby, I was a 'big lad', and this opened avenues to money and recognition. By 16 I was playing on three rugby teams, training five days a week, sometimes twice a day, and playing at least one game a week.

I attended university on a rugby scholarship and during my late teens and early twenties held semi-professional contracts for various clubs across England. However, during this period rugby became difficult and my experience changed from that of a 'big lad' dominating in a boys' game to that of a nervous and anxious boy in a world of men – and men that loved to hit and play dirty. Through this period, I had several coaches, some good who instilled values of discipline and consistent application of best effort and self-confidence. In particular, whilst at college I had two outstanding coaches who went beyond delivering rugby and became mentors to me. I have also had some extremely bad coaches: those who encouraged drink and drug use, and smoked during team talks and warm-ups, and a coach who excessively used phrases such as 'soft cunt', an apparent mode of encouragement. It is therefore fitting that rugby is a key focus of this thesis, because rugby undoubtedly helped me escape my fatalistic working-class mindset and the prospect of menial labour; however, it has also left me feeling inadequate, filled with self-doubt and unfulfilled. Considering these feelings, and my diagnosis of dyslexia, I could consider it surprising that I have sustained an academic career to the point where I have produced a PhD thesis. Yet, following this reflection I can see more clearly why this is not surprising at all.

As I noted, I attended university on a rugby scholarship, and did so thinking I could make rugby a long-term career, and so initially undervalued learning and scholarly activity. Shortly after my first semester at university I became increasingly disenfranchised with rugby and grew particularly tired of spending mornings and evenings being exposed to unmethodical floggings in gyms and quagmires, with little acknowledgement of effort or commitment. Around that time, I began sport sociology and criminology modules and became increasingly fascinated with the multifaceted nature of social interaction and human behaviour. These modules sparked my interest in myself and the world, ignited my natural curiosity and encouraged me to see the world differently. The following three key experiences contributed to my undertaking of this PhD. Firstly, the inspiration I gained from my first exposure to the social sciences. Second, the resilience and never-give-in attitude I developed through my rugby career. Lastly, the Vice-Chancellor's scholarship I received from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), for which I am grateful.

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to sport criminology

Sport criminology, the field of scholarship in which this thesis firmly sits, has experienced increased formalisation in recent times. Not least through Nic Groombridges (2017) critical criminological outline of sport and games in his book entitled *sports criminology*; which looks set to be extended further through Millward, Ludvigsen and Sly's forthcoming (2023) publication *Sport and crime: toward a critical criminology of sport*. In his work, Groombridge concludes that there is no such thing as crime, and no such thing as sport but that the two are socially constructed. Although I agree with Groombridge on this matter, the fact remains that many young people, such as those at the centre of this research, engage in the social construct of crime, and are encouraged to engage in the social construct of sport through sport for development initiatives like Kicking Crime Into Touch as a means to make positive change in their lives. Therefore, there is a continued need to develop understanding in this area.

In developing the discussion on sport criminology, Groombridge situates the social construct of sport amongst wider criminological theory and considers diverse sports-based issues ranging from celebrity and corruption to social control, and the morality of doping and doping controls. Most pertinent to this research however, is his exploration of sport as a mechanism for crime prevention and desistance. Although not referring to it specifically, Groombridge explores 'sport-for-development', a sports-based movement which I shall explore in the next section. In discussing this topic, Groombridge elects to take a contemporary perspective by focusing on sport as a site for moral development and a tool for promoting discipline. Yet when doing so, he makes little attempt to outline the mechanisms within sport that could develop the characteristics that may allow young people to avoid violence and crime. This thesis will outline some such mechanisms in relation to the sport of rugby union.

Groombridges book is in many ways a broad interrogation of sport criminology, yet his discussion of sports desistance promoting and crime reducing potential is for the most part limited to mentioning boxing. This is likely due to the over prominence of the sport in initiatives aimed at reducing youth offending. Nevertheless, Groombridge does attempt to broaden the discussion by mentioning sports such as rugby union yet does so only briefly by referencing Meeks (2014) research on rugby union in prison. In addition to being restricted by the range of sports discussed, *Sport criminology* is limited by insufficient acknowledgement of the masculinity's literature. Despite this, Groombridge makes what I believe to be a logical claim when noting that in seeking to promote desistance and reduce offending sports projects might see more success should they 'work more on masculinity and not so much on criminality' (2017, p. 131). I will develop Groombridges work in this thesis by using theoretical lenses from the fields of positive youth development and masculinities to interrogate a rugby union intervention delivered to justice involved young people in the community. However, before proceeding with the research, I will briefly contextualist this thesis and indeed KCIT as a sport-for-development initiative.

1.2 Introduction to sport for development

Coalter (2010) writes that sport has historically been attractive to policy makers in offering a prospective remedy for a plethora of social problems from building character, to developing communities and teaching the lessons of life: the list goes on. Sports attraction in the political sphere has increased over time as policy makers, media and scholars have romanticised the rhetoric that 'sport works' and become somewhat infatuated with celebrating sport as a panacea for social problems (Coalter, 2015; Coakley, 2016). I shall explore sports feature in UK government policy in chapter two. However, despite sport becoming favoured as a mechanism for change, Coalter (2010) was clear in his assertion that there is no systematic or robust evidence supporting the sports effectiveness in addressing issues relating to personal and social development.

Despite limited evidence of sports efficacy, sport has transitioned from being a source of welfare delivered to develop sport *in* the community, to a mechanism for change whereby

policy makers prioritised developing people and communities *through* sport (Coalter, 2007). In line with this transition, shortly after the millennium, the United Nations prioritised sport as a mechanism for change, and their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contributed to the birth of the movement known as 'sport-for-development'. Sport became a key mechanism for supporting the MDGs and was valued for strengthening education, improving community safety and cohesion, promoting gender equality and female empowerment and, of most relevance to this thesis, supporting at risk youth (Kidd, 2008). More recently, the United Nations General Assembly, as a replacement for the MDGs adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which reaffirmed sports position in their developmental agenda. The agenda recognises the

Growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contribution it makes to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities as well as to health education and social inclusion objectives (United Nations, 2015: 11).

the continuation of the sport-for-development agenda reinforces the value of this thesis and its contribution to understanding sport as a mechanism for youth development.

Coalter (2007) outlines that there are now three typologies of sport program, i) sport development, ii) sport plus, and iii) plus sport, which collectively cover the breadth of sport initiatives. I shall now provide a brief overview of these three typologies in order to conceptualise KCIT.

- i) sport development programs involve using sport as a vehicle to develop sport focused objectives such as improving sports skills and developing competition standards and structures (Hall and Reis, 2018). Sport development programs operate with the implicit assumption that sport has some inherent developmental properties but do not focus on them explicitly. In essence, sport development programs deliver sport for sport's sake, and although assuming that participants will receive some additional developmental outcomes do not

prioritise this in their agenda. The Sky sports funded Rugby League initiative *SkyTry*, which is ‘all about helping more children enjoy rugby league nationwide’ and which operates under the hashtag #GrowingOurGame (Salford Red Devils Foundation, n.d.) is a relevant example of a sport development program.

- ii) Sport plus is closely aligned with sport development and is the process of using sporting organisations to work towards improving sports overall standing by increasing participation rates, improving sporting infrastructure by developing sports leaders and coaches, and improving physical literacy and sport skills (Coalter, 2007). Alongside this, sport plus programs hold explicit developmental goals such as promoting a healthy lifestyle. Premiership Rugbys (n.d.) *Tackling Health* programs which ‘takes a holistic approach to teaching children about their own health, wellbeing and about leading a healthy lifestyle with a rugby focus’ is a relevant example of a sport plus program.
- iii) Plus sport programs recognise sports potential to address social issues, and start by identifying a social or developmental issue and then design and deliver a sport programme to address the issue. In Sport plus initiatives, the issue at hand is given priority and sport is used for its capacity to bring people together. Plus sport is not too dissimilar to how Giordanos et al. 2002) ‘hook for change’ theory has been adopted by sports criminologists – which I shall explore further in section 2.4. Such an approach has been criticised by as riskily supporting the ‘exceptionalism of sport’ (Black, 2010; Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2004) i.e., being over celebratory of sport potential, whilst failing to be critical and there downplaying its pitfalls. In reflecting on plus sport, Coalter (2010) clearly explains that sport is not a silver bullet that can solve all social ills, and as Shulenkorf (2012) explains: sport needs to be supported by a clear vision and strategic planning to facilitate development. One notable and relevant example of a plus sport initiative is the *Looseheadz* (n.d.) charity which aims to harness rugby union to #TackleTheStigma surrounding mental health.

Although the above typologies are important to acknowledge and understand, they are not definitive or rigid which ultimately makes sports programs difficult to define. In practice, Sport Development, Sport Plus and Plus sport programs exist on a spectrum. As Hall and Reis (2018:2) have it, outcomes are always 'dictated by each organisation's values, visions and practices, as well as local needs'. An argument they developed by referring to Coalter's (2010:298) note that 'sport is mostly a vitally important *necessary*, but not [a] *sufficient* condition for the achievement of certain outcomes'. *Try Rugby*, the project at the centre of Hall and Reis (2018) paper, with its broad objects which included growing rugby in Brazil, using rugby to support 'at risk' or disadvantaged young people in Brazil, developing links between UK based Premiership Rugby clubs and organisations across Brazil, and up-skilling teachers, coaches and volunteers is a relevant example of a program which does not fit with Coalter's typology but which spans the breadth of sport development. KCIT, the focal point for this thesis, does not fit neatly within Coalter's typology, but most closely aligns with plus sport as it focuses on engaging justice involved young people in rugby union with the purpose of providing developmental outcomes.

1.3 Introduction to this thesis

This thesis delivers an original understanding of rugby union as a diversionary and development tool within a youth justice context. Specifically, it explores whether rugby union can be used as a vehicle for delivering Positive Youth Development (PYD) to justice-involved young men. PYD is an approach to youth development based on the Relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory. The core idea of RDS is that development is the result of interaction between individuals and contexts (Ettedal et al., 2017). On this basis PYD is concerned with promoting positive, healthy change in young people by outlining the conditions that support and optimise their development. RDS metatheory outlines that the value of a developmental context is due to the interaction of its 'parts' (Overton, 1975:73). In this thesis, the research site -the Kicking Crime into Touch Project (KCIT)- constitutes the context, and the interaction between young people, youth justice and rugby union constitute its 'parts.' Exchanges between individuals (young people) and contexts (KCIT) are

considered developmental when they are mutually beneficial (Ettekal et al., 2017) i.e., young people benefit from participation in rugby union, and the sport benefits from their participation. The crucial component of this understanding is that development happens in ways that benefit or strengthen each interdependent part of the context (Ettekal et al., 2017). This means that development is not always positive but happens in ways that support each parts individual priorities.

This thesis draws on academic insights from Vierimaa et al. (2017:6), Côté et al. (2016), Camiré (2015) and Holt et al. (2016), who have suggested that sport provides a ready-made context for PYD. It is unique in its focus on rugby union in a youth justice context. Evidence has emerged that rugby union may be a suitable activity when working with justice-involved young men (Williams et al., 2015). However, research has yet to focus directly on rugby union as a vehicle for PYD. This is despite claims featured in Holt et al. (2018) that rugby coaches are seeking an evidence base with which to explore the relationship between rugby and PYD. Accordingly, this thesis provides an original contribution to knowledge. Given that it focuses specifically on rugby union as a potential vehicle for PYD, it further develops academic insight and understanding in this important area.

1.4 Research aim and questions

The Kicking Crime into Touch rugby project (hereafter referred to as KCIT) provided the research site for this thesis. At this juncture, for the purpose of understanding the context of KCIT, I will describe the origins of the project and my role in it.

KCIT was a two-year funded rugby union project based in Manchester in north-west England. It was funded by Comic Relief and delivered by academics and sports coaches from MMU. It employed the expertise of youth justice services across Greater Manchester who identified and referred young people to the project. KCIT was offered to boys between ages 14 and 18., all of whom were serving community sentences. Its delivery model involved a two-hour weekly session over a two-year period. One hour focused on playing rugby union

and developing rugby knowledge and skills, and the other hour focused on strength and conditioning in gym-based sessions.

The decision to work with KCIT for this research is significant for two overarching reasons. First, KCIT provided a valuable and unique opportunity to develop knowledge related to delivering rugby union activities in a community youth justice context. Previous research on rugby union in this context is restricted to secure estates, pupil referral units and youth offending institutions. Subsequently, little is known about rugby union as a community-based youth justice intervention. Second, given that PYD aligns with strengths-based approaches adopted by the English and Welsh youth justice system (hereafter referred to as the YJS), it is of significant value to understand rugby union's potential in facilitating PYD.

I aimed to address the following overarching research aim:

Can rugby union be used as a vehicle for supporting PYD in the youth justice system?

The research questions are as follows:

1. Can rugby union contribute to PYD among justice-involved young people?
2. What are young people's attitudes toward rugby union as a direct consequence of participating KCIT?
3. Do the masculine values embedded in rugby union impact on the sport's potential to facilitate PYD?

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises six chapters. The remainder of this chapter (chapter one) serves as an overview and guide to the thesis and outlines the key themes that will be covered throughout. Chapter two provides a review of the literature and is divided into six sections. Section 2.1 introduces the chapter and section 2.2 provides an exploration of the literature in relation to youth justice and sport. Section 2.3 focuses on the strengths-based approach to youth development known as PYD and the use of sport as a vehicle for delivering PYD.

Section 2.4 considers sport as a hook for change. Section 2.5 explores the sport of rugby union, including its formal and informal values and its emergence as an activity used in youth justice settings. Section 2.6 introduces the literature on masculinities, specifically focusing on masculinity and vulnerability, adolescent and working-class masculinities, and discussions of violence. The literature review concludes in section 2.7 with a summary and conclusions taken from the chapter.

Chapter three describes the research methodology. It begins with a chapter introduction (section 3.1) followed by a reflection on the rationale for the thesis (section 3.2) and an outline of the research aim and questions. A note of access to KCIT is provided (section 3.3). It details the research design (section 3.4), the ethnographic approach and ethical considerations and processes (sections 3.5 and 3.6). The chapter then turns to methods of data collection (section 3.7) including ethnography, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Then section 3.8 provides a detailed description of thematic analysis as the chosen method of managing and interpreting data. The chapter then provides a summary of the research approach and design (section 3.9), a note on generalising the findings (section 3.10) and reflexivity (section 3.11). Section 3.12 concludes and summarises chapter three.

Chapter four comprises six sections. It begins by recapping the conclusions drawn from the literature review and then moves to a reminder of the research aim and questions (section 4.1). An overview of the chapter and the overall research findings is provided (section 4.2). Following on, section 4.3 explores the findings regarding the relationship between rugby union and PYD, and section 4.4 explores the extent to which KCIT acted as a vehicle for PYD. The chapter concludes by exploring findings relating to masculinity in section 4.5, with a specific focus on power, embodiment and violence. Section 4.6 is a summary of the chapter.

Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings, analysis and arguments made earlier in the thesis. The chapter begins with a recap of the research (section 5.1). It then moves to discuss the process of exploring sport as a vehicle for PYD in a youth justice context (section 5.2). Section 5.3 discusses the challenges of delivering rugby union in a youth justice context

and the implications for PYD. Section 5.4 considers if touch rugby as a mode of rugby that supports PYD and 5.5 considers the potential for rugby union programmes to align with components of PYD. Sections 5.6 and 5.7 draw attention to what this thesis concludes is essential for rugby union to be a successful vehicle for PYD. The chapter concludes by outlining the impact of this research on policy and practice (section 5.8) and implications for future research (section 5.9).

Chapter six outlines the contribution to knowledge made by this thesis (section 6.1) as well as the strengths, challenges faced (section 6.2) and limitations of the research (section 6.3). A reflection on methodology and methods is also provided (section 6.4). It also provides some personal reflections of my experience of completing the thesis and includes notes on site access, my embodiment and position in the research, and why I feel conflicted about this thesis.

1.6 Kicking Crime Into Touch project (KCIT)

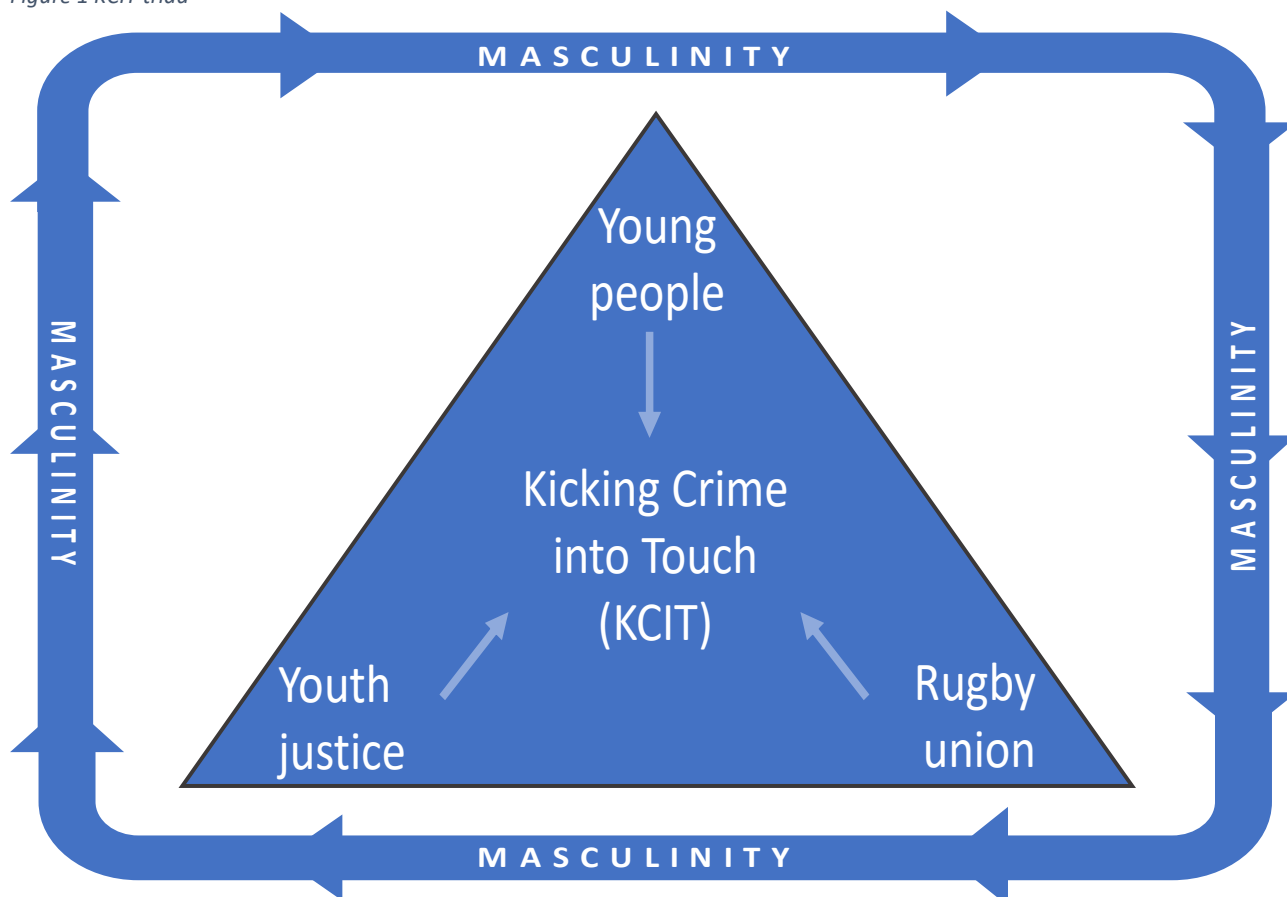
This research was conducted at the Comic Relief funded rugby project known as the Kicking Crime into Touch project (KCIT). KCIT was a two-year funded sport intervention, delivered collaboratively by academics from the Manchester Centre for Youth Studies (MCYS) based at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and sports coaches from MMU Sport. KCIT was delivered to justice-involved young people from across Greater Manchester.

KCIT worked with justice-involved young people, the majority of which were subject to an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Order (ISS) whereby they were ordered by the court to have 25 hours of contact time per week with their local youth justice team. These 25 hours can include methods of restorative justice, e.g., victim awareness and community reparation work; offending behaviour workshops to support desistance from crime; family support provision for reasons such as to support compliance; and interpersonal skill work to increase resilience and promote desistance (Youth Justice Board, 2019). KCIT became part of those 25 hours.

1.7 The KCIT triad

The KCIT triad in Figure 1 shows that KCIT sits at the intersection of rugby union, youth justice and the lives of the young people involved in the project. The outer circle demonstrates an argument that masculinity discourses wrap around and pervade all elements of this triad. These themes will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Figure 1 KCIT triad



Chapter two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore rugby union be used as a vehicle for supporting PYD in the youth justice system. In order to fully explore this, it is necessary to outline key literature relating to all parts of the KCIT triad (figure 1). These will be explored thematically throughout this chapter. The context of sport in youth justice will be discussed, followed by an examination of sports historical connection with criminology and masculinity, and sports history in UK youth justice. An overview of PYD will then be given, alongside a review of sport as a context for PYD, and as a 'hook for change'. Then a review of rugby union is provided which features literature on rugby unions history, its culture, and its emergence in youth justice. The penultimate section of this chapter reviews relevant literature relating to masculinity and associated concepts of vulnerability and violence, as well as an overview of sport and masculinity. The chapter ends with conclusions drawn from the literature review.

2.2 Contextualising KCIT as a sport-based youth justice intervention

Current academic discussions evidence that justice-involved young people face marginalisation, exclusion and disempowerment; and claims have been made that the YJS further compounds these experiences (Haines and Case, 2015; Smithson et al., 2020). Bengtsson (2016) considers that the YJS is grounded in power imbalances and hyper-masculine discourses which place young people in 'weak political position[s]' (Haines and Case, 2015:145). One such discourse is the focus on 'responsibilisation' – a notion that holds young people, families and communities responsible for exposure to 'criminogenic influences, offending behaviour and for an inability to desist' from offending (Case, 2021:3). Hart and Thompson (2009) suggest that the YJS restricts autonomy, mutes and underrepresents young people and often fails to provide youth-centric provision. This is despite young people having a fundamental right to be consulted on decisions that affect

them (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015). These approaches are evidenced as leading to young people's reduced engagement, increased frustration and increased likelihood of sustained violence, anti-social behaviour and criminality (Hart and Thompson, 2009).

Furthermore, academic debate suggests that the YJS is reductionist, lacking solutions and overly committed to political rhetoric (Goldson and Hughes, 2010; Haines and Case, 2015; Phoenix, 2016). Moreover, recent evidence from Smithson et al. (2020) considered that the YJS provides depersonalised interventions and overly emphasises the need for young people to take responsibility for their behaviour. Crowther et al. (forthcoming, 2022) note that this approach is flawed, suggesting that it fails to provide young people with the tools to challenge structural inequalities that likely underpin their justice involvement.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is a non-departmental public body that oversees youth justice services in England and Wales. Despite the aforementioned criticisms, the YJB has become increasingly underpinned by the Children First, Offenders Second (CFOS) philosophy (Case and Haines, 2015; Youth Justice Board, 2021), a strengths-based philosophy that promotes developmental and child-friendly practices. CFOS was established on the basis of the idea that, in relation to offending, 'children are part of the solution, not part of the problem' (Haines and Case, 2015:45). Due to this, the CFOS model 'inherently advocates for the participation of children and young people in decision making and intervention processes' (Smithson et al., 2020:1). This means that children and young people should be allowed to be 'active partners' in 'negotiating' their YJS experience (Wood and Hine, 2009:152). Case (2018), Haines and Case (2015) and Case et al. (2020) suggest that youth justice practitioners should encourage autonomy and voluntary participation and provide individually relevant interventions, i.e., interventions that are tailored and meaningful. Nacro (2008:6) argues that these approaches are worthwhile because they 'work'. By 'work' Nacro (2008) appears to mean that such processes have a positive effect on young people and have the capacity to support their development. PYD is one such approach, which shall be explored in section 2.3.

2.2.1 Sport's historical connection with criminology and masculinity

During the 19th century sport was seen as a valuable tool for behavioural development, based on ideas that healthy minds went hand in hand with healthy bodies (Carr, 2002; Andrews and Andrews, 2003). Alongside this, sport was considered to allow those who participated to 'blow off steam' (Mason and Wilson, 1988:27; Segrave, 1983). This positioned sport as a tool for encouraging obedience because violence and crime were considered the outcome of surplus energy (Gillin, 1914). This theme was sustained for some time in academic discussion (Mason and Wilson, 1988), and support for sport as a valuable means of energy release remains a prominent feature of modern culture. A simple Google search can help find examples such as parental guides to 'energy burns' for children to help 'keep the peace' (Eleson and Coltrera, 2020).

Sport also has a long history as a 'masculinising process' (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996:205; Robinson, 2008). McIntosh (1979:27) outlines that during the 19th century, sport as a tool for promoting development was based on the idea that sport taught strong morals and ethical values such as fair play and cooperation, and that these were transferable into broader life. The morals and values that were promoted during this period were distinctly related to 'muscular Christianity'¹, a philosophical movement that prioritised patriotism, masculinity and a willingness to self-sacrifice (Clark and Critcher, 1985:62). Sport became well regarded as a male educational tool based on the premise that participation prepared boys to meet 'the diverse challenges of a naturally harsh and competitive world'. Specifically, sport was considered preparation for war (Bailey, 1978:127).

Through the 19th century, public schools progressively prioritised sport to teach boys a civilised masculinity (Collins, 2012; Dunning, 1986; Dunning and Sheard, 1979). In conjunction with the philosophy of muscular Christianity, public schools became training sites for British masculinity (Collins, 2009): a masculinity jointly based on elevated masculine

¹ A 19th century philosophical movement through which men became defined by their health and manliness.

ideals of loyalty, bravery and physicality, and with that, decreased feminine characteristics of spirituality, sensitivity and vulnerability.

The above research seemingly celebrates sport as a vehicle for masculine development. It also suggests that for most of the 19th century, sport was seen to offer boys what Winlow (2012:122) more recently described as a 'toughening up process'. A process which involves encouraging development through exposure to physical and psychological adversity.

2.2.2 History of sport in UK youth justice

There is no consensus on what works when delivering sport with the intention of reducing offending behaviours (Coalter, 2007; Nichols, 2007; Pawson and Myhill, 2001; Crabbe, 2000; Jump, 2020; Jump and Smithson, 2020). Nevertheless, the UK government has taken notable interest in the role sport can play in promoting generalised societal welfare (Bailey, 1978). Against the current backdrop of claims that the YJS lacks solutions, sport has been a prominent feature in political discussions surrounding youth justice. Sport has featured prominently in political rhetoric surrounding youth offending since the 1960s, a time when the Albermarle Report (1960) supported the use of sport with all young people. Also, when the Wolfenden Report (1960:4) promoted sport in youth justice by suggesting that 'if more young people had the opportunity for playing games few would develop criminal habits'.

Following these claims, in the 1970s the political rhetoric of *Sport for All* (U.K. Parliament, 1974) and the White Paper *Sport and Recreation* (Department of The Environment, 1975) positioned sport as a basic human need and social service. Sport became a prominent feature of school and social life for young people based on the premise that sport could reduce boredom and frustration and therefore reduce youth anti-social behaviour (McIntosh and Charlton, 1985; Coalter, 2010). Recreation was seen as welfare and was used to support young people.

Shortly after the above developments, during the 1980s, the political landscape changed. Publications such as *Young Offenders* (Home Office, 1980) and the *Criminal Justice Act*

(Home Office, 1982) defined a 'macho' youth justice culture that was enforced through aggressive criminal responses to young people's offending behaviours through an increased use of cautions and community-based youth programmes for anti-social behaviour. During this period sport-based interventions were offered to young people as alternatives to custody but were significantly focused around reducing criminal behaviour and attitudes (Hudson, 1988; Pitts, 2003a). During the 1980s, sport became a mechanism for social control and the *Action Sport* programmes that emerged in response to inner city rioting stand testament to this (Rigg, 1986).

Concerns mounted that the aggressive liberal approach of the 1980s had been insufficient in overcoming the 'problem' of youth offending. These mounting concerns led to what has been labelled the 'punitive turn', following which young people were increasingly held responsible for their behaviour and received rigorous punishments for offending (Goldson, 2002:390; Scraton, 1997:167). The *Public Order Act* (Home Office, 1994) outlined a focus on correcting offending behaviour, whilst the subsequent *Crime and Sentencing Act* (Home Office, 1997) outlined a zero-tolerance approach to youth offending (Dennis, 1997). These developments were largely focused on young people who had offended. Yet in reference to the ever-present concern over youth offending, the influential Audit Commission (1996) report *Misspent Youth* reinvigorated sport criminology by arguing that sport could be used as early intervention for young people at risk of offending.

In the latter stages of the 1990s the Labour Party refocused sport as a social service and human need. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 1999) promoted sport in relation to political priorities including community regeneration, health, education, employment and crime. Aside from this, the *Crime and Disorder Act* (Home Office, 1998) suggested that prevention and early intervention were the most appropriate methods for tackling youth offending. Parallel to these developments, the Labour Government (1997) proposed a more holistic view of youth offending. They suggested it was not solely the responsibility of the young person, but the joint result of structural factors such as marginalisation and exclusion, and personal factors such as character deficit and lacking aspirations (Abramovay et al., 2002; Coalter et al., 2000). This holistic view, and most

specifically the focus on social exclusion was to become a key focal point for labour as they set about utilising sport to address their political agenda. I will explore sports policy developments that fall in line with this in section 2.2.3 in addition to mapping the emergence of what is known as 'sport-for-development'.

In relation to the above, the Policy Action Group, a branch of the DCMS (1995:5), suggested that 'sport has beneficial social impact ... [because] sports are inclusive and can contribute towards neighbourhood renewal and build confidence and encourage strong community groups'. Sport therefore became seen as a panacea for diverse and multifaceted social ills and became centralised as a tool for development. More recent claims have argued that sport builds 'confidence and self-esteem', whilst 'overcoming behavioural issues ... reduc[ing] involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour and improving attainment' (Williams, 2011:268). Coalter et al. (2000:33–36) summarised reasons why sport is viewed to help address structural and personal contributors to youth crime. Reasons include: (1) sport can provide a context for differential association; (2) sport can instil discipline; (3) sport can develop aspirations and motivation by providing attachment opportunities and developing self-esteem; (4) sport may provide an antidote to boredom; and last, (5) sport may satisfy 'adolescent developmental needs'.

The above account shows that in relation to youth offending sport has often been prioritised as a tool for overcoming both structural and personal deficits. This has largely been influenced by criminological explanations of offending that outlined various deficits as the cause of crime, whether they be sociological, psychological or biological. This is important because the literature suggests that deficit reduction approaches lack long-term efficacy and are developmentally flawed (Houlihan, 1997; Larson, 2012; Edwards et al., 2007; Coalter, 2010; Coakley, 2011). This is unsurprising considering Pittman (1991) argued some time ago that young people free from deficit are not by virtue ready for productivity and progression.

Although sport has been a prominent feature in political rhetoric since Albermarle in 1960, it is since 1997 and with the governance of 'new labour' which sport has become most prominent as a vehicle for supporting political aims. I shall now turn to outline key political developments between the period of 1997 and 2022 which have contributed to emergence of Sport-for-development, against which I will contextualise KCIT.

2.2.3 Sport for development

In the above section I highlighted that sport has an enduring history in the context of youth justice. However, it is only in the last 25 years that sport has become more explicitly referenced in political discourse in the UK, and subsequently in broad attempts to achieve positive outcomes in areas of political concern, including youth crime. In this section I will explore key policy development since 1997, and both define and outline the emergence of 'Sport-for-development'. However, an in-depth critique of these developments falls outside the remit of this thesis, and the discussion in this section serve only to outline the background against which KCIT and indeed this thesis sit.

Under the New Labour government of 1997, and as alluded to in the previous section sport became explicitly linked with aspects of the government's broad social political agenda as they sought to 'strengthen civil society and address issues of social exclusion' (Roberts, 2009: 111; Coalter, 2007). This in turn led to the development of key policy documents including *A sporting future for all* (2000) and *Game plan* (2002) and the development of a government department dedicated to sport – the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Off the back of these developments the UK government began capitalising on sport as a tool for achieving political outcomes and sport moved from the periphery of government policy to the forefront as a mechanism for social change (Houlihan and White, 2002). In line with this, the DCMS in efforts to capitalise on sports potential to support the governments political agenda made investments in organisations such as the Youth Sports Trust, which became the UKs leading charity using sport to improve young peoples education and development. Moreover, the DCMS contributed to the establishment of the Social Exclusion unit whose remit was to assist the government in addressing social

exclusion, and the Policy Action Team 10 whose remit was to research how sport can help in reducing social exclusion. Also, the DCMD began distributing funds into communities with high levels of multiple deprivation in a strategic effort to use sport to address social exclusion (Bloyce and Smith, 2010).

As a result of *Game plan* (2002) in particular, partnerships grew between organisations across England and Wales which paved the way for sports-based organisations, sport's governing bodies, and non-sports bodies to work in partnership to provide targeted interventions to address social exclusion, reduce anti-social behaviour and promote pro-social development amongst young people (Harris, 2012). In capitalising on the belief that sport was well placed to address a multitude of social ills many sports-based initiatives emerged across the UK following turn of the millennium under broad partnerships such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership which attempted to use sport as a mechanism for promoting social capital (Putnam, 2000). These developments represented a major transition towards the practice of developing communities through sport, or what is commonly referred to as using 'sport-for-development' (SfD) (Houlihan and White, 2002; Coalter, 2007). The legitimacy of this was supported by advancements in the international context through the development of the United Nations Office for sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) which added credibility to the practice of using sport as a vehicle for positive social change. Concurrent to the developments outlined so far in this section, the UK based charity Comic Relief launched their Sport Relief initiative in 2002 under which they set about utilising 'the power [of sport] to bring about positive change to individuals and communities'.

SfD has been theorised as the use of sport to exert positive influence on broad or specific aspect of social life (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). Moreover, SfD is distinguishable from Sport development due to its focus on using sport to develop individuals and communities and SfD is not focused on encouraging or increasing participation in formalised training or competition (Kidd, 2008). An alternative definition is provided by Coalter (2007:18) who described SfD as the 'systematic attempt to use sport as an economy of remedies to a variety of social problems', thus alluding that sport provides a low budget mechanism for

targeting areas of socio-political concern. There are now vast and growing numbers of programs working at using SfD to effect positive change globally (Lyras and Welty Peacher, 2011). Premier League kicks and Street Games are two notable examples from the UK, and the sports program KCIT which is the focal point of this thesis is an example of a sports-based intervention seeking to utilise SfD in context of UK youth justice. However, although the SfD field has grown, many of the programs that operate under such remit, specifically those relating to youth justice and crime, have arguably done so based on vague ideas that sport ameliorates anti-social behaviour without any robust understanding of mechanisms through which this is possible (Coalter, 2007; Groombridge, 2017). **Despite this, political support for the basis of SfD has largely sustained across the twenty-first century, other than in a brief period of instability in UK governments prioritisation of SfD which I shall now move to explore.**

In 2005, London was awarded the right to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games and the UK governments involvement in sport changed towards an emerging focus on elite sport, international sporting success and major sporting events. This award of the Olympics positioned sport as a central component of British life, and recommendations outlined by the *Carter review* (2005) and developments from the governments 2004 spending review reinforced this. The *Carter review* (2005) made a series of recommendations to UK government which included, to promote the personal benefits of sport, and to improving sport delivery nationally. Alongside which, the government's spending review in 2004 led to the government including sport in service agreements for local authorities who made a commitment to ensure 85% of 5–16-year-olds were engaging in at least two hours of PE and school sport supported the positioning of sport in the British psyche (Harris, 2012). Shortly after this, following a cabinet reshuffle and with the impending Olympics, the DCMS (2008) stated that they would redirect focus and begin funding sport for its own sake, and to promote sporting success, not to support other endeavours such as reducing social exclusion. The DCMS (2007) noted that resources to utilise SfD in areas such as crime reduction would not solely be funded by the DCMS but would need to be cross departmentally funded. These developments were consolidated in the *Playing to win* (2008) policy which through its distinct focus on PE and school sport, as well as community sport

and high-performance sport solidified what had by then become New Labour's focus on developing sport for the sake of improving sport.

Following a political transition to a liberal conservative coalition in 2010, the UK government's relationship with sport became more balanced as the government set about to push forward the conservative vision to re-prioritise SfD by using 'sport as both an end in itself and a means to achieve a better society' (Conservative Party, 2009: 4). In 2015, the coalition government dissolved, and was superseded by the single-party conservative government led by David Cameron. Following their election into parliament the conservatives set out their strategy for sport in their policy *Sporting future: a new strategy for an active nation* (2015) (Davies, Taylor, Ramchandani and Christy, 2019). This policy reinvigorated the use of SfD in the UK as the government stated '...in delivering this strategy we will change sport funding so it is no longer merely about how many people take part, but rather how sport can have a meaningful and measurable impact on improving people's lives' (HM Government, 2015: 6). Yet in that policy, the government have only reiterated previous political claims about the value of sport, noting that 'sport...enhances individuals and communities, boosts the economy, and supports a range of other policy priorities, including health, tackling crime and education' (HM Government, 2015: 11). Moreover, in 2019 Nick Pontefract, the chief operating officer of Sport England – an arms-length body of government responsible for developing sport across England – similarly reiterated sports potential explaining that:

'sport...is a powerful and positive force for good in society...sport builds a sense of community and social trust, provides role models, and new skills that can drive meaningful change. Yet we've only just scratched the surface of its potential as a tool to engage young people at risk of being involved in...crime'.

In line with this, the UK Government (2019) announced that they would:

'work with sports organisations such as the [English] Premier League and basketball, boxing and cycling bodies to increase sports activity in youth crime hot spots.'

Sports development policy and the emergence and proliferation of SfD across the twenty-first century have arguable occurred based on vague ideas that sport has a positive impact on areas of political concern such as youth crime and anti-social behaviour which have never been based on any substantial evidence (Coalter, 2013; Dacombe, 2013; Morgan *et al* 2018). Moreover, there is insufficient research on the conditions and mechanisms that are required for sport programs to promote positive outcomes particularly when working with vulnerable groups (Coalter, 2007; Kay and Bradbury, 2009). Nevertheless, SfD looks set to remain part of the UK sport policy landscape with the House of Lords recently reiterating in their *National plan for sport, health and wellbeing* (2021) a firm belief that

‘engaging in sport benefits society. it promotes social and community cohesion, helps people to develop skills and confidence, can help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and makes a substantial contribution to the economy’

I shall now turn my attention to the literature on PYD, an approach to youth development that opposes deficit reduction by prioritising asset development.

2.3 Positive Youth Development (PYD)

PYD is an approach to youth development that aligns with strengths-based youth justice described in section 2.2. It focuses on supporting young people to make positive steps to progress through life by offering contextual support and asset development (Damon, 2004; Lerner, 2015). In the PYD literature, assets are considered the internal (personal) and external (social) factors that allow young people to function well during adolescence (Arshad *et al.*, 2021; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). PYD is based on the relational developmental system (RDS) meta-theoretical methodology, which suggests that personal development happens when individuals and social contexts work in tandem (Overton, 2015; Ettekal *et al.*, 2017). The foundation of the RDS is the notion of ‘plasticity’ and the understanding that young people are receptive to change (Camiré *et al.*,

2021). Such an approach has been recognised as ‘challenging the hegemonic punitivity and neo-correctionalism’ of youth justice (Case and Haines, 2018:208). PYD is directly opposed to the youth justice philosophy of deficit reduction, punishment, restriction and blaming (outlined in section 2.2). Instead, PYD practitioners seek to work with young people to encourage the development of strengths, positive growth and change. These outcomes are seen to leave young people better equipped for pro-social participation and productivity (Pittman, 1991).

2.3.1 PYD models

Several models have helped conceptualise PYD. The most prominent of these is arguably the Five C’s model (Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, 2015). This model suggests that by delivering provision based around Five C’s, character (respect), caring (empathy and sympathy), competence (social, cognitive and academic skills), confidence (self-efficacy and self-regard) and connection (to others and environments), social contexts can elevate young people to produce a Sixth C – contribution (to society, self and others). Whilst this model is useful in framing an outcome for PYD, it is limited in relation to this research by not suggesting how the Five C’s can be developed in a youth justice context. I will reframe some of these Five C’s in chapter five.

The Search Institute (2005), an American-based advocate of PYD, proposed the developmental assets framework (DAF). The DAF outlines assets and strengths that young people need to succeed in life. The Search Institute (2005) divides these assets and strengths into two categories: external assets and internal assets, with each subdivided into four further components. Table 2 presents assets drawn from the DAF.

Table 2: Components of the developmental assets framework

Type of asset	Asset label	Description
External assets	Support	Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate and accept them.

	Empowerment	Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when they feel safe and respected.
	Boundaries and expectations	Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules and encouragement to do their best.
	Constructive use of time	Young people need opportunities outside of school to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youths and adults.
Internal assets	Commitment to learning	Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.
	Positive values	Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices.
	Social competencies	Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions and to cope with new situations.
	Positive identity	Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over things that happen to them.

These components are understood as the foundations of healthy youth development. Holt et al. (2017) suggest they can also be useful in evaluating the capacity of a specific context to promote PYD. Although the DAF is useful and rigorous, it is limited in its application to understanding sport as a vehicle for PYD in a youth justice context. It does not account for the multitude of contextual limitations inherent in the YJS, such as those outlined in section 2.2.

More practical and user-friendly models are available. For instance, Crabbe and Blackshaw (2004) explain that a programme only requires three key components to be considered conducive to PYD. They are (1) an appropriate and targeted activity that takes place in a safe environment, (2) positive external support, reinforcement and encouragement and (3)

opportunities to obtain and develop transferable skills. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002:9–10) in America, however, suggests that there are eight components: (1) safe and health-promoting facilities, (2) clear and consistent rules and expectations, (3) warm, supportive relationships, (4) opportunities for meaningful inclusion and belonging, (5) positive social norms, (6) support for efficacy and autonomy, (7) opportunities for skill building and (8) coordination among family, school and community efforts.

The key message from the PYD literature presented in this section is that development is not something that is done to a young person. The concepts such as connection, inclusion and support described above suggest that development is relational and social. Yet, the breadth of factors that the literature suggests contributes to PYD indicates that development is multifaceted, complex and dynamic. In this respect, PYD can be seen as a continuous project requiring individual and social effort, interaction with positive contexts, and the positive values and learning that can take place within them.

Unsurprisingly, considering PYD's strengths-based approach, the models and frameworks outlined in this section are all similar in that they focus on support and progression. Understanding the components that characterise PYD are essential to understand when exploring rugby union as a context for PYD, particularly as they encourage investigation into key areas. Namely, what is being delivered? Who is delivering it? Where is it being delivered? And why? And what effect it is having on development? I shall now move on to outline why sport is considered conducive to PYD.

2.3.2 Sport and PYD

The literature suggests that sport programmes provide ready-made contexts for PYD (Vella et al., 2011; Camiré, 2015). Lerner (2004) argued that this is because sport programmes offer the 'big three' contextual developmental assets – positive relationships, positive experiences and opportunities to learn and develop life skills. Despite PYD being a

contemporary approach, a mounting body of literature has suggested that sport programmes and sports coaches can facilitate PYD, a notable example of which is arguably Crabbe and Blackshaw (2004) discussed above. Morgan and Parker (2017) note that prior to a participant stepping foot in a sport context, sport can only be evaluated as promoting PYD if it is meaningful and relevant to those accessing it. Table 3 outlines other strategies conducive to PYD:

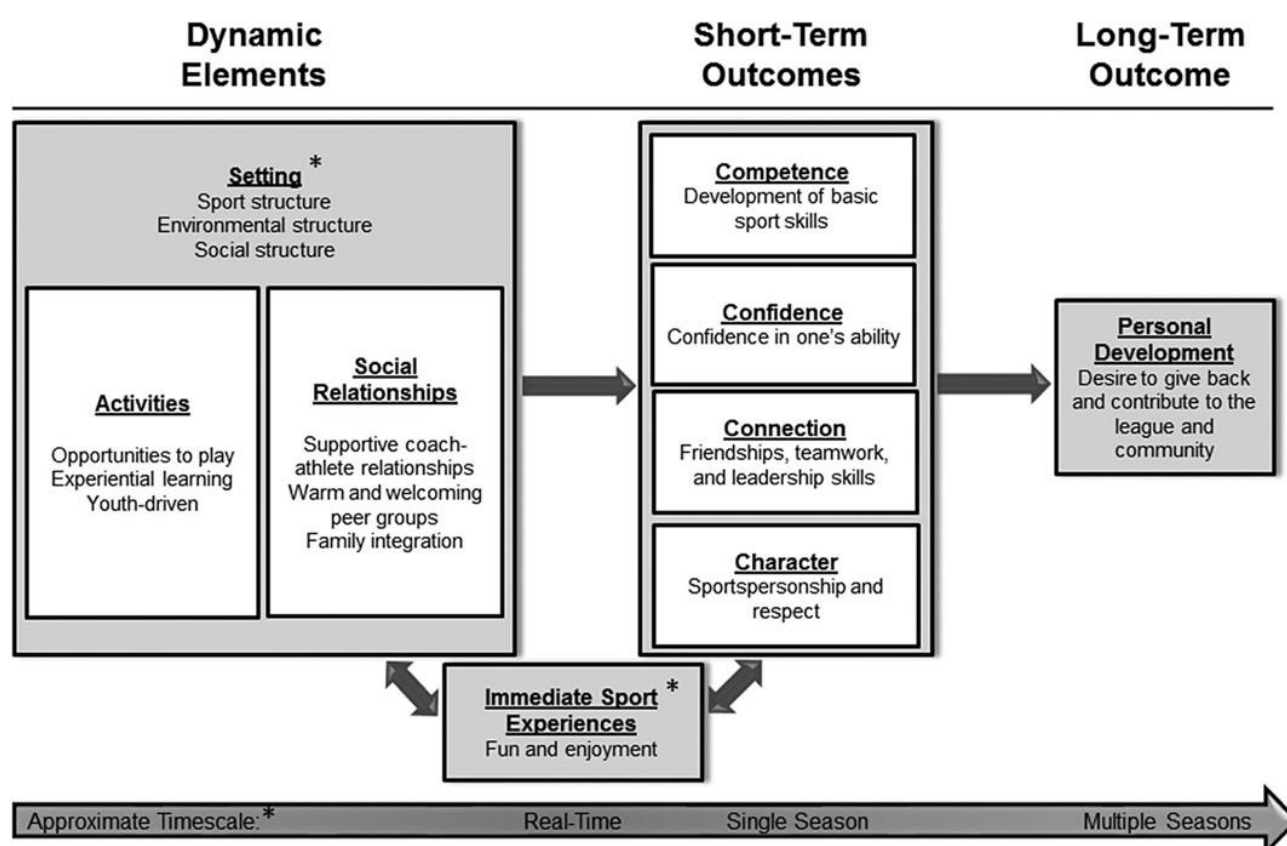
Table 3: Strategies for promoting PYD in sport

	Strategies	Recommended by
Personal skills	Actively upholding high behavioural standards and promoting accountability	Brown and Fry (2011); Flett et al. (2013); Harwood (2008); Holt et al. (2012); Olushola et al. (2013); Trottier and Robitaille (2014); Walsh et al. (2010)
	Role modelling expected behaviour	Camiré (2012); Trottier and Robitaille (2014); Turnnidge et al. (2012)
	Encouraging autonomy	Armour et al. (2013); Flett et al. (2013)
	Using goal setting	Armour et al. (2013); Flett et al. (2013)
Social skills	Team-building activities	Brown and Fry (2011); Newin et al. (2008); Olushola et al. (2013)
	Immersive volunteering opportunities	Camiré et al. (2013); Olushola et al. (2013)
	Mentoring	Olushola et al. (2013)
	Engaging in focused discussions about life and life skills	Bean et al. (2014); Brown and Fry (2011); Trottier and Robitaille (2014)
	Utilising teachable moments to highlight life skills	Camiré (2012); Trottier and Robitaille (2014); Wright and Burton (2008)

2.3.3 Personal assets framework

Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) personal assets framework (PAF) (Figure 2) provides a holistic framework against which to measure rugby union as a context for PYD. The PAF outlines the factors that should be considered: What (sporting activity) is being delivered? Who is delivering it? What is the delivery approach? And what are the ecological factors that surround the experience? These dynamic elements, when coupled with the capacity for participants to develop *competence, confidence, connection and character* in an environment that is fun and enjoyable, are considered to offer long-term personal development.

Figure 2 Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) personal assets framework for sport



Note: Asterisks indicate new or adapted elements of Côté et al.'s (2016) original model that Vierimaa et al. (2017:6) suggested on the basis of their study's findings.

The PAF is a robust and evidence-based model for understanding PYD through sport that poses a challenge to other discourses in this area, such as those that have suggested rugby union provides youth development (Meek, 2012; Meek and Lewis, 2014; Dallaglio RugbyWorks, 2017; 2021; Saracens Foundation, no date:online). The PAF suggests that value cannot be solely based on an isolated activity or experience (e.g., is it fun and enjoyable?) leading to one outcome (e.g., behaviour and attitude change). The PAF's notable strength is the holistic exploration it encourages, specifically in relation to the activity being delivered (what and how), the social relationships available (in the context), the sport setting (competition, rules, regulations and relevance), the environmental setting (accessibility and inclusivity), and the social setting (connection of sport and programme to community and opportunities for community integration). The research that underpins the PAF has even suggested that birthplace (Côté et al., 2006) has an impact on sport experiences. Considering this, it is reasonable to believe that other factors associated with birthplace, e.g., gender, race and social class as well as their intersections (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Williams and Deutsch, 2016), have an impact on youth development. The PAF is significant, and relevant to my investigation of rugby union as it shows that to evaluate PYD potential it is important to consider the entirety of the context. This includes internal and external factors, relational, experiential, cultural and historical factors, in addition to what participants bring with them.

2.3.4 Enjoyment

Crabbe and Blackshaw (2004) noted that sport can be a particularly potent method of strength-based youth justice, because it can be incredibly fun to take part in. More recently, Lerner et al. (2014) noted that enjoyment was one of sport's primary components that linked it to PYD. However, enjoyment is an abstract concept and therefore not necessarily a useful one.

Scanlan and Simons (1992:202–203) defined enjoyment in sport as 'a positive response to sport experiences that reflects generalised feelings such as pleasure, liking and fun'.

Enjoyment results from an individual's exposure to an appropriate catalyst that upon exposure brings feelings of pleasure. Scanlan and Simons' (1992) description of enjoyment poses a challenge to assessing rugby union as a context for PYD. Enjoyment is an abstract and individual experience; it is challenging to predict or claim the enjoyability of an event. Further evidence suggests that enjoyment is not an event measurable through questions such as 'is/was that enjoyable?' It is perceived and anticipated by an individual when reflecting whether they believe they will enjoy an event.

2.3.4.1 Strategies for promoting enjoyment

Although enjoyment is considered individualised, the literature suggests several mechanisms that can help increase anticipation of enjoyment and the likelihood of actual enjoyment. Mageau and Vallerand (2003) note that sport-based experiences are more likely to be enjoyable if they provide opportunities for expression, creativity and exploration.

More recently, Meek (2018) suggests that, particularly for justice-involved young people, enjoyment is best promoted by de-emphasising rules, regulations and competition factors. Failure to de-emphasise these components would likely result in an experience of sport as a context of 'exclusionary discipline', a concept drawn from education research. Novak (2021:1) describes this as a process whereby those who do not meet contextual standards face exclusion. It is critical that sport does not do this to justice-involved young people because they already face a disproportionate amount of social exclusion. To ensure that young people are not excluded, Meek (2018) and Coalter (2010) have argued that sports coaches should prioritise inclusion and empowerment. Elsewhere, McCarthy et al. (2008) note that enjoyment is best achieved by promotion, development, accomplishment and excitement. Their research argues that personal factors are more relevant to young people in sport than extrinsic social factors such as acceptance, team performance and joint winning. This suggests that personal outcomes are more enjoyable and motivating for young people than social factors. The approaches outlined here suggest that enjoyment is best achieved through individually relevant opportunities.

2.3.5 Sports coaches – central protagonists in aligning sport with PYD

Within the sports context, coaches generally hold all the power (Anderson, 2005). The literature suggests that sports coaches are central protagonists in promoting positive youth experiences and PYD (Côté et al., 2010; Camiré, 2012; Vella et al., 2013). This is to be expected, considering that prior research has argued that the quality of coach–athlete relationships in sport has a direct influence on how sport is experienced (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

A substantial, and mounting, body of research has evidenced characteristics and behaviours that increase a sports coach’s potential to promote PYD, most of which suggests that sports coaches should move beyond transactional delivery of sport and adopt a role more aligned with mentoring. This is notable on two accounts: first, it has long been acknowledged that mentoring is a sound approach to facilitating behavioural change (Grossman and Tierney, 1998; Tolan and Guerra, 1994), and second, adopting a mentoring approach allows coaches to facilitate feelings of inclusion and act as mediators between marginalised young people and society (Coalter, 2013; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Haudenhuyse et al., 2014).

Table 4 outlines behaviours and characteristics encouraging PYD.

Table 4: Coaching behaviour and short-term outcomes

Coaching behaviour/characteristic	Short-term outcome	Evidenced by
Youth centred – considers a young person’s needs	Enjoyment	Salminen and Liukkonen (1996); Martin et al. (1999)
Consultation and joint goal/outcome setting	Increased inclusion and empowerment	Bailey (2005); Haudenhuyse et al. (2012); Chamberlain (2013); Turnnidge et al. (2016)

Understanding diversity and being adaptable to group needs	Increased inclusion	Ehsani et al. (2012)
Focusing on rewarding effort and not outcome	Empowerment	McDonald et al. (2011); Petitpas et al. (2005)
Focusing on skill development, not performance, and utilising appropriately challenging but relevant activities	Increased opportunities for success and reduced likelihood of self-exclusion	Smith et al. (2009); Biddle (2006); Blauner (1964); Bergeron et al. (2015)
Promoting cooperative learning	Increased sense of inclusion	Bergeron et al. (2015)
Resisting comparisons of physical capacity	Reduced performance anxiety and increased inclusivity	Bergeron et al. (2015)
Being mindful to distribute praise and recognition among participants	Increased inclusion and sense of fair treatment	Bergeron et al. (2015)
Prioritising creativity, free expression and empowerment through reducing pressure to perform	Reduced sense of restriction	Camiré et al. (2009); Holt et al. (2008); Camiré et al. (2013); Walsh et al. (2010); Ehsani et al. (2012); Williams et al. (2015); Rosenkranz et al. (2012)
Encouraging pro-social behaviour	Context feels safer	Armour et al. (2013)
Actively developing resilience to external stress	Behaviour management and emotional regulation	Armour et al. (2013)
Providing advocacy and support	Feelings of trust and respect	Armour et al. (2013); Vaughan (2007)

Focusing on strengths/assets development	Reduced feelings of restriction	Armour et al. (2013); DuBois et al. (2011); Rhodes (2002)
Being authentic and prepared to show vulnerability by engaging with young people as equals	Young people see that coaches have humanity	Armour et al. (2013)

The focus of PYD is to provide a strengths-based approach to both short- and long-term development. The evidence above suggests that a broad and holistic consideration of experience, social interaction and other interacting factors such as culture and context is needed for PYD. I shall now provide an overview of how PYD fits with desistance-based literature, in particular, the ways in which sport can act as a vehicle for reducing criminogenic behaviours and its capacity as a ‘hook for change’ (Giordano et al., 2002). ‘Hook for change’ is a prominent theory in sport development and sport criminology (Jump and Smithson, 2020; Morgan et al., 2020; Kay and Mason, 2021).

2.4 Sport as a ‘hook for change’

Giordano et al. (2002) argued that through a ‘hook for change’ it is possible for young people to desist from offending if they have a willingness to change. LeBel et al. (2008) claim that ‘hooks’ do not force change but provide inspiration. They argue that change is not something done to an individual but that an individual must be willing to take on the work themselves.

Giordano et al.’s (2002) research makes no reference to sport. Despite this, the ‘hook for change’ theory has been widely adopted by sports criminologists and the UK government, and evidence suggests that sport has relevance as a ‘hook for change’. Parker et al. (2014), for example, suggest that sport can be effective in providing a replacement for violence and criminality, and the government publication *Tired of Hanging Around* (Audit Commission, 2009) suggests that sport can reduce boredom that manifests as crime. However, these

arguments merely position sport as a distraction. Other academics such as Chamberlain (2013) provide alternative perspectives suggesting that sport can provide a context for belonging or social inclusion (Spaaij, 2015). Sport providers, the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (2011:4), who champion the use of sport to change the lives of young people argue that sport offers ‘belonging, status and excitement ... [and] also helps develop control over emotions while learning to respect certain boundaries’. This is notable because such concepts are argued to be features found in deviant subcultures (Ayres and Treadwell, 2012). However, although it is argued that sport has this potential, McMahon and Jump (2018) have demonstrated that the salience of a ‘hook for change’ is directly related to the symbolic weight it has to an individual and not to the qualities of the event. This suggests that not all hooks are relevant for all individuals and not all sports will be effective hooks.

The literature on SfD has seemingly moved away from suggesting sport itself as a ‘hook for change’ towards considering sport as a ‘hook’ and processes within sport as the mechanisms for ‘change’. This can be seen in publications such as the Audit Commission’s (2009) *Tired of Hanging Around*, Taylor et al.’s (2015) review of the social impact of sport, and more recently in UK Sport’s (2021) ten-year strategic plan. Building on Giordano et al.’s (2002) theory, sport is now seen as the ‘hook’ to entice young people into environments that promote change (Nichols, 2007; Sherry et al., 2015; Parker et al., 2019; Jump and Smithson, 2020). Two vital components remain notable. Firstly, not all sports will have equal ‘hooking’ potential. Sports like boxing (Jump, 2020) and football (Parker et al., 2019) have been argued as appealing, whereas rugby union has been under-researched in this area. Secondly, for a sporting environment to promote positive change several mechanisms are said to be required. These include opportunities for attachment, positive relationships with the self and others, and empowerment and responsibility (Ekholm, 2013; Jump and Smithson, 2020). Ekholm (2013) notes that sport providers can facilitate these opportunities by promoting development, emphasising relationships and de-emphasising competition. PYD is an approach that fits neatly within these discussions of ‘change’.

2.5 Rugby union

Rugby union has experienced rapid growth in participation and marketability since it adopted professionalism in 1995. The prominence of the sport in criminal justice and youth development contexts has also increased since then. Data suggests that rugby union is played by over eight million people across 123 countries (World Rugby, 2020). World Rugby (2019:online) the international federation responsible for the global accessibility and relevance of rugby union have argued that the sport is distinctly a 'sport for all'. This research explores the KCIT rugby project to interrogate the potential of rugby union to support PYD, particularly in a youth justice context. A context where the research participant would have been traditionally excluded from the sport. This section explores rugby unions history and considers debates about the sport related to the focus of this thesis.

2.5.1 Rugby union – 'a game for hooligans'

Since the 19th century, rugby has been culturally defined as a 'real man's game' (Pringle, 2001; Collins, 2009), an outdated ideal suggesting that men must be strong, dominant, tough and competitive. The interconnection between masculinity and rugby has been maintained since rugby's origin. Rugby union in its early history was embedded in public schools in the UK as a mechanism for 'instilling manliness' (Pringle, 2001:426), reducing sexual confusion (Springhall, 1971:125), developing morality (Dunning and Sheard, 1979:13) and 'toughening boy[s] up' or 'hardening' men for war based on the belief that it promoted outcomes such as athleticism, determination and discipline (Collins, 2009).

Rugby has long been understood as a violent sport; however, it is not as violent as it once was. During the 19th century, when rugby was celebrated for its capacity for instilling masculinity virtues and athleticism, the sport was certainly more barbaric than it is now. Rugby was a site where 'mock fighting' was the prelude to 'serious fighting' and 'the ball was relatively unimportant to the game' (Dunning and Sheard, 1979:93–96). During the latter half of the 19th century, concerns emerged that rugby was excessively violent. In 1871, in the wake of these concerns, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) was formed as the sport's

governing body. Shortly after forming, the RFU produced a 'code of football based on the Rugby system of play', which outlined the 'Laws of the game' (Collins, 2009:20). These laws civilised rugby (Dunning and Sheard, 1979) during this period, and also highlighted the sports early connection with common culture. Whilst rugby was explicitly violent, it was intertwined with societal and class values, with rugby union originating as a middle-class sport. All those involved in the RFU and responsible for developing the laws of the game in 1871 are said to have been from 'a very narrow and close-knit stratum of the professional upper middle classes', and all those whom data is available on attended public school (Collins, *ibid.*). The rules and restrictions developed by the RFU are considered to have redefined the game and 'pleasures began to be derived less from brute force and more from ... the use of complex skill'. However, Dunning and Sheard (1979:96) note that the rules still left 'ample room for ... manly physical contact'. Even with rules and restrictions, rugby remained a violent spectacle. As Dunning and Sheard (1979:96) explain:

[rugby] became a type of group contest which provided the pleasures of 'real fighting' but which was regulated in such a way that the attendant dangers were reduced, a kind of struggle which the players could enjoy but in which they had less chance than formerly to inflict serious injury.

However, in the wake of increased rules and regulations, claims were made that

rugby football is too rapid for the contemplative, too cooperative for those who seek symbolism, and too vigorous for aesthetic delight. (Richards, 2007:20).

During the 19th century, while rugby was defined as a 'real man's game', it was also predominantly a middle-class game defined by amateurism, and the following events define this. In this period, public school campaigners fought hard and rejected professionalism to protect rugby union from the perceived threat of working-class participation. In 1895, because of mounting arguments for the RFU to allow 'broken time'² payments, 22 clubs in

² Compensation for loss of income. A mechanism that would have allowed working class men to take time away from work to play rugby.

the north of England consisting of working-class men rejected the RFU. These 22 clubs formed what was at the time known as the *Northern Union* which later agreed to allow players to receive financial remuneration for absence from work to play rugby. This event branded 'the split', resulted in a breakaway by rugby clubs in the north of England who formed the organisation known as the Professional Rugby League in 1922; now known as Rugby Football League (Nauright, 2018). Following the above event branded the split', rugby league clubs in the north of England allowed 'broken time' payments and adopted professionalism, whilst clubs in the south of England continued to reject it (Nauright, 2018). This rejection is considered to have been an expression of concern about working-class participation, because not only did the RFU outlaw payments for players, but they also actively banned all forms of incentives. Through this, amateurism was retained as a key component of rugby union's identity, and extended beyond this to become a cultural ideology through which the working class became subordinates to the middle class.

Rugby union was, and has arguably remained, a middle-class enclave (Anderson and McGuire, 2010; Collins, 2015; Worth, 2019). As Bourdieu (1978:838) argues, 'sport ... bears the marks of its origins'. Therefore, it is difficult to comprehend how rugby union can ever be perceived as a 'classless' sport, particularly when it has resisted broadening its appeal to the 'lower rungs of the social ladder' and instead has celebrated 'acculturation'³ (Collins, 2015:online). The interconnection between this and rugby union's image of violence lends claims to rugby being 'a game for hooligans played by gentlemen' (Richards, 2007:19).

In 1995 rugby union was professionalised, and since then has become a more viable and appealing sport, beyond the upper classes, through the prospect of financial remuneration. Professionalisation meant that rugby union was no longer solely elitist and recreational but could provide legitimate employment prospects. However, since this time, rugby union as a professional entity has become less 'gentlemanly', and through increasing competitiveness and marketability the sport has become more explicitly manly (Nauright and Chandler, 1996) and the players more muscular (Olds, 2001). Rugby union's offer of violence has

³ The process of elevating people from the lower strata within society.

become increasingly fetishised and, since professionalisation, rugby players have been increasingly celebrated for their hyper-masculine embodiment and capacity to negotiate violence (White and Anderson, 2017). It would not be unreasonable to describe professional rugby men as 'bodies for hire'. Anderson and McGuire (2010) argue that modern-day UK rugby union contributes directly to what it means to be masculine, with muscularity, performative violence and excessive consumption as prominent markers of masculinity.

Although rugby went through a civilising process in the 19th century and adopted more stringent rules and regulations that controlled violence and reduced injury, contemporary evidence suggests that rugby union is an inherently unsafe sport where the risk to physical and psychological well-being is high (Pollock, 2014; White et al., 2021). In the UK, rugby union has higher rates of injury than any other sport (Brooks et al., 2005; Fuller et al., 2010; Nicholl et al., 1991). The extent of this problem is not fully understood, as rugby union's injury and health/well-being limitations are often misrepresented and under-evidenced (Pollock and Kirkwood, 2016; Piggitt, 2020), a reality which Pollock (2014:2) describes as rugby union's 'dirty secret'. A vital point in relation to considering rugby union's suitability as a vehicle for PYD as it demonstrates that rugby union is inherently dangerous. Despite the physical danger and overall risk of rugby union not been fully understood, emerging research suggests that it is a cause for concern (West et al., 2021; Sasaki et al., 2020; Stokes et al., 2021). The challenge of rugby's injurious nature, as Pollock (2014) concisely explains, is that 'there is a cultural expectation and acceptance of ... rugby injury'. Elsewhere, Darko (2012) and Collins (2002) argue that the culture of rugby union encourages players to give themselves to the cause (White and Hobson, 2017; Anderson and White, 2017), meaning that the rugby players are subordinates to rugby union's social image and reputation.

I shall now turn my attention to contemporary rugby union. Sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 will focus specifically on England Rugby's core values, and section 2.5.4 will outline what academic evidence suggests about rugby union's culture. Finally, in section 2.5.5 I will look at rugby union's emergence in a criminological context. Section 2.5.6 and 2.5.7 consider rugby union as a site for catharsis and a mechanism of social control, and section 2.5.8 considers a non-contact version of the sport known as touch rugby.

2.5.2 Rugby union's formal and informal values

Goffman (1959) suggested that all structured contexts are governed by functional necessities, what Muir and Seitz (2004:309) describe as the 'nonconventional behaviours [that] maintain cohesiveness ... reaffirm ... legitimacy and provide ... shared identity and purpose'. However, functional necessities are not always behavioural but can be ritualistic, emotional, attitudinal and/or ceremonial (Durkheim, 1965; McGuire, 2008:198). Collins and Makowsky (1989) suggest that functional necessities are functional in the sense that they serve as a mechanism to maintain group cohesion and instil localised ideologies. Rugby union's functional necessities are integral to an exploration of rugby union as a context for PYD for three main reasons. First, the functional necessities comprise the core of rugby union's contemporary existence. Second, as Messner (1992) notes, when people enter a sporting context, they do not merely interact with a sport but experience an organised institution with its own unique values. Through sport, participants are exposed to, and at the mercy of, local values, hierarchies and structures. Thus, understanding how rugby union can be a vehicle for PYD means acknowledging the cultural and social discourses participants interact with when learning the game. Third, as Muir and Seitz (2004:309) note in their research exploring collegiate rugby union, 'the more closely the individual's behaviour parallels the philosophies of the group, the higher the degree of adulation and acceptance'. Belonging and inclusion are commonly cited strengths of sport in relation to marginalised young people, and therefore an exploration of functional necessities is integral. Doing so will allow a broader understanding of the behaviours and attitudes rugby union players must display to belong to the sport.

2.5.3 England Rugby's core values (TREDS)

England Rugby, also known as the Rugby Football Union (RFU), is the national governing body for grassroots and elite rugby across England. Their core values include teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship (TREDS, England Rugby, no date:online). They explain that these core values are what makes rugby union unique and suggest that

the values comprising TREDs contribute to why rugby union and rugby players are held in high social regard. Table 5 illustrates TREDs as outlined by England Rugby.

Table 5: England Rugby's core values (TREDs)

Core value	Description
Teamwork	<p>We welcome all new team members and include all because working as a team enriches our lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We play selflessly: working for the team, not for ourselves alone, both on and off the field. • We take pride in our team, rely on one another, and understand that each player has a part to play. • We speak out if our team or sport is threatened by inappropriate words or actions.
Respect	<p>We hold in high esteem our sport, its values and traditions and earn the respect of others by the way we behave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We respect our match officials and accept their decisions. • We respect opposition players and supporters. • We value our coaches and those who run our clubs and treat clubhouses with consideration.
Enjoyment	<p>We encourage players to enjoy training and playing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use our sport to adopt a healthy lifestyle and build life skills. • We safeguard our young players and help them have fun. • We enjoy being part of a team and part of the rugby family because it enhances confidence and self-esteem.

Discipline	<p>We ensure that our sport is one of controlled physical endeavor and that we are honest and fair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We obey the laws of the game which ensure an inclusive and exciting global game. • We support our disciplinary system, which protects our sport and upholds its values. • We observe the sport’s laws and regulations and report serious breaches.
Sportsmanship	<p>We uphold the rugby tradition of camaraderie with teammates and opposition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We observe fair play both on and off the pitch and are generous in victory and dignified in defeat. • We play to win but not at all costs and recognise both endeavor and achievement. • We ensure that the wellbeing and development of individual players is central to all rugby activity.

In principle, these core values present rugby union as a site uniquely positioned to facilitate PYD because they have connections to the 4 C’s –competence, confidence, connection and character- featured in Vierimaa et al.’s (2017:6) PAF. For example, teamwork, respect, enjoyment and sportsmanship are all directly cited in TREDs and the PAF. Moreover, England Rugbys’ discipline value has inferences of competence, character and personal development, featured in the PAF. However, it is important to outline that these core values are delivered by England Rugby: an organisation with a vested interest in preserving and protecting rugby union as a sport and subculture, and an organisation responsible for providing rugby union in England with esteem and high regard. In this respect, TREDs serves as a biased account of the characteristics of rugby union as a sport and subculture.

2.5.4 Rugby union's functional necessities: The academic evidence

England Rugby's core values (TREDS) make rugby union worthy of consideration as a sport to facilitate PYD. However, empirical academic research has suggested that rugby union exists as a toxic subculture. Muir and Seitz (2004:323), in their research on collegiate rugby players, observe that players performed their 'deviancy' through behaviours of 'machismo, homophobia and misogyny', which served a primary function in developing group cohesiveness. This observation has prior support: Wughalter (1994:88) critically claims that 'nowhere are masculinity and misogyny so entwined than on the rugby field'. However, it is not that rugby merely provides an arena for these behaviours to be performed. Muir and Seitz (2004) observe that when boys enter rugby contexts, they are indoctrinated into an ideology centred around hooliganism, dangerous alcohol consumption and toxic masculine practices. They argue that rugby union has become a subculture where toxic masculine practices are learned by rugby players as mechanisms to achieve legitimacy. This reaffirms that rugby union provides what Schacht (1996:562) describes as a 'training field' in deviant masculine practices. Of notable mention is that rugby players hang their identity on their capacity to endure and inflict pain, and when injured are encouraged to hide the injury or wear it as a badge of honour (Muir and Seitz, 2004; Schacht, 1996; Parry et al., 2021). In a broader context, behaviours identified as being prevalent in rugby union's subculture have been argued as primary mechanisms used by men to conceal insecurity and vulnerability (Anderson, 2008; Light and Kirk, 2000; Campbell et al., 2006; Price and Parker, 2003).

The knowledge above suggests that rugby union's dominant masculine values have transitioned away from gross displays of strength and physical prowess towards more nuanced and social displays of masculinity and dominance. This transition coincides with ideas that rugby union no longer develops 'gentle' characteristics but centralises 'manly' ideals (Nauright and Chandler, 1996). It is reasonable to postulate that, whilst professional rugby union players are becoming more 'manly' through increased musculature and physical prowess, those in amateur settings are struggling to meet the ideal of the 'perfect rugby man'. Therefore, they seek to reinforce their power in off-field displays. This suggests that rugby union is both a performance site and training ground for dangerous and unsafe

masculine behaviour. It also suggests that the production of such behaviour is how players legitimise their behaviours and identities.

2.5.5 Rugby union in a youth justice context

Rugby union has not been a prominent sport in the youth justice or youth development context. However, since rugby union's professionalisation, practitioners have begun to use it in this context as an engagement and development tool. Programmes such as Dallaglio RugbyWorks have evidenced success in youth development contexts within schools and pupil referral units⁴. They argue that rugby union has acted as a vehicle to engage socially marginalised young people. However, the *RugbyWorks Social Impact Report 2017* is unsurprisingly focused on evidencing 'impact' and presents no real critique of the sport (Dallaglio RugbyWorks, 2017). Their recent *Annual Review 2019/20* is similarly one-dimensional and reads more as a marketing catalogue than a document of any rigour in understanding rugby union's potential for facilitating PYD (Dallaglio RugbyWorks, 2021).

Meek (2012), Meek and Lewis (2014), and the Saracens Foundation (2020), in their discussions of the rugby-union-based development programmes *2nd Chance Project* and *Get Onside*, explain that rugby union has been used effectively with young men in prisons. Participants in these projects are said to have developed increased motivation and an ability to focus, developed positive relationships and improved behaviours. Meek (2012:6) explained that the *2nd Chance Project* has used rugby union in 'meeting resettlement needs and facilitating transition from custody to community'. The Saracens Foundation (2020:online) outlined that *Get Onside* had helped participants 'address the challenges that they faced both during their sentence and on release from prison'. Neither programme provided a critical examination of rugby union's limitations and the challenges that participants face when participating in the sport. Considering rugby union's interconnection

⁴ A pupil referral unit (PRU) is a name for a school which caters for children who are unable to attend a mainstream school. Possible reasons why a child attends a PRU can include permanent exclusion from mainstream education; displaying dangerous or problematic behaviours such as aggression, school refusal or poor mental health; being the victim of bullying; or complex special education needs.

with masculinity, and masculinity's interconnection with violence, which I will explore in due course, it is troubling that none of the above reports interrogate masculinity in rugby. My exploration of KCIT fills this void by taking a more 'whole package' (Wellard, 2002:238) approach which accounts for rugby union as a sporting culture, not simply a site for playing rugby.

Nevertheless, these projects demonstrate that rugby union can be used as an intervention activity within youth justice settings. However, whilst they are worthy of acknowledgement, they are unlike KCIT, as they have been delivered in prisons and schools. The programmes mentioned above have overly focused on celebrating rugby and have not grappled with rugby union as a problematic sport. Therefore, they overlook rugby union's limitations. However, the celebrated characteristics are important to explore. The following section outlines these and some project-specific characteristics. As rugby union is a relatively new feature in sport criminology, evidence is scarce. Therefore, I have situated my arguments alongside wider discussions of other combat sports such as boxing and mixed martial arts to add depth and nuance to this review.

2.5.6 Rugby union and catharsis

Meek (2018) argues that rugby union has a distinct development and engagement capacity for males in a criminal justice context. It provides them an opportunity to express their masculinity and relieve pent-up stress and aggression. This is a common argument surrounding combat sports. Catharsis is the notion that upon the release of an emotion, in this case stress or aggression, an individual becomes relieved of it and free from it (Lorenz, 1966; Moor, 1966). Coalter et al. (2000:35) note that rugby union facilitates catharsis

by providing an opportunity for an institutionalised display of force, strength and competitiveness and the opportunity for displays of adolescent masculinity.

Although the idea of rugby union providing catharsis is worth consideration in relation to rugby union's functionality for justice-involved young people, it is not a concept supportive

to PYD. In broader sport criminology discussions, Jump (2020) has been critical of scholars celebrating catharsis as a positive outcome. She argues that sports criminologists should move beyond celebrating sport for its cathartic potential, because catharsis does not enable young people to overcome years of anger and trauma.

Celebrating and promoting catharsis have been argued to have a detrimental impact on PYD, by reducing sport to a facilitator of deficit reduction. Crowther et al. (forthcoming, 2022) argue that celebrating catharsis as a positive outcome positions the emotions that are being purged through sport as problematic and in need of expulsion. Moreover, this could also be seen as a way of blaming individuals for their emotions. This is a critical point in relation to this exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for PYD, and a valuable one considering evidence suggests that anger and stress are emotional responses to feeling vulnerable (Newsom, 2015).

Pollock (2014) takes a more critical sociological perspective on the notion of rugby union providing catharsis. She argues that the idea is both superfluous and oversimplistic. She notes that catharsis situates sport as a mechanism of social pacification, whereby exposure to masculine physicality and sport-based violence becomes accepted as a mechanism for appeasing aggression. Pollock (2014) argues that promoting and celebrating catharsis positions rugby union as a mechanism of social control. The idea of catharsis is opposed to PYD, and the findings of this thesis demonstrate that whilst rugby union can offer catharsis, it can also be a source of frustration and stress.

2.5.7 Rugby union as a social control mechanism

Apart from arguing that rugby union provides catharsis, Meek (2018) also suggests that in a prison setting, rugby union provides prisoners respite from prison regimes, whilst also providing an incentive for good behaviour. However, Pollock's (2014) logic mentioned above can also be effectively applied here. For instance, the use of rugby union as a behavioural incentive undoubtedly reduces it to a mechanism for social control, an approach not conducive to PYD. The incentivisation of rugby union in this way undermines any

development potential rugby union may have and positions it as a reward- or punishment-based activity. Crowther et al. (forthcoming, 2022) critique the notion that rugby provides a welcome break from justice regimes for young people, suggesting that in terms of PYD the notion is problematic – the reality of rugby union being a welcome break means that it is merely an activity better than the alternative. This may say more about wider youth justice provision than it does about rugby union. Crowther et al.'s (forthcoming, 2022) research is notable in relation to rugby union's appeal in youth justice. The data they present suggests that rugby union is only valuable to young people as an alternative to other justice provision.

2.5.8 Touch rugby

It is growing more common for sports initiatives to blur boundaries and categorisations of sport to increase sport's accessibility and pedagogical functions (Sterchele, 2015; Pizzolati and Sterchele, 2016). Among other examples, the modified version of rugby union known as touch rugby or 'touch' is relevant. Touch rugby was a key feature of the KCIT project, and it is worth exploring the associated literature. There are numerous articles exploring the physical demands and injury concerns within touch rugby, yet the discussion of touch rugby in the social sciences, particularly in relation to youth justice, is scarce. One possible reason is that touch rugby may be considered not as a stand-alone sport, but as a training method and subcategory of rugby union. Touch rugby has, however, been theorised as a pedagogical tool suitable for novice participants (McKenzie and Gordon, 2020).

Rugby is a potent example of a sport that is appealing to men because it offers violence and displays of aggression (Coalter et al., 2000; Matthews, 2014). In his publication entitled *'Defamiliarizing Heavy-Contact Sports: A Critical Examination of Rugby, Discipline, and Pleasure'* Pringle (2009:215) referenced Lyng's (1990) concept of 'edgework' and compared rugby to sadomasochism. In doing so, he highlights the fact that rugby union's seduction relates to how the sport's 'bruising physicality' ignites feelings of pain, pleasure, anger, excitement and fear in those who play: the 'embodied risk and confrontational thrills of rugby [that take] players to an intoxicating and spine-tingling edge' (Pringle, 2009:224).

Pringle (2009) reinforces his argument by noting that touch rugby, with its omission of violence and risk of pain and injury, can result in the sport providing a less intense and therefore unpleasurable experience.

There are several distinctions between full contact rugby union and touch rugby. The foremost is that in touch rugby, most of rugby union's more injurious components⁵ are removed, and the tackle is replaced by a touch with the hand(s). Touch rugby relies on what Morrell's (2017: 631) research succinctly describes as 'the honour system of touch', a system which dictates that a tackle is complete when the attacker and defender agree that a touch has been made. Morrell's (2017) research challenges Pringle's (2009) prior argument that touch rugby is not pleasurable, and suggests that the sport has an alternative appeal. Morrell (2017) argues that touch rugby's lure is its inclusivity and adaptability, noting that the sport is adjustable to the needs of the players and the demands of the context. In touch rugby the game is defined by the players, and they negotiate everything from the rules of play to the size of the pitch. Touch rugby is a game that does not rely on the ritualistic prioritisation of success and winning. Instead it focuses on skill and enjoyment by encouraging creativity through evasive and illusionary plays such as the dummy⁶ (Morrell, 2017). More recently, McKenzie and Gordon (2020) define touch rugby as a simple game that promotes many of the competencies needed for the full contact game including running, passing and support play. They note that it does so alongside exposing players to the basic attacking and defensive principles of the game. For reasons related to this, touch rugby appears to be a suitable game for novice young people, such as those featured in this thesis. It also appears to be more conducive to PYD, as honour is a marker of character and fun is deemed a primary goal of participation.

The distinction between full contact rugby union as described by Pringle (2009) and touch rugby as explored by Morrell (2017) is important to unpack in relation to using rugby union in youth justice, and indeed to facilitate PYD. Full contact rugby union relies on explicit and exaggerated displays of masculinity (strength, power, aggression and discipline) to function.

⁵ Scrums, mauls and rucks (Pollock, 2014).

⁶ When a player fakes to pass but keeps the ball.

In contrast, touch rugby removes the reliance on these displays of masculinity by removing or replacing the *contact* elements of the game. In this respect, touch rugby 'provides a different reading of masculinity, one that is not vested in powerful bodies and domination' (Morrell, 2017:662). Therefore, touch rugby provides players some scope for deviation from rugby's traditionally hegemonic codes. It is possible that touch rugby facilitates the recognition of difference and diversity, and therefore promotes an ethos of inclusivity, thus providing greater scope for increased connection and competence.

As well as being more inclusive, touch rugby is also safer than its full contact counterpart. A prominent body of literature has advocated that non-contact forms of rugby such as touch or tag rugby⁷ should be the default option when delivering rugby sessions to novice participants, particularly when the sport is not being used for competition or performance (Batten et al., 2016; White et al., 2018; Pollock, 2014; Pollock and Kirkwood, 2016). Advocates such as Pollock et al. (2017) believe that by replacing full contact rugby with touch rugby, rugby coaches can lessen the risk of injury for vulnerable young people.

So far, this chapter has reviewed the literature relating to youth justice, PYD and rugby union. The literature seems to suggest that whilst sport has the potential to contribute to PYD, rugby union may be limited in doing so in a youth justice context with vulnerable young people. According to the literature relating to rugby unions' history, the sport's core values and cultural norms, and rationales for rugby delivery in youth justice contexts, it appears that rugby union has the potential to either support or work against PYD. In this respect, England Rugby in their core values (TREDS) appear to give the sport merit as a vehicle for PYD, although the historical and cultural values suggest that the sport simply offers masculinisation. The rationales for the delivery of sport in youth justice contexts appear to be a key factor for consideration in how the sport aligns with the philosophy of PYD. Also, touch rugby, a non-contact version of rugby, seems more closely aligned with PYD for novice participants. This chapter has thus provided a solid foundation for exploring KCIT

⁷ A non-contact version of rugby where players wear a belt with 'tags' attached around the waist. The removal of a tag signals a tackle.

as a vehicle for PYD. However, I cannot do so without first considering masculinity; it was important to include masculinity discourses in this research because they underpin the three components that KCIT intersects – youth justice, young people and rugby union (Figure 1).

2.6 Masculinity

In UK sport development policy, in the PYD literature and in discussions of rugby union in a youth justice context there is insufficient attention to the role of masculinity (Baumgartner, 2012). In relation to PYD, recent discussion from Newman et al. (2021) acknowledged the masculinity literature and argued that sports programmes can be used as vehicle for developing a positive masculinity. However, their research was focused on a project that comprised a short-term sport camp with a notable faith and spirituality element offered to young people without experience of the YJS. It is therefore integral to explore masculinity, particularly in relation to the sport of rugby union, not least because sport is fundamentally a masculine domain based on masculine components (Messner, 1992). As previously described, rugby union has sustained a reputation for masculinisation. With that in mind, I will explore the literature on masculinity, moving towards discussions related to the demographic group featured in this thesis – marginalised young men. I will conclude by exploring masculinity research related to sport.

2.6.1 Definitions of masculinity

This thesis draws on Connell's understanding of masculinity. Connell (2010:68) explains that masculinity is not a fixed state of being but a multifaceted and complex concept that 'does not exist, except in contrast to femininity'; in doing so, Connell (2010) signals that masculinity is an oppositional concept, meaning that to define the self as masculine, men distance themselves from femininity (Tolson, 2004). Connell's (2010:68–71) research clarifies that masculinity is not fixed or achievable, yet he notes that despite this, 'mass culture generally assumes ... [the existence of] "real men", "natural men" and the "deep masculine"'. His research notes that masculinity fluid and contestable and exists as a

constant 'project' (Connell, 2010:72). Masculinity is thought to be achievable but remains a constant work in progress. Connell (2010) therefore argues that at any given time multiple masculinities exist: some marginalised, some subordinate and some hegemonic, i.e., dominant.

Connell (2010:77) speaks of hegemonic masculinity as the masculinity with cultural and institutional dominance. He argues that hegemonic masculinity is dominant because it is embodied by the most powerful groups in society, and all other masculinities are subordinate or marginalised. Connell (2010) argues that masculinity is fluid and contestable across time and place. However, Kimmel (1994:125) notes that hegemonic masculinity is generally 'a man *in* power, a man *with* power and a man *of* power', noting that in Western societies power can come from 'being strong, successful, capable, reliable and in control' (Kimmel, 1994:24). Whilst hegemonic masculinity appears equitable to power and dominance, subordinate and marginalised masculinities are those that hold limited power. Connell (2010) considers that in general, subordinates to hegemonic masculinity are women, non-white men, men from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and effeminate and homo-sexual men.

For men in subordinate and marginalised positions such as justice-involved young men, 'power', although desired, is generally unobtainable. The 'real man' ideal is equally hard to accomplish. Nevertheless, Connell (2010) notes that most men strive for a 'complicit masculinity'. To achieve this, men deliver a perception of embodying a dominant masculinity, whilst seeking as best as possible to avoid explicit negotiations of power.

Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory provides a useful reference; however, it is limited in its use in understanding the masculine practices of the participants at KCIT. The young men in this thesis, who were from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds, were experiencing exclusion, and were embedded in the YJS, therefore were subordinates to the wider cultural dominance of hegemonic masculinity. Because of their limited institutional and social means of progression, they were unlikely to develop the kind of power that would elevate them to

hegemonic status. Nevertheless, they craved feelings of power and dominance and therefore were complicit with hegemonic masculinity.

2.6.2 Masculine crisis and vulnerability

The section above illustrates that masculinity is interconnected with the concept of power, particularly obtaining and performing power. Men hold an overall position of dominance in patriarchal societies like the UK. Yet evidence suggests that factors such as male academic inadequacy, decline in male well-being, dwindling opportunities for displays of physical masculinity through manual labour, and increased prominence of feminism have left masculinity in a state of 'crisis' (Messner, 1992; Beynon, 2002; Bly, 2001; Collier, 1998; Connell, 2010; Edwards, 2006), thus leaving masculinity subject to 'crisis talk' (Roberts, 2014:8). However, 'crisis talk' is not new. Roberts (2014:5) suggests that masculinity has a sustained history of such talk and, of concern to this thesis, argues that team sports such as rugby were formalised out of resistance to 'crisis talk' regarding male 'softening'. This is unsurprising because although masculinity is interconnected with strength and power, researchers have consistently argued that masculinity is deeply vulnerable (Jump, 2020; Chodorow, 1978; Epstein, 1991).

In response to this crisis, it is suggested that men and boys employ toxic masculinity techniques to conceal vulnerability (De Visser et al., 2009; Mishkind et al., 1986). The following techniques are arguably toxic because they can encourage feelings of entitlement and dominance, whilst distancing men from femininity in ways that can be damaging to society and, indeed, men themselves. For working-class men this has historically been through practices such as displays of brute strength, mastery of the body and of machines, and group solidarity (Cunneen and White, 1996). These practices are said to have broadened over time to include rejecting emotion and denying weakness (Salam, 2019; Bowman, 2020), developing hard muscular physiques (Klein, 1993; Andreasson and Johansson, 2014; Edwards et al., 2017) and displaying violent potential (Ellis, 2016; Hobbs et al., 2003; Monaghan, 2002; Hobbs et al., 2007) and 'symbolic weaponry' (Cranswick et al., 2020:1), or engaging in excessive consumption of commodities such as goods, alcohol and

drugs (Alexander, 2003; Kotzé and Antonopoulos, 2021). All these practices are integral to the 'ideal rugby man' social image, making it reasonable to claim that the 'rugby man identity' is built on toxic masculine behaviours and attitudes.

In relation to crisis arguments, the literature suggests that masculinity is an experiential struggle. Hoch (2004:102), for example, suggests that masculinity is an

Endless kind of warfare ... an obstacle course ... an endless test in which the contestants must prove their potency by beating back all rivals, getting up and over hurdles, keeping absolutely cool, not losing face, showing no sign of weakness.

The literature suggests that men and boys experiencing marginalisation become hypersensitive and fearful of further disempowerment (Anderson, 2000). Developing this, Hall (2012), Ellis (2016) and Winlow (2012) have contributed to an understanding that many marginalised males develop their masculine ideologies in ultra-competitive environments in which they become hypersensitive to prospective humiliation and further marginalisation and learn that anger and violence are appropriate mechanisms of survival.

These ideas are of note for this thesis for several reasons. First, they suggest that male behaviours and attitudes should not be taken at face value and demonstrate that they can be used to conceal internal vulnerability. Second, they suggest that young men engage in a process of symbolic interaction whereby they approach opportunities such as KCIT as a test or an opportunity for failure, but also as a site for extracting power from ideals and practices that support their masculinity project. This thesis seeks to understand the masculine practices the young men engaged in and their relationship to rugby and PYD.

2.6.3 Adolescent masculinity

Connell (2010:72) argues that masculinity remains a 'project' under constant construction and refinement. Although this is considered applicable to all men, it is particularly true for adolescent males, who the literature defines as 'growing person[s]' heading towards an

'adult world' (Connell, 2010:1) and who exist in what Anderson (2000:67–72) terms the 'social shuffle'. Adolescence is a period of 'status passage' (Anderson, 2000) where adolescent men must make decisions about which way to direct their 'project' (Connell, 2010:72). Henderson et al. (2007; cited in Woodman and Wyn, 2015:1404) summarised these ideas, suggesting that:

At a particular point in time, young people face distinctive conditions that require their active engagement in 'rewriting' the rules of making a life. At such times, young people face new demands to invent youth and young adulthood.

Anderson (2000:67) argues that adolescent young men work towards establishing their 'way of being', yet he observes that marginalised adolescent boys experience what Cloward and Ohlin (1960:86) describe as an 'intense frustration' which results from disconnection between what is desired and what is available. Roberts (2017:1) suggests that working-class adolescent boys often labour towards the unachievable goal of being 'completely masculine', a labour performed through a 'hardened masculinity' and hyper-conforming to traditional masculine dispositions and ideologies. The precarity of adolescent masculinity is such that young men must continually claim their identity through performance and interaction.

These ideas are important in assessing adolescent young men's experience of rugby union. First, they demonstrate that adolescent young men face anxiety about being dominated. Second, they allow appreciation of ideas that adolescent young men are in a state of passage, whereby they look to use available mechanisms to shape their identity. This suggests that a programme such as KCIT could be perceived as threatening but could also serve as an opportunity for identity development. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that a programme such as KCIT has a unique potential to directly challenge or reinforce definitions of masculinity, either toxic or otherwise, depending on the opportunities and experiences that it facilitates.

2.6.4 Available methods for marginalised boys to perform their masculinity

The section above explained that adolescence is both a formative and frustrating period for marginalised young men faced with establishing their identity and finding their way in the world. Young men often experience frustration due to the limited means of supporting their gender project, a project which Roberts (2017:274) suggests many working-class men direct towards the idea of being 'completely masculine'. Mac an Ghail (1996:56–59) provides a useful insight into available means that can support masculine projects. He observes that because of socio-cultural advancement and decreasing opportunities for men to explore and perform their masculinity, only three practices remain available – the three F's, 'fucking, fighting and football'. Jump (2020) develops this argument, suggesting that violence and sport are potent facilitators of male gratification. I will explore violence (including the definition of violence used in this research) and sport in relation to masculinity in the following sections.

It is well accepted that masculinity is not a state of being but an incomplete project that requires consistent attention and labour (Connell, 2010). However, a notable body of literature (Cassino and Besen-Cassino, 2020; Roberts, 2017; Chimot and Louveau, 2010) has suggested that young men still hold feelings of wishing and endeavouring to become completely masculine. Hoch (2004:96–102) argues that these feelings stem from social demands placed on young men to 'prove themselves' and show they 'measure up' (Hoch, 2004:96–102). This socialisation is said to result in young men craving validation (Hoch, 2004; Pleck, 2004; Tolson, 2004; Willis, 2004) and developing a belief that they are entitled to both power and dominance, and duty bound to avoid domination. Winlow and Hall (2009) observe that social demands to prove masculinity accompanied with socialised feelings of entitlement are powerful forces. These forces can compel young men to engage in behaviours such as crime and violence which can serve as localised proof of masculinity.

Whilst it would be easy to suggest that validating and performing masculinity through violence and crime serves as a mechanism of progression, the literature suggests that this is not the case. Arendt (1970), for example, suggests that crime and violence are methods of

resisting powerlessness, and often 'manifest in the absence of power'. Arendt (1970) suggests that violence is a mechanism employed by the vulnerable to temporarily exert their will over people and situations. In this respect, violence can be seen as a mode of resistance to feelings of vulnerability: but also, as an indication that the powerless person is aware of their powerlessness. Because as Arendt (1998: 200) explains, power 'exists only in its actualization'. In other words, power is neither implicitly held by individuals nor can it be taken for granted, conversely power must be negotiated through interaction, demonstrated through performance, and secured in social spaces. Violence is a mechanism that covers all facets of the individual quest to secure one's position on the local hierarchy of power. Support for this idea comes from Hoch (2004:96–102), who notes that crime and violence are mechanisms for deflecting claims of impotence, which she suggests is 'absolutely the worst thing a man can be' in their interpretations of themselves and their masculinity. Aside from this, Winlow (2001) observes that resistance (e.g., criminality and violence) is a functional mechanism that men can employ to secure a sense of self and a social identity and feel a sense of power (Messerschmidt, 1993; Connell, 1983). It is clear that Arendt (1970) work on violence is confoundingly paradoxical in its notion that violence is a manifestation of powerlessness and simultaneously the beginnings of a quest to move beyond the current state of being. It is concurrently a source of resistance and action but likely always a method of negotiation.

Although the above body of work on violence is not strictly a focal point of this research, such understandings are pertinent to consider when researching young people with experiences of negotiating violence when faced with vulnerability. Particularly when such research explores young people's interaction with an unfamiliar context and sport which has the potential to exasperate vulnerability. Taking these understandings forward allows an opportunity to appreciate that any displays of violence or actions to challenge the status quo within KCIT are likely performances of resistance to feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness, but also the beginnings of a quest to move beyond and elevate their position in the local hierarchy of power.

The literature suggests that several toxic methods are used by working-class boys to achieve masculine validation and prove masculinity (Kenway and Kraack 2004; MacLeod, 2009; Stahl, 2015). These include physical and verbal displays of homophobia, and public expressions of heterosexuality and dominance through means such as misogyny and discussions of sexual conquests involving women. Physical displays of masculinity through sport and violence are considered two definitive mechanisms of masculine validation (Kehily and Nayak, 1997; Martino, 1999; McDowell, 2003; Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Kenway et al., 2006; Ingram, 2009; Ward, 2015), whilst resistance and ‘exploration of nonconformist behaviours’ (e.g., crime and drug use) are seen as creative ways for men to validate their masculinity in the context of limited means (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960:86).

Adolescent boys struggle with the prospect of feeling powerless and feel compelled to prove themselves. The ethos of rugby union arguably aligns with Mac an Ghail’s (1996) three F’s: ‘fucking, fighting and football’. Therefore, rugby arguably has the potential to offer masculine gratification, and feelings of validation and power that are often achievable and accessible through alternative methods involving crime and violence. However, it is important to investigate *how* rugby union potentially offers these elements and how this relates to the power and validation marginalised adolescents can achieve elsewhere, for instance, through crime and violence.

2.6.5 Violence as a social interaction

Violence is a masculine practice so interconnected with rugby union that Pringle (2001:425) describes rugby union as a ‘sport of violence’. Ritchie and Ritchie (1993:100) further note that although ‘other sports may become violent ... Rugby *is* violent’. Pringle (2001:428) argues that ‘rugby provides positive sanctions for violence’ and notes that rugby players are celebrated as ‘heroic’ for their capacity to negotiate violence socially and with the self. Sport-based violence is a social negotiation for three key reasons. First, it is a social interaction between two or more individuals where each uses violence to secure positions of dominance and achieve their goals (Messner, 1990). Second, it constitutes a social

performance in that it is performed in front of others, allowing athletes to influence definitions others hold of them. Third, athletes negotiate violence with the self by willingly exposing their bodies to intense physical training routines and diets, as well as to the prospect of pain and injury (White et al., 1995).

Audi's (1971:59) definition of violence is

A physical attack upon, or the vigorous physical abuse of, or vigorous physical struggle against, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous physiological abuse of, or the sharp, caustic psychological attack upon, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous, or incendiary or malicious and vigorous destruction or damaging of property or potential property.

Audi's (1971) definition is used in this thesis because it provides a holistic basis for understanding what constitutes violence and shows that violence is not solely a physical practice. Violence is a component of male adolescent life that has received significant attention from scholars (Wood, 2019; Smithson and Ralphs, 2016), as well as the UK government (O'Connor and Waddell, 2015; Home Office, 2011). The young men who participated in KCIT can be considered perpetrators of violence as per Audi's definition.

It has been widely accepted that crime and violence can be a pleasurable experience for men, and some argue that violence provides feelings of emotional appeasement, satisfaction and visceral pleasure, i.e., catharsis (Katz, 1988; Spaaij, 2008; Gray and Stern, 2019; Emsley, 2005). However, over time it has become more accepted that violence is not always driven by emotion but that it also has a significant social element (Pathan, 2020).

Building on Newburn and Stanko's (1993:44) argument that men across all social classes use violence as a technique to find their place on the 'hierarchies of power', Winlow (2012) argues that violence has become a routinely negotiated component of male day-to-day life (Stanko, 1990; Hobbs, 1988). The literature suggests that over time males have developed an acute awareness to where violence can facilitate dominance (Winlow, 2012; Willis, 1990;

Winlow and Hall, 2009; Anderson, 2000; Ellis, 2012). My interpretation of this knowledge is that even when violence is highly unlikely, prospective violence and resultant humiliation is at the forefront of the male psyche. The idea that violence is a social interaction is important to acknowledge in relation to this thesis because, as Hall (2012; 2014) argues, whilst the social interaction of violence can facilitate male validation, it is also a source of danger and anxiety. In this respect, as Hall (2012) explains, violence must be carefully negotiated. This knowledge enabled this thesis to explore KCIT with an understanding that young men entering the violent rugby space may do so with a preoccupation for avoiding humiliation and a readiness to exploit opportunities for domination.

2.6.6 Avoiding violence

Anderson (2000), through his work with marginalised young people, observed and conceptualised the 'code of the street'. He notes that violence is a powerful mechanism used by powerless young men. It allows them to negotiate the tensions between respect and disrespect that they experience on the street. Anderson (2000) clarifies that violence provides multiple sociological functions for young people: the foundation of respect, status and belonging, but also provides a way for young men to conceal vulnerability, demonstrate resistance and avoid future conflict. It has also been considered that violence can serve as a mechanism for overcoming shame (Gilligan, 2003). In outlining the 'code of the street', Anderson (2000) shows that violence is not an innate masculine trait but is the outcome of socialisation and circumstance (Ward, 2015). This is an argument that has historical academic support (Messner, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 1985; Pleck, 2004).

To understand rugby union in terms of providing a positive experience and PYD for justice-involved young men with experiences of violence, it is important to explore the literature outlining some broader dynamics of violence. Historical evidence suggests that most men do not feel comfortable producing violence (Ewing, 1982; Pleck, 2004; Scher and Stevens, 1987), one reason being that the prospect of experiencing physical domination acts as an identity threat which risks moving men lower down the masculine hierarchy (Archer, 1994). Ellis (2016:81) further argues that experiences of physical domination can cause 'wounded

pride', which he explains leads to chronic anxiety about personal safety. He further notes that:

The experience of being physically dominated ... is likely to be powerfully humiliating for men who have emerged from marginal social locations that continue to cling obsessively to an image of powerful, invulnerable masculinity. (Ellis, 2016:36)

In relation to the appropriateness of delivering rugby union programmes in a youth justice context, the knowledge that physical domination can incite humiliation is important to consider, not least because it is well established that humiliation often provides the basis for male rage, aggression and violence (Katz, 1988; Polk, 1994; Spierenburg, 2008). Moreover, understanding that violence is learned through socialisation and is responsive to social contexts is significant in relation to the idea of engaging young people with experiences of violence in the violent sport that is rugby union. The knowledge that violence for many males is a contextually reflective practice suggests that marginalised young men may view rugby union as simply another context where violence must be negotiated.

2.6.7 Sport and masculinity

Masculinity is a feature of sport underacknowledged in discussions of sport and rugby criminology. This is surprising considering that gender research argues that sport is a defining context for male validation (Connell, 1983; Messner, 1992; Jump, 2020). The primary appeal of sport is its facilitation of interaction with masculine concepts and values including competition, aggression and violence (Scruton and Flintoff, 2002; Jump, 2020). I will explore some of the masculine discourses in sport but will limit this exploration to those that have potential to interact with sport as a vehicle for PYD.

Sport is culturally accepted as a site where young people can learn values such as cooperation and how to be gracious in both winning and losing (Ferris et al., 2015; Coakley,

2006; Lumpkin, 2011). Sport is also viewed to be character building and provides a site for social inclusion (Coakley, 2007; Coalter, 2017). However, sport mostly does not achieve these outcomes, and whilst it often fails in these areas, it largely succeeds in promoting interpersonal and self-directed violence and complicity with masculine ideals

The interconnectedness between sport and masculinity is prevalent to the extent that Messner (1992) suggests that the social context of sport is reliant on masculine concepts. He extends his argument to suggest that sport provides participants with magnified exposure to masculine concepts of power, dominance, hierarchy and competition. Messner (1992) further notes that by engaging in sport and experiencing these concepts, men can experience significant access to power, respect and recognition. Sport and masculinity are therefore mutually reinforcing factors. This knowledge has become influential to the extent that male participation in sport resists the fluidity and contestability of male dominance under hegemonic masculinity theory. Pleck (2004:63), for example, argues that 'refusal to compete becomes imbued with the imagery of homosexuality'. These understandings suggest that regardless of how appropriate and relevant a prospective sport experience is, by entering the sporting arena, men and boys receive an elevated masculine status and an opportunity for social progression. However, beyond an elevated masculine status, this knowledge does little to demonstrate how sport can better equip young people to achieve PYD. I shall now explore the types of development sport encourages in young men.

2.5.8 Sport, Power and violence

Participation in sport provides men and boys with opportunities to experience masculine power and feel empowered. Sport initiates men and boys into broader masculine hegemonic standards. Sport is often seen as a site for social progression (Anderson, 2011; Forsell et al., 2020). However, contrasting arguments have emerged to suggest that sport rarely serves as an opportunity for progression. Atkinson (2011) and Matthews (2014) argue that most participants in sport do not access and gain any power that can be transferred to a broader social context to support progression. Their research suggests that sport's offer of

power remains localised to specific sporting arenas and only exists in what Matthews (2014:1) describes as a 'pastiche', i.e., an imitation.

Although not specifically conducted on rugby union, research has demonstrated a link between involvement in sport and increased instances of anti-social behaviour (Faulkner et al., 2007; Gardner et al., 2009). The most notable research comes from Endresen and Olweus (2005), who evidence a link between participation in power/combat/strength sports and involvement in anti-social behaviour. Their research considers that males who engage in power sports (boxing, wrestling, weightlifting and martial arts) display increased levels of violent and anti-social behaviour away from sport. Although their research does not feature discussions of rugby union, it does suggest that contact with 'macho' sporting attitudes, norms and ideals can entrench violent and anti-social attitudes. More recent evidence has suggested that as rugby union is explicitly built around macho codes, it can normalise violence, and therefore potentially promote deviance and violence elsewhere (Jenkins and Ellis, 2011; Abbott and Barber, 2007; Williams et al., 2015; Palermo et al., 2006).

These ideas are notable in relation to exploring KCIT. They suggest that although it is possible for young men to experience empowerment through sport, they highlight that this will likely serve limited practical use in supporting social progression and reducing violence or anti-social behaviour. One factor that likely relates to this is 'relevance'. It is difficult to comprehend how a middle-class sport like rugby union can support the social progression and PYD of marginalised young men, particularly if the sport is socio-economically and culturally disconnected from those who access it. Moreover, the idea that sport only offers 'pastiche' power further limits it as a vehicle for PYD. Irrespective of whether those participating in sports experience power as a 'pastiche', it is important for this thesis to explore an understanding of how power is achieved in sports contexts.

2.6.9 Accessing power through sport

Although it is accepted that sport offers men power, Connell (1990:95) argues that power is mostly reserved for individuals willing to adhere to sport's localised priorities. Messner

(1992) adds support to this, suggesting that sport only serves as a progressive and accepting context for participants willing to match and reproduce the dominant contextual values. Messner (1992:64–71) notes that in all sports, this includes mobilising the ‘body-as-weapon’. What Messner (1992) means by this is that sport encourages participants to see their bodies as weapons to achieve dominance, suggesting that ‘dominance’ is a bi-directional process, i.e., to dominate others and experience progression and success, participants must dominate themselves. This domination, Messner (1992) argues, means inflicting physical and psychological suffering on the self. It is for reasons such as this that a prominent body of academics have claimed that success and progression through sport are only achievable in exchange for the psychological and physiological well-being of those that labour towards it (Connell, 2010; Messner, 1990; Messner and Sabo, 1990; Young, 1993).

Despite these limitations, sport remains a *safe* (read conservative) context for men and boys that provides a notable opportunity to develop masculine status and belonging. Sport has also been considered a safe site within which males can explore their masculinity in various ways. Messner (1992:67) notes that sport provides a context where men can feel ‘an emotionally safe connection with others’. More recent claims suggest that sport provides a context for men to be intimate without having their sexuality interrogated (Matthews, 2014; De Garis, 2000). Roberts et al. (2017:347) observe that sport provides a context where males can engage in semiotic intimacy by ‘hugging profusely’ and engaging in ‘knuckle-touching or chest bumping’. Roberts et al. (2017) add that in sport it is common for men to use banter as a mode of linguistic intimacy to show love and friendship (Lyman, 1987).

2.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the themes comprising the KCIT triad (figure 1), and PYD -the focus of this thesis’, as well as research relating to masculinity, based on an argument that masculinity discourses pervade all elements of the triad. There are several conclusions to be made from this literature review. Despite calls for strengths-based youth justice approaches, the system is considered reductionist, lacking solutions and focused on treating young people. These processes undermine PYD. Although the YJS is considered

lacking in solutions, sport has become a prominent component of its policy (Youth Justice Board, 2019b), and has arguably encouraged a new consideration of Giordano et al.'s (2002) 'hook for change' theory. Much of the sport criminology literature has shifted to considering sport in relation to its 'hooking' potential, i.e., its appeal, and its 'change' potential, i.e., its capacity to promote positive behaviour and identity development. PYD is a prominent approach to change that aligns with broader calls for strengths-based approaches in youth justice. This is because of its focus on asset development and acknowledgement of the interaction between young people and social contexts. Or as the PAF describes: the interaction between young people and the 'dynamic elements' of their lives including 'settings', 'activities' and 'social relationships'.

The PAF outlined by Vierimaa et al. (2017:6) suggests that sports programmes can offer young people opportunities to develop 'competence', 'confidence', 'connections', and 'character', and short-term outcomes that are considered to support long-term 'personal development'. It is clear from the literature that rugby union has a long history in offering personal development, yet its development potential is generally akin to masculinisation. Rugby, and indeed rugby culture, encourages players to subscribe to its masculine ideology. Although rugby has an enduring interconnection with personal development and behaviour control through concepts such as catharsis and discipline, yet it has only recently gained prominence in the YJS. As such, little, if anything is known about the sports capacity to facilitate PYD in that context. The emergence of rugby union in youth justice contexts, alongside its focus on strengths-based youth justice and PYD, needs exploring.

In youth justice contexts, rugby union appears to have gained prominence due to the sports masculine lures that provide the basis of the sports 'hooking potential'. This is notable because the literature exploring rugby union in youth justice and development contexts has scarcely acknowledges the masculinity literature. To provide a holistic exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for justice-involved young men with experiences of violence, I have interrogated the relevant masculinity literature. I will integrate the masculinities literature into my exploration of KCIT.

From this literature review It is debatable whether rugby union has the potential to facilitate PYD. It is likely that how it is delivered determines the potential to support or challenge masculine discourse. To achieve PYD, practitioners using rugby union in a youth justice context should emphasise enjoyment, support self-exploration and empowerment, and prioritise asset development. However, this could be challenging considering the masculine values that give the sport its identity and provide the foundations of its culture. If programmes such as KCIT that deliver hyper-masculine sports such as rugby in a youth justice context cannot overcome the limitations of their interconnection with masculinity, and indeed the inherent limitations of the YJS, it is likely that they will have limited value in facilitating PYD.

Chapter three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reflect on the rationale for conducting this research. It begins by providing a recap of the research aim and questions. It then goes on to provide a brief outline of the rugby-union-based Kicking Crime into Touch project (KCIT). I outline how I accessed KCIT, and how I negotiated my research position with the participants. Following on, an explanation of the research approach and design is provided, after which I outline the important and essential ethical considerations made throughout the research process. This begins with a description of the three participant groups involved in the research, followed by an overview of essential ethical practices including informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Following the section on ethical considerations, the inclusion criteria and the methods used to collect data are outlined. The six-phase thematic analysis process I undertook is then described, after which I discuss how the findings and recommendations from this research should be applied.

3.2 Reflecting on the rationale for my thesis

Rugby has been a major influence in my life. I initially became involved with the sport as a way of losing weight and objecting to my mum's incessant demands for me to attend church⁸. Later in life, rugby became the reason I attended college and contributed to why I went to university. Whilst studying for my undergraduate degree, I became interested in sport sociology and criminology, particularly in understanding the meaning behind sport and how it could be used as an engagement and development tool for marginalised young people.

⁸ Rugby matches and church were at the same time.

Upon completing my undergraduate degree, I was offered a Masters by Research (MRes) studentship to explore a Young Leaders Award designed and delivered by the Archbishop of York Youth Trust. The award was focused on helping primary and secondary school children explore faith, leadership, character and social action. I supplemented this research by working in a pupil referral unit as a sports coach and later as a rugby development officer. Around this time, I became disconnected with pursuing a career in rugby and frustrated at the reality of delivering rugby en masse to young people to meet quantitative targets. I became determined to explore rugby's potential to facilitate youth development. I therefore successfully applied for a PhD studentship at MMU. In my first supervisory meeting, having had KCIT explained to me by my supervision team as a new and innovative project with the aim of delivering rugby union to justice-involved young people, I decided it would be the ideal fit for my experiences and interests.

3.2.1 Research aim and questions

The purpose of this thesis was to provide and critically analyse the role of rugby union in supporting Positive Youth Development (PYD) amongst justice-involved young people. Specifically, I set out to explore justice-involved young people's experiences of rugby union and their subsequent understanding of the game through their participation in KCIT. In relation to the literature on masculinities, I sought to explore the interplay between masculine practices and realities of youth justice, the masculine components inherent in rugby union, the masculine codes and attitudes embodied by the young men participating in KCIT, and how these further interacted through their participation in KCIT.

I aimed to address the following overarching research aim:

Can rugby union be used as a vehicle for supporting PYD in the youth justice system?

The research questions are as follows:

1. Can rugby union contribute to PYD amongst justice-involved young people?

2. What are young people's attitudes toward rugby union as a direct consequence of participating in KCIT?
3. Do the masculine values embedded in rugby union impact on the sport's potential to facilitate PYD?

3.3 Access to the Kicking Crime into Touch project

An overview of KCIT was provided in section 1.6. For the purposes of understanding the context of KCIT, I provide a detailed rationale for my research approach and explore the ethical considerations made and the processes followed.

Gatekeepers have been acknowledged as an essential tool in permitting access to social contexts (Andoh-Arthur, 2019; Clark, 2011). Two of my PhD supervisors were the principal and co-investigators of KCIT, and they facilitated my access to the programme. My supervisors introduced me to the coach responsible for running the sessions. I explained my research including my questions and aims and what I intended to do at the project. We negotiated my involvement and agreed I would adopt a fluid role where I could transition between participant and observer and, where necessary, deliver some coaching.

I was part of the project from the first session and was introduced by the coach to the youth offending team (YOT) practitioners and young people. At that point, I delivered a brief presentation to them that explained my research, described what I would ask them to do should they wish to take part, and clarified my role within KCIT. I outline this role later in this chapter when I describe my ethnographic approach. I remained in the field for 18 months over the two-year period of the programme. Throughout my time with KCIT, a great deal of effort was made in developing relationships and trust with the young people. I did this in different ways, including dressing in sportswear, helping with the setting up of equipment and joining in with the rugby and gym sessions.

3.4 Research design

The research is qualitative and rooted in interpretivism (Bryman, 2015), a research paradigm and epistemological position that facilitates the exploration and understanding of the subjective meaning of the social world and the actions and interactions within it.

Specifically, this research is grounded in the epistemological position known as symbolic interactionism (Carter and Fuller, 2015), a theoretical approach that focuses on how individuals develop subjective meaning through their interaction with people, objects, activities and social contexts (Mead, 1934). There are three sociological assumptions at the core of symbolic interactionism. Blumer (1969) outlined these assumptions and suggested that they are key to understanding the epistemology. The first is that people act in relation to the world around them, and do so based on the meaning and perspective they have towards it; these are influenced by culture, context and circumstance. The second is that meanings and perspectives arise out of interaction with others, meaning that the definitions people hold are influenced by experiences and therefore remain fluid (Blumer, 1969). The final assumption is that meanings and definitions are adjusted through interpretation and experience (Blumer, 1969).

The thesis is influenced by symbolic interactionism, and therefore it considers that subjective viewpoints are essential in developing understanding and are important tools for analysis (Mead, 1934). Grounding the research approach in symbolic interactionism enabled an exploration of KCIT and the relationships, experiences and interactions that developed within the project. It allowed me to explore and understand unique perspectives on several key components of the thesis. These included cultural components of youth justice, the lived experiences of the young people who worked with the YOT and KCIT, their pre-existing perceptions of rugby union, and how the embodiment of masculinity and masculine codes may have influenced their attitudes toward rugby union. Overall, symbolic interactionism supported an exploration of how these attitudes influenced the emergence of PYD within KCIT.

To ground this research in symbolic interactionism I adopted an ethnographic approach, an approach well suited to the theory (Tan et al., 2003), and a research design commonly used in exploring topics interrelated with this research, including criminology, gender, personal development and socialisation (Polk, 2018). By undertaking an ethnography, I achieved a synergy between my theoretical position and my research approach in several ways: I observed the project and interactions within it as they occurred; I developed familiarity with the project and intimacy with the participants; and I could conceptualise the project by comparing and contrasting experiences, observations and conversations (Prus, 1996).

3.5 Research approach

To explore the research questions and meet the research aim, it was appropriate to use a qualitative multi-method research approach within my ethnography. This permitted me to engage in social interaction with KCIT participants, thereby developing relationships. The multi-method approach facilitates the collection of multiple sources of data. The multiple sources, interview and focus group data and observations could be integrated, contrasted, and compared (Bryman, 2015) to facilitate a more in-depth exploration of KCIT and encourage different ways of creating knowledge. In addition, this approach increases the authenticity and trustworthiness of the results presented in the next chapter (Nightingale, 2020). Maruna (2010:123) argues that multi-method approaches are 'under-appreciated and underutilised in contemporary criminology research', despite having been described as leading to 'a better understanding of the problem' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007:7). Multiple methods allow one method to offset the limitations of another (Jick, 1979:2–10).

In the initial stages of the research, I drew on Trow's (1957:33) note that 'the problem under investigation dictates the methods of investigation'. I reflected on the knowledge I had gained through writing my literature review and asked myself what I had learnt and what I could not learn from the available literature. In doing so, I concluded that 'power' was a key theme and commonality in the literature surrounding all elements of the KCIT triad: youth justice, young people's lives and rugby union. It was also a key feature of the literature relating to PYD and masculinity. From my review of the literature, I acquired four key

understandings related to the concept of power. First, justice-involved young people are often disempowered by the youth justice system (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015; Smithson et al., 2020). Second, rugby union was developed by men of privilege as a site where they could perform and secure power (Collins, 2009). Third, a key focus of the PYD approach is the notion of empowering young people (Search Institute, 2005). Fourth, crime and violence are often the result of powerlessness (Arendt, 1970). Considering this knowledge, I selected my research approach believing it would allow me to reduce power imbalances⁹. I also believed it would encourage young people to be active in their involvement in KCIT and in their contribution to my research (Schäfer and Yarwood, 2008; Kellett, 2011).

3.5.1 Research approach – Ethnography

An ethnographic approach, which included participant observation, was appropriate for the thesis. I employed the ethnographic approach to facilitate a process of open-ended and flexible inquiry into the experiences of justice involved young men within the KCIT project. This approach allowed me to focus in on first-hand, experience grounded, meaning (Flick, 2006). The ethnographic approach employed situates this research in keeping with a well-developed tradition of ethnographic work in the broad church of criminology, more specifically with research on men, masculinities, and violence (see Treadwell and Garland, 2011; Jump, 2020; Ellis, 2014). More so within sports criminology as seen in Jumps (2020) research on boxing and desistance.

Traditionally, ethnography is a lengthy process that requires the ethnographer to spend significant periods of time living with research subjects (Murtagh, 2007). In the initial stages of this research project, I felt apprehensive about labelling my research an ethnography due to a misconceived belief I developed from engaging with the literature (such as Hobbs, 1988; Winlow, 2001). That being that what O’Leary (2005:158) describes as a ‘credible

⁹ Power imbalances have traditionally been present in research projects exploring young people’s experiences (Davidson, 2017). This was likely in this research due to my own position in the project. I reflect on this in chapter six.

ethnographic study' is dependent on the longevity of the ethnographer's investment in the field. However, I gradually came to terms with Hammersley's (2006: 3) note that 'ethnography does not form part of a clear and systematic taxonomy...[and] there is no point in trying to draw tight boundaries around its meaning'.

O'Leary (2005:158) explains that ethnography is the endeavour to 'go below the surface, and break through the pleasantries...to build trust a rapport'. Whilst it is not uncommon for ethnographers to undertake weeks or months of intense time in the field, the structure of KCIT did not allow such intense immersion. However, what I could do was 'live' with each participants through the entirety of their KCIT experience, and live with KCIT through the majority of its lifespan. In undertaking this ethnography, I adhered to Bryman's (1988:52) claim that 'to comprehend social structures and how they are presented ... we must endeavour to experience it first-hand' and I was able to harness the exploratory power of ethnography by negotiating the 'dialectical relationship between participating and observing (O'Reilly, 2012:4). The strength of the ethnographic approach implemented in this research lies in the studying of people in a real-world context (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019).

During my time at KCIT, I held several roles that facilitated data collection. Predominantly, to establish my ethnographic position and to support the functioning of the project, I adopted a role as a KCIT participant. This role was adopted when participant numbers were low which made it difficult for the coach to deliver the project in the way he intended. It enabled me to participate alongside the young people and gain a more in-depth understanding of their experience.

On other infrequent occasions, to help the rugby coach, I utilised my rugby playing and coaching experience and adopted a coaching role. I adopted this role when the coach was absent or needed to provide more intensive one-to-one support to a young person.

On occasions with sufficient attendance to meet session requirements, I could engage in participant observation. This was a key strength of this research, and participant observation is widely accepted as an important method of data collection in the social

sciences (Somekh and Lewin, 2006). I took an open-ended approach to participant observation, seeking to identify patterns of behaviour and observe how one person's actions and dialogue were responded to by another (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1959). The differing positions I took in the project remained fluid and interchangeable.

The approach placed distinct demands on me to develop and use 'personal skills of self-awareness and self-reflexiveness, facilitative skills in interpersonal and group settings, political skills, intellectual skills and data management skills (Reason, 1994:335). The key strength of the approach was that I situated myself directly within KCIT. In doing so, I could experience first-hand the intersections of rugby union, youth justice and justice-involved young people, and how they combined to influence PYD against a backdrop of masculine discourse. It enabled me to observe the behaviours and experiences of the participants that they may have 'taken for granted' and that they may not discuss in interviews (Bryman, 2015:493–495). My focus when undertaking participant observation was to explore in situ how the young people experienced KCIT, taking into consideration how they used the programme and rugby union to satisfy their needs. In addition, I focused on identifying any cultural messages young people were exposed to in the programme and observed the interactions between young people, rugby coaches and YOT practitioners.

Observations were undertaken with the ontological micro-theory dramaturgy in mind (Goffman, 1959). This theory suggests that social actors actively manage their performances, construct impressions and draw on methods that permit them to evoke favoured responses and outcomes from their audience (Given, 2008). I drew on Goffman's (1959) idea of 'impression management' and associated ideas of 'presentation of self', 'dramatic realisation', 'mystification' and 'interaction ritual'. This approach was appropriate because the literature suggests that working-class young men often draw on hyper-masculine performances to conceal their internal vulnerabilities (Anderson, 2008; Light and Kirk, 2000; Campbell et al., 2006; Price and Parker, 2003).

3.5.1.1 How I captured data from my ethnography

Throughout my ethnography, I used several methods to capture data. During KCIT sessions I gathered what Emerson et al. (2011:29–41) refer to as ‘jottings’: individual words¹⁰ and phrases that I could draw upon to refresh my memory later. During KCIT sessions or whilst sat in my car shortly after, I recorded these as notes in my mobile phone. This was the most convenient method of capturing nuggets of information that could be expanded and explained later.

The evening after each KCIT session, using pen and paper, I used my ‘jottings’ to capture field notes because the inherently chaotic and unpredictable nature of sport made it impractical during the sessions. Field notes comprised characterising and appraising value judgements (Nagel, 1961:492), and notes on events witnessed, comments heard, and conversations had at KCIT. I focused on considering what information they offered, i.e., what the speaker said, as well as how I believed listeners interpreted the information (Goffman, 1983). Moreover, I made notes of ‘personal fronts’ including clothing, appearance and demeanour, and noted actions believed to be ‘performances’ such as exaggerated body language and commented on the meaning I interpreted from them (Goffman, 1959:24–34). I recorded my emotional responses to events at the session at the time I took the field notes. I also used my field notes to log any retrospective questioning of my observations, including questions such as ‘What is happening in this social setting?’, ‘What would happen if the people here did X?’ and ‘What do these people think about Y?’ (May, 2011). Field notes were also used to reflect on my personal presence, situatedness and general thoughts about the experience, some of which can be seen in chapter six.

These reflective questions were essential in my investigation into subjective, intangible and unquantifiable aspects of KCIT. These included the participants’ experiences and attitudes towards rugby union, the potential for PYD through involvement with KCIT, and my reflections and observations. I now give a detailed account of the ethical considerations and processes made in this thesis.

¹⁰ An example of one of my jottings is the term ‘verbalist’, a word used by James (18-year-old White British) which I later reflected was used to describe someone who made hollow promises or threats.

3.6 Ethical considerations and processes

Research ethics is a series of principles that inform research and provide support for conducting research in a way that does no harm to anyone involved. This thesis is guided by ethical practice and underpinned by the principle of informed consent (Shaw and Gould, 2001). The overarching ethical consideration was how to balance the rights of the young people to participate and have their voices heard while ensuring they were not subject to exploitation or harm within the research process. This was important because the thesis explored the experience of vulnerable young people and had the potential to explore sensitive topics such as experiences of violence and crime.

Sensitive research has been discussed as that which explores sensitive topics, such as experiences of trauma or shame. It has the potential to cause harm and distress to the participant, individuals from their social group or the interviewer themselves (Sieber and Stanley, 1988). There are various potential harms in research involving working with vulnerable groups and exploring sensitive issues, and it was integral to acknowledge that these were all possible through this research. These include emotional harm brought on by exploring private and intimate experiences (Cowles, 1988); legal harm resulting from exploring issues related to offending and violence (Finch, 2001); physical harm as a potential outcome of retribution for disclosures of violence and crime (Radford et al., 2017) and social harm as a result of findings and recommendations leading to policy or practice implications that may have a detrimental impact on participants or their social groups (Lee and Renzetti, 1990). I acknowledged these harms and concluded that their likelihood was small and sufficiently mitigated by the processes I outline in the remainder of this section.

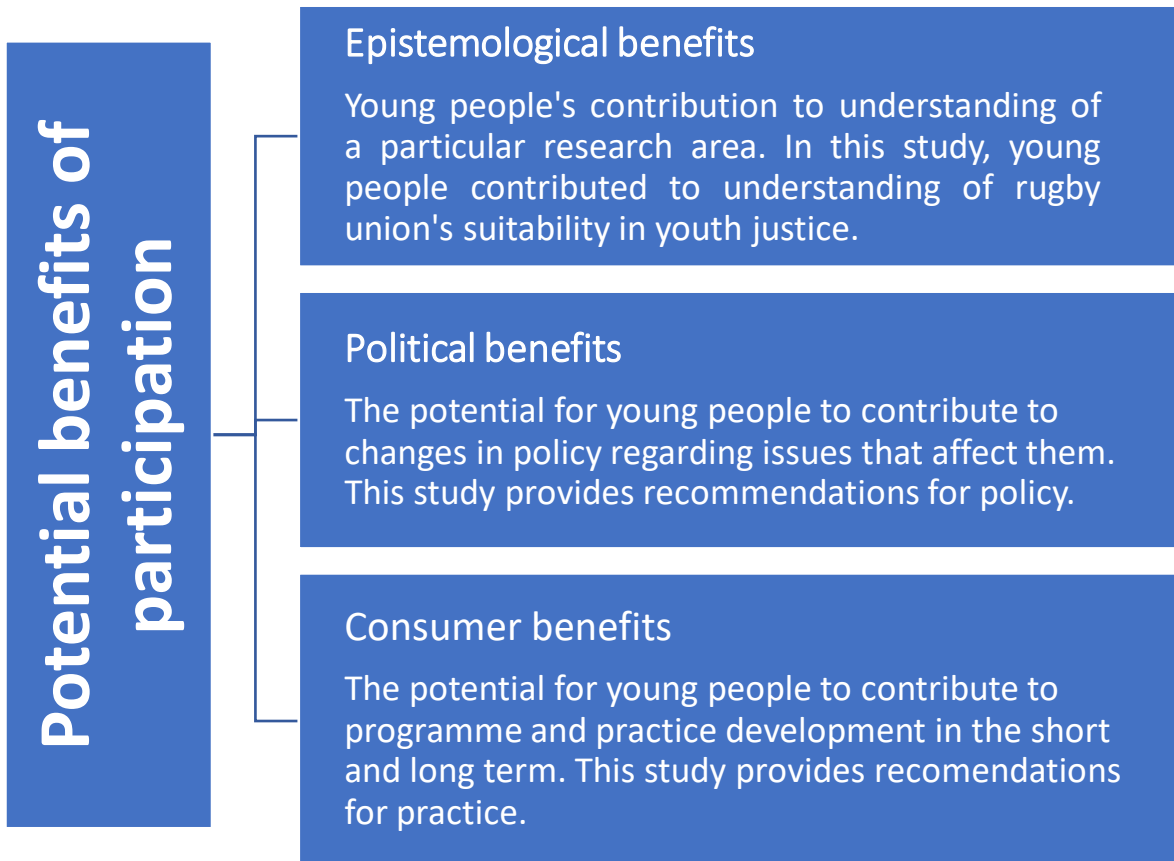
As this research involved working with vulnerable young people with experiences of crime, violence and trauma, ensuring participant safety and support was vital, not least because exploring these topics can bring about negative emotional responses such as shame and embarrassment (Smith, 2016). Within this study, the prospect of emotional harm was more prevalent in one-to-one interviews, as these involved focused and more in-depth discussions of sensitive topics, including violence, whereas the prospect of social harm was

more likely in the focus group due to the nature of group interaction. To mitigate these harms, participants were verbally informed at the beginning of interviews that any information which related to major criminal activity or indicated that the participant or someone else was in a position of harm (for example, threats of violence) would need to be discussed with my supervisor or a YOT worker. No disclosures of this kind were made.

Although the potential for harms was a consideration, this was balanced against the need to include young people in research in which they were participating. Studies exploring research involving young people have suggested that even when research involves the prospect of harms, young people feel that their participation is worthwhile (Finkelhor et al., 2014; Radford et al., 2013). It is also likely, as noted by Powell et al. (2018), that preventing the participation of young people in research that concerns them can contribute to social harm. In a youth justice context, this could be through issues raised in my literature review including the silencing and under-representation of justice-involved children (Hart and Thompson, 2009). Understanding the potential harms and benefits of sensitive research with young people is essential in weighing up the appropriateness of including them in its design (Carter, 2009). In relation to harms that young people may encounter in research, Powell et al. (2018) note that marginalised and vulnerable young people can often feel blamed when research explores sensitive experiences. I had an acute awareness of this when conducting this research, particularly during interviews where conversation focused on histories of violence and crime. I outline how I mitigated against this in section 3.6.2-3.6.4.

In relation to benefits, the research project had three key potential benefits for participants as shown in Figure 3 (Davis, 2009:156).

Figure 3: Potential benefits to participants



Throughout this research, I upheld high ethical standards in line with MMU's ethical guidelines. I conducted this research within the Code of Research Ethics/Code of Practice provided by the British Society of Criminology (2006), alongside General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, UK government, 2016). To minimise potential harms and to ensure that this research was ethically sound, the research proposal underwent an ethical approval process at MMU. The research was approved by the university's Faculty of Arts and Humanities Research Governance Committee. The considerations in the ethical approval included access to participants, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, support for participants, researcher safety and dissemination. I now discuss these in turn, before moving to discuss data collection approaches in section 3.7.

3.6.1 Access to participants

The ethnographic position I adopted required me to have contact with all participants who attended KCIT. My decision to use interviews and focus groups required me to engage in more formal data collection with participants who fell into three categories:

- young people aged 16 or over,
- YOT practitioners (subdivided into ‘frontline’ practitioners and ‘administrative’ practitioners),
- KCIT coaches.

Figure 4: Participant groups and sample size¹¹

Young people	YOT practitioners	KCIT coaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten young people • All aged 16 or over • All on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance order (ISS) • All attended three or more KCIT sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two frontline staff with first-hand experience of KCIT • Two administrative staff with no first-hand experience of KCIT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One rugby coach and KCIT lead • One gym instructor and KCIT project support

3.6.1.1 Young people

I observed all young people who attended KCIT as part of my ethnographic approach. I included ten young people in interviews who were ‘retained’¹² by KCIT, and three of the ten young people were also involved in a focus group. The inclusion criteria is further explained in section 3.7.1. For the interviews and focus group, I provided the young people with an information sheet (Appendix 2), outlining the research and interview process. I asked them

¹¹ ISS is a court sanction given to young people who have committed a serious offence that requires them to have 25 hours of structured contact time with their YOT (Youth Justice Board, 2019).

¹² They had attended three KCIT sessions.

to participate on a voluntary basis and obtained informed consent before including them in the research.

All ten young people who participated in this research were aged 16 or over, and all were male. They participated in KCIT as part of their court-sanctioned Intensive Supervision and Surveillance order (ISS). The programme became part of their 25 hours of mandatory contact time with the YOT. All the young people were interviewed either at the main KCIT site or at a YOT office.

Table 6 lists these participants by pseudonym, age and ethnicity.

Table 6: Young people participating in research

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity
Zac	16	BAME
Joe	17	White British
Zain	17	BAME
Luke	17	White British
James	18	White British
Dom	17	White British
Ron	17	BAME
Billy	17	White British
Cooper	17	BAME
Liam	16	BAME

3.6.1.2 YOT practitioners

KCIT involved four YOTs across Greater Manchester, and practitioners who attended were included as part of my ethnographic position. They were all made aware of this, and they were provided with an information sheet (Appendix 5). Four practitioners were included in one-to-one interviews. These included two practitioners who frequently attended KCIT, referred to as frontline practitioners, and two who did not attend KCIT but worked with the young people who attended as part of their ISS. They are referred to as administrative

practitioners. Practitioners were selected based on their knowledge of the KCIT programme and other similar youth justice interventions (I outline further details of my inclusion criteria in section 3.7.1). Frontline practitioners were involved in face-to-face interviews and administrative practitioners took part in telephone interviews.

Table 7 lists the frontline practitioners by pseudonym, role, ethnicity and gender.

Table 7: Frontline practitioners

Pseudonym	Role	Ethnicity	Gender	Interviewed
Sally	Frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager	White British	Female	Yes
Steve	Frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager	White British	Male	Yes
Aaron	Frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager	BAME	Male	No
Grant	Frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager	White British	Male	No

The frontline practitioners provided a means of supporting access to young people. They did so by adjusting the young people’s ISS timetables to allow time for them to be involved in interviews. They booked facilities at their respective YOT offices for meetings to take place and supported me in building relationships with the young people, reassuring them of my intentions and offering me credibility.

Following consultation with my supervisors, it was felt appropriate to include YOT practitioners who did not take part in KCIT but who had interacted with the programme at an administrative level¹³. Two such practitioners were suitable for interview.

Table 8 lists the administrative practitioners by pseudonym, role, ethnicity and gender.

Table 8: Administrative YOT practitioners

Pseudonym	Role	Ethnicity	Gender
Ned	Administrative YOT worker	White British	Male
Jane	Administrative YOT worker	BAME	Female

3.6.1.3 KCIT coaches

Both coaches responsible for delivering KCIT were involved in the research: the professional rugby coach who led the project and the coach responsible for gym sessions. I observed both coaches as part of my ethnography. They both took part in one-to-one interviews. They were provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix 4).

Table 9 lists the coaches by pseudonym, role, ethnicity and gender.

Table 9: Coach participants

Pseudonym	Role	Ethnicity	Gender
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¹³ The two YOT practitioners were interviewed because of their knowledge of KCIT and the other provision included in the young people’s ISS timetables.

Mark	Rugby coach and KCIT lead	White British	Male
Ben	Gym instructor and KCIT support	White British	Male

3.6.2 Informed consent

Given that the young people involved in this research were aged 16 or over, they could provide informed consent. The principle of informed consent was crucial. During my first interaction with the young people, coaches and practitioners, I made it clear to them I was involved in KCIT as a researcher. I disclosed that, as part of this role, I would conduct participant observations and take notes on what I saw and heard.

The information sheets provided to the participants (Appendices 2, 4 and 5) contained information to support informed consent (Powell et al., 2018). They included all relevant information about the research project including its purpose and my key research topics. The information sheets also outlined why the participants had been invited to take part and informed them that participation was voluntary. The sheets contained guidance about the expectations of participants with an explanation that they may be offered the opportunity to be included in interviews and focus groups. The information sheet also informed them that with their permission they may have their interview audio-recorded.

On the information sheets I outlined that there were no expected risks to participants and clarified that there were no incentives to participate. The information sheets also outlined what would happen to their data, including that it would be stored in line with GDPR guidelines as well as MMU's data protection policy. Prior to the interviews and focus group I provided key information to participants using tailored language that was free from jargon. When participants were asked to take part in an interview or focus group, they were requested to complete a consent form (Appendices 1–5).

Ensuring that the young people were competent and cognisant enough to be involved in this research was a primary concern (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Mason, 2004; Wiles et al., 2005) and it was a complex process. When assessing the young people's capacity to participate, I considered this in line with *Gillick competence*. Therefore, I considered participants competent to participate if they showed sufficient 'maturity and intelligence to understand the nature and implications' of their involvement (Griffith, 2016:244). Due to the use of Gillick competence to assess suitability for inclusion, age was not considered a definitive indicator of competency. Instead, competency was considered on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with my supervisors and the young person's YOT worker. Prior to each interview, verbal consent was granted by each participant and they were reassured that they could have a break, stop or withdraw from the interview should they wish. This verbal confirmation of consent was essential to maintaining the ethical integrity of this research and its work with justice-involved young people. I found that ensuring participation was truly voluntary within the context of the YJS and against the backdrop of an ISS was challenging.

3.6.3 Confidentiality

The concept of trust has been argued to be an integral component of exploring the experiences of vulnerable young people (Powell et al., 2018). Trust was gained through my ethnographic position in the research and was embedded through developing closeness with participants by sharing information (Russell, 2005). To maintain this trust, I reassured participants that the information they provided would be protected.

The data collected was for this research and any future associated research outputs, including publications and conference presentations. The ethnographic approach meant it was necessary to explain to everyone who attended KCIT that there was a possibility they would feature in this thesis and future outputs. Before I began interviews and focus groups, I made all participants aware that any data they provided would be held in confidentiality. Likewise, all participants were informed that their data would be anonymised. Although confidentiality was upheld, there was a tension between balancing confidentiality and my

duty of care as a researcher, particularly my duty to report any information provided by participants that indicated someone may be in a position of harm. As such, I used verbal examples to make participants aware of the limited nature of confidentiality. For example, prior to interviews, I explained to young people that discussions of drug use and prior violence would not be reported but should they disclose any experience of abuse or plans to harm others, I would discuss their comments with my supervisors and their YOT worker.

3.6.4 Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity, although similar, are distinct concepts. As outlined above, confidentiality refers to holding and managing information that was disclosed in confidence and is seen in relation to ethics as the maintenance of privacy (Oliver, 2003; Gregory, 2003). Confidentiality is a limited concept due to the issues which I described above. Anonymity, however, refers to the concealment or adjustment of information to ensure that those who provided it remain unknown and unidentifiable. Anonymity is considered an ethical process of mitigating against the limits of confidentiality. The foremost way that anonymity can be achieved in research is by removing identifiers (Wiles et al., 2006). Using pseudonyms or fictitious names is a norm in social research (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006) and was used in this thesis.

3.7 Data collection approaches

3.7.1 Inclusion criteria

For this research I recruited a total of 16 participants, including ten young men, two KCIT coaches and four YOT practitioners (see Figure 4). I was deliberate in my recruitment approach (Bryman, 2015:418; Andrade, 2021) for two key reasons. First, I was exploring an individual project with a small number of participants with whom I could develop deep familiarity with (Etikan et al., 2016), a reality which allowed me to make considered choices about whom to include in interviews. Second, I used the insights I gained from the literature

review, reflected on my research aim and questions, and included individuals whom I felt were experienced, informed and competent enough to contribute to the research.

3.7.2 The rationale for semi-structured interviews

My ethnographic approach, participant observations and informal conversations, although important components of my study, could only provide a partial insight into the participants' experiences and understandings (Silverman, 1993; Sandelowski, 2000). Therefore, I incorporated semi-structured interviews into my research design for several reasons. Foremost, owing to my symbolic interactionist position, semi-structured interviews served as a natural fit by providing a notable context for social interaction through which meaning could be collaboratively negotiated (Garfinkel, 1967) between myself and the participant. Moreover, semi-structured interviews have been regarded as a young-person-friendly strategy towards data collection. They offer young people the opportunity to speak about their lived experience on their terms (Heath et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews allowed me to uncover data beyond that gathered through observation, including the reconstruction of past events (Bryman, 2015), giving me a fuller picture of the research area. They were also used to explore and verify the data I collected through my ethnographic position by supporting participants to unpick the meanings and interpretations of the behaviours I observed (Johnson et al., 1990; May, 2011). The interview process enabled me to extend my data beyond the external performances displayed by the participants at KCIT to include the internal subjectivity that hid behind them (Silverman, 1985:165).

3.7.3 Semi-structured interviews

In total, I conducted 16 one-to-one semi-structured interviews. These included interviews with the ten young people (seven were interviewed once and three required follow-up

interviews¹⁴), two frontline YOT practitioners, two administrative YOT practitioners and two coaches. All interviews lasted between 20 and 60 minutes.

3.7.4 The interview process

Interview guides were produced that allowed me to focus my enquiry on themes relating to my overall research aim and questions. These themes were based on my review of the literature and what I had experienced and observed at KCIT. Owing to my symbolic interactionist perspective, I used interview questions that allowed me to explore the meanings my participants had of their experiences relating to my research (Spradley, 2016). I used open-ended questions that facilitated dialogue and encouraged participants to reflect on and interpret their own experiences (Charmaz, 2006; Seidman, 2013).

During interviews, I attempted to be open and flexible and allow participants space to tell stories and speak freely (Goodson, 2013). Participants were reassured that there were no right or wrong answers to any questions and they were encouraged to be open and honest (Frosh et al., 2002). Reflexive questioning was used to encourage participants to engage in storytelling and avoid the need to justify and defend their experiences (Becker, 2008).

Non-standardised prompts were used in response to what participants said during interviews. These prompts included reflexive questions such as ‘Could you tell me more about that?’ and ‘How did that make you feel?’ Using probes in this way also served as a validating purpose by supporting clarification of points of ambiguity (Mason, 2002:231; Roberts, 2020).

Figure 5 shows some examples of the questions that comprised the interview guides for the different groups of participants. The interview guides can be found in Appendices 6–8.

¹⁴ Follow-up interviews were conducted when initial interviews were limited by timing issues such as a young person being late for their interview, or YOT staff requiring the young person to be elsewhere before the interview was complete.

Figure 5: Example interview questions

Young people

- How did you feel when you were asked to take part in the rugby project?
- When you were first asked, what did you think the project would involve?
- If you were describing the rugby project to someone who had never heard of it, what would you say?

YOT practitioners

- Could you tell me about the young people you work with?
- What do you think the benefits of the KCIT project are for the young people you work with?
- What outcomes are important to the young people when taking part in a programme like KCIT?

Coaching staff

- How did you come to be involved in KCIT?
- What do you hope to achieve through delivering the project?
- Do you think there's anything unique about rugby union as opposed to other sports?

I consciously tried to create a participant-focused interview environment within which participants felt free and supported in speaking about their experiences (Carter and Sealey, 2009; Roberts, 2020). I worked towards this in several ways. First, I approached each interview with a liberal attitude, without predispositions or expectations and with an openness to learn (Peredaryenko and Krauss, 2013). Second, I took time before the interview to embed the rapport I had built with the participant through my ethnographic position. I did this by speaking with them about what I knew they were interested in, such as the gym, motorbikes and anime¹⁵. Third, I double-checked that the participants felt fully informed of what the interview would involve and that they were comfortable participating. I took this opportunity to ask if they had questions or concerns. During the interview, I was

¹⁵ A type of cartoon inspired by Japanese animation.

empathetic and sympathetic to their feelings and discussions (Heritage and Clayman, 2011; Eisenberg and Strayer, 1990), and demonstrated this by using ‘response cries’¹⁶ (Prior, 2018:7; Goffman, 1978).

3.7.5 The interviews

Participants were asked where they would like their interview to be conducted and I attempted to negotiate a site where participants would feel comfortable (Densley, 2013). KCIT coaches and all frontline YOT practitioners were interviewed at the KCIT site. Where possible, young people were also interviewed at the project site before or after a KCIT session to minimise disruption to its delivery. Arranging interviews with young people was straightforward during KCIT sessions as they were a ‘captive audience’. Interviewing the young people at a YOT office proved more challenging. These interviews tended to be more unpredictable, and I experienced instances of non-attendance and poor punctuality. Indeed, on some occasions, YOT staff cut short the interviews because of staffing issues and the requirements of the young people’s orders. In these instances, they were offered follow-up interviews.

3.7.6 Telephone interviews

I conducted two telephone interviews, one with each of the two administrative YOT practitioners. Interview guides for these interviews replicated those used with the frontline YOT practitioners. Telephone interviews worked well, but it is important to acknowledge their two main limitations. First, it was not possible to observe the participant during the interviews and see how their body language changed in response to questions. Second, I could not use my body language to interact with the participants (Bryman, 2015:488).

¹⁶ Words, phrases and tones of voice that show empathy such as ‘Oh no!’, ‘That’s great!’ or ‘No way!’

3.7.7 Challenges accessing and including young people in interviews

I faced several challenges when attempting to interview the young people. It was challenging to include young people who had attended three or more KCIT sessions because their attendance was often transient and sporadic. Additionally, some young people stopped attending KCIT before they could participate in an interview. Attempts were made to contact two young people via telephone who had 'moved on' and ceased their involvement with KCIT. One did not respond and the second did not attend his interview and I had no further contact with him. This is interesting in relation to the application of PYD literature. These experiences arguably highlight that the 'timescale' of engagement and development is limited to one or a few sessions, not 'seasons' or 'multiple seasons' as outlined by the PAF (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6).

Prior to beginning the research, I assumed that access to young people would be straightforward because of their ISS requirements, an assumption based on the knowledge that they were ordered by court to spend 25 hours per week in contact with their YOT. Similarly, I assumed that because the young people were active participants in KCIT, they would be willing and able to be interviewed. However, this assumption was incorrect. Throughout the research it was clear that the young people had little control over their own lives and were constantly navigating the requirements of their ISS. As described in the next chapter, the young people did not feel that their attendance at KCIT was entirely voluntary, and many explained that they only attended to fulfil their ISS. This posed an ethical challenge, and I consciously ensured that I fully informed the young people that their participation in interviews was voluntary. This was challenging but I worked towards it by encouraging voluntary participation and preserving the rights and entitlements of the young people (Smithson and Gray, 2021).

3.7.8 The rationale for using focus groups

It has been suggested that group dynamics can sometimes elicit discussions that may not have been previously expected by researchers (Parker and Tritter, 2006) and topics that may

not emerge through one-to-one interviews (Babbie, 2007). Heath et al. (2012) highlight that focus groups are the most readily used research method with young people. This is perhaps not surprising upon consideration of Krueger's (2014) argument that they provide a non-threatening environment where researchers and participants can discuss experiences and opinions of pre-defined areas of interest. Additionally, Eder and Fingerson (2003) note that focus groups should be a default option when researching the experiences of young people. Primarily, focus groups are said to reduce the power and influence of researchers and therefore foster a less threatening environment for those being interviewed. Eder and Fingerson (2003) explain that focus groups are more representative of the real-world interactions of young people, who develop knowledge and understanding through interaction with others as they produce shared meaning. This final point meant that focus groups fitted neatly with my symbolic interactionist position. It was not possible to conduct more than one focus group due to the challenges outlined in section 3.7.7.

3.7.9 The focus group process

Like the interview guides outlined in section 3.7.4, a focus group guide was produced that allowed me to explore areas relating to my research questions and overall research aim. Likewise, it was based on what I had learnt from the literature and my experiences at KCIT. It was also influenced by what I had learnt and heard in one-to-one interviews. I attempted to be open and flexible to allow participants space to tell their stories, speak freely and interact with one another (Goodson, 2013). Throughout the focus group, I used all the techniques that I used in interviews, as outlined in section 3.7.4. Examples of questions posed during the focus group are given in Figure 6. Appendix 9 contains the guide.

Figure 6: Focus group example questions

Focus group example questions

- What are your thoughts about rugby?
- What do you think about rugby's physicality?
- What would happen if you replicated the type of physicality performed on a rugby field on the street?

3.7.10 Challenges conducting the focus group

The practicalities of conducting the focus group were challenging. Prior to embarking on the research, I had intended to invite all young people who took part in a one-to-one interview to a focus group. However, for similar reasons to those mentioned in section 3.7.7, many young people had moved on or stopped attending KCIT before this was possible.

The focus group proved to be an insightful experience because the young people were willing to challenge each other's experiences and understandings. This happened more when participants spoke about their experiences away from KCIT and about experiences that others in the group had not been involved in. When speaking about KCIT, the young people were more descriptive and often spoke in agreement with one another. Conversely, it was more challenging to explore experiences of intimacy, such as relationships with the coaches, as well as the emotions that participants felt in relation to rugby. Considering some of the literature I reviewed in sections 2.6.2 to 2.6.4, it is likely that these difficulties were due to the participants responding to social interaction by concealing vulnerability and denying emotion¹⁷.

3.7.11 Data collection tools

All the interviews and the focus group were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Consent was obtained from all participants in relation to recording and they were informed that they could refuse. The use of a dictaphone in this research provided both methodological strengths and limitations. In-depth notes did not have to be taken when participants were speaking, thus allowing me to focus more closely on what they said; this provided the grounds for me to interpret and explore the data provided in real time (May, 2011). However, the presence of a dictaphone undoubtedly inhibited participant responses. It was also not uncommon in the early stages of interviews for young people to respond 'no

¹⁷ In the literature review I explored arguments that young men often reject emotion and deny weakness to conceal vulnerability (Salam, 2019; Bowman, 2020).

comment' directly into the dictaphone. It is possible that this kind of response was a means of young people asserting their authority by indicating that they were experienced in undertaking recorded interviews, likely taped police interviews.

The audio recordings were manually transcribed. Although this was a time-consuming process, it was undoubtedly worthwhile. The transcription process served as an analytical function in allowing me to listen to and re-hear interviews and become closer to the data to produce a contextualised analysis.

3.8 Data analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) was utilised to analyse and interpret data gathered through the multi-method research approach (Braun and Clarke, 2012). TA was selected based on Braun and Clarke's (2012:2) note that 'TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences'. TA is unique because it supports the identification of commonalities within the data and provides an opportunity for sense making. In line with recommendations from Braun and Clarke (2012) I used a six-phase approach to TA. These phases are described below.

3.8.1 Familiarising myself with the data

I immersed myself in the data by transcribing and organising it all manually. The transcription process began my familiarisation with the data. Once the interviews and focus group had been transcribed and I had transferred pen and paper field notes to typed electronic copies, I began reading and re-reading the transcripts. I made notes on my second reading. Notes included comments on anything that appeared interesting or relevant to my research aim and questions. My note-taking served as an opportunity to read the data analytically and critically. It also encouraged reflexivity. During this phase, I addressed questions such as 'What does this mean?', 'How have participants understood their experience?' and 'What assumptions have they made?' I made notes on individual transcripts and generalised notes about all transcripts.

3.8.2 Generating initial codes

Once I had familiarised myself with the data, I moved on to conduct a systematic analysis through two rounds of coding (Braun and Clarke, 2012). The initial coding (Charmaz, 2006) involved producing summaries of broad portions of the data and more descriptive notes on its content. Initial codes were a mixture of rudimentary notes that described what the data was saying, for example, 'didn't want to go to KCIT' and 'likes the project'. Alongside these, I assigned more interpretive codes which were used to label my interpretation of the data and included notes such as 'doesn't like rugby' and 'feels welcomed at KCIT'.

3.8.3 Searching for themes

During phase three, I engaged in focused coding (Charmaz, 2006). Through this coding process, I joined my initial codes to develop themes based on the understanding that a theme

captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006:82)

My search for themes was an active process, and I constructed themes by making choices about how the data related to my research aim and questions. I also considered how I would shape the data into my analysis by considering how the themes linked to the literature. This phase involved me asking myself questions such as 'Does this theme fall within the scope of this study?' and 'Is this relevant to my research question?' Additionally, and to support this, I familiarised myself further by re-reading transcripts, notes and codes I had assigned, and I attempted to identify hierarchical relationships (Labra et al., 2020). In producing the themes, I reviewed the codes I had assigned to the data and identified connections between themes. At this stage, the themes remained descriptive. For example,

I connected the codes 'feels welcomed at KCIT' and 'didn't want to go to KCIT' to produce the subtheme 'expectation and experience'.

3.8.4 Reviewing potential themes

During phase four, I reviewed the original themes I had produced by revisiting the entire dataset and the codes. This process focused on quality-checking the identified themes.

During this phase, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2012) recommendation to check themes against data extracts and assess whether they worked in relation to the data. In this phase, I asked myself questions about my analysis such as 'Does the theme accurately represent the data it is linked to?' and 'Is the theme too abstract or difficult to understand?' (Labra et al., 2020:11). This process allowed me to decide on 'themes that capture the most important and relevant elements of the data, and the overall tone of the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2012:9). An example of this included using the subthemes 'expectation and experience' and 'relationships are valuable' to create the theme 'KCIT strengths for generating PYD'.

3.8.5 Defining and naming themes

The final phase prior to producing my analysis involved defining the identified themes. For example, I defined the theme 'rugby union's limitations for generating PYD' as 'the factors of the sport that limit it as an appropriate context for PYD'. During this phase, I selected and organised extracts that best represented each theme, taking into consideration their definition. The selected quotes formed the foundation of my analysis. Chapter four of this thesis presents these quotes alongside the narratives I produced to relate them to the literature and the research topic. The themes I identified through my data analysis are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Themes and subthemes

Masculinity and power(lessness)	Rugby union's limitations for generating PYD	Rugby union's strengths for generating PYD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restriction• Loss of control• Masculine behaviour and attitudes• Understandings of rugby and rugby men	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assumptions about sport and rugby union• Explicit cultural messages• Implicit cultural messages• Experience• Expectation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement• Accomplishment (education/skill)• Relationships

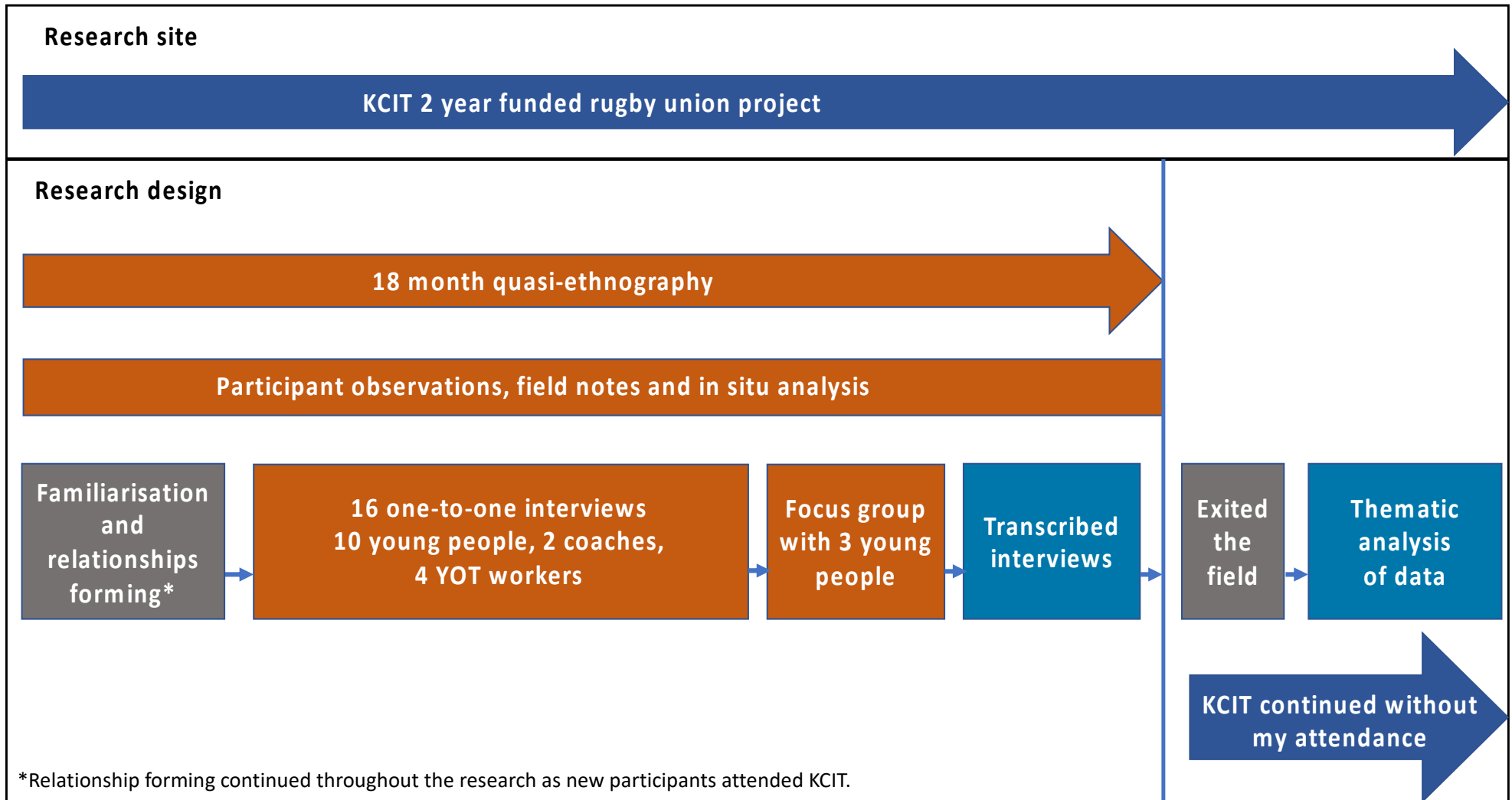
3.8.6 Producing the thesis

My writing of this thesis was the final stage of my data analysis. Through the writing up of my data analysis, I have presented a narrative of my research data. This narrative provides my interpretation of the data and situates it in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two. In chapter four, I present my analysis of the data. I begin (section 4.3) by presenting findings which demonstrate the limitations of KCIT and rugby union more generally as a vehicle for supporting PYD in a youth justice context, amongst which I discuss rugby union as a 'hook for change' (Giordano et al., 2002). I then (section 4.4) provide a critical appraisal of rugby union and KCIT as a vehicle for PYD. Finally, I (section 4.5) provide an analysis of how masculinity featured in this thesis. Specifically, it explores the extent to which rugby union's masculine values limit the sport's potential to facilitate PYD.

3.9 Summary of the research approach and design

To produce the findings and conclusions from this multi-method research, it was critical to integrate the data I collected. Through my ethnographic approach and the taking of field notes, I analysed the research context as I experienced it. I started data collection by undertaking observations and producing field notes and continued to do so over the 18 months I spent in the field. I organised and conducted one-to-one semi-structured interviews after four months in the field. The focus group took place after all the one-to-one interviews. Figure 8 outlines how this research took place in a semi-sequential fashion.

Figure 8 Overview of research design



*Relationship forming continued throughout the research as new participants attended KCIT.

Key - KCIT : ■ Enter and Exit the field: ■ Data collection: ■ Data analysis: ■

3.10 Generalising the findings and making conclusions

I encourage readers to recognise this thesis as *my* interpretation of young people's understanding of their experiences of KCIT, PYD, youth justice and masculinity. By doing so, readers should be able to assess the transferability of this research (Smith et al., 2009) to other contexts to which the findings and discussions in this thesis can be generalised. These may include, but may not be limited to, other sports-based youth justice interventions, rugby programmes working with non-rugby-playing participants, sports programmes seeking to achieve PYD, understandings in relation to working-class boys and masculinity, and masculinity in sport. Caution is needed when generalising the findings and discussions in this thesis for several reasons. First, the data collected through this research, particularly from the interviews and focus groups, was provided by a small sample. Second, the young people in this research were all on an ISS, an order not experienced by all justice-involved young people. Those not on an ISS may have had a different experience of KCIT. Finally, the research was conducted in an area of England not associated with rugby union and therefore where the sport lacks visibility. My hope is that I have enabled readers to make their own conclusions about the transferability of my findings to their own knowledge and experiences of using rugby union when working with justice-involved young men.

3.11 Reflexivity

My presence and involvement in this research naturally resulted in my influence on the data, analysis and conclusions. Throughout the research process, I engaged in reflexivity to achieve greater awareness of this influence (Shaw, 2010). Reflexivity is considered to help reduce researcher bias by allowing researchers the opportunity to acknowledge and accept any predispositions (Finlay and Gough, 2008; Medico and Santiago-Delefosse, 2014; Hughes, 2012). Upon engaging in reflexivity, I accepted that my belonging to this research and the experiences and beliefs I brought to my engagement with KCIT and its participants were a strength. I present some reflections on my position as a researcher at

this juncture so that readers may then consider them in relation to this research (Finlay, 2002). As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, I have professional experience of working with young people categorised as vulnerable, including those with complex, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Such experience comes from working with young people in my previous employment as a sports teacher in a pupil referral unit. I have also developed and delivered sports-based interventions in community settings, including rugby-specific interventions to young people. Moreover, I have 12 years of experience as a rugby player. Finally, as a young person I was uninterested in education and often disengaged at school, and I have experience of temporary exclusion from school.

My reflexive process enhanced this research by allowing me to think more critically about my methodological considerations, particularly the choice of research questions and the methods I used to collect data (Langdridge, 2007).

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed how this research was undertaken. It began by providing the rationale and justification for the research approach and design. It also outlined the important ethical processes followed and the ethical considerations made throughout this research. It outlined the methods and processes of data collection and analysis used. Chapter four presents my analysis of the data gathered through my fieldwork.

Chapter four: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The literature review provided a detailed overview of research relating to the themes comprising the KCIT triad (Figure 1) and PYD, the focus of this thesis. Alongside which it explored masculinity research relating to these areas. Several conclusions were taken from the literature review. Despite calls for strengths-based youth justice approaches, the system is considered reductionist, lacking solutions and focused on treating crime and violence. These processes undermine PYD. The emergence of rugby within the YJS, alongside its focus on strengths-based youth justice and PYD, needs exploring. Rugby union has a long history as a vehicle for personal development, yet rugby, and rugby culture are masculinising because they encourage players to subscribe to its masculine ideology. Although rugby has an enduring interconnection with personal development and behaviour control through concepts such as catharsis and discipline, it has only recently gained prominence in the YJS.

From the literature review it is debatable whether rugby union can facilitate PYD, and it is likely that how it is delivered determines its potential to support or undermine PYD. It is clear from the literature that to achieve PYD, practitioners using rugby union in a youth justice context should emphasise enjoyment, support self-exploration and empowerment, and prioritise asset development. However, this could be challenging considering the masculine values that give the sport its identity and provide the foundations of its culture. This chapter presents the analysis of the empirical findings taken from an 18-month ethnography at the KCIT programme. The originality of the work presented in this chapter is in integration of youth justice, PYD, sport criminology and masculinities research. This thesis addresses the following overarching research aim:

Can rugby union be used as a vehicle for supporting PYD in the youth justice system?

The research questions are as follows:

1. Can rugby union contribute to PYD amongst justice-involved young people?
2. What are young people's attitudes toward rugby union as a direct consequence of participating in KCIT?
3. Do the masculine values embedded in rugby union impact on the sport's potential to facilitate PYD?

4.2 Findings and analysis overview

The remainder of this chapter is organised into three sections. Section 4.3 presents findings which demonstrate the limitations of KCIT and rugby union more generally as a vehicle for supporting PYD in the YJS. The section begins by demonstrating how KCIT, as an extension of the YJS, acts as a restrictive experience for young people. The findings demonstrate the potential for rugby union to influence and consolidate young men's masculine attitudes. The section then moves on to a critique of rugby union as an inherently exclusionary sport. It concludes with an analysis of England Rugby's core values 'TREDS' – teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship.

The following section (section 4.4) provides a critical appraisal of rugby union and KCIT as a vehicle for PYD. It highlights the potential for rugby union to contribute to a sense of belonging and status for young men in the YJS. It is followed by an analysis of how KCIT developed competence and was supportive of young people's education and employment. It concludes with a discussion of how and why the relationships young people formed with the KCIT coaches were valuable and supportive of PYD, and the extent to which intimacy and humour supported these positive relationships. I will refer to the personal assets framework (PAF) developed by Vierimaa et al. (2017:6) and its elements throughout this analysis. PAF provides a tool against which to understand KCIT and indeed rugby union's alignment with PYD and, furthermore, how rugby union and KCIT facilitated or failed to facilitate *competence, confidence, connection and character*, as well as their influence on *personal development*, all of which are key features of the PAF.

The penultimate section (section 4.5) provides an analysis of how masculinity featured in this thesis. It specifically explores the extent to which rugby union is a hyper-masculine sport believed to develop hyper-masculine values, how young men perceive rugby union as a hyper-masculine context, how masculinity and 'being a man' were perceived by the young people, and how crime and violence are related to this understanding of masculinity. Section 4.6 is a summary of the findings and analysis.

4.3 An analysis of rugby union's limitations as a context for PYD

Understanding rugby union's limitations when utilised in a youth justice context is integral in developing an understanding of how the sport can be used as a vehicle for delivering PYD. The first two sub-sections of this section relate to the use of rugby union in the YJS. The remainder of the section focuses on the cultural context of rugby union, including its gameplay and England Rugby's core values. The section concludes with an analysis of the data relating to the unique experiences at KCIT.

4.3.1 *'If I don't come, it's going to be a problem, you know what I mean?':*

Rugby union can be a restrictive practice for justice-involved young men

The literature review made reference to the philosophy of Children First, Offenders Second (CFOS) (Case and Haines, 2015). It purports that the YJS should offer young people personalised interventions and encourage voluntary participation in interventions and activities. The literature related to sport interventions clarifies that they need to have built-in individualised mechanisms of support, particularly if they are aiming to generate PYD (Morgan and Parker, 2017; Holt et al., 2017). Not all types of sport or sport settings are relevant and attractive to all young people (Coalter, 2007). Therefore, as the findings in this section illustrate, if sport is seen as non-voluntary and non-relevant, it can be experienced as disempowering and restrictive.

From the outset of the fieldwork, it was evident that the young people believed rugby union lacked relevance for them. This was likely based on their socio-economic status and their experiences of marginalisation and social exclusion. They were not stereotypical men who traditionally accessed rugby union. Joe (17-year-old White British) found his involvement with rugby surprising.

R: How do you feel about rugby?

P: *It's just nuts innit, I never knew I would be playing rugby and that.*

R: What do your friends think about it?

P: *I don't really tell them to be honest.*

Dom (17-year-old White British) had told his peers about his involvement with KCIT and explained that some had questioned it:

R: What do your friends and family think about you taking part in rugby? So, do you talk about it to them?

P: *My grandad said 'it's a waste of time you might as well carry on working on your fighting'.*

R: Why's that?

P: *He said one day I will have to use it; I don't train because I enjoy it. I do it cos I need to.*

In relation to the PAF, Joe and Dom's narratives suggest that their rugby participation did not receive peer group support and that the sport did not integrate with their family values. Jane (administrative YOT worker) summarised this disconnection:

It [the sport] is a barrier because young people hear about rugby and it's not really a sport [that] say, for example, the type of young people who would access YOS¹⁸ would have participated in the past in school ... the difficult thing was getting them there in the first place ... It's the rugby element. I think [it] has kind of been a barrier with our staff and with our young people ... the areas we work in are not really strong rugby kind of ermm areas, really. I think a lot of young people mention football and some of the responses from young people when we try entice them on the rugby programme have been ... 'I'm not interested in rugby' and we have been trying to not use the word rugby actively ... actually not say rugby [but] actually say sports programme ... It's, you know, trying to use all other words to describe it apart from saying rugby. It seems like as soon as you say rugby there is a switch off in young people.

The sport of rugby union acted as a barrier for recruitment to KCIT because it was disconnected from the lives of the young people. Indeed, the idea of 'trying to not use the word rugby' emphasises the exclusion and disempowerment justice-involved young people experience through depersonalised interventions. This coincides with current discussions in youth justice (Smithson et al., 2020) and suggests that the YJS is adult-centric. The young men explained that they felt that their YOT forced KCIT on them, which they found problematic. When asked during their interview to describe their attendance at KCIT, Ron, Zac and Zain made the following statements:

I ain't got a choice innit. Obviously, if it's on my timetable, then I gotta do it. (Ron, 17-year-old BAME)

¹⁸ YOS stands for Youth Offending Services and refers to a partnership between agencies that work to reduce youth offending.

Knowing *I have to come ... if I don't come, it's going to be a problem, you know what I mean? I get forced to.* (Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

Zain's (17-year-old BAME) reflection was more in depth:

P: *I didn't say I don't want to come, I just said I was forced into it innit.*

R: Would there have been any consequences if you hadn't come?

P: *Yes! I'd have been breached*¹⁹.

This reticence for attendance and engagement was palpable in situ and I reflected on this during the project:

Some of these lads clearly do not want to be here. It's becoming increasingly clear that the lads approach the project, at least in their first session, in one of two ways: being disengaged from the get-go, heads down, hands in pockets, all together unsure; or like a whirlwind of energy, appearing cocksure, as if to say, 'I've got to be here, so let's do it'. Admittedly, this seems to change week by week and I'm unsure which one results in better engagement. (Field note extract 10.5.2019)

It is unclear whether the YOTs coerced the young men to attend KCIT despite it being stipulated by the project team that participation should be voluntary. Regardless, perceptions of being *forced* were real for the young people. As such, they struggled to connect with rugby union, and the sport became something else to '*deal with*' as part of their court order. It became a symbol of what Bengtsson (2016) described as the pervasive power imbalance and hyper-masculinity in the criminal justice system (CJS).

¹⁹ Deemed to be in violation of ISS obligation, which results in further interventions.

This raises an important question about voluntary participation; in essence, can participation ever be voluntary in a restrictive and disempowering system such as the YJS.

When prompted to reflect on their rugby union experience, Dom and Luke considered:

[I] wasn't that keen. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

The first couple of times I was like, 'oh well'. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

The perception of being *forced* to attend KCIT positioned rugby union as similar to other restrictions imposed on the young men by the YJS. This perception provided an administrative challenge for Ben (gym instructor and KCIT support) and Mark (rugby coach and KCIT lead), who had to work towards convincing the young men of rugby union's worth. This inevitably often restricted their capacity to centralise the components of the 'activity' element of the PAF, namely 'youth-driven', 'opportunities for play' and 'experiential learning' (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6).

Zac considered this during his interview and alluded to an anxiety surrounding his KCIT experience. For him, the responsibility to attend KCIT reinforced his powerlessness:

If I didn't have to go ... I just wouldn't go ... like yesterday I was 15 minutes late [to go to rugby] and they put me down as a warning ... that could have been [classed as] a breach [of my court order] ... it pisses me off. (Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

Zain attended KCIT over two separate time periods with varying levels of engagement. His experience reinforces ideas that voluntary participation leads to a more positive experience. When I asked him about his first experience of KCIT he explained:

The first time [I came to rugby] was probably about 8 months ago innit and I got forced into that, basically. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

Zain's first period of attendance was short-lived. The following statement demonstrates his resistance to the imposition of attending KCIT:

If they make me do something and I don't want to do it, then I won't do it!

However, during his second period of attendance, he was more engaged and connected to the programme. He reflected on this during his interview.

[The second time] one of them [YOT practitioners] said, 'What would you rather do then? Go boxing or something?' And I said 'rugby'.

Zain's experience demonstrates that participation does not 'need' to be voluntary in the strictest sense, yet it suggests that it does benefit from some feelings of autonomy. This is notable because, at present, strictly voluntary participation is unlikely for young people when faced with ISS order restrictions coupled with the structural inequalities experienced in the YJS (Phoenix, 2016; Smithson et al., 2020). This, however, is a broader issue beyond the scope of this thesis. Arguably, Zain's experience shows the value of consultation and supports the notion that consultation can shape positive experiences of sport (Chamberlain, 2013; Lerner et al., 2017).

The young men frequently used apathy and resistance at KCIT, and it is possible that they did so both to demonstrate that rugby lacked relevance to them and as a means to assert power and dominance in a context with limited options. They employed methods such as kicking and/or throwing balls away or rejecting KCIT by instigating self-exclusion. The nature of involuntary participation was a primary factor that, from the outset, limited KCIT in supporting PYD. The young people resisted against their involvement in the programme and indeed rugby union more generally.

Participants seem reticent to engage fully in rugby, they seem uninterested, sometimes as though they don't want to be here. (Field note extract 28.06.2019)

Despite this, there was evidence that the young men accepted that participating in rugby union could be valuable. They considered KCIT to be more appealing than alternative YOT requirements. This alone might be enough to support sports programmes as strengths-based mechanisms in youth justice. Joe, one of the most consistent participants, explained that despite rugby union's irrelevance, it provided a welcome break from less appealing justice provision. During his interview, he suggested that KCIT provided enjoyment, one of the key outcomes of Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) PAF:

It's just something enjoyable, better than sitting in YOT and that ... not something that I properly like [or] I would do personally, but it's one of them things where I would do it, you know what I mean? But I wouldn't go out of my way to choose to do it. (Joe, 17-year-old White British).

Joe's response supports Meek's (2018) research findings (conducted in youth custody settings) and suggests that rugby union can provide respite from criminal justice regimes. The view that rugby is better than '*sitting in YOT*' suggests that rugby union can be seen as an appealing alternative to other provision; however, this does not mean that rugby union can be considered a vehicle for PYD, not least because rugby union was unappealing to the young people. KCIT set against the backdrop of the YJS was a setting limited in its relevance and its capacity to empower the young men.

4.3.2 '*Everyone's nice innit and no one's a dick'ed*': Rugby union as a 'hook for change'

One of the fundamental concepts that often underpins why sport is promoted to young people with histories of offending behaviour is that it is believed to be an effective 'hook for change' (Giordano et al., 2002:1001). The concept of a 'hook for change' demonstrates that external mechanisms can support and energise individuals to change their behaviour and identity. Interestingly, the PAF as a framework for understanding sport's capacity to promote 'personal development' (i.e., change) situates neatly with

Giordano et al.'s (2002) theory. The defining factor of a 'hook for change' is its capacity to support identity and behaviour change. Yet, hooks are only effective when individuals allow them to be. Therefore, for an activity to have gravitas as a 'hook for change' it must align with individual concerns and aspirations (Giordano et al., 2002).

'Hook for change' is a concept that both sport criminology and youth development scholars have embraced, likely because, as Holt et al. (2016) explained, physical activity in theory provides a 'natural fit' for promoting development. Such claims suggest that it is sport itself that holds the key to change, and not the individual or the relationship between the two, whereas scholars such as McMahon and Belur (2013) acknowledge that a 'hook' necessitates agential and external mechanisms working in tandem. They argue that sport can provide a 'hook for change', yet its effectiveness as a hook is not definitive or guaranteed because not all sport has equal appeal or relevance to individual participants. This is notable as the individual, i.e., the dynamic element of a sports programme responsible for agentic change, is missing from Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) PAF.

A critical finding of this thesis is that rugby, in its purest sense, had a limited 'hooking' potential for justice-involved young men. Rugby did not support their aspirations and was simply a vehicle through which they could fulfil the requirements of their ISS orders. Interestingly, one factor I observed that did increase rugby union's appeal was the development of social relationships and the connections that KCIT facilitated.

Luke explained,

It's actually quite good, you know. It helps people ... they [the coaches] get on your case [and] they look after you; they don't really want to see you go downhill.

(Luke, 17-year-old White British)

Social relationships at KCIT were appealing to the young people. Zain supported this with a more direct perspective:

Everyone's nice innit and no one's a dick'ed ... It's about the people ... imagine having dick'ed people. Obviously no one's going to want to turn up innit, they would be like 'Oh are you coming to rugby?' and I'd be like 'Nah I don't want to.'
(Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

Although Zain explained that KCIT staff offered the 'hook', it was unclear what characterised a 'dick'ed'. I did, however, gain an insight from Dom. He explained that a 'dick'ed' coach was someone who

basically ... they take everything seriously even though we are not like serious players. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

The coaches, Mark and Ben, were not 'dick'eds'. The young men were fond of them because they showed them respect by being approachable and supportive.

Every time we meet, he's always got that one handshake ... [it's a] bond innit ... no one wants a guy [who] just does his job innit. He has a connection where he wants to help, and he wants the kids in YOT to be better. (Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

I mean, who else does this just to help some naughty kids out? (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

Dom further articulated the role of the coaches:

If you struggle, they can help you and you can talk to them if you don't understand summat ... The other day [Mark] showed me this pass he did over his back and then I was baffled for about ten minutes, like how the fuck does he keep doing that? And then I went and was like 'How do you do it?' and he showed me for about twenty minutes. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

One critical factor here is the reflection on the sociological position as 'naughty kids' and 'kids in YOT'. This arguably demonstrates that KCIT's facilitation of positive relationships

was the 'hooking potential' and not necessarily the attraction of rugby union. The coaches used covert intimacy (Roberts et al., 2017) through methods including handshakes and showing conscientious, non-threatening attitudes. The young men themselves explained that this had supported some personal changes.

[Before I came] I thought 'oh, it's going to be absolute shite' ... obviously [now] I have started coming and [seen] that it's decent ... I'm actually pretty healthy now.
(Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

It's helped me ... at home. I wake up and do press ups ... and I do them before I go to sleep ... It's just got my brain working ... it's changed my opinion quite a lot. It's opened my eyes to what I want. I want a better life so I will be going to the gym, and ... I've started doing other things like ... other sports and stuff ... [Now I'm] concentrating on my fitness and concentrating on what I'm eating, and I've just started surrounding myself with good environments because it makes me feel better about myself ... [I'm] not hanging about on the estate all the time. Now I don't really go out unless we are doing good. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

I argue that rugby union was not the 'hook for change' for the young men who attended the KCIT programme. I also propose that rugby had 'hooking potential' for those young people who actively wanted to change. KCIT's facilitation of the exposure to a positive setting with positive social relationships supported personal development. However, it should not be assumed that rugby union is naturally conducive to encouraging changes in the types of attitudes and behaviours that originally brought the young men into contact with the YJS, nor should it be assumed that rugby union inherently supports PYD. Rugby union has the potential to entrench these attitudes and behaviours, increase victimisation and marginalisation and, if delivered in line with rugby's historical philosophy, be the antithesis of PYD.

4.3.3 *'It's a challenge innit [to] see who's stronger'*: Rugby union, a site for 'hardening boys'

Before moving through this section, it is worthwhile recalling the original rationale of KCIT: to provide a structured weekly rugby union programme for justice-involved young people to divert them from offending behaviours whilst simultaneously increasing their competency and supporting their personal development. KCIT achieved this in the sense that none of the young men who attended were committing crime at the time the project took place, and many of the young people obtained rugby-specific qualifications as part of their attendance on the programme. Despite these intended outcomes, this thesis demonstrates that the young people, YOT practitioners and coaches were more focused on the potential for KCIT to address stress and tension relief through its prospective offer of physical competition. Phillips (1996:74) argues that rugby union has a unique masculine appeal in that it provides an exposure to a 'great roughness', i.e., intense physicality, and it could therefore facilitate physical and emotional release in ways that have become restricted in contemporary society.

Indicative of the hierarchical nature of masculinity, not all sports have an equal association with masculinity. Matthews (2014:13) claims that contact sports such as rugby, boxing and mixed martial arts (MMA) have a greater capacity to satisfy masculinity and the need for physical expression. These sports permit the 'channelling of male biology' and encourage performers to 'let the beast out' (Matthews, 2014:13).

When asked what he liked about rugby union, Joe noted:

It's a challenge innit [to] see who's stronger and that ... [I can] annihilate [friend's name], [when I do, I feel] funny and happy. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

I asked the young people if there were any sports they would not play:

[I don't like] golf and cricket. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

[Racket sports are] just boring, you're just smacking a ball again and again. (Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

A key distinction between tennis or golf and rugby union is that despite all three being distinctly middle class, rugby facilitates explicit and direct interactional violence. Therefore, it is likely that rugby is preferred because its celebration of exaggerated displays of physicality align with traditional masculine values. Rugby's 'rule bound' physicality is underpinned by an ideology of violence and aggression, i.e., components historically considered inherent to 'male biology' (Messner, 1992:67). Steve (frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager) believed the sanctioned expressions of masculinity afforded by rugby offered a positive experience for young men:

I think it's a channel [for energy/anger] really ... there's a massively sort of physical aspect to the game ... and that's really, really healthy for the young people.

Mark (rugby coach and KCIT lead) agreed, explaining that rugby union provided a wholesome redirection of energy:

[The lads] go get involved in things which are negative for them and which would be a bad experience and a bad situation to get into. It's taking them away and offering them a sport ... that they can do on a regular basis so that they can just kind of get hold of so that it becomes part of their normal routine, and ermm [it's] something which is a good opportunity for them to get involved in.

Mark and Steve's claims support the literature by suggesting that rugby provides a 'good opportunity' to channel male energy (Parker et al., 2014; Chamberlain, 2013). This theme was prominent throughout KCIT sessions. YOT practitioners and coaches informally reiterated that rugby was a 'good opportunity'. Comments included 'Are you going to get involved today? It will be good for you.' and 'Come on, this is good for you.' These

comments suggest that it is physicality that contributes to personal development (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6) and were reflective of broader hegemonic discourses that reinforce sport as a male expectation (Jump, 2020). They also reinforced the young people's participation as an expectation and contributed to hegemonic discourses in which masculinity has become synonymous with physical presence. These claims are indicative of exhortations that men are often bombarded with as a process of encouraging their complicity with hegemonic masculinity (Winlow and Hall, 2009; Winlow, 2012; Ellis, 2012). Claims of sport being 'good' naturally infer that non-participation is 'bad'.

Ben (gym instructor and KCIT support) supported Jump's (2020) claim that sport is a male expectation by inferring that rugby union was a 'safe' (i.e., conservative) environment:

[Rugby union offers] a nice friendly environment for them that's not going to do any harm and, if anything, they do enjoy.

This idea has been considered by Pleck (2004:64), who asserts that sport offers masculine safety: sport protects masculine status from claims of femininity. I do not doubt that the YOT practitioners and coaches believed their claims were genuine; however, such claims undeniably reiterate cultural messages reinforcing sport and physical presence as interconnected with masculinity. Such claims encouraged the young men to be complicit in their adherence to sporting masculine discourses, inferring that sport participation was for their own good (Pascoe, 2005; 2007; McCormack and Anderson, 2010). To develop this argument, I return to Pleck (2004:64), who suggests that by entering a sporting context, man's position in patriarchal culture is elevated. In terms of rugby as a mechanism to prevent criminal behaviour, Pleck's claim is notable as it suggests that rugby union may offer men patriarchal power and status. Subsequently, it is feasible to think that if rugby union can offer power and status, it could act as a replacement for more criminal means of experiencing these concepts.

Pollock (2014:2) considers that rugby's rhetoric of being 'good' and 'safe' conceals a 'dirty secret'. She argues that rugby has a prominent, although under-evidenced, capacity to be harmful. She confirms that rugby injuries are, in general, minor; however, she claims that rugby participation can cause lifelong disability, paralysis and, in extreme cases, death (Hill et al., 2020; White et al., 2021). Arguably, sport development scholars (Meek, 2018) have upheld this 'secret' by focusing somewhat exclusively on evidencing rugby's developmental assets; concealing this secret has contributed to a vague perception that rugby is 'good' and 'safe'. As a case in point, I reflect on my experience in KCIT, where during one session I experienced a knee to the face yet made no claim of harm. During KCIT, I also observed participants showing signs of physical harm and distress, sometimes through bloodshed and sometimes through limping, yet I scarcely heard any claims of physical discomfort or distress.

My reflective example here illustrates Sabo's (2009) 'pain principle'. For Sabo, pain is an inevitable component of patriarchal culture. This is true in the rugby context. As a former semi-professional rugby player who still bears scars from my rugby career, pain and rugby have become synonymous. The ability to endure pain is a common masculine attitude (Young et al., 1994) which may provide individuals with self-worth, social progression and social acceptance (Sabo, 2004). This is true of rugby because, as Schacht (1996) argues, enduring pain is how rugby players legitimise their masculinity; likewise, it provides the basis of their character. Yet this process does not manifest itself in a way aligned with the notion of personal development in the PAF (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). My experience of rejecting pain at KCIT provided me with credibility. In turn, concealing pain protected the credibility of the project as a 'safe' site. Ironically, by concealing pain I contributed to rugby's 'dirty secret' (Pollock, 2014) and to broader patriarchal beliefs in the value of pain (Sabo, 2004).

The knowledge that denying pain and accepting injury are integral to the playing of rugby provides an ironic juxtaposition, particularly considering that KCIT delivered rugby union to justice-involved young men with anxieties about proving themselves as 'men'. Young et al. (1994) consider that concealing emotion and concealing both physical and

psychological pain are mechanisms used by men in their exhibition of masculinity. During his interview, Mark was definitive in his explanation that the prospect of enduring pain is developmental and integral to rugby. Mark considered that pain is a mechanism used by players to secure their identity as rugby men:

Rugby just by the nature of its physicality ... and how hard you have to work and how much you have to put your body through when you know you could get injured, and you still do it and you've done something that hurts: that's a bigger achievement than something that doesn't [hurt] for me. To go and take a hit [from] someone who's come to hurt you, and I mean they do hurt you, but you don't show them that they hurt you, and you still get up, and you still play on and challenge. As opposed to walking away from the challenge ... you don't give up.
(Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

Involving young men with predisposed hyper-masculine anxieties in rugby union risks entrenching performances of 'bravado' and 'toughness' –behaviours that contributed to their involvement with the YJS. Rugby union arguably encourages young men to remain emotionally muted and further internalise personal stressors by restricting opportunities to indulge in personal fragility. The sporting structure of rugby union appears opposed to PYD as outlined in the PAF. This is not least because the sport facilitates the development of an unhealthy connection between harmful self-sacrifice and respect. Rugby union achieves what Pollock (1999:8) terms 'the hardening of boys' through what Messner (2011:163) describes as the process of encouraging

Emotional separation, shame and fear to toughen boys in ways that prepares them for the cutthroat competition of public life, but that simultaneously stunts their ability to engage in the kinds of mutual intimacy that is the foundation of ... happy family lives.

This analysis raises questions about the inherent hidden education delivered through the playing of rugby union. Nauright and Chandler (1996) suggest that rugby union is a game

for men. However, I suggest that rugby provides an implicit education in 'toxic masculinity' through encouraging the traditionally masculine behaviour of emotional rejection (Hutchins and Phillips, 1999; Salam, 2019; Bowman, 2020). This idea raises notable ethical concerns, primarily about the detrimental impact on individual personal development, particularly considering that individuals socialised in toxic masculine ideologies are more liable to suffer from mental and physical health problems (Pappas, 2019). Yet, considering the wider social impact, scholars such as Salam (2019) and Valenti (2018) have evidenced this socialisation as contributing to the perpetuation of destructive patriarchal practices, including further violence, heightened desires for domination, and entrenchment of misogynistic and homophobic attitudes. In terms of PYD, it is possible that without focused effort, the long-term outcome of rugby participation may not be positive personal development as indicated by the PAF, but toxic masculinisation.

Mark's comment '*take a hit from someone who's come to hurt you*' outlines an intent to harm. This intent defines rugby union as a site that normalises violence (see Rudd et al., 2016; Jump, 2020 for discussions of this in boxing). Intent is an issue I do not cover in depth here. However, I suggest that this comment undermines the argument that rugby is 'safe', at least from a physical well-being perspective. In doing this, it also defines rugby as a site where players wilfully negotiate violence as a means of accomplishing their masculinity.

Like Jump's (2020) theorisation of findings in the sport of boxing, I maintain that performances of violent physicality through rugby will not prevent similar behaviours being reproduced elsewhere. I turn my attention to Kreager (2007), who established a link between contact sport and violence. Kreager (2007) evidenced that the greater the level of violence comprising a sport, the greater the likelihood that such sport encourages violence to permeate social life. Mark's inference of intent to harm, i.e., the conscious act of inflicting violence on another player, led me to conclude that rugby union fails as a context to protect young men from experiencing violence. The reason for this is simple:

violence is a key component of rugby union's identity; participation in rugby union is literal exposure to violence.

In terms of safety, arguably rugby union serves as a sanctioned arena for physicality and violence. Therefore, the safety provided within KCIT was that of social safety, particularly the reduced fear of recompense and reprimand for engaging in violent contests. James and Ron explained what would happen if they performed comparable physicality elsewhere:

Probably would ... [get] stabbed ... slashed, nicked, [or] jail [time]. Jail innit [I swear on my] mother's life ... [I] probably would have got nicked for that [on the street]. (James, 18-year-old White British)

Probably would have got stabbed. (Ron, 17-year-old BAME)

Yet, Steve and Dom explained:

[Rugby can provide] a good channel for built-up stress and frustration, and I think [it's a] ... massive channel for being able to exert yourself. (Steve, frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager)

Rugby almost seems like releasing anger [in a way and] I get the same buzz off rugby as I do Thai boxing ... it's like I can release all my anger but not like in a bad way but in a good way. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

To conclude, I argue that any claims that rugby union is 'good' and 'safe' do hold truth, but only for those willing to relinquish their mind and body to the sport. However, because the YOTs celebrated and promoted rugby as progressive and developmental, the capacity for a socially conservative redirection of stress and tension may be rugby union's primary strength. However, this does not necessarily result in PYD. Although rugby provided a temporary respite from the chaos of social life (Crowther et al., forthcoming,

2022), the findings here add legitimacy to Jump's (2020) claim that it is naïve to celebrate sport as an outlet for stress relief. She explains that sport cannot overturn years of entrenched anger and inherent trauma. The use of sport in the YJS is more likely to offer respite from chaos and frustration than any of the outcomes currently outlined in Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) PAF. Arguably, rugby union provides a *masculine bandage* to plaster over fragile and vulnerable masculinities and emotional deficits. There is a need to overcome this, and practitioners

'Need to move beyond considering rugby as a site for expelling stress and built-up frustration and consider how rugby can be mobilised as a context through which young men can identify and explore the stressors they experience, and thus help develop coping mechanisms.' (Crowther et al., forthcoming, 2022:8)

4.3.4 *'Rugby union in particular is, it's very complicated'*: Rugby union is inherently exclusionary

Pringle (2009:224) notes that the 'confrontational thrill of rugby [takes] players to an intoxicating and spine-tingling edge'. He argues that rugby's appeal lies in its facilitation of pain, pleasure, anger, excitement and fear. Mark (rugby coach and KCIT lead) similarly argued that this was the root of rugby union's suitability and relevance for justice-involved young men. He suggested that rugby's sanctioned violence could replace the desire to seek more deviant methods of violence:

They are exposed to a lot of those [physical] situations really ... it's the way they have been brought up ... that's their go to ... [way of] how they can overcome a problem, through physicality [and] 'doing someone', whether it's putting someone in their place or whether... it's a lack of education ... [or] I don't know, is it [something else? I'm not sure]. There are different options that you have got, whether that's ermm verbal or different ways of addressing the situation but maybe it's an easier option ... [so] I think they enjoy the contact ... whether that's hitting the rugby bag or tackling someone they enjoy [it]. Maybe it's [the]

aggression or competition or whatever you kind of label it ... they kind of enjoy that physical challenge ... I think. They tend to go and find opportunities that are down that [route and] they enjoy that kind of ermm physical challenge.

The young men supported Mark's ideas about the appeal of 'roughness':

[I enjoy it because] you have got to try take people out. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

[I like it because] I like throwing people about and that. It's good. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

'Confrontational thrills' (Pringle, 2009:224) are indeed one of rugby's key appeals; however, the appeal of rugby union's physicality was not an opportunity to simply 'take someone out' or 'throw someone about'. I reflected on this in my field notes:

Mark delivered a bit about 'safe and effective tackle technique' today. At first, I thought, this is a good opportunity for the lads to get stuck in and learn. The process was slow, there was no real impact in the contacts, the lads just went through the motions. They giggled, smirked, and just looked uncomfortable with the intimacy. (Field note extract 23.08.2019)

I draw on Ellis's (2016) discussion of violence in which he suggests that street violence is often savage and chaotic. Rugby union violence, however, is more akin to 'mimetic' (Matthews, 2014:1) and 'sanitised' violence (Ellis, 2016:102). For the young men accustomed to *real* violence, rugby union served only as a restrictive context. It is likely that this sanitised violence is insufficient to ease the primal and predatory desires which Emsley (2005) suggests support male violence.

The young men viewed participating in KCIT as an opportunity for mindless physicality and roughness. However, rugby's violence is vague and misconceived in comparison to their prior experiences of violence, and participation did not meet their expectations. It

transpired that rugby's physicality was not a case of mindlessly negotiating violence but was akin to Nauright and Chandler's (1996) critical assessment that rugby union's roughness is unique and complex. Such unique complexity underpins Richards' (2007) argument that rugby union lacks inclusivity, a reality that was pervasive at KCIT. Steve explained this by describing rugby as too complicated and technical, thereby presenting it as a sport with which it is difficult to develop a connection:

One thing that ... puts people off rugby union in particular is, it's very complicated, whereas rugby league is a really simple game ... [the complexity of rugby union] can deter a lot of people ... so like over-complicated rules. I think in particular with rugby union it's more ... like a negative game and it's played on the negative. Sort of, you are waiting for somebody to make mistakes and then you can capitalise on those mistakes rather than going out [and creating opportunities], whereas rugby league it's literally you get the ball and run as quick as you can ... there are sometimes some really exciting rugby union games [but] there can be some absolute borefests as well where it's just like ... too technical. (Steve, frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager)

My field notes supported Steve's insight. I reflected on rugby union's unique components and how they caused young people to show signs of lacking in both competence and confidence.

The lads engaged well with the rugby component of the session today, but they sometimes seem to find the pace of play difficult to keep up with. Sometimes they just drop out and sit down, but this makes it more demanding for the rest of the lads and ultimately affects the quality of the game. (Field note extract 15.02.2019)

I also reflected on rugby union's seemingly counterintuitive gameplay and its impact on limiting the young men from connecting with the sport. Rugby union's unique components, including the shape of the ball²⁰, limited its appeal:

I'm realising that rugby is not simple. The rugby rules and requirements limit the project and slow down the access to gameplay. Everything seems counterintuitive for these lads, and understandably. Run forward, pass it backwards? The requirement for the body to rotate is difficult, and the lads seem to lack that coordination. The shape of the ball, the lads look at it like 'what do I do with this?'; they don't know how to hold it. (Field note extract 15.02.2019)

When I asked the young men about rugby union's physical demands they reinforced the idea that rugby union is too demanding to be inclusive (Richards, 2007):

The first day I went [to] rugby ... I just seen how bad it was [when] I started running and [I] nearly passed out, it was horrible. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

Fitness [is hard] because whilst we are playing we tend to run a lot and I don't tend to run, and I realised I get out of breath really fast. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

Rugby has been successful in criminal justice contexts, for example, through Saracens Sport Foundation's operation in HMYOI Feltham and the Leeds Rhinos operation in HMYOI Wetherby (Meek, 2012; 2018). However, this thesis illustrates the RFU has been ineffective in promoting it as a 'sport for all' (World Rugby, 2019:online). The sport arguably remains disconnected from the working class and lacks accessibility for novice participants such as the young men at KCIT. In relation, rugby union can be seen as a reinforcer of disparate social stratification, arguably emphasising marginalised young people's disconnection from mainstream society. Rugby union's physical demands,

²⁰ The shape of the rugby ball is a prolate spheroid.

particularly fitness, coordination and body awareness, are factors that limit the sport's inclusivity. The disconnection between the physical capacity of the participants at KCIT and rugby's physical demands meant that rugby could not be 'played as it should' (Springhall, 1971:125) or as the young people expected, i.e., vigorously, violently and with virility. These factors reduced rugby union's relevance to the young people in this research (Rosenkranz et al., 2012), and its 'uniqueness' and complexity worked against PYD by inciting stress and frustration (Holt et al., 2017).

The literature presented above along with my own observations outlined below demonstrate that exclusion was a distinct reality and that such exclusion caused participants to accept their limited competence in the rugby space. I observed this on multiple occasions throughout the project:

[Today] Zac went off from the game and refused to play. He said he had a 'bad back'. Despite, if true, being a valid and reasonable excuse, I'm not sure it was genuine. Because a bit later he took part in the gym session with no complaints.
(Field note extract 23.08.2019)

Joe said that he hurt himself during the session today. He said that he had stubbed his hand/finger in catching the ball. It's likely, but it seems to be a regular occurrence that he hurts himself, drops out, and sits there. I am wondering if he has actually hurt himself or if he is just using it as an excuse to avoid taking part.
(Field note extract 18.10.2019)

Similarly to Richards (2007), these insights suggest that rugby union was too demanding, at least for the young men at KCIT. This was detrimental to both the psychology and social image of the young men, but also gave rebirth to previous traumatic experiences.

Billy (17-year-old White British) was a notable example of this when he explained that sometimes at rugby he felt '*embarrassed ... [and] like a mong*'²¹.

4.3.5 TREDs – rugby union's core values

England Rugby (no date:online), rugby union's governing body, outlines five core values: teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship (TREDs). A short outline of these principles is provided here (a more in-depth description of TREDs is given in section 2.4.3).

Table 10 provides England Rugby's definitions of the core values along with some definitions given by the young men partaking in KCIT.

²¹ A derogatory term for someone who is considered stupid.

Table 10: Definitions of TREDs

	Teamwork	Respect	Enjoyment	Discipline	Sportsmanship
Definitions provided by England Rugby	All involved in Rugby union are encouraged to work selflessly for the team and the good of the sport, both on and off the field.	All involved should adhere to Rugby union’s values and traditions to earn respect. Likewise, all involved should respect one another.	Players are encouraged to enjoy training, playing and being part of the Rugby family.	Rugby is underpinned by controlled physicality. All involved should obey the laws of the game.	England Rugby considers that sportsmanship provides the sport’s foundation. All involved are encouraged to uphold camaraderie; they should uphold fair play.
Definitions provided by the young	<i>‘stick[ing] together’</i> (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)	<i>‘respect is earned by being on the same level’</i> (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)	<i>‘fun innit’</i> (Ron, 17-year-old BAME)	<i>‘do your thing and carry on until you get what you want’</i> (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)	<i>‘shake hands after the game and if someone’s injured you go over and check’</i> (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

<p>men in this research</p>	<p><i>'working together' (Joe, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>	<p><i>'do what they tell you and do the training and that' (Joe, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>	<p><i>'smiling' (Joe, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>	<p><i>'when you got a couple of rules and that innit' (Ron, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>	<p><i>'don't start going mad and just shake his hand' (Joe, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>
	<p><i>'cooperate with someone for an outcome ... [it's] everything. The world wouldn't run without teamwork' (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)</i></p>	<p><i>'understanding where someone has come from [and] who they are' (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)</i></p>	<p><i>'a person with a smile on their face' (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)</i></p>	<p><i>'when you are told what to do' (Joe, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>	<p><i>'if someone beats you, you show them respect; say if you lost to them ... say if you beat them, you would show them respect cos at the end of the day you both like the sport and you have done what you came to do' (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)</i></p>
	<p><i>'it's like including others within a task that you want to do and making sure everyone plays a part'</i></p>	<p><i>'say if you lost to them ... say if you beat them, you would show them respect cos at the end of the day you</i></p>	<p><i>'being happy and having fun' (Luke, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>	<p><i>'knowing the consequences of something before you do it' (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)</i></p>	<p><i>'it just means like the whole thing in sport and teamwork and everything' (Luke, 17-year-old White British)</i></p>

	(Luke, 17-year-old White British)	<i>both like the sport and you both have done what you came to do'</i> (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)			
	<i>'not moaning at each other when you play ... focusing on working together'</i> (Billy, 17-year-old White British)	<i>'someone treats you with respect, you treat them back with respect'</i> (Luke, 17-year-old White British)	<i>'having a laugh ... when you are happy or summat'</i> (Dom, 17-year-old White British)	<i>'not letting no one take you for a mug and you're disciplined in showing where you stand'</i> (Luke, 17-year-old White British)	<i>'[be] good with the other team and show respect'</i> (Billy, 17-year-old White British)
		<i>'look out for one another ... if you give me respect, I will give you respect'</i> (Dom, 17-year-old White British)	<i>'have fun'</i> (Billy, 17-year-old White British)	<i>'when someone does something wrong, you tell them off or summat'</i> (Dom, 17-year-old White British)	

		<i>'speaking to someone nicely'</i> (Billy, 17-year-old White British)			
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TREDS appears to be aligned with PYD, particularly as both refer to what are understood as positive social norms and practices such as teamwork, emotional regulation and enjoyment (Lerner et al., 2014). However, the young men at KCIT had different interpretations of these values. I shall now provide a contextual comparison of these understandings.

4.3.5.1 Teamwork

England Rugby's teamwork value demonstrates that players should be selfless in their actions, and everyone involved in rugby should perform all actions for the good of the sport. This infers that no one involved in rugby union is more important than rugby union itself. Players should relinquish their mind, body and soul to rugby union by adhering to the sport's 'militaristic, patriotic ideology' (Collins, 2002:799). The young men's understanding of teamwork, however, was more suggestive of cooperation, inclusion and joint endeavour towards a common goal. England Rugby's definition of teamwork limits rugby union's PYD potential because it suggests that players must give themselves to the game without due concern for themselves or others.

4.3.5.2 Respect

TREDS demonstrates that those involved in rugby union should earn and show respect by upholding its values and traditions. The literature review evidenced that rugby union's traditions include education in violence and production of force, which ultimately culminate in the development and use of the 'body-as-weapon'²² (Messner, 1992:64–71). This demonstrates that to secure respect through rugby, players must embody its culture of violent competition. Refusal to do so results in disrespect and being viewed as

²² What Messner (1992) theorises as a bidirectional process of achieving dominance in sport. To dominate others, participants must dominate themselves by overcoming physical and psychological struggles.

disrespectful to rugby's traditions. The young men, however, explained that people can earn and show respect by being courteous towards others, understanding their circumstances and using language to show respect. This suggests that rugby union reinforces a toxic connection between respect and violence.

4.3.5.3 Enjoyment

England Rugby considers that all those involved in rugby union should enjoy training, playing and being part of the rugby family. When asked to explain enjoyment, the young men noted that enjoyment was about having fun. There were signs that the young men found the immediate experience of rugby union enjoyable and fun. When asked to comment on whether rugby was enjoyable or fun, the young men linked enjoyment with opportunities for physicality:

I like doing the contact ... I started enjoying rugby when we got the pads out ... and I enjoyed it when we started doing the contact. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

I like tackling. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

Opportunities to play the game were considered more enjoyable than training:

[I like] being able to play the game. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

The game itself, that's just fun. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

It is clear from these examples that the young men found enjoyment in playing rugby but were less enthusiastic about training and learning techniques because they undervalued the competencies they could develop through the sport:

Learning the techniques, that's boring that. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

[I don't like] doing the passing and that because I don't really need [the skills]. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

Aside from enjoying rugby's physical and performative components, it was clear that KCIT's environment was a source of appeal and enjoyment. Cooper explained that the programme facilitated discussions that were not possible in other social settings:

I remember when we were just talking about cartoons and things and one of them said 'Oh this is great this ermm I never actually get a chance to talk to anyone about stuff like this.' I'm thinking, 'Oh this must be completely different when he was outside, and he has to act in a certain way and can't really talk about certain things.' (Cooper, 17-year-old BAME)

Rugby union was enjoyable as it provided the young men an outlet for both physical and social self-expression. Despite rugby's physicality being a key source of enjoyment and appeal, rugby union can be appealing for other reasons such as facilitating individuality and expression. These findings support Mageau and Vallerand's (2003) insight that sport can facilitate enjoyment by providing opportunities for expression. I propose that enjoyment should be a key focus if rugby union is to be a vehicle for PYD.

4.3.5.4 Discipline

Discipline is about controlled physicality and devotion to the laws of the game. In some respects, rugby discipline means being complicit in negotiating physicality, aggression and violence. For the young men, discipline was a vague concept, of which they showed diverse understandings (see Table 10). They understood discipline as being steadfast in one's convictions and dedicated to personal conduct. The contrast here is that England Rugby links discipline with a complicity to the norms of the game, whereas for the young men discipline was individually relevant. Further distinction is needed to clarify what is meant by 'discipline'. Novice participants risk being exposed to a form of 'exclusionary discipline' (Novak, 2021), whereby their limited knowledge of the 'laws of the game' has the potential to encourage alienation from the sport. To address this, rugby union would benefit from relaxing its laws and rules to increase accessibility.

Despite discipline being a vague concept for the young men, they disagreed with England Rugby's view that rugby's physicality was disciplined. Some of the young men suggested that it was, in fact, ill-disciplined and uncontrolled. When discussing rugby's physicality, James and Zain explained that players could intentionally use rugby to inflict pain on others:

I'd just like run at someone and sniper them for a start [of a game] ... just wait until we started playing rugby and then just spear them or something like that. (James, 18-year-old White British)

[When tackling] you have to try take people out – it's good. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

Joe noted that an effective tackle would result in the opposing player being '*straight on the floor winded*'. These insights illustrate a conflict between how England Rugby considers players should use physicality and what novice participants understand. This stems from a contradiction in understandings of discipline. The young men were unwilling to accept rugby's physicality, which highlighted a mismatch between the required and possessed discipline. This suggests a need to ensure that provision is appropriately tailored and relevant to participants.

4.3.5.5 Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship was the core value for which England Rugby and the young men were most closely aligned. Both agreed that sportsmanship was the sum of the other values that comprised TREDs, including concepts such as togetherness, admiration for others and the capacity to show sporting restraint. However, there were subtle differences. England Rugby considers that sportsmanship is about 'fair play', which is a vague notion. The young men considered sportsmanship to be about valuing people and their well-being above gameplay and winning or losing. This is notable because it shows that the young men's idea of sportsmanship contradicted key components of TREDs.

4.3.6 Summarising TREDs

Although the discourse through which England Rugby presents TREDs sounds progressive and inclusive, TREDs arguably disguises a restrictive masculine culture which forces men to subscribe to specific hegemonic values, driving personal development towards the embodiment of complicit masculinity. TREDs is a prominent example of Messner's (1992) concerns about sporting symbolism targeting the male consciousness. It also shapes a culture of conformity whereby players support these values or face rejection. TREDs centralises toxic masculine components of rugby union, specifically that physicality is a primary method of showing respect and that players must be complicit in surrendering their mind and body to the sport and its laws.

4.3.7 TREDs and the rhetoric of KCIT

The MenEngage Alliance (2014:4), a global alliance seeking to reduce gender inequality and end gender-based violence, argued:

many of the values currently celebrated in sport and the way sport has been defined and taught have a negative impact on boys and men, as well as women and girls.

TREDs is an example of such values. Evidence from this thesis undermines the idea of TREDs as a progressive values system. Mark (rugby coach and KCIT lead), for example, noted:

The teamwork shown across the group is unlike no other ... the physical aspect of it and the respect shown on the pitch and the rivalries, but it never goes over the line, it never bubbles beyond you know ... if you get hit [you] say 'good hi't and tell them 'that was a great hit'.

It is clear from this example that rugby union's core value of respect is one of rugby union's defining components. Mark's reflection shows that this respect necessitates physicality, thus reaffirming the longstanding idea that physicality is rugby union's defining component (David and Brannon, 1976; Nauright and Chandler, 1996). Mark's notion of acceptance and condoning of violence illustrates that rugby union's culture promotes complicity in the use of the 'body-as-weapon', i.e., a tool used to negotiate violence in the quest for status (Messner, 1992:64–71). Physicality, in its literal sense, is not a limitation of rugby union's potential to support PYD. However, the hyper-masculine discourse such as the connection between violence and respect that reinforces this physicality is. Ben (gym instructor and KCIT support) summarised this:

It's an aggressive ... contact sport ermm, but the respect shown ... and that culture is just there, and you see that ... it is that channelled aggression, and yes you can [have] aggression and ermm like [be] dominating physically, is a huge part of the sport, but ... [rugby does] that in a way that is ermm it's how can I put it? Ermm it's not abusing anyone or anything like that, it's just using that, you know, competitive sporting way.

Although Ben suggests that rugby's violence is not 'abusive', his comments clearly show that rugby is about dominance and aggression. His comments conceal the distinct reality shown by Messner's (1992:64–71) 'body-as-weapon' concept that even if rugby is not abusive to others, it is certainly abusive to the self. Nevertheless, Mark contradicted Ben, suggesting that rugby is in fact abusive and that abuse is a key method for legitimising oneself as a rugby player:

If you hit someone you carry on, you might score and then you check that person's alright.

and

It's ok to lose that individual battle but you can get it back next time. They enjoy that challenge of getting them back next time. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

These findings reflect Pollock's (2014) argument that violence and aggression and rugby union are mutually reinforcing, i.e., players desire to be violent and aggressive and receive encouragement from the sport to be this. This is notable as the MenEngage Alliance (2004:6) suggests that sport encourages hyper-competitive attitudes in which the 'winner takes all', something that James offered obvious support for when describing a fight he had seen at a rugby game. He explained:

[It happened because] he got pissed off ... [because] he was losing wasn't he, he's a loser. (James, 18-year-old White British)

Rugby union provides an opportunity to direct aggression but critically reinforces the legitimacy of aggression and violence. In this respect, TREDs undermines rugby union's PYD potential. TREDs does this by encouraging the development and entrenchment of aggression and hyper-/toxic masculinities that distance young people from wholesome versions of the short- and long-term outcomes of the PAF (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). Mark and Ben considered TREDs to be rugby union's 'functional necessities' and the sport's key strength. However, the formal values of TREDs and rugby's cultural ideals arguably conceal toxic messages. As part of this culture, Pollock (2014:100) explains 'there is a culture of expectation and acceptance of ... rugby injuries'. This thesis supports this explanation, evidencing that aggressive physicality, selfless physical performance and complicity with hyper-masculine discourses are fundamental to rugby union.

Mark upheld a belief that PYD outcomes would be more achievable through exposure to rugby union's wider roles, including '*playing ... coaching ... refereeing*', roles that Williams et al. (2015) considers provide more direct and immersive exposure to scenarios necessitating conflict resolution and emotional regulation skills. However, the transient nature of the young men who attended KCIT made it challenging to facilitate these roles. Moreover, this suggests that the timeframes (single season and multiple seasons) featured in Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) PAF are unrealistic for a youth justice context. Subsequently, KCIT only exposed its participants to a peripheral rugby union experience predicated on competition and skill development. This suggests that rugby union may be an ineffective vehicle for PYD in the YJS and with transient populations, particularly because it takes time and effort to ready participants for more well-rounded and

immersive rugby union experiences with the potential to promote short- and long-term outcomes like those featured in the PAF. In the absence of such opportunities, rugby union exemplifies the argument of the MenEngage Alliance (2004:6) that

[Through sport] boys ... are taught that winning is everything, that they should do whatever it takes to win, and that their happiness and success depends on defeating others.

4.3.8 *'I enjoy it when we started doing contact. That's rugby innit?':* Rugby union's relevance and accessibility

Academics exploring combat sports such as boxing and MMA have established notable links between sport and excitement. Jump (2016), for example, observed boxing's masculine lure as the opportunity to experience excitement through competitive violence. More recently, Channon (2020) considered excitement in MMA. He observed that action and excitement in MMA are a result of the actual activity, providing participants an escape from dull day-to-day routine. Channon further suggested that MMA can be exciting because it provides a competitive testing ground for physical capacity. Channon's (2020) claim is notable as it provides a nuanced understanding of Goffman's (1976:260–261) claim that 'action ... thrill and risk' deliver excitement. Channon's research suggests that sport need not offer 'action' but must provide more excitement than whatever else is on offer. Joe's (17-year-old White British) claim that rugby is *'better than sitting in YOT and that'* demonstrates that rugby did have some appeal. The next section explores and considers the implications of delivering touch rugby to justice-involved young people.

Parker et al. (2014) and Jenkins and Ellis (2011) argue that sport can replace violence and deviant behaviour. However, I argue that they underestimate the extent to which violence is a core component of rugby union (David and Brannon, 1976; Nauright and Chandler, 1996). Recently, well-evidenced concerns have shaped arguments that rugby union's physicality is unsafe and detrimental to health and well-being (Pollock, 2014; White et al., 2021). Accordingly, an emerging body of academics have advocated a move

towards using touch or tag rugby when engaging novice participants and when rugby union is not being used for competition or performance (Batten et al., 2016; White et al., 2018; Pollock, 2014; Pollock and Kirkwood, 2016). My experiences at KCIT observing young men engage with touch rugby illustrate that the game increased inclusivity and accessibility. Touch rugby arguably aligns with the PAF in the sense that it facilitates experiential learning and opportunities for play (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). However, I will show in this section that this shift reduces rugby union's 'cultural clout and ... [the] degree of respect' achievable through participation (Ellis, 2016:139).

Although KCIT coaches made efforts to facilitate exposure to rugby's more physical components, Mark (rugby coach and KCIT lead) tended to restrict opportunities for physical contact to highly structured and managed drills. He delivered touch rugby when sessions involved enough young men to play a game. In these instances, Mark delivered touch rugby as described in section 2.4.9 and removed rugby union's more dangerous components²³. The removal of these gameplay components allowed KCIT to address concerns relating to player welfare and reduced the need for many areas of rugby competency. However, this was not without its limitations, and it ultimately defined KCIT as something that was not '*proper rugby*' (Dom, 17-year-old White British), which arguably reduced the programme's value as a masculine currency.

The most glaring limitation was that reducing rugby's gross physical components increased demands for rugby-specific competence in areas such as passing. When Mark removed opportunities for violence, the young men could not draw on masculine defaults such as physical strength, power and violence that they had crafted in alternative contexts. In place of these capacities, touch rugby increased the demand for speed, coordination, cardiovascular fitness, agility and rugby-specific knowledge. This left the young men in a vulnerable position and at risk of being labelled fraudulent. The reality of touching another male in a way that was non-violent caused the young men to be anxious about the nebulous intimacy that defined touch. During their interviews, Liam and Dom showed that anxiety stemmed from concerns about hand placement and the application of force:

²³ As a reminder, these components include scrums, mauls and rucks.

[Contact rugby] it's just more how do I explain it? It feels like it's just easier. Not easier [but] I feel like it's more [real]. When it's touch, it's too pause go pause go. Do you know what I mean?... I like [contact rugby] cos it just feels a lot I don't know, I just don't know. I'm a lot more confident tackling someone than touching them. I don't know why, it's just like if I had a choice between doing the two, I would rather do contact. (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)

To be honest, I like doing the contact ... and the pad work ... I remember like I never used to play rugby proper, but I remember when we were on the pads and we were using the pads on the Astro²⁴ last time and that was the best bit about rugby ... [and] the first time I started to enjoy rugby was like when we got the pads out, you get me? Like touch rugby gets boring to an extent because you are not taking anyone down and I enjoy it when we started doing contact. That's rugby innit? (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

Touch rugby removed what Ellis (2016:91) termed 'the moral sanctity of violence' and replaced it with an anxiety-inducing experience, where rugby became defined by *unmanly* touch. The removal of violent physicality meant that KCIT transgressed appropriately masculine behaviour. As well as through these examples, my field notes show that it was obvious in situ that touch rugby caused anxiety.

The lads look really nervous playing touch and pass [touch rugby], they sometimes run up to their opponent but then pause whilst they decide what to do, where to put their hands and where to touch the other man. (Field note extract 23.11.2018)

It was clear that the young men resonated with Pringle's (2009) finding that touch rugby can be an unpleasurable experience because it denies many of rugby's seductions, including the prospect of violence-induced pleasure. Touch rugby did not transport the young men to the 'edge' (Lyng, 1990) and therefore offered limited excitement because of the lack of physical and mental risk. The only risk experienced was social, not

²⁴ Artificial playing surface.

something the young men welcomed. The findings show that touch rugby failed to meet expectations about what rugby union *should* be because, as some young men explained, rugby is not really about skill but collisions:

[rugby is for] meatheads²⁵ and [where] other meatheads ... [are] running at you.

(James, 18-year-old White British)

My favourite part is when we have the pads out and we have to run into the pads.

(Dom, 17-year-old White British)

I wish we had more contact ... [but] not everyone's for it. (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)

Contact rugby constituted *proper* rugby; touch rugby did not. This replicates a discussion of 'sparring' (a training method employed by boxers) featured in Ellis's (2016:94) ethnography *-Men, Masculinities and Violence-* when a participant discredited sparring because he could not see the value in 'the soft contact shit, [so] wanted it proper'. I prompted Mark to explain why he used touch instead of full contact and he explained:

[In touch rugby] they are still going to be made to look daft by someone sidestepping them [and] they are still putting them[selves] in a position out of their comfort zone ... [where they can be] made to look daft. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

Mark believed the young men would receive humbling experiences through touch rugby, and that adversity was a primary developmental opportunity. However, exposure to such humility does not feature in England Rugby's TREDs framework, nor to my knowledge is it described anywhere else as a pedagogical benefit of the sport. It is likely that Mark's explanation stems from the remnants of rugby union's cultural history, throughout which society celebrated rugby union for providing developmental exposure to adversity (McIntosh, 1979), the merits of which were considered the development of characteristics including determination and self-control (Springhall, 1971). These factors

²⁵ A colloquial term used to describe someone who is believed to be stupid, mindless or lacking wit.

limit rugby union's PYD potential because, in terms of the PAF, promoting adversity presents rugby as a damaging 'dynamic element'. It results in rugby arguably being a weapon to break down young people's reliance on bravado and machismo, therefore reducing rugby union to nothing more than an environment whereby young men can be humbled through domination. It is imperative to acknowledge that adversity was a pervasive component of the lives of the young men who attended KCIT. Without due acknowledgement of this, it is likely that practitioners will replicate the adverse experiences that such young men have become accustomed to across other aspects of their lives. If adversity was guaranteed to bring about pro-social development, it is likely that these young men would not need rugby to facilitate it. Luke contradicted Mark and suggested that adversity can lead to hardening:

P: We have been through too much shit to be weak like I have.

R: What do you mean?

P: Well, like coming home at 13 years of age and there's no food in the fridge. That's what makes you who you are, you know what I mean.

R: So, is that a situation that you've been in?

P: Yes, so my mum moving away to [another area] when you're 13 and leaving your dad and that. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

In this instance, humiliation serves as a reworking of the 'toughening up' process. Winlow (2012:122) explains that adversity develops mental and physical toughness. The merits of such 'toughness', however, are unclear. It is likely that this toughening causes self-isolation and development of ideas that those who have been toughened can 'look after' (Ellis, 2016:120) themselves. In contrast to being developmental, it is likely that such humiliation will bring about feelings of anxiety, dread and disconnection from the context such feelings are experienced in. This is critical in relation to encouraging such processes in the rugby space because, as Katz (1988), Polk (1994) and Spierenburg (2008) state,

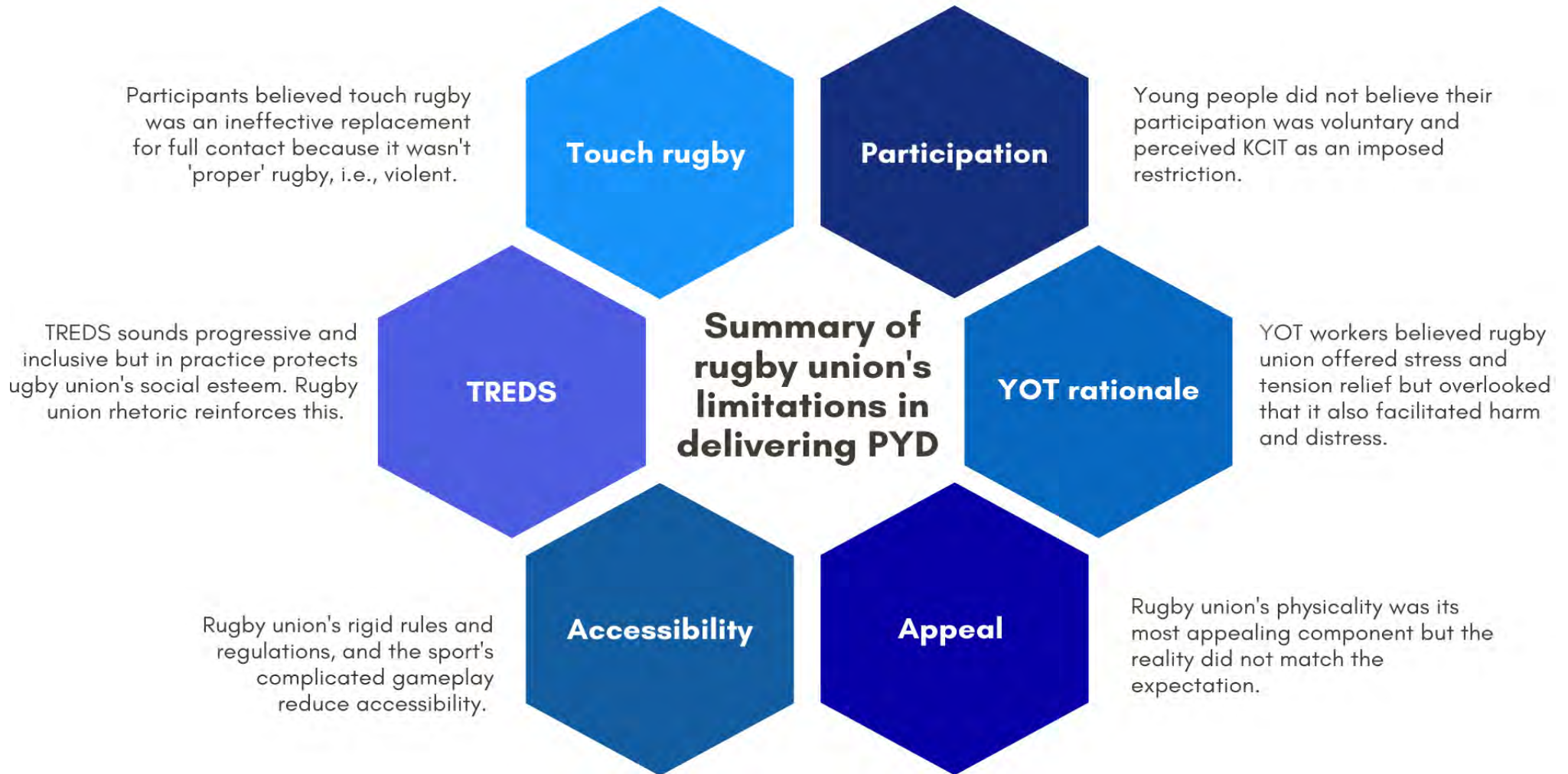
humiliation leads to rage and aggression, emotions that can provide the basis for violence. Ellis (2016:36) explained:

The experience of being physically dominated, and of failing to act ... is likely to be powerfully humiliating for men who have emerged from marginal social locations that continue to cling obsessively to an image of powerful, invulnerable masculinity.

Actively facilitating humiliation opens young men up to a type of 'victimisation'. This raises an important ethical question, one provided by Hall (2012:192): 'young males are receiving brutal treatment ... to "toughen them up", for what are they being toughened up?'. Exposing young men to 'humiliation' arguably reinforces hegemonic discourses and the 'hardening' of a gendered habitus (Winlow, 2012). This process is not progressive and is likely to entrench aggression, violence and stoic silence in response to threats, all of which are detrimental to men and, indeed, society.

4.3.9 Summary of findings in relation to rugby union's limitations in delivering PYD

Figure 9 Summary of findings in relation to rugby union's limitations in delivering PYD



Having covered these key issues, I shall now turn attention towards some of the more positive findings from this research. In the following sections, I will demonstrate that, despite the critical findings identified above, rugby union has some merits for PYD.

4.4 'It's not just doing things for the sake of them, [it's doing them] so that they get an outcome from it.': Analysis of rugby union's merits for PYD

This section will present findings that demonstrate that rugby union has merits for delivering PYD. The findings suggest that rugby union can be used by young people to secure status and experience positive connections via supportive coach–athlete relationships. Rugby union can facilitate competency development by providing educational outcomes. The section concludes by demonstrating that positive relationships and experiences in rugby union are interrelated to intimacy and empowerment.

4.4.1 *'It's like a little gang ... within society's rules'*: Rugby union and status

Ayres and Treadwell (2012) illustrate that in deviant subcultures such as football firms, men develop their masculine identities through belonging, acquiring status and engaging in violence and consumption. Research exploring sport as a tool for reducing crime has suggested that sport offers similar outcomes. Chamberlain (2013:5) suggests that sport team membership provides an opportunity for 'emotional belonging', or what the PYD literature refers to as 'connections' (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). The Laureus Sport for Social Good Foundation (2011:4) makes this argument explicit, claiming that sport provides 'a sense of belonging, status, and excitement'.

Mark argued that this knowledge applied to rugby union. When I asked 'Why rugby union for justice-involved young men?', he told me:

Well, first of all, team sports over individual sport. You know, having played team sport, what it means to win with mates as opposed to on your own. I mean you could argue that some people love winning on their own, but my experience is that winning together and being part of something that you have worked hard together and sweated together and shed blood together and worked hard for [is better] ... [In a team] you do anything for your teammates, [you] do anything for your mates. It is, it's like a little gang ... within society's rules. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

Mark supports the argument of Chamberlain (2013) and the Laureus Sport for Social Good Foundation (2011) that sport teams provide excitement, belonging, status and opportunities for connection with supportive peer groups. Elsewhere, the analysis (see section 4.3) of data has shown that rugby union did not provide a context in which the young men at KCIT believed they belonged, and the replacement of contact rugby with touch rugby reduced feelings of excitement (section 4.3.8). The remainder of this section unpacks rugby union's potential to provide status.

Short and Strodtbeck (1965) explain that individuals accrue status through interaction with others. Gould (2002) notes that status is the result of an individual's actions being symbolically judged by others. Gravel et al. (2018) argue that status is judged on the basis of what is contextually and socially valued. Rugby union, as a team sport, undoubtedly provides status by virtue of it necessitating social interaction. However, this literature suggests that to receive high status, players must reproduce cultural expectations. It is insufficient for one's existence to be acknowledged by others merely through interaction. This existence necessitates evaluation; this process involves unique and specific performances and interactions – in rugby this means negotiating violence. Status should not be understated as a social commodity in the lives of young men, particularly as it has been argued that many marginalised young people orientate their lives around securing and preserving social status (Anderson, 2000:33).

Gravel et al. (2018) explored the links between street violence and status. They argued that status is achievable through street violence based on two factors: first, how worthy the recipient of the violence is judged to be, and second the characteristics of the violence. Therefore, the characteristics of violence are key markers in providing status.

Due to rugby union's interconnection with violence, in principle it appears ideally suited for status development, crucially, in a way that bridges the gap between violent potential and social acceptance. However, this was not the case in this study, and KCIT offered limited opportunities for status acquisition in two ways. First, KCIT provided only partial and sanitised forms of violence. To reiterate an earlier claim, touch rugby disenfranchised the young men because they had learnt to rely on physical production to secure their identity, meaning that rugby offered them limited opportunities to develop status. Second, the project insulated the young men from the 'rugby family' (England Rugby, no date:online). KCIT offered them no opportunities to compete against other groups of young people, i.e., 'worthy' opponents. All opportunities for physicality were localised and against the other young men who attended KCIT. Therefore, status also remained localised. Greater consideration needs to be given to how rugby union can facilitate status development. I suggest that this could simply involve greater emphasis on inculcating young men into the 'rugby family', a focus that would arguably broaden rugby's capacity to encourage PYD.

4.4.2 '*Rugby gives you qualifications*': developing competence through rugby

Asset development – providing young people with the tools to achieve social progression – is the primary feature of a PYD approach. Within the PAF, 'competence' (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6) is one of the short-term outcomes achievable through sport that has the potential to contribute to long-term personal development. Education and qualifications certainly align with the concept of competence. Coalter (2008) considers that sports programmes delivered to justice-involved young people should provide unambiguous opportunities for achievement. One reason for this, particularly with young men, may be the enduring masculine concern of 'what will it get me?' (David and Brannon, 1976:27). Jane (administrative YOT worker) demonstrated this:

It's not just doing things for the sake of them, [it's doing them] so that they get an outcome from it. So, from a reparation [point of view] in the allotment they grow things they harvest and they ya know? [They] can get something from that; and

from the bike cabin they can actually get an AQA²⁶ [qualification], they can fix bikes up, there's a, ya know, sense of fulfilment from the end of that ... one of the main things we wanna get out of it is that they get tangible outcomes. (Jane, administrative YOT worker)

Coakley (2011:309) outlines that practitioners should provide and define achievement opportunities within sport because '... the act of sport participation ... leads to no regular identifiable outcomes'. Coakley's claim is important to consider; yet it is remiss to dismiss the idea of encouraging participation in sport without defining outcomes. Joe (17-year-old White British) explained, '*[rugby is] better than sitting in YOT and that*'.

KCIT provided opportunities for the young men to achieve educational outcomes, and some of them explained this to be the most salient focus of their attendance. When asked to comment how rugby has helped them, Cooper and Liam explained:

Rugby gives you qualifications ... you could probably put that on your CV or whatever. It's actually productive. (Cooper, 17-year-old BAME)

[I go because] Rugby gives you qualifications. (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)

These examples are notable in supporting Coalter's (2008) claim that sports programmes should provide developmental outcomes. They also arguably contradict claims that justice-involved young men lack aspirations, a claim sustained by academic and political discourse (Coalter et al., 2000; Abramovay et al., 2002; Baker, 2017; Labour Party, 1997). The young men in this study aspired to be socially mobile:

I would like to do something with fitness you know like ... I don't know, like fitness instructor, something like that, but then I was [also] looking at construction ... there's a lot of things I would like to do in the future ... I mainly see myself as like a businessperson. (Cooper, 17-year-old BAME)

²⁶ A UK-based qualification provider.

I see myself working innit, as a ground worker. I wanna do engineering and design and stuff ... I have to do something about it and try my best to get up there. (Ron, 17-year-old BAME)

I want to be a personal trainer ... which at the moment looks very good like, looking like it's most likely going to happen cos I'm doing PT at college as well as getting qualifications from this project as well so it's looking really like positive at the moment. (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)

Sally (frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager) noted that the challenge was not that the young men lacked aspirations, but that it was difficult for them to develop the tools (arguably the 4 C's; Vierimaa et al., 2017:6) needed to support their personal development. Instead, she suggested that the young men were surviving amidst the 'chaos' and restrictions of their lives:

[Getting qualifications] means everything to them. You know you might take it for granted that you have done your [GCSEs, but] I didn't take my GCSEs and I didn't go to school and I didn't do my GCSEs and I was off the rails. At the time, I wasn't ready for that kind of thing, but you know, these young people walk away from school with nothing. So, any sort of certificate and being able to take that home and show their parents [is great]. I mean, we have parents coming in and saying 'that's the first certificate we have, that's the first certificate they have ever got' you know? They are so excited and so like, they don't know it's low level anyway because we would never outline it like that. We make a big thing of it and we are like 'this is amazing and look what you have achieved' you know? It's, you can't underestimate that. You know the impact ... those qualifications will have on those young people, and they haven't had the opportunities to sit through their GCSEs in their nice bedrooms with their nice laptops revising for you know [their exams] with all their books that mum and dad have provided you know? Like my son has ... they don't have that. It's chaos, the houses are a mess all the time. Even if they were in mainstream school and they had the opportunity to sit their GCSEs it's unlikely that they would be able to get the results they are probably capable of just because of the craziness that's going on in their lives. They are not a priority at the time. (Sally, frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager)

Luke was a prominent example of a young man having to ignore his aspirations to overcome adversity:

[Adversity has made] me who I am and [that's a] positive but for what it's got me it's negative, but I don't know, it's mad innit, it's hard to keep your mind straight when you have got shit going on and especially in your mates' groups and that, it's like the slums innit? It's mad, you can't explain how you feel in the place and the time and how it was and stuff you know what I mean ... [I'm] like coming home at 13 years of age and there's no food in the fridge ... so my mum moving away to [another area] when you're 13 and leaving your dad and that, not everyone's been through that. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

My field notes show that the experience of receiving qualifications was rewarding for the young men:

Today, the lads received their AQA certificates ... the sense of pride from YOT practitioners was clear, as were the smiles on the faces of the lads. Mark gave a speech and a presentation which underlined to the lads that the qualification resulted from their consistent effort. The lads looked happy, if a little apprehensive and, in a way, embarrassed about being put in the spotlight. (Field note extract 06.09.2018)

The findings in this section illustrate that justice-involved young men do have aspirations, but they exist within a set of contextual factors that constrain their capacity to achieve. The potential for the young men to obtain qualifications helped associate KCIT more closely as a site for PYD as outlined in the PAF (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6), particularly as it offered an opportunity for accruing and developing assets (Witt and Crompton, 2003). This was mostly due to KCIT's ability to increase competence through educational outcomes in a way that was fun and enjoyable, which arguably in turn increased the level of connection the young men had to it.

4.4.3 *'You get to know them to a completely different level ... it's about the time we are spending with them'*: Strengthening connections through rugby union

Armour et al. (2013) argue that positive interpersonal relationships between adults and young people are possible when adults allow young people to see their humanity. They explain that sport can facilitate this. By using sport the YJS can help contribute to a more informal and, crucially, more accessible youth justice experience. Sally and Jane supported this:

[Through sport] we get a really good relationship [with young people] because the best relationships are formed out and about doing stuff ... because it's a relaxed environment ... doing group work and stuff like that, it's a really slow process to build a relationship and to get to know anyone, because you see them once a week across a desk and you [are] basically ask[ing] them questions and ticking boxes and the young people don't really want to tell you anything. They don't know you, or trust you, whereas getting to know them [when] involved in group stuff [like sport] you get to know them to a completely different level ... it's about the time we are spending with them. It's about the relationships we are building and the conversations we are able to have with them whilst we are doing that, and they are more likely to do the offending behaviour work and really take it on board if they have a relationship formed with me. (Sally, frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager)

Rather than doing questionnaires and doing offence-focused work we are about to get our staff to go and participate and do activities with young people who are getting a lot of enjoyment and to be there and kind of be present when they are both participating and enjoying it. It builds these relationships and makes them stronger and makes young people more engaged and therefore more likely to succeed in their order and less likely to re-offend. (Jane, administrative YOT worker)

Through joint participation in sport, young people and YOT practitioners can interact on a 'level playing field'. This is notable because, in her analysis of the CJS, Bengtsson (2016) characterises the system as being underpinned by pervasive hyper-masculinity and power imbalances. The findings from this thesis suggest that by allowing joint participation in rugby union between justice-involved young men and their YOT practitioners, the justice system may begin to overcome Bengtsson's (2016) criticism. In relation to PYD, joint participation may contribute to positive interpersonal connections based on more equitable power dynamics. Indeed, data provided by the young men further showed how participation in rugby had helped them in ways associated with PYD:

Increased YOS engagement:

I open up more when I am there [at rugby]. Cos when I'm sat in YOT I hardly speak to anyone. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

Relationship development:

[The YOT practitioners who attend rugby] are probably my favourite ones ... they are just nice, aren't they? They are not like strict ... they could always be on your case and stress you out [but they don't]. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

Redefining YOS experience:

[YOS] is supposed to be a punishment, but it's not cos we do things like rugby. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

These findings indicate that joint participation in rugby contributed to positive outcomes that all aligned with Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) PAF. However, I observed that this was not as clear as these examples show and was certainly not guaranteed. Several factors contributed to positive outcomes, including how active and invested the YOT practitioners were in KCIT sessions, how accepting the young men were of sessional content, and how positive and supportive YOT staff were during rugby sessions:

The same YOT staff always join in. They work really hard to get the lads motivated to take part. It looks and sounds like they care. At this point, it's not clear why they think rugby is a good thing for the lads, but at least they're trying to help them have a good time. They get involved; they joke with the lads and give them encouragement. Another YOT worker, Aaron [frontline YOT worker and ISS case worker] isn't like this, it's like he doesn't care. Today he dropped the lads off and sat in the car and it's not the first time. This is frustrating. If he doesn't care, how can he expect the lads to?' (Field note extract 19.07.2019)

Grant (frontline YOT worker and ISS case worker) stood on the side again today. I know the project's not about the staff, but some effort to join in would be good. I asked him why he didn't want to, and he just said, 'I'm too tired from training and I don't want to get injured.' I thought to myself, 'Well I'm sure nobody wants to get injured, but why can you not take part like that, but [then] you get the lads to, [it] doesn't seem fair.' (Field note extract 26.07.2019)

The reluctance of staff to support KCIT and the young people within it was a considerable frustration for Mark:

I get frustrated that the things out of our control are the enthusiasm and the willingness of the supervisors. And I think that [they're] the biggest hindrance to this project... I mean if they're not motivated how are they going to motivate the young lads? ... I think ... it's the supervisors giving more excuses than the lads ... we have got three or four supervisors that are just motivated to make their lads better ... I don't see the same drive and energy in some other supervisors. [As well as hindering the session] it's those supervisors who aren't bringing the referrals in, and the other supervisors will persuade the lads [to get involved in the project]. We have said if we get them to week three then they stick and they see the benefit. Actually, whether they enjoy the rugby or not they enjoy being around us, they do, and they, you know? [They] enjoy a bit of banter. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

The findings in this section demonstrate that rugby contributed to positive outcomes. This link is not by any means simple or guaranteed. This understanding adds to the PYD

literature and highlights that development made through sport, in part, results from 'supportive ... relationships' (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). However, the data shown here provides an original perspective in highlighting that, aside from the possibility of positive development emerging from positive relationships, sport can in fact facilitate the formation of positive relationships. This finding suggests that Armour et al.'s (2013) claim that sport develops relationships by exposing humanity is true of rugby union and the connections between YOT practitioners, young men and wider YOS provision. During KCIT the YOT practitioners and young men could participate as equals instead of being constrained by unequal power dynamics (Bengtsson, 2016), but only when practitioners allowed this to happen. The findings from the YOT practitioners showed that by developing relationships, the young men became more receptive and connected to wider YOT provision (Smithson and Jones, 2021). This alone may provide an appropriate rationale for utilising rugby union to facilitate PYD in the YJS.

4.4.4 *'I'm not there to breach them, I'm not there to say anything to anybody or judge.'*: Rugby union as a site for empowerment and intimacy

David and Brannon (1976:27) consider that males have an innate need to simultaneously dominate others and avoid being dominated. In relation, Hoch (2004:102) describes masculinity as an endless 'kind of warfare' within which the identity is under constant threat. It seems logical to assume that young men engaged in such 'warfare' are hyper-vigilant about the prospect of being dominated and disempowered. The young men in this research clearly felt that KCIT, rugby union and the associated interaction with unfamiliar and untrusted people provided such a prospect. During interviews, I asked them to reflect on how they felt when they were first asked to attend KCIT. Billy told me:

P: The first time I didn't like it cos I thought rugby man, I'm not good at that.

R: Were you concerned about making yourself look a bit stupid or whatever?

P: Yes. (Billy, 17-year-old White British)

Dom was also apprehensive about attending KCIT:

I wasn't that keen on it because I don't like playing football; I get too aggressive playing it but then I started playing it [rugby] and it was actually alright ... When I play football, I just end up getting in fights. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

However, these anxieties were reduced following attendance at KCIT when the young men developed positive connections with KCIT and other staff and young people. The key catalyst for this was feeling respected. Positive and respectful dialogue supported coaches and young men to engage respectfully, which helped them to navigate the unfamiliar terrain. For Billy (17-year-old White British), effective dialogue helped reinforce a perception that everyone at KCIT was '*[on the] same level*'. To demonstrate respect, coaches used conversation to negotiate contextual boundaries. Mark explained that he achieved this through consultation:

The way I like to coach is actually including them. You might have heard it today, so [by] asking 'what rules do you want to play today lads?' [I'm] giving them ownership of their game. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

Mark was willing to actively facilitate a youth-driven programme by encouraging the young men to connect with rugby union. Ben (gym instructor and KCIT support) achieved a youth-driven experience through informality:

It's very informal like, the situation ... [just] chatting to them saying 'yes [are] you going to get involved today?' and [if they say] 'no no no', [so I just say] 'ok no worries' and then we chat again in ten minutes or something like that. So, I think that [a] relaxed atmosphere [helps the lads]. (Ben, gym instructor and KCIT support)

This is notable because consultation such as this helped facilitate voluntary participation, which has been shown to be integral to PYD (Nichols, 1997; Williams et al., 2015; Rosenkranz et al., 2012). It further supports the PAF in outlining that supportive and empowering activities are integral to PYD in sport (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). On other occasions, humour and encouragement helped soften KCIT's boundaries and reduced the

labour of attendance. The young men described how coaches used humour to negotiate participatory tensions between engagement and disengagement:

[Mark] is a standard guy ... he's jokes like he's funny but also makes you do the work innit ... [Mark's] funny man, he just talks ... he thinks he's like us, he's just funny ... [Ben is] just a standard guy like, he just wants you to do your reps and stuff, it's just standard. I like it. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

When asked to consider the use of humour and what it means for relationship development, the young men explained that:

[Humour] makes you, just makes you like them more like, it makes you trust them more ... it makes you not stiffen up when you're around them. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

[it makes you think] they're not like not moody or stressed or anything. (Billy, 17-year-old White British)

Well, I think they are both funny as fuck. I know they can be like serious when we are messing about but overall, they are good and have a laugh with you and you can talk to them if you don't understand summat. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

Sally explained that in her experience working for the YOS, humour had been a vital component in meeting the needs of young people:

I always look for a little bit of humour because if they have laughed during that session then they will have taken it in what they have been learning ... and they will remember that session more than someone coming and standing there [just] talking at them ... (Sally, frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager)

It is apparent, therefore, that for justice-involved young people, a relaxed and informal social climate is more appealing, and humour is a key component in achieving this.

Obviously you don't want to be with someone who's a dick'ed or someone who's just there for the job and not to have fun ... [you don't want someone] who takes everything serious even though we are not serious players. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

Mark explained that he was conscious of the need to negotiate the delicate and dynamic balance between roles including friend, mentor, coach and authority figure whilst working with the young men:

They don't know me ... [we need to] build some trust, build a relationship ... because they are always surrounded by people, who in all honesty I didn't know this word before, [but who] can breach them ... [the outcome is] they will talk to me because they trust me and they know I'm not there to breach them, I'm not there to say anything to anybody or judge. Ultimately, do they get judged all the time before they have even opened their mouth? I reckon so. So, it's important that this environment doesn't [replicate that]. I think we have done that, I think we can say we have done that pretty well. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead)

Arguably, Mark considered his role to be that of a supportive adult responsible for shaping a positive experience and one that did not replicate restrictions faced elsewhere. Joe considered this:

These [YOT practitioners] are all snitches, all of them ... they just tell you off ... innit, they say put your phone away and that ... the coaches are more lenient. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

In situ, however, I observed evidence that Joe's claim was not strictly true. I frequently observed staff asking young men to put their phones away. Arguably, Joe did not perceive Mark's request as threatening because of the unique position Mark held as the mediator between YOS and the young men. One key factor underpinned this role: the amount of power Mark held in relation to the young people's ISS orders. Mark had limited capacity to directly impose sanctions on the young people that related to their offending order:

There's no pressure, they don't have to do anything they don't want to. There is encouragement without going over the line. That's really what I mean; they are not coming anywhere where anybody can take advantage of them. So there's no threat ... [they are] understanding that you are not a threat because this isn't an environment where they are going to be dictated to and told what to do. So, we set the stall out from the start like, 'What do you want to get out of it? Do you want to tick a box for your supervisors, or do you want to get a qualification?', which they all do. (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead).

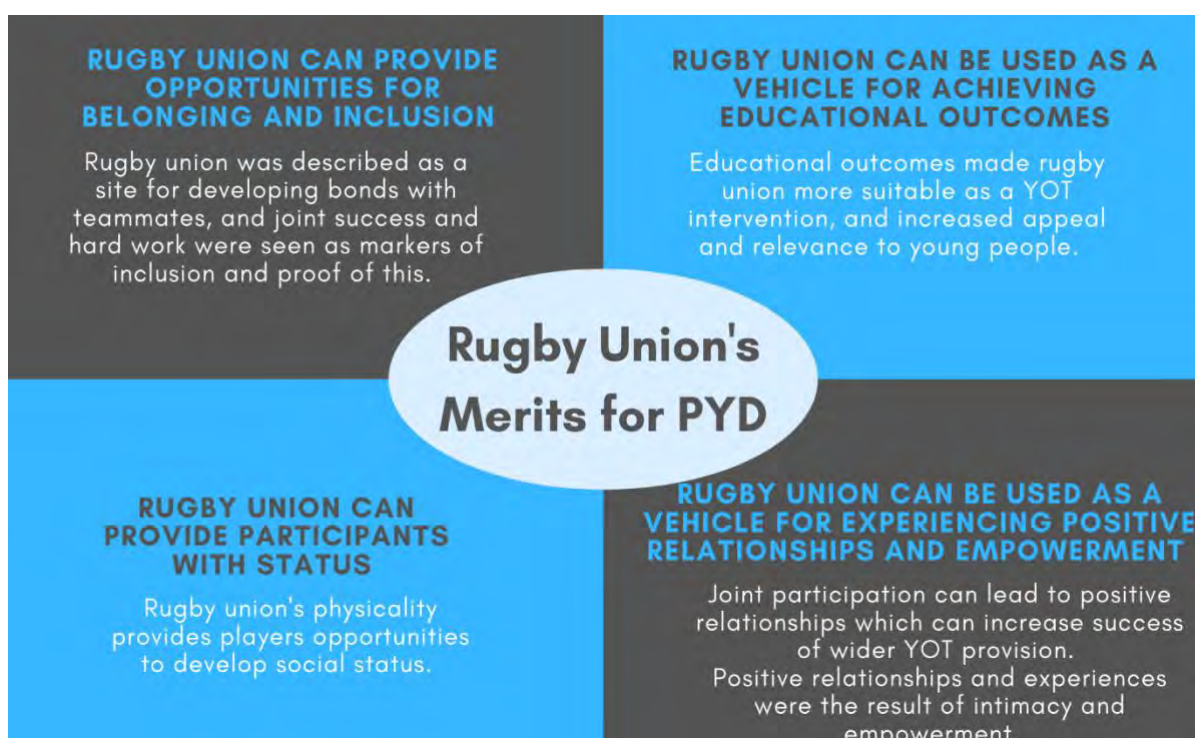
The findings show that aside from Mark holding limited power, he was consciously supportive of the young people. A social practice that contributed to feelings of respect and reduced threat was 'banter'. Lyman (1987) described that banter breaks social rules by drawing on irony and sarcasm to create humour that results in strengthened bonds. Banter can support positive connections, and at KCIT, banter did just that. However, banter was not always experientially positive and there was no guarantee that it strengthened connections. On some occasions, banter had the opposite influence, particularly when reinforcing disparate power dynamics. Some YOT practitioners utilised banter as a mechanism to suppress the young men by crossing the figurative boundary between what was permissive and what was possible. This involved the use of belittling language. When used in this way, banter served as a 'power play' that acted as a symbolic weapon. An example of this included YOT staff threatening a 'breach' in response to non-criminal and non-offensive behaviour. This was most prominent when 'the young men physically outmanoeuvred or outperformed YOT practitioners' (Field note extract 13.09.2019).

Throughout KCIT, several factors influenced the success or failure of banter, most notably the timing, the method and focus of the exchange, the relationship of the parties involved and the distance in power between them. Banter was detrimental when used to disempower. This was more apparent when the YOT practitioners attempted banter than when the coaches did. I observed the coaches' attempts at banter to be more experientially positive and, therefore, more conducive to strengthening interpersonal connections. The key reasons for this were that the banter between the coaches and young men was bi-directional and reciprocal, i.e., both could 'give as good as they got' without fear of punishment. Previous research by Roberts et al. (2017:349) has shown

that football players in academies use banter to show the strength of relationships. They conclude that ‘banter signals friendship’. Banter did not signal friendship at KCIT but when used appropriately it did provide the basis for positive connections between the coaches and the young people. Banter, therefore, can be considered a mechanism supporting or undermining positive social relationships and PYD within the context of sport in the YJS.

4.4.5 Summary of the merits of rugby union for delivering PYD

Figure 10: Summary of rugby union’s merits of rugby union for delivering PYD



4.5 'You're a man when you get yourself together': an analysis of masculinity in the context of KCIT

Theories of masculinity are a useful lens through which to analyse and understand rugby as a PYD tool for young men who have previously engaged in crime and violence. These theories offer insights into how to interpret and understand the lives and experiences of such young men. Masculinities are multiple, fluid and contestable, and masculinity is not something in isolation from social interaction, but something men *do* and construct within social contexts (Connell, 2010; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (2010) explains that masculinities are not coherent objects, but are performative and

interactional. Masculinity is a process of 'doing'; therefore, it is futile to focus on defining it and, instead, the focus should be on understanding how social processes provide opportunities for individuals to construct gendered lives (Connell, 2010:71).

Connell (2010) defines hegemonic masculinity as the process by which masculinity reproduces patriarchy, noting that although multiple masculinities co-exist, the dominant form of masculinity in any context reflects attributes including power and control in relation to contextual values. Masculine capital is attributed to those who most closely conform to contextual values and therefore hold power and control, whilst others (men and women) take up subordinate or marginalised positions (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Kimmel (1994:125) summarises hegemonic masculinity as 'a man *in* power, a man *with* power, and a man *of* power'. In Western societies power is synonymous 'with being strong, successful, capable, reliable and in control' (Kimmel, 1994:25). Regarding the variance in what constitutes hegemony in time and place, Connell's (2010) theory outlines that men exist in hierarchies. It also explains that they do so in accordance with how closely they support local values and practices. Applying this understanding to this thesis, it is critical to consider rugby union's complicity with hegemonic masculinity. Given that there is no fixed typology of masculinity, it is only possible to refer to what the literature outlines as the characteristics accepted, celebrated and promoted by rugby union and the men who comprise rugby's subculture. This thesis develops an understanding of rugby as a site of 'masculinizing practices' (Connell, 2000) where men enact or process dominant masculine codes.

4.5.1 Rugby union: A middle-class preserve

A small, although notably unified, body of literature (Hutchins and Phillips, 1999; Springhall, 1971; Richards, 2007; Nauright and Chandler, 1996) has demonstrated that since its inception, rugby union has been a site dominated by hyper-masculine values. Springhall (1971:125) posits that rugby union was adopted in Victorian public schools based on ideas that the 'manly sport' was capable of 'reinforc[ing] masculinity', reducing

'sexual confusion', offering character development, moulding gentlemen and producing soldiers. However, these ideas are now outdated. Connell (2010) asserts that masculinity does not pre-exist social performance and interaction, but is created within it, and suggests that it is not possible to 'reinforc[e] masculinity'. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept that 'reinforcing' is more akin to rugby union being selective of the masculinities accepted by the subculture and the characteristics promoted by it. These have historically included violence, power and discipline (Phillips, 1996; McIntosh, 1979). The reinforcement of masculinity, therefore, is more likely what Ellis (2016:122) describes as a 'toughening up' process: a process through which individuals learn and are encouraged to display physical and mental fortitude and resilience, with an overemphasis on the physical. In this respect it is reasonable to assert that rugby union is representative of 'hegemonic contexts in which the equation of masculinity with the use of physical force is ubiquitous' (Ellis, 2016:135). This raises concern about the personal development that takes place within rugby union contexts.

The literature demonstrates that middle/upper-class men developed rugby union as a site for accomplishing their masculinity by performing like 'gentlemen', 'beasts' and 'barbarians' (Hutchins and Phillips, 1999; Richards, 2007; Nauright and Chandler, 1996; Dunning and Sheard, 1979). More recent literature suggests that rugby union has remained reserved as a context where middle-class men can perform and secure power (Anderson and McGuire, 2010; Collins, 2015; Worth, 2019). Collins (2009) maintains that rugby union's reluctance to adopt professionalism until 1995 through the fear that working-class participation would harm the sport as a site for middle/upper-class recreation exemplifies this point. KCIT, and rugby union's emergence in the YJS, stands testament to the fact that rugby union is no longer quite the middle/upper-class enclave that it once was. However, the findings presented in this chapter arguably illustrate that rugby union is not 'classless' (Collins, 2015:online) but rather that the historically dominant class characteristics of rugby's historical context remain. Rugby union may be more accessible than ever, but that does not equate to inclusivity. Moreover, although rugby union may be more accessible, it does not mean that it is accessed or accepted by groups that do not meet the sport's historical ideals. This suggests that rugby union may not be a conducive context for justice-involved young people to experience PYD in ways aligned with the PAF (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6).

4.5.2 *'It's just better being big than skinny'*: Rugby union, muscle and 'symbolic weaponry'

Nauright and Chandler (1996) consider that throughout rugby union's history, society viewed rugby union men as 'manly' and 'soldier'-like, and celebrated rugby union for developing concomitant virtues including self-control, public spirit and determination, which are arguably iterations of character, confidence and personal development. Anderson and McGuire (2010) suggest that such celebration has been sustained, arguing that rugby union remains renowned for its connection to traditional masculine ethics and its reproduction of gender codes. In relation, Nauright and Chandler (1996) describe rugby union as developing pluralistic notions of masculinity within individuals, with the sport having potential to develop character and indeed competence. Yet for the most part, the character and competence of rugby players are arguably interconnected with their capacity to negotiate violence. This suggests that the sport connects young men to hyper-masculine ideals as a means of defining their identity.

Despite the potential for pluralistic development, Nauright and Chandler (1996:7) suggest that this plurality has dwindled. Subsequently, they note that the promotion of 'manly' virtues and identities has all but replaced any focus rugby union had on the 'gentle'. This is evidenced by the sharp increase in rugby players' musculature since rugby union's professionalisation (Olds, 2001). It is important to note that when researching rugby, Muir and Seitz (2004:306) observed that 'manly' development is interwoven with insecurity, homophobia, misogyny and machismo, and they suggest that rugby union indoctrinates rugby players into a pervasive ideology of machismo and hyper-masculinity.

Indicative of this, Joe (17-year-old White British) described rugby players as *'big meatheads ... animals ... animal tanks'*, a description that arguably evokes imagery of mechanistic bodies void of emotion yet imbued with 'symbolic weaponry' (Cranswick et al., 2020:1). When asked to describe the ideal rugby player, the young men predominately characterised them by their bodily capital and physical capacity:

You need to be fit ... like you need to be healthy for like running and stamina ... you just need to be strong like you can't have things like asthma or like a certain bone problem. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

Tall, bulky, healthy and strong. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

I reckon you've got to be rapid innit, because they are all fast innit. (Ron, 17-year-old White British)

You need to be FIT man. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

These descriptions demonstrate that the young men perceived the identity of rugby men as explicitly physical and performative. This data contradicts World Rugby's (2019:online) notion that rugby union is a 'sport for all' and suggests that rugby union is seen as a sport restricted to people with a distinct physical capacity. The nuances of these definitions were contradictory to the physical embodiment of the young men at KCIT. Looking back at my field notes, I had observed:

Having spent some time around the project, it's very clear that most of these young men don't have the type of physical developments you would find in, say, a community rugby session. Occasionally there have been flashes of quick feet [agility] and the occasional display of strength [on the rugby field], but the fitness and physical condition are lacking. The lads just struggle. (Field note extract 21.06.2019)

The young men supported my observation and were of the belief that such physical requirements were out of reach:

When we were walking from the rugby field to the gym, the lads were focused on talking about muscle and what they wanted from the gym. All the lads said they wanted to develop muscle, but some of them dismissed it as an impossibility. They said it was too late for them. They believed their consumption of 'weed' had stunted their muscular/physical potential. (Field note extract 25.08.2019)

The above observation suggests that within the KCIT space, the young men lacked confidence in their capacity to develop muscular, physically proficient bodies like those they believed defined rugby men. When questioned about muscular development, Joe (17-year-old White British) spoke about his disappointment at his lack of physical development, and the conversation moved to explore the foundation of this disappointment:

P: I don't want to be a skinny guy all my life ... It's just better being big than skinny innit. I mean I don't want to be massive, but I just thought I would have a bit of bulk innit.

R: And does that get you anything?

P: Yes

R: Do you think you would feel better about yourself if you were big?

P: I would feel better about myself, wouldn't I?

R: In what sense, like how do you think other people would think about you if you were bigger?

P: They would be sad.

R: They would be sad?

P: I mean, they would be scared.

R: They would be scared. So, are you scared of people that are bigger than you?

P: Nah! Nah but that's me tho innit. That's different, it's intimidation and that innit. It's weird.

Joe alludes that his limited musculature contributes to him feeling vulnerable and lacking confidence. Unlike a rugby player, Joe did not desire muscle for any performative purpose, but to provide himself with social confidence and protection by being able to incite fear in others. He was clear in his belief that he could exchange muscular bodily capital for social recognition and prestige (Bourdieu, 2011; 1990) and that he could use a muscular body as a 'protective cocoon' (Kotzé and Antonopoulos, 2021:12; Cranswick et al., 2020) to hide behind, arguably supporting the notion that '[the] masculine blueprint ... frames muscularity as a vehicle of success' (Cranswick et al., 2020:9). Success for Joe was the ability to incite fear in others.

Such ideas resonate with claims that, when masculinity is threatened, muscularity can project an outward display of confidence to conceal internal anxiety (Andreasson and Johansson, 2014; Klein, 1993; Mishkind et al., 1986; Edwards et al., 2017; De Visser et al., 2009; Klein, 1993; Sparkes et al., 2005). Muscularity has become socially valued as a 'primary sign of manhood' (Morrison et al., 2003:117). As Joe explained, muscle makes men 'feel better'. Or in PYD terms, muscle is considered to provide the foundation of confidence. Ellis (2016), Kotzé and Antonopoulos (2021) and Winlow (2001) argue that muscle can reduce the need to reinforce masculinity through violent performance, or performance of any kind. The development of muscle can therefore be considered a deficit reduction technique. However, young men are unlikely to achieve any PYD outcomes through developing muscle, at least not in the way outlined by the PAF (Vierimaa et al., 2017:6). Although muscle may increase confidence, it will do so in a way that does not allow young men to understand the vulnerability and insecurity that motivates that need.

Muscularity and physical stature negate the need for performance, in the sense that possession of them alone may be enough to incite fear and deflect conflict. Arguably, rugby and the need to prove oneself as physically capable within the rugby space were unappealing to the young men who attended KCIT. Indeed, as Joe's narrative attests, the development of a muscular body laden with violent potential (Hobbs et al., 2003; Monaghan, 2002; Hobbs et al., 2007) was more appealing. The young men desired the psychological safety of a muscular physique but were nervous about the need to call on it for action. Much in the same way, Ron explained why he carried a knife for protection:

[I carried a knife because] Honestly, I thought raar he's a bigger kid innit, I'm 15 [at the time], he was about 17. The height difference, it's way too different. So, I thought raar I'll take summin with me not to use it but to scare him. (Ron, 17-year-old BAME).

In this extract, it is clear that Ron viewed the knife as a source of confidence which he relied on when negotiating the prospect of a violent interaction with a 'bigger kid'. In this respect, the knife was a crutch with which Ron could overcome his fears and vulnerability. Interestingly, and from the reverse perspective, the nuances of Ron's narrative arguably corroborate Joe's argument that muscle and size can be used for intimidation. It is reasonable to argue that if rugby and its associated physical development have the capacity to provide a 'protective cocoon', it may result in young men such as Ron relying on tools such as knives to conceal their vulnerabilities.

4.5.3 '*[I'm] not fully there yet*': Participants' understanding of masculinity

The young people in this research had firm and clear views about masculinity. Their views were supportive of both Connell (2010) and Kimmel (1994), who suggest that masculinity is performative and achieved through social interaction and displays of power. Although it is unlikely that the young men from KCIT would ever achieve hegemonic masculinity, because they lack the institutional and cultural means of doing so, they nevertheless strived to accrue and experience power in their localised social contexts. Zain and Luke expressed this during their interviews.

You're the one interviewing me; you're the one that's got yourself together, and you came here in a car and stuff. (Zain, 17-year-old BAME)

You're a man when you get yourself together ... you gotta pay tax and work. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

I experienced such themes first-hand during an interview with Zain.

During his interview, Zain got defensive about my and his position in the interview. He used me for comparison, and in doing so showed me his frustration, which I suspect was related to my role as a man, in charge, who had the proof, and his position as a boy with no concrete status as a man. The frustration was palpable, which for me, made the interview a bit awkward. (Field note extract 17.05.2019)

It was evident that Zain and Luke upheld traditional definitions of masculinity and that they had been socialised to view hegemonic masculinity as interconnected with power. It is notable to add at this point that my hegemonic position of dominance within this context was strengthened by my physical embodiment, i.e., I embodied power through my own muscular physique, further elevated by the cultural power I held as a former semi-professional rugby player.

The young men self-defined as possessing marginalised and subordinate masculinities. Zain expressed this during his interview by challenging my perception, asking '*What do you class me as? A kid? A young man or a kid?*' However, he showed resistance to the labels 'kid' and 'young man' by self-defining as a '*minor*', i.e., 'a man in the making' (Roberts, 2017:276). My participants were, as Woodman and Wyn (2015:1404) note, 'rewriting' the rules of making a life ... [and] invent[ing their] youth and young adulthood'. Drawing on the idea of *plasticity*, the foundation of the PYD approach, the young men defined themselves as open to the socialisations at KCIT.

Through his reflection, Zain's position was that of a 'growing person' moving towards the 'adult world' (Connell, 2010:1). In developing this, Zain explained, '*[I'm] not fully there yet*', i.e., 'completely masculine' (Roberts, 2017:1). This highlighted that Zain had his own ideas about the extent to which masculinity was achievable, or a process to 'complete'. I am not entirely sure what Zain's understanding of 'completion' was. Yet it is reasonable to believe that given that his understanding of masculinity was defined through power and control, his perception that he was 'not there yet' demonstrates that he felt disempowered and lacking control of his life. The findings presented in this section resonate with what Anderson (2000:67) terms the 'social shuffle', the formative period

within which adolescents with individual insecurities seek ways to establish their social identity and distinguish their 'way of being'.

4.5.4 'Some people do it because they desperately need ... attention': Crime as a mechanism for experiencing power

Nichols' (1997:183) work explores why participation in sports such as rugby union might be relevant to criminological theory, particularly in relation to young people. He suggests that sport is relevant in this context because it can satisfy young people's 'need for excitement', a need which is thought to motivate young people's involvement in crime. Interestingly, crime was not such a one-dimensional experience to the young men who attended KCIT. They reflected that misbehaving was multifunctional and provided opportunities for both recreation and identity development:

[Kids misbehave] Because you grow up and you don't like the park because the park is for kids ... but there's no youth centres ... you can't go play in parks because that's for kids and stuff, so you feel like it's a period between where you are being a child and an adult and it's sort of like where do you fit? (Cooper, 17-year-old BAME)

A lot of young people commit crime in London. I think [it] was boredom ... people are just bored. They have nothing to do, literally ... in that situation when I'm with my friends and you literally have nothing to do, you might as well do something crazy. (Billy, 17-year-old White British)

Although Cooper and Billy's ideas were insightful, Ron provided greater depth to this discussion. He explained that crime and mischief resulted from experiences of marginalisation and from lacking the social support to make positive choices:

You have got nothing to do innit. Obviously if you rob a [mo]ped then you are going to have a [good time]. I don't know, there's nothing to do out there ... like when I was 7, I used to go to youth clubs and I liked it but once they locked it off, then I got active innit ... there's just nothing there. What do you think kids would

do after school? They are going to want to go out innit ... there's nowhere for them to chill and nothing for them to do. What are they then going to do? They will be like 'raar, I've got an idea ... ermm let's get a chase [from someone] or something?'
(Ron, 17-year-old BAME)

Crime served as a mechanism of resistance to 'intense frustration', an experience born from anger grounded in a disconnection between what is desired and what is available (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960:86). Whilst this is telling of the circumstances the young men faced, it also suggests that 'boredom', a key focus of the government publication *Tired of Hanging Around* (Audit Commission, 2009:48), remains a prominent reason for young people's involvement in crime or anti-social behaviours.

Aside from their frustration with the lack of resources available to them, the young men reflected on how they resented their youth. Luke (17-year-old White British) exemplified this with the statement, *'I used to buzz off PS4 [games console] when I was a kid, but it's boring now.'* Billy's frustration had grown into a sense that life had become stagnant.

[We] just sit outside the shop ... just wasting life. It's the same old. [My friends], they're not thinking 'oh I want to go out somewhere it's the weekend'. They're just like 'oh take it as it comes, it's boring'. (Billy, 17-year-old White British)

The interconnection between boredom, frustration and crime is unsurprising, particularly considering that a relationship between the three has previously been established (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960:86). For the young people at KCIT, resistance was logical and a potent opportunity to prove themselves and show agency in an otherwise restrictive period of their lives where they had limited social structures to which they could experience positive connections. As noted in section 4.3.1 the young men often showed resistance to rugby union by kicking balls away, this may support the idea that they felt disempowered within the context.

During interviews, I asked the young people to consider why they and others became involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. The consensus was that such behaviours constituted a means of overcoming their own lived frustrations. Luke termed this *'acting out'* because of *'anger built up'*. However, such behaviours served a functional purpose in

moving the young men closer to their perception of masculinity by demonstrating power, securing recognition and facilitating belonging.

[People are] robbing and stealing stuff for money. To keep their mind fit or do nice things that they might not have. (Luke, 17-year-old White British)

Some people do it for money, some people do it to please [others]. Like, I don't know how to explain it. There's loads of reasons really. Like some people do it to impress the people they are with ... and some people do it because they desperately need ... attention. (Liam, 16-year-old BAME)

Today Ron told me about the closing of the local youth centre. He said that's the reason he 'got active' and the reason he believed a lot of his peers misbehave. (Field note extract 19.07.2019)

Arguably, 'acting out' demonstrated a way to resist social constraints and embrace frustration, and therefore was a way of offering excitement and a process of validating self and social identity. Hall (2012; 2008) argue that feelings of insecurity and marginality can lead men to find ways of showing themselves as strong and capable. Perhaps the young people did not view these behaviours as simply recreational but rather as necessary and logical in securing localised masculine power. This finding echoes work suggesting that crime and violence are appealing and readily available tools drawn on by disempowered men experiencing marginalisation.

A prominent body of research (Hoch, 2004; Pleck, 2004; Tolson, 2004; Willis, 2004) has examined masculine quests for validation. Hoch (2004:96–102) asserts that historically there has been an incumbent demand for men to 'prove themselves' as masculine, a demand which results in a pervasive fear of being branded 'impotent', a label considered 'absolutely the worst thing a man can be'. The rationales for crime and violence outlined by the young men show literal examples of marginalised young men viewing life as an 'obstacle course ... in which the contestants must prove [themselves while] showing no sign of weakness' (Hoch, 2004:102). Hoch (2004) argues that men are therefore under constant pressure to perform and live in a state of constant angst about their capability in relation to others. Considering this, it is reasonable to suggest that for marginalised young

men, rugby union provides an existential test. Such a test limits rugby union's capacity for PYD, particularly because it has the potential to expose male vulnerability in a way that young men may not want or be ready for.

4.5.5 *'If you [had] seen your sister getting bottled, you would bang the guy!':*

Violence as a mechanism to prove masculinity

Self-sacrifice, rejecting pain and injury, and negotiating violence with the self and others can signal adherence to hegemonic masculinity (Messner, 1992; Sabo, 2004). These practices have also been argued by masculinity scholars to be underpinned by vulnerability (Anderson, 2008; Light and Kirk, 2000; Campbell et al., 2006). Moreover, this knowledge has been applied to rugby, with research suggesting that the aforementioned practices are distinct mechanisms used by rugby players to both conceal their vulnerability and legitimise their rugby man identity (Muir and Seitz, 2004). The findings presented in this section suggest that the young men at KCIT subscribed to a masculine ideology of using stoicism and violence to overcome vulnerability and impending shame. Because of this, and because such themes are prominent in rugby, rugby has the potential to suppress and mask vulnerability and fragility.

With respect to the notion that violence is a defensive practice employed by men to overcome vulnerability, Gilligan (2003) notes that the main precursor for violence is the avoidance of shame. From this perspective, violence is not a tool drawn on to support social progression but a reaction to impending disrespect. This can arguably be seen in the following narratives offered by Joe and Dom in relation to violent experiences. When asked about violence Joe explained:

[Seeing my sister] getting bottled and ... doing what I have done and that's what I reckon, you can't stop ... can you, you know what I mean? ... If you [had] seen your sister getting bottled, you would bang the guy! Or would you just let them walk away? You would bang them! Wouldn't you? Anyone would [do the same]. I don't care who they are, a judge or anything, a policeman no matter what. ... To be honest, I was absolutely happy with myself. I didn't know it was ... bad ... [I] just thought just give him a little beating and he's gone off [and] gone home. So, I

didn't know that [he got stabbed] and [I] was genuinely happy with myself. I mean, he had just battered my sister so I've gotta be [happy with myself] innit. (Joe, 17-year-old White British)

Joe's example suggests that he performed violence jointly through fear of loss of status, disrespect and shame (Ellis, 2016; Anderson, 2000). Through such examples, it is challenging to see how sport, in this case rugby union, can offer a replacement for street violence (Parker et al., 2014), particularly when violence is presented as being born not from an innate desire to fight but from a fear of 'imminent loss and ... existential threats' (Ellis, 2016:96). A similar theme can be seen in Dom's reflection:

Basically, I was in college, and he picked up a strong-arm [mechanic's tool] ... He threatened me with it, so I said next time I see him I will aim for his major arteries and kill him ... My plan didn't work out. What actually happened was ... I walked into college ... pulled out the blade and put it to his neck, and when he fell off the chair and the teacher come fuckin flying at me, I decked the teacher, went storming out of college, out the door, teacher came behind me, grabbed my arms, and security guards came over [and I] got tackled to the floor, then I managed to get back up and threatened them with my knife. Then [I] lost my knife to get my backpack because my bag had my coat in it and I wanted my coat ... [then I] went McDonalds, [then I] went home, had a brew and police kicked down the door. (Dom, 17-year-old White British)

The above extracts show that violence was not an abstract concept but a routinely negotiated component of life for Joe and Dom. They also demonstrate that these young men were hyper-aware of their proximity to threat, particularly when that threat involved violence and could result in disrespect. Also, as has been seen elsewhere in the literature, social anxiety arguably fuelled anger and motivated violence (Ellis, 2016; Anderson, 2000). This raises concern about the merit of encouraging young men with such sensitivities to engage in rugby union: a context where participants' esteem is valued in relation to their physical potential and their capacity to negotiate violence. It is important to acknowledge that in its raw form, rugby union is simply competitive, organised and stylised violence; therefore, by entering the rugby space, young men are taking steps towards actively negotiating violence.

These factors have not been considered by prior research on rugby union in a criminal justice context. Yet they are important because they illustrate that justice-involved young men can be hyper-conscious of their social identity and somewhat reliant, and arguably willing, to rely on violence to underpin it. This perhaps explains why the young men defined and celebrated rugby for its offer of violence and suggests why young men with limited appreciation of rugby union's non-violent skills (sections 4.3.4 -4.3.8) will be disproportionately drawn to rugby's violence and dismiss the less violent experiences on offer. In PYD terms, this arguably makes it difficult for providers to nurture connections between such young people and rugby, which in turn makes it challenging for rugby to be both a safe and relevant experience. This limits the appropriateness of encouraging young men willing to use extreme forms of violence to navigate threatening social interaction to play rugby. The remainder of this section will develop this further.

The above extracts suggest that the young men were well versed in negotiating violence and were prepared to do so to mask their vulnerability and protect their esteem. Yet they do little to explain the foundations of the apparent readiness for violence. The frontline YOT workers I interviewed, however, did have ideas about this. When I asked Steve (frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager) why the young people he works with celebrate violence and aggression, he attributed it to '*emotional intelligence deficiencies*'. Noting that this constituted an inability to respond to threat in constructive ways, he explained:

Emotional intelligence is about having the skills to recognise what's going on at ... a particular time in your life, and what you are experiencing, and it's about being able to verbalise that sort of [thing] as well, and understand how it's connected to your behaviours. So, your thoughts and feelings and behaviours [and] how they are all interlinked with each other ... The majority of times the young people just don't comprehend, they don't fully understand, and they have difficulty sequencing and you're trying to get this, what could potentially be quite a lot of complicated information over to them. Then, it's having the level of emotional intelligence where it's not just understanding but it's kind of seeing what's in between and what might trigger their understanding of themselves ... [the young people] are falling down because they don't recognise anything other than anger ... It seems to

be, you know, if somebody says something you don't agree with, you get angry, and if somebody does something you don't agree with, you get angry. (Steve, frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager)

When I asked Sally (frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager) a similar question, she somewhat succinctly supported Steve's narrative. She explained:

'[the lads are concerned] about themselves and where they fit in society ... [and by being] cocky ... boisterous and loud [they hide this]'.

Billy attested to Sally's comments in the following exchange:

R: Talk to me about crime and violence. Why do people get involved in that?

P: *[To] make themselves look bigger, to make your name look bigger so everyone's thinking oh look he's doing that ... [it's] to show off in front of people and make a name for yourself. (Billy, 17-year-old White British)*

Anger, cockiness and boisterousness, however, are by no means uniquely performed by the young men in this research, nor is using violent potential to secure respect and status. Men often use exaggerated displays of emotion to conceal vulnerability (Ellis, 2016; Hobbs et al., 2003; Monaghan, 2002; Hobbs et al., 2007). What is interesting about Steve's claim is that he begins by blaming the young people for lacking emotional intelligence yet proceeds to suggest that the anger is motivated by feelings of disrespect, aggravation and a hyper-awareness of their social identity. Overall, the findings presented in this section suggest that violence is motivated by a complex nexus of social and emotional factors. This raises questions about the notion of catharsis and indeed the validity of using rugby union as a mechanism to overcome violence in a youth justice context. If violence is the result of multiple compounding factors such as vulnerability, social insecurity and emotional intelligence deficiencies, it is unlikely that rugby union can counteract this, unless it can counteract these feelings and contributors.

Taken together, Steve, Sally and Billy's claims suggest that anger and exaggerated performances were the primary mechanisms for helping the young men manage the

balance between respect (Anderson, 2000) and disrespect (Ward, 2015). Moreover, these claims suggest that anger, violence and exaggerated performances of machismo can result from lacking the competence to express themselves in more wholesome ways; as Ellis (2016:79) has argued, these outcomes may be the result of a 'poverty of language and articulacy'. Although this suggests a limitation of the young men's emotional capacity, it is important to accept that they may not be cognisant in performing their anger and associated violence: these may in practice be the result of a socialised need to favour violence over less nebulous action (Hall, 2012; 2014). I reflected on the points made about anger during my fieldwork and noted that anger was considered a character trait and behavioural norm:

I've done a few interviews with the YOT practitioners now. The interesting thing to me is that they talk about the lads having a default for anger and being unable to recognise or perform different emotions. This says to me that they believe it's the fault of the lads, like they want to be angry. There doesn't seem to be a reflection on 'why'. It also feels like there is an expectation for anger. (Field note extract 18.09.2019)

This is notable in relation to KCIT because, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, these processes have previously been identified in a rugby context (Muir and Seitz, 2004). Therefore, rugby union's hegemonic values reinforce the values that young men bring from the street, and, as illustrated across section 4.3.3, rugby union is a site that centralises interpersonal violence over articulation. It is reasonable to argue that without conscious effort and bespoke mechanisms to support young people in overcoming the foundations of their violence, rugby merely contributes to the poverty that Ellis (2016) notes. This raises concern about the suitability of rugby union for a youth justice context where young men embody marginality and insecurity. It also suggests that rugby is unlikely to prevent male violence motivated by vulnerability and insecurity. Considering this, instead of supporting PYD, helping young men to overcome these behaviours, or providing them the tools to understand and manage the multifaceted foundations of their violence, rugby may merely provide a context for young men to 'perform an exaggerated pose of machismo' (Hoch, 2004:105).

For reasons such as this, encouraging exposure to the hyper-masculine rugby context may set young men who have been socialised to rely on anger, violent potential and bravado up for failure. This is because rugby union's hegemonic values support the suppression of emotions such as pain and fear yet socialise free rein of anger and machismo. I turn to a comment provided by Zac as a case in point. During his interview I asked him how he would feel if someone tackled him hard in a rugby game. He explained:

I'm not going to lie: I would go mad, and I would actually go mad ... and punch them and everything. (Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

Rugby was a threatening experience for Zac, and his comment shows that experiences in rugby union could well contribute to 'wounded pride' (Ellis, 2016:81) and entrench anxiety about personal safety (Winlow, 2012). Moreover, Gilligan (2003) notes that violence is a likely response to shame in situations where men lack alternative methods. This is concerning, as the data at the start of this section suggests that the young men at KCIT had histories of using violence to overcome shame. At this juncture I must reaffirm that the young men at KCIT were novices in the rugby context. As such, they did not have any prerequisite knowledge of rugby-specific offensive and defensive strategies. Nor did they have an arsenal of passing options or competency in performing rugby skills such as tactical kicks, side steps or the dummy²⁷ to draw upon to overcome potential shame. Of concern is that placing justice-involved young men in a rugby context, where shame is likely, may set them up for further violent behaviour because, as Gilligan (2003) notes, violence is a likely response to shame when men lack alternative methods. To summarise this section, I turn to Ellis's (2016:81) note that 'hesitancy, attempting to negotiate or placate, backing down, walking or running away [are] simply not viable options in some situations'. For rugby novices with preoccupations with shame, and a history of using violence to overcome it, rugby is arguably one of these situations.

²⁷ The act of faking a pass.

4.5.6 Summary of masculinity in the context of KCIT

Figure 11 shows a summary of my findings and analysis in the context of KCIT.

Figure 11: Summary of masculinity findings and analysis

SUMMARY OF MASCULINITY FINDINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF KCIT		
RUGBY UNION	PARTICIPANTS	CRIME AND VIOLENCE
<p>Rugby union is a 'manly sport' and players show their worth through violence and hyper-masculine embodiment.</p> <p>Rugby union reinforces masculine values, e.g., success, power, dominance, strength.</p> <p>Rugby union provides education in masculinity.</p> <p>Rugby union has sustained a reputation as a middle-class sport.</p>	<p>Believed in the 'real man' ideal and were frustrated because they had not reached it.</p> <p>Believed they could become 'completely masculine'.</p> <p>Participants' embodiment was different from how they described rugby player embodiment.</p> <p>Saw the rugby player identity as being unattainable to them.</p>	<p>Crime and violence were functional in allowing young people to feel something, resist marginalisation, and maintain social survival.</p> <p>Violence was routinely negotiated and provided a potent answer to problems the young people faced at the time of its production.</p> <p>YOT staff saw violence as the product of young people's deficits (emotion and insecurity).</p>

4.6 Summary of findings and analysis

This chapter suggests that the hyper-masculine values that underpin and distinguish rugby union limit it as a 'hook for change' and as a site for PYD. This chapter has presented and analysed findings demonstrating that England Rugby's value system (TREDS) is vague, whilst noting that it simultaneously conceals and perpetuates hyper-masculine and potentially toxic masculine cultural discourse. The findings support the notion that respect can be shown and achieved by men through violence and that this is prominent in rugby union. Directing justice-involved young men with histories of violence, who embody insecurity, trauma and vulnerability, towards rugby union without due consideration of its suitability and relevance risks entrenching the hyper-masculine values that contributed to their contact with the YJS. Based on the findings and analysis in this chapter, rugby union does have potential to offer the development of competence, confidence, connection, character, and indeed, personal development. However, it

arguably undermines these concepts with hyper-masculine ideals. Rugby union's real value as a 'hook for change' is in its capacity to undo masculine values and symbols through providing alternative masculine constructs: ones that de-emphasise the use of the 'body-as-weapon'²⁸ and the necessity for stoic silence, aggression and violence as appropriate male behaviours in the face of adversity. The same principle applies if rugby union is to demonstrate gravitas as a tool for PYD. The next chapter will discuss this further.

²⁸ This is a similar line of argument to that in Jump's (2015) research on the sport of boxing.

Chapter five: Discussion of findings

5.1 Thesis recap

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the research gap in relation to how rugby union may be used as a vehicle to support positive youth development (PYD) in the youth justice system.

A mixed methods approach was adopted consisting of an 18 month ethnography at the KCIT rugby programme, during which I conducted participant observations, one-to-one semi-structured interviews and a focus group. KCIT was a 2-year Comic Relief funded project that delivered weekly two-hour sessions of rugby union to justice-involved young people in Greater Manchester. The thesis addressed the following overarching research aim:

Can rugby union be used as a vehicle for supporting PYD in the youth justice system?

The research questions are as follows:

1. Can rugby union contribute to PYD amongst justice-involved young people?
2. What are young people's attitudes toward rugby union as a direct consequence of participating in the KCIT project?
3. Do the masculine values embedded in rugby union impact on the sport's potential to facilitate PYD?

The data was analysed using thematic analysis and was presented in chapter four.

This chapter brings together the findings, analysis and critiques made thus far in this thesis. It begins by discussing (section 5.2) the need for a bespoke PYD model to allow a greater understanding of sport as a vehicle for facilitating PYD in the YJS. Section 5.2.1 explains that in the YJS, sport participants are not homogenous but are diverse individuals with complex histories and needs, which in the YJS are likely intertwined with trauma and marginalisation. As such, acknowledging and tailoring sporting activities to account for this should be the primary concern when considering sport as a vehicle for PYD in youth

justice contexts. An adapted version of Vierimaa et al.'s (2017:6) Personal Assets Framework (PAF, Figure 2,) that is arguably more relevant for a youth justice context is presented. Section 5.3 proposes that current rationales for delivering rugby union in a youth justice context are counter-productive to PYD. Section 5.4 offers a discussion of touch rugby as a mode of rugby more aligned with PYD. Section 5.5 explains that adults involved in sports programmes like KCIT are key to facilitating PYD and draws attention to a discussion unique to the youth justice context. It notes that YOT practitioners have notable influence in sports programmes such as KCIT. It was clear through my ethnography that YOT workers hold notable power and influence over the young people they work with and this transfers into sports programmes like KCIT. As such, through their participation and interaction with such programmes staff negotiate the sporting experience for justice-involved young people.

Sections 5.6 highlights the need to consider sociocultural factors in programmes such as KCIT. Section 5.7 promotes a focus on the needs, codes, values, and beliefs that young people bring to such programmes. These can include a need for non-threatening and inclusive modes of competition and play, cravings for respect and recognition, and definitions of appropriate male behaviour which include violence and stoicism. The chapter concludes by outlining the implications of this thesis for policy and practice (section 5.8) and for future research (section 5.9).

5.2 Assessing sport as a vehicle for PYD in the youth justice context

A significant challenge when exploring rugby union as a vehicle for PYD in a youth justice context is that none of the models for PYD are entirely suitable for this context. This is an issue that emerging research has begun to acknowledge. Camiré et al. (2021) recently published a paper prompting a 'reimagining' of sport as a vehicle for PYD with a more explicit focus on social justice that addresses head on the power and privilege inherent in sport. The PYD literature should give greater acknowledgement to the broad range of learning outcomes that sport can facilitate. The research presented in this thesis serves as the most current contribution to this area

PYD models generally sit outside of the context of sport and although extremely valuable in framing PYD, they are limited by the privileged perspective of those who produced them. Their main limitation, a failure to acknowledge the diversity of individuals who enter the sports arena, and particularly in relation to the YJS, the complex histories they embody. The diversity of which arguably contribute to programmes like KCIT not simply being a site where the coach delivers sport to a homogenous group who want to play rugby; but a site where the coach must contour their delivery into the complex mosaic of personalities they are presented with. The findings from this thesis suggest that current PYD models do not adequately account for the sociocultural and economic challenges faced by justice-involved young people.

The PAF (Figure 2) was useful in providing a basis for understanding sport as a vehicle for PYD. It acknowledges fun and enjoyment as valuable outcomes. These factors are significant in exploring PYD in a youth justice context through sporting activities. In this context programmes and activities often have short lifespans, sporadic attendance and inconsistent engagement. Encouraging an emphasis on fun and enjoyment is critical as it provides a more realistic focus for sporting programmes and allows them to be seen as achieving PYD without necessarily having to achieve any other PYD outcomes. This is important for two main reasons. Firstly, as was demonstrated through KCIT, the factors that influence attendance in a youth justice context are generally not something that programme staff can control. Therefore, it is unreasonable, and potentially impossible, to use models like the PAF to evaluate a programme like KCIT. These types of programmes face notable challenges as a direct result of their interaction with the YJS, which in turn limit their capacity to achieve short and long-term outcomes for all participants. Secondly, some sports, such as rugby union, are not appealing to all young people, thereby, focusing on fun and enjoyment is a means of improving retention and providing a valuable experience for young people. While fun and enjoyment are vital aspects for sports programmes offered in a youth justice context, participating in them does not directly result in justice-involved young people being better equipped to cope with the complex agentic and structural challenges they face.

Short and long-term outcomes of the PAF are arguably not relevant in a youth justice context. The PAF encourages a somewhat holistic approach to understanding sport as a vehicle for PYD, but it overlooks one key component: the participant. The findings from

this thesis draws the conclusion that to fully understand sport as a vehicle for PYD in a youth justice context, a bespoke PYD framework is needed; one which foregrounds the participant and recognises their uniqueness.

I have provided a revised version of Vierimaa et al.'s (2017) PAF (Figure 2). This revised framework encompasses and extends the dynamic elements featured in the PAF and directs development towards a tailored version of the assets found in the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework (Table 3). I present my revisions to the PAF as a starting point (Figure 13) for future work. In doing so I acknowledge that it is only by building on previous work from PYD advocates like Vierimaa et al. (2017) and Search Institute (2005) that I have been able to present these revisions. In these revisions, specifically for the youth justice context, the participant is placed at the forefront of consideration and sits at the top of the framework to reinforce their overall importance in the programme. In sports projects like KCIT, where the focus is not solely on sports performance or further participation but on broader, more holistic development, a redefinition of the short-term outcomes, i.e., competence, confidence, connection and character, is needed. Based on the findings from this thesis, I propose the following as a starting point:

Figure 12: 4C's for PYD in youth justice



The long-term outcomes of the PAF are not suitable for sporting programmes like KCIT. For projects with a limited lifespan, and where various constraints and complexities can lead to sporadic attendance, it is unreasonable to suggest that sport support can support long-term PYD. This is not directly attributable to specific sports but is arguably a direct result of the challenges faced when offering sports programmes to marginalised young people. A more realistic and achievable long-term outcome is necessary given that the generalised PYD models outlined in chapter 2 arguably do not have the scope to acknowledge these challenges and limitations. The PAF (Figure 2) is limited because of its focus on further sports involvement as an outcome of participation, whereas sports programmes like KCIT cannot guarantee long-term participation and similarly cannot guarantee involvement in sport beyond the life of a project. In direct relation to the KCIT programme, long-term participation was even more challenging due to young people's lack of interest in rugby union. A more suitable long-term goal for sports programmes in a youth justice context would be for participants to display a willingness to engage with, and take ownership of, the sessions, and develop or embedded positive connections and relationships with the sports coach, their YOT worker and indeed, themselves.

5.2.1 Participants should be a key dynamic element of PYD

The findings in this thesis demonstrate that the young people taking part in KCIT had limited agency and their attendance was not entirely voluntary. Some of the young people suggested they felt forced to attend. This is notable, considering KCIT requested voluntary participation. Yet this is more notable for this thesis, because voluntary participation is a key component of PYD (Williams et al., 2015; Search Institute, 2005). Youth justice literature has also encouraged practitioners to facilitate voluntary participation and prioritise autonomy in service delivery (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015; Case et al., 2020). Arguably, a suitable description for the young people's experience of KCIT is 'quasi-mandatory' attendance, a concept drawn from health research, defined as: participation that feels forced due to it being a requirement of a larger structure and system (Archard et al., 2021; McNaughton et al., 2016). This is an important consideration as 'quasi-mandatory' attendance somewhat limits the extent to which programmes like KCIT can support PYD.

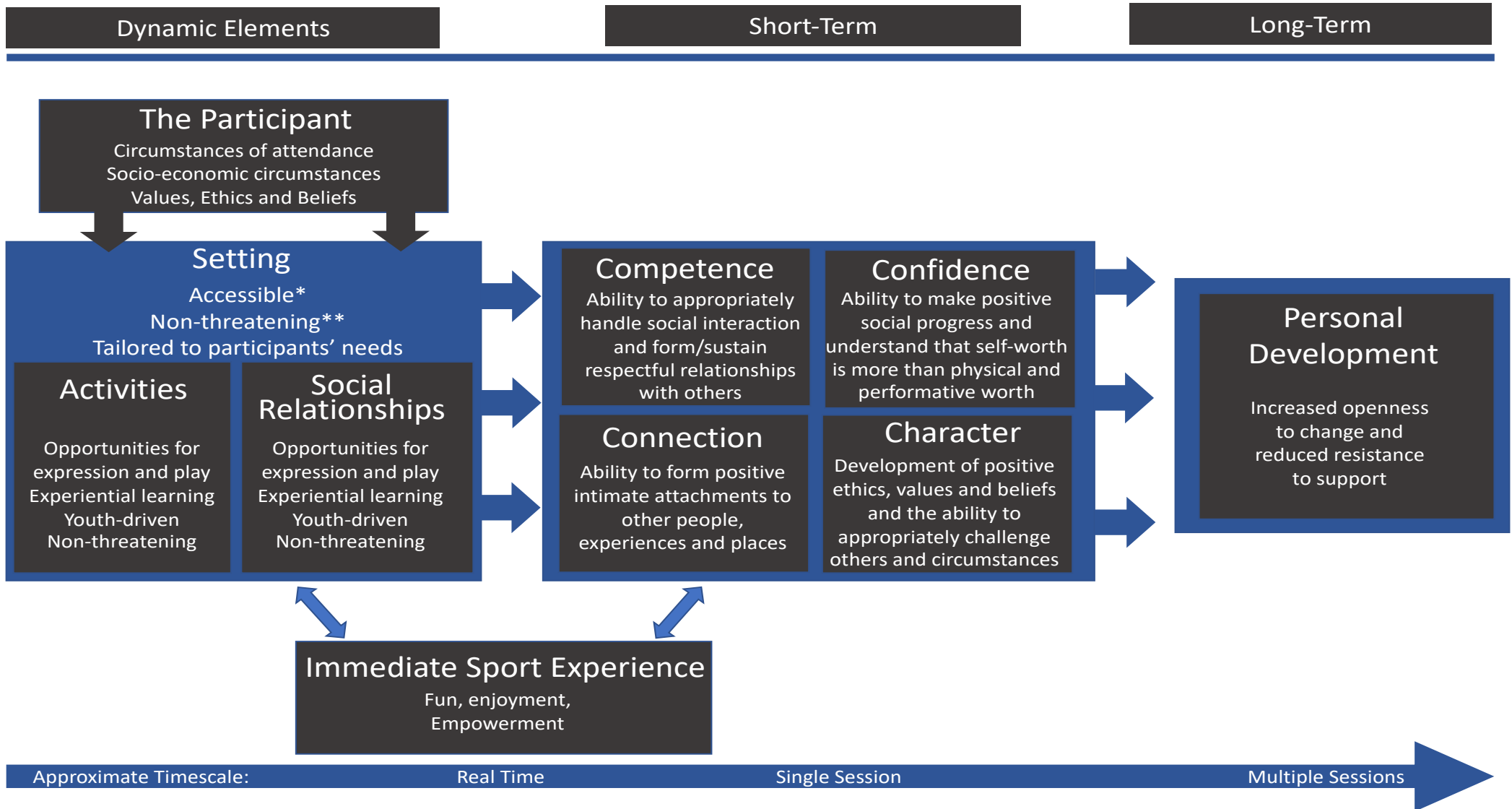
The reality of quasi-mandatory attendance and young people's perceptions of feeling forced to attend programmes is juxtaposed by the YJB's current priority to support the voice of the child (YJB, 2021). It also arguably demonstrates that sports programmes like KCIT can contribute to the disempowerment justice-involved young people experience (Haines and Case, 2015; Smithson et al., 2020). This is further supported by findings in this thesis that illustrated that YOT practitioners employed coercive tactics to encourage young people to attend KCIT. Examples include, '*trying not to use the word rugby*' and '*trying to use all other words to describe it apart from saying rugby*' (Jane, administrative YOT worker). Such tactics clearly limit young people's capacity to make informed decisions. There are likely two distinct, although interrelated, reasons such an approach was used. First, it is likely that the pervasive power imbalance in the YJS (Bengtsson, 2016) and the reality that the YJS lacks solutions for working with young people (Smithson et al., 2020) lead YOT practitioners into imposing opportunities like KCIT on young people. The second, interrelated reason is that YOT practitioners were arguably supportive of the cultural rhetoric surrounding the power of sport, a rhetoric that has culminated in claims such as 'sport has the power to change the world' (Fraser, 2021). Therefore, YOT practitioners viewed sports' 'power' as more potent than the need to work *with* young people.

The reality of quasi-mandatory attendance, and coercive tactics, limits programmes like KCIT in working towards PYD; not least because they frame such programmes as governed by negative social relationships and environmental structures. Programmes specifically utilising rugby union face even more challenges and risks. Indeed, rugby union is a violent sport with significant risk of injury (Pollock, 2014; White et al., 2021). Alongside Pollock's (2014:2) description of rugby union's 'dirty secret' noted in chapter two, the challenge is that not only is rugby union's violent and injurious nature under-represented, but it can also be wilfully ignored and overlooked by practitioners. This is likely because the merits are seen to offset the risks. Yet, if those responsible for directly or indirectly facilitating sport involvement, do not fully inform young people of the potential risks of participating in sport, particularly a violent sport like rugby, or conceal key facts about programmes like KCIT, they take away the agency to make informed decisions.

The nature of attendance and the dynamic between coercion and informed decision-making is notable in relation to the rhetoric that young people lack aspirations (Coalter et al., 2000; Abramovay et al., 2002). The young people involved in KCIT arguably did aspire to be socially mobile, and the consistent effort that led to their gaining of qualifications at KCIT attests to this. Sally (frontline YOT worker and ISS case manager) summarised this when she explained that outcomes such as qualifications from programmes like KCIT '*mean everything*' to the young people. Sally's example is notable in relation to agency, participation and attendance. She indicates that justice-involved young peoples' aspirations are curtailed by a need to survive amidst complexities. Arguably, however, through coercion and deception the YJS restricts aspirations by offering young people something to do rather than asking whether the 'something' is the right thing to do. A solution to this is for the YJS to take a participatory action approach to the design of programmes such as KCIT. For instance, including young people in the design and implementation of programmes (see Smithson and Jones, 2021).

Below is my revised framework (Figure 13) for supporting PYD through sport in a youth justice context which builds on previous work from Vierimaa et al. (2017), Search Institute (2005) and Morgan and Parker (2017). It provides a starting point for the evolution for a new framework and can be considered a tool for evaluation and design, both of which, as the revised model shows, should put participants at the forefront of programmes.

Figure 13: Proposed PAF for youth justice



*Inclusive and uncomplicated

** does not marginalise or disempower

5.3 Current rationales for delivering rugby union compromise PYD

Under the umbrella of PYD and its progressive strengths-based approach to development, the justifications for including rugby union in a youth justice context explored in this thesis, and seen elsewhere in the literature (Meek, 2018), appear inappropriate and limited. The literature echoes claims about the suitability, or lack of suitability of rugby union for PYD in a youth justice context. However, most, if not all, of the rationales cited, seemingly take a deficit approach rather than a strengths-based approach.

The first rationale explored in this thesis and elsewhere in the literature (Meek, 2018), is the belief that rugby union's offer of physicality and violence can pacify young people. This rationale is unsuitable for several reasons. First, it moves rugby union's potential away from being a PYD context towards one of social control. This idea is more fitting of 1980s sport initiatives such as Action Sport (Rigg, 1986). It also undermines the masculinity and violence research, which has argued that most men do not engage in violence for recreation but often do so through need (Anderson, 2000; Arendt, 1970; Winlow, 2012; Pathan, 2020). Moreover, it overlooks the fact that rugby union is a 'sport of violence' (Pringle, 2001:425) therefore, it can only ever provide a redirection of violent behaviour. Engaging in physicality and violence in a rugby union context will arguably not equip marginalised young people to address the agentic and structural constraints that they experience. Violence, as Anderson's (2000) research illustrates, is a learned behaviour, therefore it is likely that encouraging violence in the rugby context will reinforce its use in other contexts.

The second rationale is the belief that rugby union as a crucible of masculine concepts and components that can offer adversity that subsequently supports PYD. This is a reiteration of archaic ideas found in rugby union's early history (McIntosh, 1979; Springhall, 1971). Indeed, there may historically have been worth in utilising rugby union

as a masculinising practice when war was a more prominent threat to social life. The findings in this thesis suggest that although rugby union no longer serves as a preparation for war, it arguably remains a site for ‘toughening [boys] up’ (Winlow, 2012:12). It is still considered a valuable masculinising practice where men and boys can harden themselves through negotiating adversity. Such views need challenging, because they arguably overlook and discount the multiple adversities that justice-involved young people already face and, in this respect, do a disservice to their lived experience. For rugby union to have any potential to support PYD this rhetoric must change.

Last is the rationale of catharsis – the process of releasing emotion to experience relief. It is a long-standing rationale for delivering sports like rugby union to young people who have shown aggression and anger, and features in this research and elsewhere in the literature (Meek, 2018). This rationale is fundamentally opposed to PYD because it seemingly positions emotions such as stress, anger and aggression as deficits that require challenging. Furthermore, this rationale overlooks arguments that for many men, these emotions are often responses to vulnerability (Hall, 2012; Ellis, 2016; Winlow, 2012). Indeed, rugby union can provide catharsis; however, celebrating or promoting this could lead rugby union towards a vehicle for toxic masculinisation rather than PYD, where young men learn that violence and physicality are appropriate methods to deflect and conceal vulnerability.

To work towards positioning rugby union as a vehicle for PYD, academics and practitioners must overcome their own privilege as individuals who do not readily negotiate the prospect of physical violence, and in doing so, recognise that for some young people, violence is perceived as one of the few solutions, if not the only solution, to the problems they face. They must also understand that sporting adversity is not necessarily developmental, but can, as findings in this thesis demonstrates, cause anxiety, frustration and self-doubt. As posited earlier, one possible beneficial approach that this research identified for overcoming this and achieving PYD through rugby union is to consider the participant as a key dynamic element from the start.

5.4 Is touch rugby the answer to rugby union supporting PYD?

Rugby union's team structure, technicality and '*overcomplicatedness*' were key sources of frustration for the KCIT participants. However, paradoxically the young people continued to crave competition. KCIT used touch rugby as an alternative mode of competition. In line with burgeoning calls for rugby coaches to reduce rugby union's excessive violence (White et al., 2017; Batten et al., 2016), touch rugby provides participants with access to a mode of rugby that removes the need to negotiate rugby union's violent and more injurious components (rucks, mauls and scrums). Also, tackles are replaced with 'touches and taps'. Touch rugby is physically safer and can be a less anxiety-provoking and a more 'beginner-friendly' mode of competition. Touch rugby does not provide a definitive answer to rugby union's limitations outlined above, but it arguably serves as a more inclusive mode of competition for novice participants. For the young people in this study, touch rugby appeared to increase both relevance and accessibility, and therefore was experienced as a mode of rugby more conducive to PYD. This somewhat contradicts Messner's (1992) broad claim that competition limits young people's sporting experience. Considering the findings in this thesis, I contest claims from the likes of Meek (2018) and Ekholm (2013) that sports coaches should de-emphasise competition, and I support Camiré's (2015) position that competition can support or inhibit PYD. Therefore, instead of de-emphasising competition, an emphasis on PYD would be better met if coaches consciously worked towards re-conceptualising and re-defining competition. In relation to rugby union and PYD, touch rugby is a worthy place to start as it can downplay the prominence of violence and masculine concepts such as strength and aggression.

There are limitations to touch rugby, and these are important to acknowledge. In the KCIT programme, young people were concerned about it as they were unsure where to place their hands and how much pressure on an opponent was acceptable. However, rugby union's esteem as a macho sport was arguably enough to outweigh these concerns and make touch rugby acceptable. Against the young people's bravado-laden claims that they preferred and desired more contact, touch rugby appeared to provide an appropriately challenging mode of rugby that satisfied what the literature has suggested is a socialised need for competition (Ellis, 2016; Winlow, 2012). Overall, touch rugby allowed increased

access to play and experiential learning, key components of sport as a vehicle for PYD (Smith et al., 2009; Biddle, 2006; Blauner, 1964; Bergeron et al., 2015). Crucially, it did this without participants having to risk the prospect of violent domination. An experience which Ellis (2016), through his concept of 'wounded pride', argued can be extremely damaging for men. By doing so, touch rugby arguably challenged the masculine constructs found in sports like rugby union, such as the need for competition to be violent (Jump, 2020). Touch rugby also appeared to have value in working against rugby union's definition as an exclusive 'game for hooligans' (Richards, 2007) and moved it closer to being a 'sport for all' (World Rugby, 2019).

Touch rugby should be the primary offer in future efforts to support young people to engage in rugby in programmes like KCIT. This is not least because it provides a relevant and appropriate mode of sport more concomitant to delivering PYD, but also because it arguably has the potential to work against 'hardened' masculine attitudes (Roberts et al., 2017:338) and 'toughening up' (Winlow, 2012:122) by redefining male competition. Touch rugby may be able to teach men and boys that it is possible to touch other men without being violent, and without being gay.

Despite touch rugby's potential to be more conducive to PYD, it would be naïve to suggest that by encouraging young men to touch and compete against each other in non-violent ways, programmes like KCIT can encourage young men to unrestrainedly accept male intimacy. Indeed, there will probably always be resistance to intimate male connections. Yet, if sport providers 'buy in' to the understanding of 'plasticity' (Camiré et al., 2021), i.e., that young people are receptive to change and provide supplementary education alongside it, it is more likely that PYD can be achieved in a rugby context.

If young people are indeed receptive to the playing of rugby union, 'plasticity' must underpin the rationale for programmes. This is unsurprising considering that Giordano et al.'s (2002) 'hook for change' theory argues that change becomes possible through the support of external mechanisms. Taken together, 'plasticity' and the ideas of external mechanisms make it logical to argue that sports programmes like KCIT should be supported by specific targeted education offers. Sport participation alone is arguably not robust enough to support change because it does not provide young people with a clear enough roadmap for how this can be achieved, particularly if there is a cultural

disconnection between the sport and the young people who access it, as was the case at KCIT. Future research exploring rugby union as a vehicle for supporting PYD should include explicit PYD-focused education. One of the ways in which this could be achieved is working directly with young people to create a tailored PYD curriculum and delivering and evaluating the curriculum via a case study. Alongside and following co-production and delivery of the curriculum, data could be collected through surveys, interviews and observations to develop both a process and impact evaluation.

5.5 Relationships are more important than rugby

Consistent with the literature (Côté et al., 2010; Camiré, 2012; Vella et al., 2013), this thesis highlights coaches as central protagonists in creating positive sporting experiences. Whilst this was overall unsurprising, I did not expect to find that YOT practitioners were similarly influential. The findings arguably demonstrate that rugby union can be used as a context where young people can develop valued connections to adults in positions of responsibility and authority. The methods found to facilitate positive relationships were unexpected.

5.5.1 Coaches: a flexible approach is best

KCIT was a programme with rugby union at its core. However, this was managed by the considerate and dynamic delivery of the project by the coaches. Mark (rugby coach and KCIT lead) was not rigid in his methods of delivering a rugby union programme. It was common for him to draw on other sports and deliver modified and tailored games. Mark delivered what I term *hybrid games*, described as games that maintained the essence of the project's focus yet drew on other sports to increase accessibility and inclusivity. On most occasions, the rugby ball remained the focus of play during sessions, but it was common for Mark to start with activities that looked more like football, netball or basketball than rugby union. He often adapted rules and regulations from various sports and merged them with rugby union's scoring systems, terminology and modes of play (passing, catching and kicking). This pedagogical approach increased accessibility, inclusivity and empowerment, key features of PYD (Holt et al., 2017) in sport in two ways. First, it supported young people to use existing frames of reference from sports they were

familiar with. Second, *hybrid games* seemingly allowed young people to access rugby union without being overwhelmed or threatened by its complexity. They also appeared to provide excitement, enjoyment and interactive opportunities for participants to indulge their creativity, another key marker of PYD (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003; Ehsani et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2015; Rosenkranz et al., 2012). This is consistent with Meek's (2018) claim that by de-emphasising rules and regulations, coaches can provide enjoyable sporting experiences. Considering this, I encourage governing bodies such as the RFU to empower coaches to move beyond the rigid confines of delivering specific sports, and instead use them as a canvass to provide tailored experiences.

5.5.2 Coaches need to be respectful

The coaches' commitment to showing respect and recognition was arguably a key mechanism for allowing young people at KCT to develop connections: to the coaches, to KCIT and indeed, to rugby union. Foremost to this respect was the use of 'interaction rituals'²⁹ (Goffman, 1967). Coaches made an obvious point of welcoming participants to KCIT. At the beginning of the participants' KCIT journey, and again at the start of each session, coaches used 'fist bumps' and handshakes as symbols of respect and recognition. The data demonstrates that young people valued these symbols and their use, arguably putting them at ease and encouraging them to abandon their pre-established bravados. Coaches also used probing yet non-intrusive questions and showed an interest in the young people's thoughts and feelings.

In keeping with the literature, this thesis shows that consultation is a valuable experience for young people with experiences of marginalisation and disempowerment (Wood and Hine, 2009; Utting and Vennard, 2000; Nacro, 2008; Haines and Case, 2015; Case, 2018). Whilst this was true at KCIT, the critical component appeared to be that consultation was not tokenistic. Coaches at KCIT took an egalitarian approach to consultation whereby they disempowered themselves to empower participants. Although this rarely led to increases in participation, it arguably had value in providing a space for young people to take more control of their experience.

²⁹ A set of behaviours performed to influence and manage social interaction

Overall, respect and recognition, and the symbolisms and interactions that provided their foundation, led to a symbiotic respect between coaches and young people; the more respect shown by one group, the more it was reciprocated by the other. This symbiotic respect resulted in a positive participatory experience for the young men. Respect and recognition should be considered vital mechanisms for facilitating positive experiences and promoting '*stickativity*' (Mark, rugby coach and KCIT lead), i.e., a reason to attend. To a certain degree rugby union was irrelevant, and it was respect and recognition that sustained participant's attendance and engagement and supported their personal development. Respect and recognition are arguably powerful 'hooks' for engagement.

5.5.3 YOT practitioners as supporting adults are highly influential

In line with recent youth justice research (Smithson and Jones, 2021), findings from this thesis suggest that co-participation between young people and YOT practitioners can help facilitate positive experiences and outcomes for young people and co-participation can lead to trusting relationships. Programmes like KCIT can arguably help redefine young people's experiences of the YJS by providing a vehicle for developing relationships. Whilst this is notable, the methods that helped facilitate this are more useful for future practice. Positive relationships were not simply the result of joint engagement by young people, YOT workers and coaching staff. It would be naïve to suggest that by simply attending and co-participating that they can develop positive relational bonds. Two distinct factors appeared to be supportive of such outcomes. I categorise them below as participatory factors and interactional factors.

5.5.3.1 Participatory factors

Participatory factors included the extent to which YOT practitioners participated in KCIT sessions and more crucially, the nature of their participation and engagement. The findings from this thesis suggest that YOT practitioners who attended KCIT had what can be described as 'better' relationships with young people compared with those practitioners who never attended. There are several plausible reasons for this. Foremost, it is likely that joint attendance increased young people's informal experiences with the YOT workers and in turn their connection to them. However, data from my ethnography

suggested that co-participation and positive outcomes were not simply cause and effect. Several nuanced and covert factors were present, all of which can arguably be encompassed in the following recommendation for future practice: practitioners working with justice-involved young people in a sporting context should overlook their own anxieties and be willing to place themselves in positions of vulnerability³⁰. This can be achieved by disempowering themselves, and by connecting intimately with young people by displaying their humanity. In summary, it appears that YOT practitioners can be powerful influences in distinguishing sports programmes from wider YJS provision, and therefore, redefining young people's experience of the YJS, arguably to one of a more inclusive participatory nature.

5.5.3.2 Interactional factors

Interactional factors include the rhetoric and language used by YOT practitioners, and the implicit and explicit messages these deliver. This thesis indicates that in a sports context, YOT practitioners who provide positive encouragement, recognise effort, and emphasise effort over outcome, develop stronger, more positive connections with young people. In contrast, YOT practitioners who allow their own self-interest to influence their interaction are limited in developing positive relationships. An example of this includes YOT staff playing passive roles in KCIT owing to their lack of interest in rugby. This supports the broad range of research in Table 5, in chapter two, and outlines those coaching behaviours are not restricted to the sport coaches but are arguably applicable to all adults directly involved in a sport programme. The literature confirms that sports coaches are the key catalysts for PYD (Côté et al., 2010; Camiré, 2012; Vella et al., 2013). However, considering the findings from this thesis YOT practitioners, the mediators between justice-involved young people and sport, appear to have a direct capacity to support or be un-supportive of PYD.

One way rugby union can be used as a context for PYD in a youth justice context is ensuring that appropriate and suitable adults are responsible for its delivery, and that supporting staff are equally suitable. They need to be supportive of the involvement of young people and invested in their experience. Integral to this is that all adults in direct

³⁰ position of emotional and social vulnerability

positions of power and influence are willing to place young people at the centre of the sporting experience. Greater care and consideration should be taken regarding YOT worker suitability in relation to specific programmes like KCIT. If YOT practitioners are not prepared to 'buy in', and engage as equals, thus potentially experiencing disempowerment for the benefit of young people, then they should not be involved in the activity. This is important because staff apathy can undermine PYD and can arguably reduce morale among young people.

5.6 Sociocultural factors need consideration

A significant limitation of the contemporary literature on rugby union in a youth justice and PYD context is the lack of acknowledgement of the importance of masculinities research. Research into rugby union in the area of masculinity has overlooked the sociocultural relationship between participants and rugby union.

The findings from this thesis suggest that such factors should be acknowledged. The findings from this thesis suggest that rugby union remains disconnected from the experiences of marginalised young people. This disconnection had several limiting outcomes for KCIT in terms of its facilitation of PYD. The outcome of the sociocultural disconnect between rugby union and the young people was such that they approached rugby union as an unknown entity. It could be argued therefore, that KCIT offered young people a new experience. Nonetheless, it is also a cause for concern considering several scholars have argued that working-class men are hypersensitive to prospective humiliation and subordination and preoccupied with avoiding such experiences (Anderson, 2000; Hall, 2012; Ellis, 2016; Winlow, 2012). Although it is likely that the young people would have approached any sport project with trepidation and apprehension, the rugby focus of KCIT seemingly prompted an added layer of anxiety that manifested as reticence and reluctance.

There was arguably also another more critical sociocultural issue related to the disconnection between the young people and rugby union. This relates to PYD theory (Vierimaa et al., 2017; Morgan and Parker, 2017) and Giordano et al.'s (2002) 'hook for

change' theory and is contestably the most critical limitation of rugby union in a youth justice context My data offers evidence that rugby union remains distanced from working-class culture and serves as more concrete evidence that it provides working-class young men no realistic, desired, or relevant prospects for identity change and development. My analysis suggests that two factors interrelate with this.

First, rugby union holds no social value for marginalised young men, evidenced by KCIT participants hiding their involvement in the sport or discrediting it. Second, the young people considered the 'rugby man' identity as unattainable. This is likely, in part related to the changes in rugby players' physique since the sports professionalisation in 1995. A key example of which is the sharp increase in the muscle mass and physical prowess of players since then (Mencía et al., 2021). The descriptions such as '*animal*' and '*tank*' provided by the young men in this thesis suggest that muscularity and physical prowess may widely be understood as the core of the 'rugby man' identity.

Future programmes seeking to deliver rugby union in a youth justice context should consider the prominence of rugby union's cultural position in relation to those who access the project. To reiterate text from chapter two, 'sport ... bears the marks of its origins' (Bourdieu, 1978:838), and rugby union is not 'classless' but remains middle class (Collins, 2015). It is therefore likely that rugby union will be limited in offering attainable identity prospects, power or status to marginalised boys to support change and social progression (Atkinson, 2011; Matthews, 2014).

5.7 Codes, ethics, values and beliefs

Sport is culturally celebrated as a site where young people can develop positive ethics, such as fairness, graciousness in defeat and success, resilience and respect. Likewise, these factors are related to PYD (Vierimaa et al., 2017; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, 2015). Previous research has illustrated that sport often fails in promoting such values, at least in the positive way that sports programmes seek (Anderson and White, 2017). The central idea underpinning sport for development, and indeed as mentioned earlier (section 5.4) the PYD approach, is that young people are open to learning. Crucially, discussions about rugby union as a site for PYD have overlooked some critical masculinities debates. These

include Messner's (1992) suggestion that young people do not enter sport contexts void of ideas and values, but as incomplete projects open to further socialisation. This is an important point considering Anderson (2000) argued that marginalised young people reproduce behaviours that reinforce their self and social esteem. Through positive reinforcement young people learn to behave in ways that support and protect their identity. The young people involved in KCIT showed that violence was a way to secure respect and reinforce identity on the street; and Mark, the rugby coach believed violence was a way to secure respect and reinforce identity on the rugby field. Without due consideration of alignment between these two factors, it is arguably likely that rugby union simply offers reinforcement for the relationship between violence and respect.

This thesis suggests that justice-involved young people can attend programmes like KCIT with ideas drawn from the 'code of the street' (Anderson, 2000) -a set of informal rules that can govern the social lives of young people experiencing marginalisation. The core principles of this code are respect and status, which can ensure survival in the face of adversity, and violence can be used to support this. The young men in this thesis held beliefs that respect was synonymous with fear, intimidation and reputation. They also arguably showed signs of fearing being seen as weak and vulnerable by using bravado and claims of masculine prowess to obscure their insecurity. These attitudes illustrated the 'hardened masculinity' Roberts et al. (2017:338) referenced and were also in line with the broad range of literature relating to the masculinity 'crisis' notion, outlined in chapter two (section 2.6.2). Understanding rugby union as a learning and development environment, it would likely be valuable for practitioners to recognise and understand that young people can bring with them such beliefs. This is particularly prominent in relation to the hyper-masculine sport of rugby union. Rugby union replicates, stylises, and adds structure to the codes young people interact with on the street. Rugby union does this by encouraging players to use violence to secure respect and elevate status. Arguably, by under-estimating the association marginalised young people may have between violence, respect and status, coaches delivering rugby union will unduly reinforce such beliefs.

The literature confirms that rugby union is a violent sport. This thesis reinforces this understanding, demonstrating that even in informal rugby projects like KCIT, young people expect to negotiate violence. The findings contribute to established research arguing that the capacity to negotiate violence is central to the 'rugby man' identity (Muir

and Seitz, 2004; Schacht, 1996; Parry et al., 2021). This thesis also provides evidence that rugby union emphasises codes which marginalised young people learn on the street: codes which educate young people that violence is an appropriate way to earn respect and status, and that physical presence and a reputation for toughness can provide contextual success. Indeed, it could be argued that rugby union offers young people a context where they can engage in recreational violence without fear of recompense or reprimand. However, by reinforcing the codes that young people bring from the street, it is likely that rugby union legitimises such codes. This thesis suggests that programmes like KCIT, are at the intersection between the hyper-masculine sport of rugby union and marginalised young people with hyper-masculine ideals and can therefore reinforce toxic masculine values. Rugby union arguably supports the misconceived 'real man' ideal, and offers young people frames of reference that masculinity is achievable through muscularity, performance and consumption. For rugby union to have worth as a vehicle for PYD, coaches need to work against this.

5.7.1 Rugby union is socially and emotionally risky for working-class boys

This thesis supports Jump's (2016) argument that the competitive violence offered by some sports is a powerful lure for young men. However, whilst this was reflected through conversations with the young people in the thesis, and through time spent at KCIT, I found that their claims about the appeal of rugby union's violence were likely hollow and superficial. Arguably the experiences of the young people participating in KCIT illustrates that competitive violence in a rugby union context, like most violence (Ewing, 1982; Pleck, 2004; Scher and Stevens, 1987), is an uncomfortable experience for novice young men. The young men used claims of enjoyment and appeal as techniques to provide complicit support for rugby union's violence. In doing so, they reinforced their own masculine status without needing to negotiate physical violence. Their claims were likely a protective mechanism; an argument grounded in the reality that when young people were encouraged to be physically aggressive with one another, they were reluctant and resisted. When they were physical with one another they found it unfulfilling, and the interaction was a source of frustration and stress. Practitioners using rugby union with young men should reflect on the legitimacy of the claims young men make about the appeal of violence and question whether contact is appropriate.

Direct body-to-body contact in rugby union is complex and highly technical. Although it often appears mindless and reckless, anyone who has experienced it first-hand will attest to its intricacy. This thesis has demonstrated that it is not only physically challenging, but also serves as a socially and emotionally complex interaction, particularly for novice participants in spaces like KCIT where attendance is sporadic, infrequent, and short lived. Participants therefore cannot develop and embed intimate connections i.e., trusting relationships with one another. Indeed, the literature has established that rugby union is dangerous (Pollock, 2014; White et al., 2021). This thesis adds a novel dynamic to the literature and research evidence highlighting that the sport can also be socially risky. In doing so, it challenges the broad claim that sport is safe for young men.

At present, in western society 'safe' is arguably used as a catch-all term to describe sport as a conservative site for males. Indeed, sport is a socially conservative practice for males; however, the understanding of the concept needs further development. As it stands, the broad perspective devalues and subverts the experiences of individual young men and their sporting experience. Whilst sport remains a broad culturally conservative practice for men in the UK, this research has gone some way to outlining that not all sport is conservative for all young men in specific subcultures. Rugby union may be a radical and risky sport for marginalised young people. Practitioners and scholars should resist being misled by ideas that sport, in a broad sense, is safe for men. This thesis suggests rugby union is risky because its physicality requires a high level of technical comprehension and it necessitates players touching each other in ways that they may not feel comfortable doing: ways that can arguably produce homoerotic anxiety and concerns about homophobic stigma (Plummer, 1999). A critical example of this is the 'cheek-to-cheek' (defender's face to attacker's bum) cue often used by coaches in rugby to encourage safe contact. Other hyper-masculine sports such as boxing arguably do not pose this risk. It is far more conducive to traditional male honour for one man to punch another man in the face, than it is to cradle another man. Particularly in a slow, controlled, and formulated fashion like in the early stages of learning the rugby tackle.

Rugby union's violence arguably has the power to dismantle the reputation and status that marginalised young people seek to secure and sustain on the street, and potentially reveal them as holding a fraudulent 'hard' masculinity. This thesis suggests that the

traditionally hyper-masculine, 'real mans' sport of rugby union is not definitively conservative for young men. Especially those from marginalised backgrounds who hang their worth on their 'hard' reputation. Based on the experiences at KCIT, it would be a misrepresentation to suggest that rugby union's offer of violence is a 'lure' or a 'hook' for participation. It is more reasonable and representative to state that the prospect and potential for violence and physicality, coupled with rugby union's social esteem as a 'real man's' game, made it an acceptable site for engagement.

5.7.2 Rugby union – positive outcomes, but not PYD.

This thesis demonstrates that rugby union can be used to facilitate several notable and worthy outcomes, namely education, positive relationships and arguably opportunities for young people to meet societal expectations for engagement. This would suggest that rugby union can be used as a vehicle for PYD. However, this thesis has illustrated that rugby union lacks relevance amongst marginalised young men because it fails to provide relevant outcomes. It arguably holds no cultural value for marginalised young men, and therefore cannot offer them opportunities to develop status of any worth. On the contrary, the sport is socially risky and threatening to the status and reputation that young people rely on because it exposes them to a type of domination and victimisation they are unprepared for.

It has been said that men who are rarely confronted with the prospect of negotiating physical violence find sports like rugby union and their offer of recreational violence exciting and consider them valuable arenas to develop status (Messner, 1990). Yet, this thesis arguably suggests that for young men with direct experiences of violence, rugby union serves as as an 'existential threat' (Ellis, 2016:96). A threat that arguably sets them up for failure by restricting them into reproducing further violence. This was succinctly and powerfully presented through Zac's response to the question 'How would you feel if someone tackled you hard [at rugby]?' when he stated,

I'm not going to lie: I would go mad, and I would actually go mad ... and punch them and everything. (Zac, 16-year-old BAME)

Unless practitioners actively challenge many of the components that provide rugby union with distinction, the suitability of the sport in a youth justice context is contestable.

A failure to engage with the masculinities research, would have made many of the connections and discussions featured in the chapter impossible. Without this connection the thesis would have been unable to explore the young people's lived experiences and understandings, and how they interrelate with their playing of rugby union. Academics exploring rugby union in a youth justice context should build on this and integrate the masculinities knowledge into their research. I will now outline the policy and practice implications of this thesis.

5.8 Implications of research for policy and practice

This thesis sought to add to the knowledge in sport criminology and the field of PYD by exploring how rugby union can be used as a vehicle for PYD in a youth justice context. Understanding how rugby union can deliver PYD is valuable because rugby union has emerged in a criminal justice context through programmes like the 2nd Chance Project (Meek, 2012; Meek and Lewis, 2014) and Get Onside (Saracens Foundation, 2020:online). By outlining and exploring young people's experiences of rugby union against the backdrop of youth justice and understandings in masculinities research, this thesis demonstrates that the potential of using specific sports, such as rugby union, as a vehicle for PYD cannot be considered without examining what young people bring to the sport. This includes the conditions under which they attend and engage, their socio-economic and cultural circumstances, and how these inter-relate with specific sports projects. Consideration of these factors might improve the potential of programmes like KCIT to deliver PYD, and therefore could increase outcomes for young people. I do not limit this discussion to rugby union, all sports programmes delivered in a youth justice context seeking to facilitate PYD should make these considerations.

Figure 9 on page 144 of this thesis can be used as a framework for developing policy and practice. In that figure, I summarise six aspects of rugby union delivery in youth justice through the KCIT program which I found to limit the sport as a context of PYD. These aspects were as follow:

- 1) **Touch rugby** - Despite being more accessible than full contact rugby touch rugby lacked appeal to participants at KCIT.
- 2) **Accessibility** - Rugby unions restrictive rules and regulations and the sports complicated gameplay limit the sports accessibility.
- 3) **Appeal** - Rugby union physicality appealed to the young people at KCIT and made the sport worthy of their consideration, but the reality did not satisfy their expectation.
- 4) **Participation** - The young people at KCIT did not believe their participation was entirely voluntary.
- 5) **YOT rationale** - YOT workers supported rugby union participation based on a belief that the sport could offer stress relief but overlooked that the participation often facilitated distress.
- 6) **TREDS** – rugby unions core values – protect the sports social esteem as a masculine sport.

Although the aspects outlined in figure 9 are explicitly the result of this research's focus on KCIT, these aspects can be categorised under broad themes which can, and should, be applied to better develop PYD supportive sports interventions going forward. Aspects 1, 2 and 3 can be grouped together to demonstrate that sports programs in youth justice need to bare relevance to those who access them. Aspects 4 and 5 highlight that the mechanisms driving participation are important factors which support or negate a sport programs alignment with PYD. These factors can be worked into future endeavours to use sport as PYD and practitioners should seek to mould sport provision to the needs of young people, and endeavour to reflect on the mechanisms driving participations. Aspect 6 is perhaps a more complex factor to overcome. This aspect highlights that regardless of the relevance and participatory mechanism involved in a sport program such as KCIT, the fact remains that when young people engage with a sport, in this case the sport of rugby union, they are at the mercy the overarching values which underpin the sport. It may well be a complex task for practitioners to challenge such values, yet this complexity should not serve as motivation for complicity and practitioners should be empowered to provide PYD supportive re-definitions.

From a YJS perspective, the findings of this thesis suggest that greater attention needs to be paid to how and why young people access programmes like KCIT. In relation to a

violent and dangerous sport like rugby union, young people should be able to make informed decisions, including what a programme involves, and should be allowed to decide, without feeling coerced, into participating. Not only would this facilitate a more ethical use of rugby union, but by paying greater respect and attention to young people's concerns and autonomy, personal agency may yield better outcomes such as improved engagement.

A crucial finding from this research is that YOT practitioners are central in influencing young people's experiences in sports programmes like KCIT. If young people are to continue to attend similar projects alongside their YOT practitioners, practitioners should be prepared to co-participate and encourage positive experiences and outcomes, not work against them. Coaches in contact sports programmes like KCIT are arguably well placed to use such programmes to challenge the masculine discourses that young men can bring from the street and apply to the rugby context. In such sports programmes, coaches working with novice young people have a significant responsibility as holders of cultural, social and technical knowledge; it is their responsibility to use this information to educate and develop young people in ways aligned with PYD. This can arguably be achieved by coaches moving outside the rigid confines of what a specific sport is or is expected to be, and by delivering flexible, bespoke sport experiences. Practitioners need to carefully manage the balance between providing a youth-focused experience which meets participant needs and providing a context that is accessible and inclusive. To achieve this, practitioners should critically observe and critically reflect on the behaviours and expressions of participants.

Unfortunately, evidenced in this research, there appears at present to be little challenge posed to the hyper-masculine codes and values found in rugby union. On the contrary, these values have lingered from rugby union's origin. Several of these values and ideas can be seen in this thesis and in the literature reviewed in chapter two. These include the ideas that rugby union provides exposure to developmental opportunities for catharsis and masculine development. These values and ideas are arguably promoted, prioritised, and accepted by sports scholars and practitioners with little interrogation of whether and to what extent they have developmental value. As highlighted in section 5.2, a bespoke and suitable PYD model needs to be developed to suit sports programmes in a criminal justice context. However, until this is developed, practitioners should be guided by the

broad principles of PYD. Without this focus and without building on the discussions presented in this thesis, it is likely that rugby union projects will be limited by the sport's hyper-masculine ideals. For some young men, such projects could serve as just another context to negotiate violence.

There are significant critiques of rugby union in this thesis that governing bodies like England Rugby, the RFU, World Rugby and local rugby authorities should take note. Many of the critical claims strike at the very core of what rugby union is: a middle-class sport focused on competitive violence. It will be a challenge to convince these bodies that positive outcomes can likely come from subverting the codes and values that underpin the sport. That said, I am encouraged by the work I have seen at the KCIT programme, the work of the coaches, and the two frontline YOT staff who, despite my critical examination, have shown that elements of PYD is possible with the right people in positions of influence.

5.9 Implications for future research

Key recommendations for further research to emerge from this thesis relate to theory and methods. Much of the current research on PYD is arguably broad and unfitting in a youth justice context. In particular, the sports-focused PYD models such as the PAF are just that: sports-focused. The outcomes featured in such models are, therefore, unsuitable and disconnected from the reality of sports programmes delivered to justice-involved young people. For a population experiencing a multitude of disadvantages, it is crucial to develop a tailored PYD model. At the same time, research on sport and criminal justice, could make better use of the PYD literature.

The empirical real-world research I conducted was based on one rugby union project and featured a modest sample size. However, the thesis has made novel contributions to the literature relating to sport criminology and PYD, some of which could be generalisable to the wider sport and youth justice research. If sports programmes in a youth justice context are to deliver positive outcomes for young people, it is necessary to understand what each young person brings to the context.

I anticipate challenges when disseminating this research to target audiences such as rugby union governing bodies. History shows that these organisations have often been reluctant to change. One useful area for future research that would help reinforce the case for a change in rugby union, particularly in relation to its utilisation in youth justice contexts is undertaking a broad investigation into justice-involved young people's involvement in rugby union in different geographical locations across the UK. A valuable piece of research would be an exploration of how rugby union can be supplemented by a targeted PYD and 'change' curriculum. This could be undertaken in several ways. First, researchers could work with a small but representative group of justice-involved young people to explore their needs, understandings, and perceptions of rugby union, and if and how these three components interrelate. Through consultation with the broad PYD literature, and through continued collaborative work with young people, this research could produce a core framework for a context-specific rugby union programme delivery that features grounded and youth-driven definitions for *competence*, *confidence*, *connection* and *character*. This would arguably allow rugby projects in youth justice contexts to be youth led and to proactively work towards change and development. Following the development of this core framework, it should be rolled out to various YOTs nationally, recommending that, whilst the core framework should provide the basis for project delivery, practitioners should work in collaboration with young people locally to refine the project.

In addition to delivering direct and focused research on rugby union, as described above, a more bespoke PYD model is needed for the youth justice context. The following is a good starting point for a research design. Begin by undertaking a quantitative study developed to gain a broad understanding of sport in the youth justice system. A questionnaire would be a suitable research tool and administered to young people and practitioners (coaches and supporting adults) involved in a wide range of sports across varied geographical locations. Suitable questions to include in this questionnaire might be 'What are you hoping to achieve in the short term from involvement?', 'What are you hoping to achieve in the long term?' and 'What is the most valuable thing about the project?'. The data gathered could be analysed and turned into topics for a qualitative investigation. Alongside which an exploration of sports-based programmes operating in youth justice could be undertaken to support a more in-depth understanding of sport in the YJS. Techniques that would likely generate valuable results include interviews and

focus groups, visual ethnography, or more creative youth-led methods such as photovoice. Developing a bespoke PYD framework suitable for sport in youth justice will be a lengthy process, but work that can support this has already been undertaken by the *Alliance of sport in criminal justice* and the *Youth Endowment Fund*.

It is clear from this thesis that rugby union can be used to facilitate several notable outcomes aligned with PYD. However, rugby union is arguably not inherently conducive to PYD. Its potential appears to be situated in the people delivering and managing the programmes through which it is delivered. Without considering more fully the interaction between young people and programmes like KCIT, or by merely celebrating the positive outcomes that young people achieve through such programmes, it will arguably be difficult to elevate sports programs in youth justice to align with PYD. Asset development is a notable and valuable focus; however, by completely ignoring the deficits of projects like KCIT and sports like rugby union, practitioners and scholars will be left 'papering over the cracks' of any limitations and disconnections.

Chapter six: Reflections

6.1 Statement of contribution

This thesis makes a valuable contribution to sport criminology in the following ways. Foremost, considering rugby union's emergence and increased traction as a tool for youth engagement and development in criminal justice settings, this research breaks new ground by exploring rugby union in community-based youth justice; prior research has been limited to schools and prisons. No existing research, excluding my own pending publication (Crowther et al., forthcoming, 2022), has applied PYD literature to rugby union a youth justice context. Therefore, this research is truly innovative, and I shall now explore some of its strengths.

6.2 Strengths of this research

A strength of this thesis is the access to a 'real-world' rugby programme - KCIT. The access to KCIT as the research site allowed me to observe and experience young people's interaction with rugby union in real time, grounding an understanding of the symbolic interaction between justice-involved young people and the programme. By engaging with a real-world project, I could observe the real-world challenges that justice-involved young people experience. Interacting with the programme in this way allowed me to experience unique frustrations and insights. An example, being the very short notice with which sessions were cancelled due to no attendance.

6.3 Challenges and limitations

I faced several challenges and limitations during the research. Foremost, my sample and dataset is limited and therefore caution should be had in generalising my results. To bolster my sample size, I could have attempted to interview more YOT staff, however, had I done this, it would have diluted the voices of the young people I spoke with and

ultimately would have been contradictory to my focus on PYD. Although my sample size is small, this data gathered is credible and invaluable due to the strengths of the methods used. The methods used in this research, did as they were intended to do, and brought forward an 'authentic insight into people's experiences' (Silverman, 1993: 91)

When considering the findings from this research, readers should be mindful that the geographical location within which KCIT was delivered may also influence the generalisability of the findings. KCIT was delivered in Manchester in north-west England, an area of England that, despite having a rich rugby union history and a premiership rugby union club (Sale Sharks), remains football-centric. Whilst rugby union is more popular (in terms of participation rates) both nationally and globally than its counterpart rugby league, the north of England remains a rugby league stronghold. This had a strong cultural implication in that, as my analysis showed, rugby union remains disconnected from young people in this part of England. Young people remain underexposed to rugby union in school and social life.

As with all research, this research was not straightforward and I faced several methodological challenges, and this study has its methodological limitations.

6.4 Reflections on methodology and methods

My immersion in KCIT allowed me to observe participants over varying periods of time and I encourage other researchers to consider using an ethnography to explore sports programs in youth justice contexts. However, in hindsight, a more longitudinal approach may have strengthened this research. A mixed methods approach (interviews and questionnaires), as used elsewhere in sport criminology (Meek, 2012), would have allowed me to measure the young people's attitudes towards rugby union before, during and after their participation at KCIT.

6.5 Personal reflections

In the introduction to this thesis, I provided reflections on some of the experiences that led me to embark on this PhD. I will take this opportunity to reflect on some of my

experiences conducting this research, and some more in-depth reflections on my personal rugby experience. I will present three reflections. The first relates to KCIT and how I felt during the research. The second is a reflection on my position within KCIT. I will finish this chapter, and this thesis, with an overall reflection on how I feel about this research and why, which will include reflections on my personal rugby experience.

6.5.1 Site access

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge that when undertaking this research, I was in a fortunate and privileged position from the outset. The funding for KCIT, the site for this study, was secured by two of my supervisors prior to my enrolment at MMU. The same two supervisors were also partly responsible for KCIT's design, implementation and management. Considering this, it was relatively easy for me to use the project as a research site, and my supervisors facilitated my access to KCIT without me having to undertake any foundational labour that other people undertaking research projects might have required, such as finding a project and building the relationships to facilitate access. However, whilst I am grateful for this, their involvement in KCIT had its drawbacks for me as a student. Not least of these was that their involvement in KCIT made me feel pressured to 'do KCIT justice', and in the early days of my research, whilst I was getting to know my supervisors and KCIT, I struggled to cast a critical eye when undertaking observations. I was preoccupied with seeing the good in the project, and my observations and reflections lacked a balance. Although my supervisors' frequent presence at KCIT meant I could have regular informal conversations about my research, their presence often made me feel pressured to be academically 'switched on' and ready to answer questions and engage in more scholarly discussion. In the early days this restricted my capacity to allow KCIT to unfold in front of me and restricted my understanding of the programme because I tried to impose theory upon it. However, with time I took ownership of my observations and reflections, and I grew to accept my position at the project. In doing this, my observations and reflections became more personal and grounded.

6.5.2 'You look like rugby'

During my time at KCIT, a YOT practitioner remarked, 'you look like rugby'. Although this is hardly surprising considering my physical characteristics, this comment encouraged me to reflect on what I brought to the project. I'm 6' 2", I have a slightly crooked nose, as a result of two breaks, and wear a small scar on my forehead, both of which were sustained on the rugby field. Through my time at KCIT, I weighed somewhere in the region of 110kg. My embodiment was something I hadn't shed a critical light on until I was told 'you look like rugby'. However, upon reflection, it is clear my physical appearance is undeniably that of a rugby player, particularly when interacting with a rugby project. The reality of this was illuminated during my undertaking of this research, some of the terms the young men used to describe successful rugby players could quite feasibly have been used to describe me. These include being tall, big, hairy, and having a beard. Although I'm not convinced there is a causation between having a beard and being a successful rugby player, these descriptions may have shown that the young men believed I was the embodiment of the ideal rugby man. Within the context of the research, this made me feel both uncomfortable and responsible. On the one hand, as someone experienced in rugby for many years at both amateur and semi-professional levels, the descriptors of the ideal rugby man caused me to feel like my rugby skills, and indeed rugby skills in general, were undervalued. Moreover, it also made me feel like the young men viewed rugby men, and in turn me, as nothing more than a conditioned body, an occupier of space and a vessel for gross physical production.

The terms used by the young men to describe the ideal rugby player also made me feel self-conscious, and I was apprehensive that I, as a man with all the physical markings of a rugby player and who could feasibly be described as an 'animal tank', might be a source of intimidation, particularly because it felt like I may have had an overbearing presence in the project. This is a notable reflection, particularly in a study focused on rugby union and featuring masculinity, and it is likely that my presence at the project directly influenced the participants' understandings of rugby men. This is also notable because it is a stark contrast to other scholars who have produced ethnographic doctoral research in the rugby context., Darko (2012), who in her PhD thesis explored the body concerns of elite male rugby players, reflected that she felt intimidated as a woman in a male-dominated

world. Considering some of the masculinities research presented in this thesis, it is clear to see why Darko (2012) had such feelings. However, I cannot relate to her experiences, but I do acknowledge that my embodiment influenced KCIT and this research. In particular, the statements made about my body and the descriptors used by the young men made me feel responsible for portraying rugby men, and indeed myself, as non-threatening. This resulted in me adopting an active, yet naïve ethnographic position where I felt obliged to consciously resist the temptation to indulge my own physical prowess. I was careful not to use language or make comments that I know from my own experience would be well suited for the rugby context.

Critically speaking, my bodily characteristics and physical presence certainly provided me with credibility within the confines of KCIT and it is likely that someone who looked less 'like rugby' would not have been so easily embedded in the project. However, it is possible that my presence at KCIT can be seen as a methodological limitation, particularly because it is likely that the participants' knowledge and perceptions of my rugby capabilities and history influenced the data they provided. Specifically, it is likely that the closeness I developed with the participants through my ethnographic position, and their associated understanding of my rugby experience, meant that they may have felt obliged to provide data that pleased, or at least did not discredit, my identity. This is particularly likely concerning data about rugby union, rugby men and the KCIT experience, because insulting, discrediting or criticising any of these things would likely have been seen as an insult to my identity.

6.5.3 Feeling conflicted

As I sit here writing this final section for this thesis, I am unsure whether it will be considered 'good research' or even 'good writing'; however, I feel I have done a 'good job' in providing an accurate representation of what I have found during this project. I have done justice to the experiences of the young men who attended KCIT. Yet, looking back at what I have written and thinking about my past and my future, I feel somewhat conflicted. This feeling is the result of two factors. The first is that I have been somewhat critical of rugby throughout this thesis, yet as I outlined in my introduction, rugby has contributed significantly to the position I am in today. The second is that, despite all the

critique of rugby union, the young men in this research enjoyed their time at KCIT, learning about rugby union and interacting with one another. I would now like to provide an honest reflection of what rugby has done for me to show that although rugby can result in positive outcomes, it is by no means a definitively positive context.

Rugby has given me many years of happy memories. It allowed me to develop robust and enduring friendships, formed the basis for my college and university journey, and has provided me common ground and a basis to start conversations with other men. Most significantly, rugby elevated my social and cultural position from that of a working-class boy destined for labour, who would likely have struggled to escape the council estate, which I remain nervous telling people about, to that of a determined young man with elevated aspirations and real prospects of achievement. I can reasonably argue that because of my rugby experience I rarely feel nervous in front of others, I don't feel scared of confrontation, and I have a sense of confidence in my ability to endure and 'get stuff done'. However, whilst I am grateful for this, rugby has facilitated my exposure to deviant behaviours and socialisations that I would likely never have experienced elsewhere. Through rugby I have witnessed coaches getting sacked for threatening to assault referees and have witnessed mobs of parents fight at the side of the pitch over trivial arguments. I have witnessed a teammate urinate in his own mouth (aka 'bubbling') and have myself been urinated on numerous times in the shower as a perverse display of intimacy. Through rugby, I have been exposed to performance-enhancing and recreational drug use and have been both the victim and perpetrator of sexual assault on the field of play. The most troubling of my rugby memories is witnessing an opposing player lie brain dead at the side of the pitch only to die minutes later in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. Although it was inconclusive whether rugby was a contributing factor to the boy's death, I am harrowed by the conduct of myself and others at the time as we looked on, claiming the boy was 'soft' or 'faking it' as we were invested in the cultural idea of stoicism.

I walked away from rugby feeling let down, angry and unfulfilled. Through participation in rugby, I had lived my life in a context where strange and unusual behaviours and attitudes were encouraged, accepted, and even expected. Since walking away from the sport, I now fear vulnerability and struggle to attribute my self-worth to anything other than my physical potential. Although the completion of this thesis is a notable milestone in my life,

and even though I feel proud of myself for producing it, time will tell whether it will overcome my feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and discontent that result from various rugby coaches telling me I wasn't good enough.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Young person consent form



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

CONSENT FORM – over 16s

STUDY TITLE: Kicking crime into touch: A quasi-ethnographic investigation of rugby union as a site for positive youth development in the youth justice system

RESEARCHER: Jamie Crowther

Jamie.crowther@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Please
tick box

1. I have read and understood the information sheet for this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to change my mind at any time without giving any reason to the research team.
3. I understand, if I decide to withdraw, it may be difficult to remove all my input from the project but that anything that could be identified as mine will be deleted.
4. I understand that anonymised extracts of what I say during sessions with the research team might be used in reports written for staff at Young Manchester and in academic publications or similar.
5. I understand that the discussions I have with the research team will be used to write reports and other publications.
6. I give permission for audio recordings of the sessions to be used for the purposes of writing the final report.
7. I agree to be respectful of other people taking part and maintain confidentiality.
8. I agree to take part in the above project

By signing below I agree to support this project and uphold any agreements and boundaries that we create (now or in the future). I will do my best to keep you informed about the research and what happens to the information I collect after. I agree to abide by GDPR regulations on the rights of the data subject chapter 3 to be found on the following link. <https://gdpr-info.eu/chapter-3/>

MY NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER

DATE

SIGNATURE

Participant Information Sheet – Young person

Research title: Kicking Crime Into Touch: An exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for supporting Positive Youth Development in the youth justice system

1. Invitation to research

As a compulsory component of my postgraduate degree I am required to perform an independent research project. For this I would like to explore the use of Rugby Union, through the Kicking Crime into Touch project which you, as a tool for examining marginality, masculinity and positive youth development. The outcome of this research will hopefully be an increased understanding of the use of Rugby Union as an engagement tool with young people in the criminal justice system. Before you decide to take part, you need to understand what I would be asking you to do. This information sheet explains this.

Please ask questions if you don't understand anything, or if anything is not clear. Feel free to ask for more information and take your time to decide whether you want to participate. If you have any questions regarding the information included in this document or relating to the research, please contact any of the people listed at the end of this document.

2. Why have I been invited?

You have been given this information sheet because you are being asked to participate in the research project outlined at the start of this document. You have been asked because you are aged between 15 and 18 and currently attend the Kicking Crime into Touch Rugby sessions. If you decide that you would like to participate, you will be one of between 10 and 16 young people involved in this research project. As part of this research you may be asked to produce photographs and videos relating to the rugby programme or your wider life away from rugby. You may also be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview or a group interview involving between four and six other young people. Two Rugby coaches and four Youth offending team workers will also be interviewed as part of this research.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do?

As part of your agreement to take part in this research project you are agreeing to engage in any and all aspects of the research. As a young person, part of this includes participating in the 'Kicking Crime into Touch' Rugby program. As part of your engagement in this research project you may be asked to take photographs on your personal phones, or with a camera provided, to visually represent things that are important to you at the rugby program and in your life away from rugby. The research project will run until 2021, and you are asked to participate in as little or as much as you like.

Following your engagement in the program you may be asked to participate in a one-to-one audio recorded interview with the researcher. This interview will last no more than one hour and will take place at the youth offending team office and at a time convenient for you and your youth offending team worker. During this interview you will be provided the opportunity to discuss your experience of taking part in the Kicking Crime into Touch program. This interview will provide an opportunity for you to discuss and explain any photographs you have taken. During this interview, you may also be asked if they have any other images relating to this research project which you wish to share. By engaging in the research in this way you will be contributing directly to the outcomes of this research.

Following participation in the one-to-one interview you may be asked to participate in a small group interview called a focus group. This interview will involve me (the researcher), you (the participant), and between three and four other young people from the Kicking Crime into Touch project. This focus group will take place at Platt Lane sports complex (Platt Lane Complex, Yew Tree Rd, Manchester M14 7UU). During this interview you will be asked to discuss in a small group their experiences of engaging in the rugby program. You may also be asked to present any videos and images you have produced as part of the research and discuss what the image shows and explain why they are important to you.

All interviews will be audio recorded (with you and your child's permission). Audio recordings will be transcribed (converted into a word document) and used for the research project. Images may be included in the final research report (with your

permission) to illustrate and represent the Kicking Crime into Touch project, your experiences and the research themes.

5. Are there any risks if I participate?

It is not anticipated that there are any risks to you as a participant engaging in this research project.

6. Are there any advantages if I participate?

You may gain some basic research skills. All expenses will be covered to make sure no one is out of pocket for being involved.

7. What will happen with the data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, we will collect from you personally-identifiable information.

The Manchester Metropolitan University ('the University') is the Data Controller in respect of this research and any personal data that you provide as a research participant.

The University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and manages personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's Data Protection Policy.

We collect personal data as part of this research (such as name, telephone numbers or age). As a public authority acting in the public interest we rely upon the 'public task' lawful basis. When we collect special category data (such as medical information or ethnicity) we rely upon the research and archiving purposes in the public interest lawful basis.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained.

If your data is shared this will be under the terms of a Research Collaboration Agreement which defines use and agrees confidentiality and information security provisions. It is the University's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **The University never sells personal data to third parties.**

We will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose.

The information gathered from this research will be used for the purposes of my thesis,

conferences, journals and other publications relevant to the research.

When I write up conversations that take place, I will use fake names so that anyone reading doesn't know who said what. To help with this, I will record interviews and focus groups so that I can listen to them and write stuff down. I will always ask before I do this and if anyone feels uncomfortable with it, we don't have to do it. Once I have listened to the recordings and written up what was said including key bits of information, I will delete them so no one else will hear them.

If you decide to take part, you will be working with other people who attend Kicking Crime into Touch. It is very important that all of us involved respect the confidentiality and privacy of everyone else

For further information about use of your personal data and your data protection rights please see the [University's Data Protection Pages](#).

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be used for final report publication. The results may also be used for the purposes of journal publication and conference presentation.

Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed by the researcher's supervisory team [Prof. Hannah Smithson and Dr. Deborah Jump] and by Manchester Metropolitan Universities research ethics committee.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you have any concerns relations to this research, please contact one of the following:

The researcher:

Jamie Crowther

Number: 07394073487

Email: Jamie.crowther@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

Research supervisor:

Prof. Hannah Smithson

Number: 0161 2473442

Email: H.L.Smithson@mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

2nd Research supervisor:

Dr. Deborah Jump

Number: 0161 2473453

Email: D.Jump@mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

Faculty Ethics Contact:

Katherine Walthall

Number: 0161 247 6673

Email: artsandhumanities@mmu.ac.uk

Address: Room 1.07, Righton Building, Cavendish Street, Manchester, M15 6BG

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THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

CONSENT FORM – ADULT PARTICIPANT

Title of Project: **An exploration of Rugby Union as a means to examine marginality, masculinity and desistance amongst young people in the youth justice system**

Name of Researcher: **Jamie Crowther**

Please initial all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated **12/03/2019** (version **3**) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my medical care or legal rights being affected.
3. I understand, if I decide to withdraw, it may be difficult to remove all my input from the project but that anything that could be identified as mine will be deleted.
4. I understand that anonymised extracts of what I say during interviews and conversations might be used for the following purposes: in the final thesis for this research, in conference presentations, journal articles and other publications relating to this research.
5. I agree for photographs and videos that include me to be made in relation to this research. I understand that this may include the researcher or other people taking photographs or videos of me.
6. I give permission for audio recordings of interviews and focus groups to be used for the purposes of writing this research
7. I agree for photographs and videos of me to be used for all purposes relating to this research; including the researchers' thesis, conference presentations, journal articles and social media advertising.
8. I agree to take part in the above study.

By signing below I agree to support this project and uphold any agreements and boundaries that we create (now or in the future). I will do my best to keep you informed about the research and what happens to the information I collect after. I agree to abide by GDPR regulations on the rights of the data subject chapter 3 to be found on the following link. <https://gdpr-info.eu/chapter-3/>

MY NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER

DATE

SIGNATURE

Participant Information Sheet – Coaches (Adult participant)

Research title: Kicking crime into touch: A exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for supporting positive youth development in the youth justice system

1. Invitation to research

I am a research student at Manchester Metropolitan University. As part of my studies I am required to undertake a research project, as part of this I would like to explore what delivering the Kicking Crime into Touch Rugby programme was like for you. Specifically, I am interested to know what the experience of delivering rugby in this context was like for you, what was good, what was less good and among other things recommendations for future development of rugby in the criminal justice context. To do this will ask you to participate in a one-to-one interview where you will be given the opportunity to discuss your experience of delivering the Kicking Crime into Touch program. By doing this, it means that you will have contributed to the outcome of this research.

2. Why have I been invited?

You have been asked to participate in this research as you are responsible for some/all the production and delivery of the Kicking Crime into Touch program. Alongside you, there will be one other coach, 4 Youth offending team workers and between 10 and 16 young people participating in this research.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do?

As part of your agreement to take part in this research project you are consenting to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher whose name appears at the top of this document. Initially this will be one interview that will take place at a mutually agreeable time at Platt lane sports complex (Platt Lane Complex, Yew Tree Rd, Manchester M14 7UU). Should it become evident that more interviews will be beneficial, you may be asked to participate in further one-to-one interviews. During the interview you will be asked questions relating to your experiences of the Kicking Crime into Touch program and your experiences of delivering rugby within the youth justice context.

All interviews will be audio recorded (with your permission). Audio recordings will be transcribed (converted into a word document) and used for the research project.

5. Are there any risks if I participate?

It is not anticipated that there are any risks to you as a participant engaging in this research project.

6. Are there any advantages if I participate?

You may gain some basic research skills. All expenses will be covered to make sure no one is out of pocket for being involved.

7. What will happen with the data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, we will collect from you personally-identifiable information.

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Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained.

If your data is shared this will be under the terms of a Research Collaboration Agreement which defines use, and agrees confidentiality and information security provisions. It is the University's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **The University never sells personal data to third parties.**

We will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose.

The information obtained through this research project will be used for the purposes of my thesis, conferences, journals and other publications relevant to the research.

When I write up conversations that take place, I will use fake names so that anyone reading doesn't know who said what. To help with this, I will record any interviews we may have so that I can listen to them and write stuff down. I will always ask before I do this and if you feel uncomfortable with it, we don't have to do it. Once I have listened to the recordings and written up what was said including key bits of information, I will delete them so no one else will hear them.

If you decide to take part, you will be working with other people involved with Kicking Crime into Touch. It is very important that all of us involved respect the confidentiality and privacy of everyone else

For further information about use of your personal data and your data protection rights please see the [University's Data Protection Pages](#).

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be used for final report publication. The results may also be used for the purposes of journal publication and conference presentation.

Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed by the researcher's supervisory team [Prof. Hannah Smithson and Dr. Deborah Jump] and by Manchester Metropolitan Universities research ethics committee.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you have any concerns relations to this research, please contact one of the following:

The researcher:

Jamie Crowther

Number: 07394073487

Email: Jamie.crowther@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

Research supervisor:

Prof. Hannah Smithson

Number: 0161 2473442

Email: H.L.Smithson@mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

2nd Research supervisor:

Dr. Deborah Jump

Number: 0161 2473453

Email: D.Jump@mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

Faculty Ethics Contact:

Katherine Walthall

Number: 0161 247 6673

Email: artsandhumanities@mmu.ac.uk

Address: Room 1.07, Righton Building, Cavendish Street, Manchester, M15 6BG

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THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT

Participant Information Sheet – Youth Offending Team worker (Adult participant)

Research title: Kicking Crime Into Touch: An exploration of rugby union as a vehicle for supporting Positive Youth Development in the youth justice system

1. Invitation to research

I am a research student at Manchester Metropolitan University. As part of my studies I am required to undertake a research project, as part of this I would like to explore aspects of the Kicking Crime into Touch program. As you have been responsible for recruiting young people to the program and working with them elsewhere, I would like to explore your understanding of the programs position in the lives of the young people you work with. Specifically, I am interested to know your thoughts and understandings of rugby, delivered in the youth justice context, including, what was good, what was less good and among other things recommendations for future development of rugby when delivered in this context. To do this you will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview where you will be given the opportunity to discuss your experience relating to the Kicking Crime into Touch program. By doing this, it means that you will have contributed to the outcome of this research.

2. Why have I been invited?

You have been asked to participate in this research as you are responsible for recruiting and engaging young people involved in the criminal justice system in the Kicking Crime into Touch program and working with them elsewhere. Alongside you, there will be three other Youth Offending Team workers, two coaches and between 10 and 16 young people participating in this research.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do?

As part of your agreement to take part in this research project you are consenting to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher whose name appears at the top of this document. Initially this will be one interview that will take place at a

mutually agreeable time at Platt lane sports complex (Platt Lane Complex, Yew Tree Rd, Manchester M14 7UU), or your regular place of work. Should it become evident that more interviews will be beneficial, you may be asked to participate in further one-to-one interviews. During the interview you will be asked questions relating to your experiences of the Kicking Crime into Touch program. You will also be asked for feedback on the project and asked to discuss any impact that the project has had on your work with young people and, from your perspective, the lives of the young people more generally.

All interviews will be audio recorded (with your permission). Audio recordings will be transcribed (converted into a word document) and used for the research project.

5. Are there any risks if I participate?

It is not anticipated that there are any risks to you as a participant engaging in this research project.

6. Are there any advantages if I participate?

You may gain some basic research skills. All expenses will be covered to make sure no one is out of pocket for being involved.

7. What will happen with the data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, we will collect from you personally-identifiable information.

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Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained.

If your data is shared this will be under the terms of a Research Collaboration Agreement which defines use, and agrees confidentiality and information security

provisions. It is the University's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **The University never sells personal data to third parties.**

We will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose.

The information obtained through this research project will be used for the purposes of my thesis, conferences, journals and other publications relevant to the research.

When I write up conversations that take place, I will use fake names so that anyone reading doesn't know who said what. To help with this, I will record any interviews we may have so that I can listen to them and write stuff down. I will always ask before I do this and if you feel uncomfortable with it, we don't have to do it. Once I have listened to the recordings and written up what was said including key bits of information, I will delete them so no one else will hear them.

If you decide to take part, you will be working with other people involved with Kicking Crime into Touch. It is very important that all of us involved respect the confidentiality and privacy of everyone else

For further information about use of your personal data and your data protection rights please see the [University's Data Protection Pages](#).

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be used for final report publication. The results may also be used for the purposes of journal publication and conference presentation.

Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed by the researcher's supervisory team [Prof. Hannah Smithson and Dr. Deborah Jump] and by Manchester Metropolitan Universities research ethics committee.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you have any concerns relations to this research, please contact one of the following:

The researcher:

Jamie Crowther

Number: 07394073487

Email: Jamie.crowther@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

Research supervisor:

Prof. Hannah Smithson

Number: 0161 2473442

Email: H.L.Smithson@mmu.ac.uk

Address: GM15, Geoffrey Manton Building, Manchester, M15 6LL

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Dr. Deborah Jump

Number: 0161 2473453

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Katherine Walthall

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Address: Room 1.07, Righton Building, Cavendish Street, Manchester, M15 6BG

If you have any concerns regarding the personal data collected from you, our Data Protection Officer can be contacted using the legal@mmu.ac.uk e-mail address, by calling 0161 247 3331 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH. You also have a right to lodge a complaint in respect of the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office as the supervisory authority. Please see: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT

Young people interview guide

Personal life and interests

could you tell me about where you live?

Could you tell me about your social life?

How do you spend your free time?

What do you do for fun?

What is your least favourite way to spend your time?

Where do you most like to spend your time/what is your favourite place in the world?

Where do you least like to spend your time/what is your least favourite place in the world?

What do you think you will do in the future? What would you like to do? Is there a possibility that this will happen? If not, what will you most likely do?

Tell me an interesting fact about yourself? Maybe something that will surprise me.

Relationships and opinion of YOT

How did you become involved with YOT?

What is your opinion of YOT? Could you tell me about the service in general, and more specifically about the staff you work with?

Who do you look up to most in life? i.e., who's your biggest role model? Who would you go to if you needed advice?

Who provides you support on a daily basis?

Rugby

How did you feel when asked to take part in the rugby project?

What did the YOT staff say to you? How was the idea of rugby 'sold' to you?

When you were first asked, and before you started taking part in KCIT what did you think it would involve?

Do you feel the same as you did before you started taking part? Has your opinion changed?

What is your favourite/most enjoyable part of the rugby programme?

What is your least favourite part?

What have you achieved through taking part in rugby?

If you were to describe and explain the rugby programme to someone who had never heard of it, what would you say? What if you were talking to a friend?

What do your friends and family say about you taking part in KCIT?

Could you tell me about the coaches at KCIT? Are there any differences between the two coaches (and other staff who are at KCIT? Are there any differences between the rugby coaches and the YOT workers?

What characteristics make a good rugby player?

Tell me about the perfect rugby player.

Should you continue to engage in KCIT, what would you hope to achieve?

Talk to me about the contact involved in rugby? How do you feel about that?

Rugby's core values

Tell me about respect

Tell me about teamwork

Tell me about enjoyment

Tell me about sportsmanship

Tell me about discipline

Sport

Do you engage in any sports away from YOT?

Are there any sports that you don't like? Why don't you like them? Is an opportunity like the KCIT programme came up but the sport wasn't rugby, what would you like it to be? What would you not like it to be? Why?

Crime

What do you think makes people commit crime?

What do you think keeps people from committing crime?

Why do you think people stop committing crime?

Tell me about how you felt when you committed crime?

Masculinity

What does it mean to be a man?

What responsibilities do men have?

How should men act?

Are there any emotions that are unacceptable for men?

Do all these things change with age or are they consistent throughout life?

YOT practitioners interview guide

Young people and work

Talk to me about the young people you work with?

Talk to me about the lives of the young people you work with e.g., what are the general life circumstances of the young people, both at home and socially; and what is there lifelike as part of YOT?

How would you describe the working relationship you have with the young people you work with?

What outcomes are important to the young people you work with? What do they generally want to achieve from their time working with YOT?

When deciding on a programme for young people, from a professional standpoint, what do you hope young people would achieve?

What do you think the young people would hope to achieve?

What skills do these young people need to develop? How can rugby support this?

Rugby and sport

What role, if any, does sport and leisure play in your work with young people?

More specifically, talk to me about the KCIT rugby programme, and how it fits with your role?

What specifically do you think the young people you work with would like to get out of this programme?

Crime

What works with young people, specifically the young people you work with? i.e., what approaches, what activities etc.

What do you think should be done about youth crime? i.e., what should be the response?

What does it take for young people to desist from crime?

What would make your work with young people more manageable?

Coaches interview guide

KCIT planning and preparation

Tell me about how you came to be involved in KCIT? What did the conversation look like?

Who approached you about it and what did they say?

What is the purpose/focus of the project?

What do you aim to achieve through the programmes deliver?

How would you measure success for this programme? what are the performance indicators?

What considerations did you make when designing this programme? are these considerations different to when you design a program for other individuals? i.e., uni, performance, community etc.

What do you understand your role to be in this programme?

What specifically are you looking to develop in these young people? Do you have any strategies for developing such capacities?

Programme applicability

Do you think the programme would be appropriate for all young people working with YOT?

What strategies/approaches, do you use to engage seemingly disengaged young people?

What do you think rugby is different from other sports?

Do you think rugby has more potential as a tool for development than other sports, and if so why?

Thoughts about young people

What role do young people play in sport?

What role can sport play in the lives of young people?

What outcomes are important for young people? i.e., what do you think they want to achieve through programmes like this?

Why do think rugby might help develop the young people you are working with?

What do you hope these young people will achieve through the programme?

Rugbys core values

Tell me about respect – how would you encourage this?

Tell me about teamwork – how would you encourage this?

Tell me about enjoyment – how would you encourage this?

Tell me about sportsmanship – how would you encourage this?

Tell me about discipline – how would you encourage this?

Masculinity

Tell me about masculinity in rugby?

Replication

If you were speaking to someone looking to replicate this project, what would you say to them?

What advice would you give them?

Appendix 9 Focus group guide

Focus group guide

Rugby and rugby players

What are your thoughts about rugby?

Have you ever watched a rugby match? (in person or on tv)

What do you think about rugby's physicality?

Do you enjoy the physical side of it?

Do you think there are any types of physicality that are unacceptable in rugby?

What would happen if you replicated the type of physicality performed on a rugby field on the street?

What do you think about the people who play rugby? how would you describe them?

