The 'Double Jeopardy' of Practice: Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women from Disadvantaged Areas

by

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Thesis submitted to the School of Sport and Health Sciences, Cardiff Metropolitan University, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2022

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Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS 2) is a pan-Wales higher level skills initiative led by Bangor University on behalf of the HE sector in Wales. It is part funded by the Welsh Government's European Social Fund (ESF) convergence programme for West Wales and the Valleys.

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Acknowledgements

Finally, to my family and friends, some of whom unfortunately did not get to see the final product, thank you for sticking with me throughout my academic career thus far. Here's hoping the 'eternal student' jokes will soon conclude! Most importantly, I would like to thank my parents, Sharon and David. I am indebted to you for the opportunities and constant love, encouragement and support you have gifted me in my life so far. To you, I owe everything and to you, this thesis is dedicated. I hope I've made you proud.

Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Abstract

The global 'pandemic' of physical inactivity is a leading cause of chronic non-communicable disease and early mortality (Pratt et al., 2020). Owing to the benefits of physical activity as a protective factor in combatting ill-health, there is an increasing emphasis on mobilising populations in both policy and practice. Despite this growing focus, however, evidence suggests that significant portions of society are not meeting physical activity recommendations and are thus at an increased risk of disease (WHO, 2022). Within society, certain groups report higher levels of inactivity, exacerbated by the intersection of demographic characteristics which enhance oppression, such as the 'double jeopardy' representing the heightened risk individuals who are both female and experiencing social disadvantage face in being inactive.

Interventions to increase physical activity are frequently characterised by behaviour change frameworks. Such frameworks focus on autonomous actors as drivers of change and are thus susceptible to value-action gaps (Blake, 1999), as well as underestimating the complex nature of physical activity participation. To address these shortcomings and access the frequently overlooked mediation between structure and agency in determining behaviour, this research adopted practice theory as a lens to explore disadvantaged girls' relationships with physical activity.

Three studies were conducted: the first utilised observations and qualitative interviews to explore girls' practice within community settings; the second involved interviewing key stakeholders to identify alignments and conflicts in practice; and the third piloted a coproduced walking programme and 'practice mentor' approach with a young woman, whereby walks were evaluated using a cyclical practice-based interviewing technique. Key findings included the desire and shift towards forms of physical activity that incorporate socialising, technology, person-centred approaches and choice, as well as the value in adopting a practice-based analysis to identify both problematic and facilitative elements/practices and add, remove or bundle practices in novel ways to promote physical activity participation. The research provided an alternative approach to a 'wicked problem' and contributes to a growing body of literature in employing practice theory in the field of physical activity and public health.

Key Words: Social practices; physical activity; inactivity; girls; behaviour change

Peer-Reviewed Publications

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Hopkins, E. O., Bolton, N. J., Brown, D. H. K., Matthews, N., Anderson, M. (2020). Beyond TTM and ABC: A Practice Perspective on Physical Activity Promotion for Adolescent Females from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. *Societies.* 10 (4), p.1-14.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Significance of Physical Activity

Physical inactivity, defined as the 'non-achievement of physical activity guidelines' (Thivel et al., 2018, p.2) is a significant and evolving area of focus in global policy and practice owing to its risk factor in the rise of chronic non-communicable disease (National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, N.D.; World Health Organisation (WHO), N.D.; Diaz and Shimbo, 2013; McTiernan et al., 2020). Chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease (heart attacks, strokes), cancers, respiratory disease (asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease), diabetes and obesity, are the leading cause of death worldwide, and are increasing in prevalence across age, gender and ethnicity (Anderson and Durstine, 2019; WHO, 2022). Additionally, ill-health is frequently exacerbated by the combination of diseases resulting in multimorbidity and disability (Boutayeb, Boutayeb and Boutayeb, 2013; Wekesah et al., 2018). This creates significant social and economic consequences, such as increasing healthcare costs and workforce complications, leading to an annual loss of £7.4 billion within the UK, with £0.9 billion lost in the NHS alone (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2022), in addition to the negative impact upon general living conditions and quality of life across individuals, households and society as a collective (Anderson and Durstine, 2019; Hajat and Stein, 2019).

Insufficient PA has been demonstrated to be the fourth leading risk factor for mortality, with inactive individuals reporting a 20-30% increased risk of all-cause mortality compared to those who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity PA most days of the week (WHO, N.D.). Additionally, one in six deaths in the UK is currently attributed to a lack of physical activity (PA) (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2022). In response to the 'pandemic' of physical inactivity (Ding et al., 2016) and sedentary behaviour (characterised by long periods of sitting, reclining or lying down (Thivel et al., 2018)), which have been attributed to approximately 5.3 million deaths per year (Wen and Wu, 2012), global policy has increasingly promoted PA as a vehicle to contest the rise of non-communicable disease and death. Broadly defined as 'any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure' (Caspersen, Powell and Christenson, 1985, p.126; WHO, N.D.; Department of Health and Social Care, 2019; Haseler et al., 2019), this thesis has instead opted for Piggin's (2020) definition of 'people moving, acting and performing

within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships' (p.5) to account for the increasingly holistic forms of PA available and the consideration of culture and shared practice within the definition (discussed in further detail in the upcoming *Literature Review*).

Whilst non-modifiable risk factors such as age, ethnicity and genetics frequently predispose individuals to certain diseases, this predisposition can be strongly influenced by one's environment and lifestyle (Alegria, Torres, Baccarelli and Bollati, 2011). Modifiable risk factors, such as diet, alcohol and nicotine intake, stress management and exercise behaviour can thus impact upon gene expression and prevent/treat primary and secondary disease (Tiffon, 2018; Anderson and Durstine, 2019). Research has shown that PA is an effective preventive strategy against at least 25 chronic medical conditions, with risk reduction sitting in the 20-30% range (Rhodes et al., 2017). More specifically, PA has been shown to reduce the risk and facilitate the treatment of dementia and Alzheimer's disease (Paterson and Warbuton, 2010), depression (Rebar et al., 2015), cardiovascular disease (Ekblom-Bak, et al., 2014), diabetes (Sigal et al., 2018), and various forms of cancer (Warburton et al., 2010) among other conditions.

Given the protective factors of PA against chronic disease (Lukacs, Sasvari and Kiss-Toth, 2018), in addition to the significant costs of treating such diseases in increasingly strained healthcare systems (Appleby, Crawford and Emmerson, 2009; Dolton, 2017), institutions are increasingly turning to preventive forms of intervention, resulting in an increasing impetus on PA in both government mandate and public health practice. Addressing calls for updated guidance, global leadership and a feasible and effective policy to increase PA levels, in 2018, WHO released their Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) 2018-2030: More Active People for a Healthier World. Targeting a 15% relative reduction in the global prevalence of physical inactivity by 2030, GAPPA called for systems approaches to ensure populations have access to safe and enabling environments and diverse opportunities to be active in their daily lives to reverse current inactivity trends. GAPPA created four strategic objectives, with 20 policy actions that were universally applicable to all countries, despite their different starting points in terms of capacity to promote PA (WHO, 2018).

These objectives were: 1) create active societies – creating positive social norms and attitudes surrounding PA, enhancing knowledge and understanding of the benefits of regularly participating; 2) create active environments – creating supportive spaces and places where people from all backgrounds have equitable access to PA opportunities; 3) create active people – increasing programmes and opportunities so that people from all backgrounds can engage in regular PA as individuals, families and communities.; and 4) create active systems – investment in systems and international, national and subnational collaboration to increase PA opportunities, including governance, leadership, advocacy, information systems, financing mechanisms and multisectoral partnerships across all relevant sectors. GAPPA required each country to identify short, middle and long-term policy responses according to their specific national and subnational contexts, with implementation efforts targeted towards the least active populations.

GAPPA highlights the global shift and increasing focus and resource towards PA, with its objectives both implicitly and explicitly representing contemporary national sporting organisations' strategies, such as the Vision for Sport in Wales, the Move More Strategy for Cardiff and Sport England's Uniting the Movement (Sport Wales, 2018; Move More Cardiff, 2022; Sport England, 2022). In addition to guidance stipulated by WHO, individual nations also prescribe national PA recommendations which individuals are encouraged to meet. Within the UK, those aged 19-64 are recommended 150 minutes of moderate intensity PA or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity PA across the week, while young people aged 5-18 are recommended at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity PA per day across the week, incorporating a variety of types and intensities of activities to develop movement skills, muscles and bones (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019). Similar recommendations are stipulated for the remaining age groups and certain health conditions, as well as being stipulated throughout various nations across the world (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2018; Government of Canada, 2018; Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Government, 2021). Despite widespread focus and investment on PA on a global scale, however, research illustrates that global populations are recording PA levels far inferior to the

recommended intake, particularly within certain demographic groups, leading to the research problem at the core of this work.

1.2 The Research Problem

Research indicates that more than one quarter (27%) of the world's adult population is insufficiently active, while a vast 80% of adolescents are not meeting their PA recommendations (WHO, 2022). There is also significant variance in PA participation across different groups. For example, women and girls, older adults, disabled populations and lower socio-economic groups have recorded consistently higher levels of inactivity compared to men and boys, younger adults, able populations and more affluent groups (Azevedo et al., 2007; Fox et al., 2011; Hallal et al., 2012; Carty et al., 2021; WHO, 2022).

Reflecting upon GAPPA in its fourth year, the Global Status Report on Physical Activity (2022) indicated that whilst some policy action areas were achieving success, only poor to moderate progress was being made in many of the areas stipulated by GAPPA, likely impacting upon PA levels. For example, just 47% of countries worldwide reported a national PA policy while only 38% of those countries reported an operational PA policy. 42% of countries were promoting PA in public spaces while 30% and 36% of countries were promoting PA in childcare and workplace settings respectively, two institutions where groups spend vast amounts of time in their day to day lives (WHO, 2022). Additionally, just 52% of countries reported a national campaign on PA, suggesting that messaging surrounding PA needs to improve for certain populations to thrive. There is thus much more work to be done surrounding increasing PA levels on a global scale and in order to address global physical inactivity, national participation, contexts and understandings are of utmost importance.

Within Wales, two surveys are used to record participation levels in PA and sport. For under 16s, there is the School Sport Survey, circulated by Sport Wales to pupils aged 7-16 which queries their attitudes, behaviours and opportunities in PA. Specifically, the survey seeks participation data as well as attitudes towards PA and sport provision throughout the country. The survey is delivered online to every school in Wales and in

2022, retrieved responses from over 1000 schools and 116,000 students. The survey revealed that 36% of pupils were participating in sport and PA less than once a week, an 8-percentage point increase since 2018, while 39% of pupils took part in organised sport outside of the curriculum three or more times per week, a 9-percentage point decrease since 2018 (Sport Wales, 2022), highlighting the significant (and increasing) portion of young people not meeting their PA guidelines. Within those participation statistics, 37% of girls were reporting no frequent participation compared to 33% of boys, while 43% of boys were reporting participating three or more times per week compared to 36% of girls, illustrating a significant gender gap in PA participation. A stark contrast was also identified between socioeconomic groups, with 47% of the least disadvantaged groups participating three or more times per week compared to 32% of the most disadvantaged groups. Elsewhere, Mixed ethnic groups reported the highest levels of PA participation (three or more times per week) at 43%, followed by White populations at 41% with Asian groups reporting the lowest levels at 30%. Disability status also had a significant impact upon participation, with 42% of pupils with a disability reporting no frequent activity compared to 35% of pupils without a disability (Sport Wales, 2022).

To gather insight surrounding adult (16+) participation in PA, a 'Sport and Active Lifestyles' section was implemented by Sport Wales into the National Survey for Wales, circulated annually by Welsh Government (2022). The National Survey for Wales is disseminated continuously throughout the year to avoid seasonal bias and seeks to produce an annual summary of behaviour throughout the country, incorporating topics such as national identity, education, employment, well-being, Welsh language, culture and health and lifestyle. Data from the survey is then weighted to represent the characteristics of the overall population in Wales, equating to approximately 2.5 million adults.

The survey revealed that 34% of adults in Wales participated in sport or PA three or more times per week while 50% of adults participated less than once per week or not at all during the previous four weeks. Additionally, the gender, socioeconomic and disability-based trends that emerged from the school sport survey remained consistent, with women and girls, disadvantaged groups and disabled populations recording significantly lower levels of participation compared to their counterparts

(Sport Wales, 2022). There is thus a significant problem with physical inactivity throughout Wales and the rest of the world, leading to its growing reputation as a 'pandemic' (Ding et al., 2016), warranting investment to alleviate its societal consequences. In addition to this phenomenon, the lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns (described in further detail in the upcoming *Methodology* chapter) have left a legacy of inactivity and ill-health, intensifying the aforementioned issues (Park et al., 2022). As stated earlier, the trends reported throughout Wales mirror global patterns in PA participation (Azevedo et al., 2007; Fox et al., 2011; Hallal et al., 2012; Carty et al., 2021; WHO, 2022), leading to the identification of the aforementioned populations as target groups, requiring further resource and support to increase their PA levels along with the rest of society.

Given the significant impact a single demographic characteristic can have on PA participation (gender or disability for example), it is of increasing importance to also understand and address instances of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), whereby various social, cultural and biological categories overlap and intersect to form systems of oppression and discrimination. One example of intersectionality, recognised by StreetGames and coined the 'double jeopardy' (2017), formed the basis of this PhD funding bid to the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS2) programme and the eventual research project outlined in this thesis.

StreetGames is one of the UK's leading 'sport for development' charities, who attempt to harness the power of sport to create positive change in the lives of disadvantaged young people across the UK. To do this, StreetGames deliver a number of targeted projects, including Doorstep Sport, ParkLives, Fit and Fed and Us Girls. Us Girls is a project designed to increase and sustain young women's participation in sport and PA within disadvantaged communities (StreetGames, 2017). Insight revealed that within Wales, just 25% of individuals who were both female and experiencing social and economic disadvantage were classed as 'hooked on sport', meaning they were meeting their national PA recommendations (Sport Wales, 2014; StreetGames, 2017), hence the term 'double jeopardy' for PA participation. StreetGames aimed to address this gap by launching Us Girls in Wales in 2015, providing opportunities 'at the right time, for the right price, in the right place, in the right style and delivered by the right people' (StreetGames, 2017, p.2).

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The Us Girls programme in Wales was designed in part response to a market segmentation conducted by Sport Wales (previously the Sports Council for Wales, 2008), whereby the general population were divided into categories of individuals. Us Girls focused on Sport Wales' 'Lisa', an 18-35-year-old woman residing in a disadvantaged area of Wales who participated in limited PA and experienced numerous barriers to taking part. StreetGames thus created 'Little Lisa', a 13-19-year-old girl who was inactive/semi-active and also resided in a disadvantaged area of Wales. Both Lisa and Little Lisa were found to be prevalent throughout the South Wales Valleys region, in addition to metropolitan areas of Wales and the industrial areas of North-East Wales.

Two years' worth of Us Girls insight revealed a number of details surrounding those who were represented by 'Little Lisa' and their wants and needs surrounding PA. These included informal exercise sessions, flexible clothing options and incentives and rewards which will be discussed in further detail in the upcoming *Literature Review.* However, for the purpose of the introduction to the thesis, it is worth noting that whilst there was value in adopting such an approach to gather insight into girls experiencing disadvantage, as with any market segmentation, there was likely significant diversity within the population as a whole, in addition to the need for more detailed, local and longitudinal baseline data for an improved understanding of the demographic profiles and their relationships with PA (Bolton and Martin, 2013; Anderson et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2016). This, in addition to the complex, multifaceted nature of PA participation, meant a more in-depth approach to exploring the double jeopardy that went beyond the preliminary insight was proposed in the research bid. So, whilst in part forming the basis of the research project, Little Lisa was approached with a critical eye.

In addition to the call for more comprehensive baseline data surrounding individuals experiencing the double jeopardy, it was also recognised that a significant portion of the literature surrounding interventions to promote PA participation was based upon models of behaviour change. Frameworks such as the transtheoretical model (TTM, Prochaska and DiClemente, 1983), attitude, behaviour, choice (ABC) model (Shove, 2010) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) frequently characterise

interventions to transform behaviour within specific groups, as illustrated by Taymoori et al. (2008), Fjeldsoe, Miller and Marshall (2010) and Dishman et al. (2014). Despite widespread use and investment, however, even so far as representing Sport England's nationwide recommendations for tackling inactivity (2019), the success of such approaches is questionable, with studies frequently reporting moderate results at best, highlighted in studies by Adams and White (2005), Camacho-Miñano, LaVoi and Barr-Anderson (2011) and Cleland et al. (2013).

A number of issues have been identified with relying on behaviour change approaches to increase PA participation which will be discussed throughout the *Literature Review*. However, the key issues surround critiques of poor implementation (Romain et al., 2018), failure to account for the numerous, complex factors that influence PA participation (Adams and White, 2005), and most significantly for this project, the focus on rational, autonomous actors as drivers of change, thereby failing to account for the impact of 'social, material and interrelational features of human activity' (Cohn, 2014, p.159) on everyday behaviour and being susceptible to value-action gaps (Blake, 1999), whereby individuals fail to action the behaviours they verbally desire or value. Spotswood et al. (2019) also highlight a key issue equally present in much of contemporary neo-liberal policy-making strategies in that reframing sociocultural issues as moral responsibilities can serve to magnify social stigma and symbolic violence, further enhancing social inequalities. Therefore, this research argues that behaviour change frameworks such as the TTM and ABC perceive the agency-structure relationship too simplistically, and to complement and advance contemporary research on promoting PA participation, there is a call for more sophisticated accounts of the social world where the basic domain of enquiry is 'neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time' (Giddens, 1984, p.2). Subsequently, the main aim of this research was to pilot an alternative theoretical lens in an attempt to understand and shift PA engagement in young women experiencing social and economic disadvantage.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research was to critically examine the relationship between PA and girls from socially and economically disadvantaged areas through a practice theory lens. Owing to the significant levels of health inequalities and disadvantage in the area (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019), the research was conducted in three community settings throughout the South Wales Valleys region, seeking to develop novel insights and approaches to enhance engagement in sport and PA for this population and thereby influence contemporary sport policy. To address the research aims, the following objectives were created and will be explored throughout the thesis in order to understand where practice theory can offer alternative perspectives and tools to address the 'wicked problem' of physical inactivity.

I.   To examine collective practices among disadvantaged girls with varying commitments to PA throughout community settings in the South Wales Valleys region.

II.   To examine practice, policy and provision in community settings and national governing bodies in order to identify alignments and conflicts in needs between girls, club leaders and policymakers.

III.   To pilot a coproduced practice-based intervention to increase PA participation in the population of disadvantaged girls.

IV.   To deploy sensitising concepts such as 'anchoring practices' and 'affective practice' as tools to assess how and why PA is ordered in practitioners' lives in a manner which reinforces the double jeopardy.

V.   To critically analyse practice theory as a tool to enhance community sport and PA provision as well as its potential for influencing contemporary sport policy.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured with a further eight chapters following this introduction. Chapter two provides a critical review of the pre-existing literature on the research problem, as well as practice theory as an evolving theoretical lens. It begins by providing an introduction to PA, including key definitions surrounding PA, inactivity and sedentary behaviour (as well as a justification for the adoption of Piggin's (2020) holistic definition), the documented health benefits of participating in PA and the risks

associated with inactivity. This is followed by a timeline of sport policy within the UK starting from the early 19th century. The purpose here is to uncover the policies and national investments that characterised PA participation during particular periods, considering how they have created and reinforced relationships with PA in present day society. This section also serves to reflect upon the politicised nature of sport and PA and the power policy holds in dictating PA participation during a policy's life course and beyond.

The chapter then proceeds towards an overview of the relationship between PA and firstly, women and girls, and secondly, disadvantaged groups, including a critical discussion of the terms poverty, deprivation and disadvantage and the health inequalities faced by those residing in those groups. Following this, the double jeopardy is introduced, including its theoretical underpinnings from Sport Wales' market segmentation and Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality, as well as locating it within the context of the South Wales Valleys and its legacy of socioeconomic decline. Afterwards, there is a critical discussion surrounding interventions to increase PA participation within disadvantaged girls, highlighting the shortcomings of interventions based upon behaviour change frameworks for their failure to account for the impact of complex social, material and interrelational features of PA behaviour. It concludes therefore with a call for alternative approaches.

Chapter three provides an overview of practice theory as the alternative theoretical lens adopted to explore the double jeopardy. It begins by outlining the origins of practice theory and its emergence as a cultural theory to combat the historic dualism of structure versus agency. It also highlights the contribution of first-generation practice theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens. Following this, the key principles of practice theory as a family of theories are described, including the contemporary contributions of second-generation practice theorists, before progressing to a critical discussion surrounding the three elements model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012), the central framework adopted for this analysis. Within this, trajectories and relations between practices are discussed, including how links between elements and practices are made, sustained or broken to shift behaviour at both a societal and individual level. There is also a note on how individuals are recruited as carriers of practice, incorporating Bourdieu's concepts of *capital* and

habitus for their potential as an heuristic device in understanding recruitment, as well as an introduction to key sensitising concepts such as Swidler's *anchoring practices* and Wetherell's *affective practice*. Finally, there is a discussion surrounding the contemporary use of practice theory within the field of PA research, concluding with a call to contribute to this growing body of literature owing to practice theory's potential in advancing public health's attempts to shift behaviour.

Chapter four details the methodology adopted for this research. It begins with a philosophical overview of the research process, including the main paradigms within the field, and a critical discussion of pragmatism owing to its adoption within the research for its flexibility, practicality and alignment with practice theory as a theoretical lens. The chapter then proceeds to outline the qualitative research methodology adopted to address the research problem, outlining the methods utilised in three distinct studies to explore the double jeopardy: Study 1, *Exploring Practice Constellations,* Study 2, *Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders,* and Study 3, *Walking and Talking.* Within these sections, the case settings will be introduced, along with justifications for the adoption of participant observation, qualitative interviews and a coproduced walking programme and practice-based evaluation as the key research methods. Details surrounding sampling, negotiating field access and data analysis will also be provided, along with a narrative of the Covid-19 pandemic in Wales owing to its significant impact on the methods adopted within this research. The chapter will conclude with a critical discussion surrounding managing quality in qualitative research, as well as an extended discussion surrounding the ethical considerations of working with young, disadvantaged populations.

Chapters five, six and seven address the empirical data collection that was undertaken to explore the double jeopardy among key stakeholders. Chapter five details the observations and interviews undertaken over a period of one year with adolescent girls residing in disadvantaged areas throughout the South Wales Valleys. Three field settings were selected in order to reach individuals with varying commitments to PA. These included a gymnastics club (committed), an extra-curricular Couch to 5K club (semi-committed) and a youth club (inactive). The aim of this study was to observe and interrogate collective practice among the cohorts at each club and the study cohort

as a whole to identify consistent patterns of practice and understand the elements and bundles of practice that underpinned daily activity.

Chapter six outlines the second study, whereby a series of interviews were undertaken with the leaders of the community field settings, as well as senior employees from their governing organisations, including British Gymnastics, StreetGames and Sport Wales. Following the insight gathered surrounding disadvantaged girls' needs, desires and practices, it was deemed important to gather the same from those providing opportunities on the ground, as well as those designing the policies that govern provision. The aim of this study was thus to triangulate the practices and needs of the girls, community leaders and governing organisations in order to identify both alignments and conflicts and thus the most opportune areas for intervention.

Chapter seven meanwhile describes the key findings that emerged from a pilot study which sought to increase PA levels with one individual from the gymnastics field setting. To pilot a novel approach, the researcher adopted the role of practice-mentor, leaning on life coaching and participatory action research methods to conduct a cyclical interview-based evaluation of a walking programme coproduced by the researcher and participant over a period of eight weeks. The purpose, to consistently interrogate practice and trial novel elements and/or practice bundles (such as walking and socialising or walking and taking photographs) to enhance engagement and reinforce walking as an anchoring practice in the individual's daily life.

Each findings chapter will include a short introduction, accompanied by the conceptual model below. Figure 1 outlines the aims and objectives of the research, along with the studies each objective corresponds with, and a breakdown of the conceptual framework that was utilised during fieldwork. Within the model, this framework leads to the eventual practical, theoretical and policy-based contributions and future recommendations as a result of the research. Where the first two objectives in the model are shaded, this signifies that they permeated all three studies. The non-shaded objectives meanwhile have direct arrows leading to their corresponding studies. Additionally, within the conceptual lens, the three elements model, comprising of materials, meanings and competencies, was the primary framework for analysis. The dotted arrows infiltrating the model highlight the addition of anchoring practices

(Swidler, 2001) and affective practice (Wetherell, 2015) as heuristic devices to further explore PA practices among the research population.

Along with the addition of the conceptual model at the beginning of each empirical findings chapter, highlighting the appropriate objective and study, each findings chapter will conclude with a short summary. Within that summary, the key findings will be presented within the conceptual lens box in Figure 1, outlining the key materials, meanings, competencies, anchoring practices and notions of affect that were identified within that study. The purpose, to provide a visual representation of how the elements and practices linked together to form patterns of practice, and their impact on PA engagement for the double jeopardy population.

A critical discussion of the empirical data and key findings is provided in Chapter eight, evaluating the challenges and opportunities for addressing the double jeopardy both on the ground and on a higher, policy-based level. Topics for discussion include (but are not limited to) the value of adopting practice theory as an alternative lens to both understand and shift practice in disadvantaged girls (and wider populations), the need to embed PA practice from a young age via early active experiences, the utility of functional activities such as active travel and standing desks and the merit of adopting person-centred approaches to shift practice.

Chapter nine marks the final chapter of the thesis. The research aim and key objectives are revisited, and presented alongside key messages and recommendations, and in conclusion, practical implications, strengths and limitations of the research and areas for future work are presented.

AIM

To critically examine the relationship between physical activity and girls from socially and economically disadvantaged areas through a practice theory lens.

OBJECTIVES

To critically analyse practice theory as a tool to enhance community sport and physical activity provision as well as its potential for influencing contemporary sport policy.

To deploy sensitising concepts such as 'anchoring practices' and 'affective practice' as tools to assess how and why physical activity is ordered in practitioners' lives in a manner which reinforces the double jeopardy.

To examine collective practices among disadvantaged girls with varying commitments to physical activity throughout community settings in the South Wales Valleys.

To examine practice, policy and provision in community settings and national governing bodies in order to identify alignments and conflicts in needs between girls, club leaders and policymakers.

To pilot a coproduced practice-based intervention to increase physical activity participation in the population of disadvantaged girls.

STUDY 1 ⟷ STUDY 2 ⟷ STUDY 3

Conceptual Lens

Anchoring Practices

Materials

Affective Practices, Atmospheres & Generators

PRACTICE

Competency

Meanings

Practical Implications   **Theoretical Implications**   **Policy-Based Implications**

Figure 1: A conceptual model of the research

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 An Introduction to Physical Activity

Caspersen, Powell and Christenson define physical activity (PA) as 'any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure' (1985, p.126). This definition (including minor variations of said definition) is perhaps the most predominant interpretation worldwide, representing both government and policy perspectives (used by the World Health Organisation, 2020 and the UK Chief Medical Officers (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019), as well as many perspectives within the realm of academia (Westerterp, 2013; Dasso, 2018; Haseler et al., 2019). Whilst the statement is commended for its clarity and simplicity, and is said to encompass a wide array of human movement, ranging from leisure time pursuits, to active travel, to forms of manual labour (WHO, 2020), it has been critiqued for its framing of PA as a mechanistic act, entrenched in 'epidemiological and biomedical discourse' (Piggin, 2020, p.2). It is argued to be reductionist by nature and does not account for contributions from wider psychological processes (Biddle and Mutrie, 2001), social interactions (Piggin, 2020), situational aspects (Phoenix and Bell, 2019) or political influences (Silk et al., 2017). To address the shortcoming, Piggin (2020) extended the definition to include:

> *People moving, acting and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships.*
>
> (p.5)

The aforementioned account is more holistic in nature, and consciously defines PA as *people* moving, accounting for both individual motives and shared, cultural practices and understandings. Moving forward, this thesis has adopted Piggin's (2019) definition as representative of the forms of PA researched and referenced throughout. In reference to PA, it is also useful to define key terms associated with the practice. For exercise, inspiration has been taken from Casperson, Powell and Christensen's (1985) definition, where it represents a more planned, structured, repetitive and purposeful form of PA, with the objective of improving/maintaining one's physical fitness. Similarly, sport forms part of the PA spectrum with the terms often used interchangeably, but is considered a more institutionalised and organised practice, based on specific rules and skill mastery (Thivel et al., 2018).

Routine PA is widely understood (in moderation) as a health-enhancing behaviour. Amongst other benefits, research illustrates that PA can reduce blood pressure, improve coronary blood flow, improve body composition (reducing the risk of obesity) and both treat and prevent diabetes (Warburton, Nicol and Bredin, 2006; Hayes and Kriska, 2008). This is in addition to widespread mental and social benefits, including reduced risk of depression and anxiety (White et al., 2017; Czosnek et al., 2019). PA is widely endorsed by organisations and institutions globally, owing to its protective factor in reducing the risk of chronic noncommunicable disease and fighting morbidity (WHO, 2010), as well as its contribution to reducing the economic burden of ill-health (Katzmarzyk, Gledhill and Shephard, 2000). This endorsement has been illustrated by the creation of nationwide PA guidelines, such as those offered by the UK Chief Medical Officers who recommend 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity across the week for adults aged 19-64 (UK Government, 2019). For young people aged five to 18, this differs slightly, with 60 minutes of moderate intensity PA per day recommended across the week, including both aerobic and strength-based activities (UK Government, 2019).

Despite widespread knowledge and investment in the benefits of PA, large proportions of society record significantly lower levels of activity than their recommended intake (WHO, 2018). Of particular relevance to this thesis, are women and girls who globally and consistently report lower levels of activity than their male counterparts (van der Horst et al., 2007; Guthold et al., 2018), in addition to the lower levels of PA exhibited by those of a lower socio-economic position compared to those considered more affluent (Gidlow et al., 2006; Economic and Social Research Council, 2014). On the contrary, large cohorts of the aforementioned populations have increased levels of sedentary behaviour and inactivity. Sedentary behaviour is defined as 'any waking behaviour characterised by an energy expenditure < 1.5 METs, while in a sitting, reclining or lying posture' (Sedentary Behaviour Research Network, 2012, p.540). The term inactivity, meanwhile, represents those who are doing insufficient amounts of PA; that is not meeting their recommended guidelines across the week (Sedentary Behaviour Research Network, 2012, p.540).

Both behaviours have serious health implications (González, Fuentes and Márquez, 2017) and have often been mistaken as synonymous with one another. However, it is crucial to point out that whilst they can occur together, it is also possible to be sedentary but not inactive, and vice versa (van der Ploeg and Hillsdon, 2017). For example, an office clerk who drives to work and spends the majority of the day in a seated position may also attend a spin class post-work, before returning home and lounging for the rest of their evening. This accounts for high sedentary time but also has the capability to meet the daily PA recommendation. Likewise, a hairdresser, whose occupation requires them to stand for long periods of the day, will not record high levels of sedentary time. Their lack of engagement in PA, however, will still register them inactive and thus at-risk of implications. In recent years, the transition towards low-activity occupation, in addition to advances in technology making specific forms of manual labour unnecessary/undesirable (and making leisure time less active), have resulted in increased levels of sedentary behaviour and inactivity (Parry and Straker, 2013; Gao and Lee, 2019; WHO, N.D.). Combatting these behaviours and increasing PA participation has thus become a global public health priority (Blair, 2009), aided by the identification of target groups within society, of whom are most at risk of facing the associated health implications (Giles-Corti, 2006; Sport England, 2019).

2.2 Physical Activity and Sport Policy in the UK

The benefits of PA and sport are well-known and well-documented across the world. In recent years, there have been global efforts to enhance PA participation for a number of reasons, not least of which to decrease the incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases. These efforts have been led by the development of national policies and frameworks which raise the profile of PA and provide action plans/programmes to mobilise entire populations (Daugbjerg et al., 2009). It is useful, therefore, to provide a brief commentary surrounding how PA and sport policies have evolved throughout the UK over time and go some way to explain contemporary societal relations with PA. A trend towards holistic PA policies rather than solely sport policies has been seen in recent years, hence many of the policies mentioned below explicitly refer to sport.

The early nineteenth century saw a lack of strategic approach to sport from the UK Government. There was limited involvement in providing sport and the little involvement that did occur mostly surrounded instances where sport could spill into other areas of government focus (Tacon, 2018). This was characterised by a degree of paternalism towards the lower classes regarding health and education (likely influencing sport in the process), defending privilege (manifesting in various disputes over countryside space for wealthy landowners or urban populations participating in sport) and controlling 'undisciplined leisure' amongst lower classes so as not to endanger social stability (Holt, 1989; Shoard, 1987; Tacon, 2018).

During the second half of the twentieth century, Government interest in sport developed from previous years. The landmark of which was the *Sport and the Community* report produced by the Wolfenden Committee (Coalter, 2007). The report made 57 recommendations surrounding the provision of sport, the most significant of which was the setting up of a Sports Development Council responsible for distributing public funding. This was a period of massive expansion for sport in the UK, with increased provision of facilities and voluntary-sector sport, and the movement towards local authorities becoming key players in creating and reinforcing the structure of sport throughout the UK (Houlihan, 1997). In 1972, under a Conservative administration, the UK Government replaced their advisory status within sport with executive status, published in the White Paper on Sport and Recreation (Department of Education, 1975) and adopting legitimate responsibility for providing sport to the nation, owing to its contribution to general welfare (Tacon, 2018).

Successive Conservative Governments saw the diminishing of state involvement in sport, in line with broader Conservative objectives surrounding introducing market forces in public services. This period saw the value of sport measured by financial efficiency, often at the expense of quality of provision (Jackson and Nesti, 2001). The rapid expansion of the previous decade was halted by National and Local Government decline in fostering wider participation among communities, in addition to a more homogenised sports regime with little room for innovation and associated risk (Houlihan, 1997). The election of the New Labour Government in 1997 saw a positive shift in sport policy. This era was characterised by '*Sport for Good'*; a conception of sport as a vehicle for wider social and economic benefits, including improving social

cohesion and health, developing social capital, encouraging lifelong learning, combatting social exclusion and aiding economic, physical and social regeneration (Collins, 2010). This illustrated a move away from developing sport *in* the community to developing communities *through* sport (Houlihan and White, 2002).

As Coalter (2007) pointed out, the evidence of wider social and economic benefits of sport was somewhat weak and this was taken into consideration in the Policy Action Team 10 report produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (1999). Nevertheless, there was a commitment from New Labour to the *potential* benefits of sport and this exhibited itself across multiple levels, from attempting to increase daily PA participation throughout the UK population via schools and club partnerships, to attracting and hosting major sporting events (such as the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics games), to action through 'joined up' Government, whereby policy objectives were cross-cutting and implemented with multiple policy areas in mind (Tacon, 2018). The latter of which has persisted to this day, as illustrated by educational, workplace and transport policies which seek to promote PA.

After a period of 'Sport for Good' coherency, in 2007, the new Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, James Purnell, announced a repositioning, advocating that sport matters in itself and was too often justified on the basis of spill-over benefits (Purnell, 2007). This was the catalyst for a new era of 'Sport for Sport's Sake'. A move away from developing communities *through* sport back to developing sport *in* communities, built around a core of sport services provided by NGB's. PA thus became the Department of Health's responsibility rather than that of Sport England's (Collins, 2010) and money was to be halted or retrieved if Sport England were found to be spending funds on anything other than sport specifically (Price, 2009). The 'Sport for Sport's Sake' movement was not without its critiques (see Collins, 2010). Nevertheless, during New Labour years, there was an increased lobbying of sport which enhanced both community and elite provision (Bloyce and Smith, 2010a, 2010b; Devine, 2013; Houlihan, 2011). This was undermined, however, by the incoming financial crisis and subsequent period of Austerity.

Whilst not directly targeted at sport, the Conservative-led Coalition Government's policy of Austerity from 2010 impacted heavily upon sporting organisation and

provision. Austerity directly and disproportionately affected the poor, sick and disabled, intensifying an already problematic area of social exclusion (Dorling, 2014) and subsequent physical and sporting inactivity (Widdop et al., 2017). Reductions in public expenditure to create a 'leaner, more efficient state' where the UK were encouraged to 'do more with less' (Krugman, 2015, p.1) resulted in £64 billion being removed from public expenditure by 2013 (The Centre of Welfare Reform, 2013). In practice, Austerity disproportionately affected those receiving social benefits, so much so that organisations such as the JRF and the United Nations began to question the moral legitimacy of the policy owed to its contribution to increasing poverty (Carter, 2016; Widdop et al., 2017).

The streamlining effect of Austerity led to a dramatic reduction in community sport provision, accentuated by the preference for maintaining funding for elite sport in light of the incoming 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic games (Hylton and Totten, 2013; Tacon, 2018). School Sport in particular suffered at the hands of Austerity, with the success of the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy put forth by New Labour undermined by funding cuts and the decrease in Local Authority expenditure resulting in many School Sport links being lost. Factors such as staff cuts, increased charges, facility closures and falling revenue budgets were predicted and shown to affect participation (Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), 2012; Parnell et al., 2014; Parnell and Widdop 2015). Additionally, reductions in service-quality likely affected engagement with hard-to-reach groups (APSE, 2012), as Local Authorities often maintained facility spend but decreased commitment to community budgets (Widdop et al., 2018); 'Sport for All' was thus a policy rhetoric rather than a policy reality (King, 2013, 2014).

In recent years, policy has been more inclusive of the concept of PA, incorporating it alongside sport and developing cross-department efforts to mobilise the UK population, as illustrated by Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation, put forth by the Conservative Government in 2015. This strategy concentrated on the ways in which sport and PA contribute to five principal outcomes, namely, physical wellbeing; mental wellbeing; individual development; social and community development; and economic development. This policy was a move away from NGB-concentrated funding toward the addition of wider internal and external organisations,

capable of justifying their contribution to the aforementioned outcomes, a key example being the charity StreetGames (Tacon, 2018). In Wales, such shifts have been reflected in policies such as Climbing Higher (Welsh Government, 2005) and Creating an Active Wales (Welsh Government, 2009), in addition to wider strategies from Welsh Government and key stakeholders, such as Sport Wales' 'Vision for Sport' (2018) and the 'Healthy and Active Fund'. The latter of which seeks to promote ties between Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales in order to address key target groups for inactivity (Welsh Government, 2019).

The last decade of UK policy has purposely coincided with and been reinforced by a global shift towards increasing PA levels, owed to the far-reaching social and economic benefits (Das and Horton, 2012; Hafner et al., 2020). There is an increasing emphasis on multi-perspective, whole systems approaches to enhancing PA from a structural level (as proposed by WHO in GAPPA and national governments and organisations, such as the NHS), down to a regional/individual level via Local Authorities, schools and organisations within (WHO, 2018; Nau et al., 2019; Potts, Shearn, Frith and Christy, 2021). In this way, efforts, resources, methods and findings can be shared amongst those who are capable of/have made transformation possible, better reflecting the complex, multifaceted nature of PA participation.

In many cases, sport and PA initiatives tackle decreased participation rates and their associated health impact, as well as various other organisational priority areas, illustrating an increasingly joined-up thinking approach. For example, the beacon of Welsh Government's community sport and PA provision has long been the Free-Swimming initiative (McInch and Fleming, 2022). Starting in Wales in 2003, the Free-Swimming initiative is Europe's longest running health programme. In Wales, the programme targeted two main groups; under-16s as part of the Climbing Higher strategy, and over-60s as part of the Strategy for Older People, intended to address isolation, poverty, social exclusion and older people's rights (Anderson et al., 2014). PA was thus not for the sole sake of increasing PA levels. Additionally, in present-day Wales, much of Welsh Government's policies and actions are driven by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). The purpose of the Act is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, encouraging public bodies to think about long-term impact and joined-up approaches to tackling complex issues.

It presents seven well-being goals to achieve its aim, these are developing: a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales (Welsh Government, 2015). Increasing participation in sport and PA is therefore one of countless vehicles capable of addressing several of these well-being goals.

In summary, the various shifts in policy over time reflect the politicised nature of sport/PA, with each shift having a powerful impact upon the structure of activity throughout the policy's life course and indeed the years following (Tacon, 2018). It is crucial therefore that national policies and frameworks of the future do all they can to promote PA within sport and wider society, in a world where leisure is increasingly in competition with sedentary forms of activity.

2.3 Women and Physical Activity

Women and girls have long been considered a target group requiring intervention to enhance PA and sports participation levels (Coleman, Cox and Roker, 2008; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2008). This is due to a persistent gender disparity that has presented itself within research over time (Trost et al., 2002; Hallal et al., 2012; Appleby and Foster, 2013; Sport England, 2014). Physical *inactivity* has been consistently higher in women than men (Guthold et al., 2008; Mielke et al., 2018; Guthold et al., 2018), with 31.7% of women globally reported as inactive in recent years, compared to 23.4% of men (The Lancet, 2018). Albeit narrowing, this gap continues to persist within the UK. In 2020, Sport England recorded 61% of women as active, compared to 65% of men, while 26% of women were considered inactive, compared to 25% of men. In Wales, the gap is slightly larger. From 2019-2020, 36% of women were considered inactive compared to 30% of men, while 58% of men were meeting PA guidelines in the previous week compared to 49% of women (Welsh Government, 2020). Interestingly, women reported 4% higher levels of *fairly active* behaviour compared to men, whereby they were participating in 30-149 minutes of PA each week (where 30 minutes or less is considered inactive) (Welsh Government, 2020; Sport England, 2018). Participation in organised sport was also lower for women in Wales, with 55% recording *any* participation in sport over a four-week period

compared to 64% of men, and 54% participating in sport less than once a week compared to 44% of men (Sport Wales, 2019).

The barriers to female involvement in PA are numerous and complex and there is value in briefly considering female relations with PA throughout history. Elements of women's relationship with PA have been historically dictated by men, often influenced and justified on the basis of stereotypes regarding biological sex and associated capabilities. In pre-industrial times, physical labour was not confined to males. Charles and Duffin (2013) describe the transition from women's frequent and normalised participation in physically demanding activities in earlier centuries, such as working land and tending livestock, to a more domesticated (and possibly sedentary) role as housewives or waged factory workers during post-industrial times. Increased mechanisation, as well as decreased autonomy as women were increasingly placed in subordination to men (particularly husbands) during the Industrial Revolution resulted in the female position becoming more associated with the household and domestic labour (Taylor, N.D.). Of course, this was not true for all women, but evidence suggests that it was an increasing reality for many.

In relation to decreased autonomy, the inception of modern sport also saw women excluded from competing. Many medical professionals believed that PA posed a risk to a female's reproductive capabilities (Cahn, 1994), thus worthy of barring them from organised sport. Meanwhile, the father of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, believed than female involvement was 'impractical, uninteresting…and improper' (Coubertin, 1912, p.713) and that the place of women in sport should simply be to 'crown the victors' (Coubertin, 1935, p.583). Despite a turbulent relationship with PA, throughout history, women have participated globally in activities ranging from wrestling, boxing, javelin throwing and ball games, to hunting, gathering and racing through Ancient Greece, the Renaissance period, the Victorian Era, throughout the World Wars and up until present day (Gutman, 1991; Weiller and Higgs, 1994; Cahn, 1995; Dufur, 2006). They have done so, however, under the constraints of 'gendered domestic roles, ideas of femininity, and the primacy of men's sports' (Dufur, 2006; p.583). Many of which persist to this day and represent contemporary barriers to PA.

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Numerous studies have been conducted into what facilitates, mediates and prevents female engagement in PA and sport (for example, see Dwyer et al., 2006; Da Costa and Ireland, 2012; Pekmezi et al., 2013; Moreno and Johnston, 2014), with many studies emphasising particular social characteristics as a lens through which to consider PA participation, such as socio-economic position (Lin et al., 2017) ethnicity (Joseph et al., 2015) pregnancy (Cioffi et al., 2010), disease/illness (Rehm and Konkle-Parker, 2015), disability (Rimmer, Rubin and Braddock, 2000) and age/life stage (Dave et al., 2015). General barriers to female engagement range from a lack of motivation or interest in PA, lack of time, predicted lack of enjoyment, lack of social support and childcare, lack of PA culture, lack of money, and self-consciousness in a PA context (Jaffee et al., 1999; Moreno and Johnston, 2014; Bjornsdottir, Arnadottir and Halldorsdottir, 2012; Hoebeke, 2006). Thus, there is comprehensive evidence of female perceptions on what mediates involvement in PA and what is necessary to address in terms of enhancing their participation. As highlighted by Swapna et al. (2015) and Brunet and Sabiston (2011), age holds a powerful influence over our motivations to be active, and ageing can contribute to significant reductions in our participation in PA (Milanović et al., 2013; Sport England, 2018). One life stage in particular has been shown to coincide with a significant decrease PA participation. That stage is adolescence.

2.3.1 Female Adolescent Drop-Out

Adolescence is a dynamic and contested concept owing to its varying physiological, psychosocial, temporal and cultural dimensions (Curtis, 2015). Chronological definitions range from 10-18 (American Psychological Society, 2002), to 10-24 (Sawyer et al., 2018) to 10-25 (Society for Adolescent Medicine, 1995). For the purpose of this project, the WHO definition was adopted, defining adolescence as the period between ages 10-19, where 'youth' represents ages 15-24 and 'young people' is used for those aged 10-24 (WHO, 2015). Adolescence is understood as a period of transition (Curtis, 2015), whereby individuals experience significant cognitive, emotional, physical, and psychosocial development (Neinstein, 2002; Byrnes 2003; Steinberg, 2015). Unsurprisingly, this coincides with significant behaviour change as individuals begin to explore personal identity, navigate peer relationships and transition towards independence (American Psychological Association, 2015).

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PA and sports participation rates have been shown to peak during childhood (Eime et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2016). This might be in part due to the increased likelihood of individuals participating in multiple sports, known as the sampling effect (Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin, 2008), in addition to time spent engaged in 'play' and organised PA in the school setting. As individuals transition towards adolescence, there is a well-documented drop-out of PA (Gardner, Magee and Vella, 2016; Witt and Dangi, 2018; Kemp et al., 2021); one that is particularly pronounced in young women (Owen et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2019). Historically, drop-out has been observed well into adolescence, as late as age 16 (Craike, Symons and Zimmermann, 2012). Recent research, however, suggests that drop-out from PA and sport is occurring at an earlier age, with significant reductions in participation observed as early as age seven (Farooq et al., 2018), 10 (Vella, Schweickle and Sutcliffe, 2020) and between 11-14 (Sember et al., 2020). The earlier drop-out could in part be due to an increasing emphasis on children as the subject of empirical research, placing more emphasis on their lives than ever before (Nairn and Clarke, 2012), as well as a developing ability to accurately measure PA levels, made possible by technological advancements (Bort-Roig et al., 2014; Degroote et al., 2018).

Consistent with PA levels through the life course, young women experience greater drop-out and lower participation levels during adolescence than their male counterparts (Sallis, Prochaska and Taylor, 2000; Women's Sport Foundation, 2008; Hallal et al., 2012). Whilst Crane and Temple (2015) concluded their systematic review on adolescent drop-out by calling for more studies into the female phenomenon, including its unique contributing factors, there are a number of studies available which address this. For example, Whitehead and Biddle (2008) grouped adolescent female perceptions of PA mediators into seven key themes, namely; (1) perceptions of femininity - including stereotypical views surrounding activity and masculinity, where participation endangers feminine appearance; (2) self-presentational concerns - fearing negative evaluation over appearance or ability; (3) changing priorities - increased social activity and opportunity with age; (4) lack of motivation versus appreciation of the benefits - inactive girls lacking the desire to be active and feeling as though PA was *not for them*; (5) the desired structure of PA - particular conditions needed to be met for inactive girls to participate, for example, being surrounded by

friends throughout; (6) parental support - early parental support meant that for active girls, PA was a habit by the time they reached adolescence; and (7) enjoyment – the level of enjoyment associated with an activity could independently influence whether the girls participated.

Agreement and support for the above mediators is provided by Dwyer et al. (2006), Craike, Symons and Zimmerman (2009) and Young et al. (2014), as well as additional barriers/facilitators from the respective studies, including (lack of) time, safety concerns, competition, cost and involvement in technology-related activities (where girls prefer to engage with telephones, television and the internet). This supported an earlier finding by Flintoff and Scratton (2001) that girls were heavily influenced by healthy lifestyle discourses that, in present day, are highly accessible and popular on social media. In addition to this finding, Flintoff and Scratton (2001) identified that adolescent girls perceived the most important benefit of PA as the health benefits. The 'fitspiration' hashtag that frequently circulates on social media platforms such as Instagram, as well as notions that 'strong is the new skinny' (Tiggeman and Zaccardo, 2016) can thus be powerful anchors of adolescent female behaviour. The risk, however, is that participants in Flintoff and Scratton's (2001) study were more concerned with short-term benefits of exercise, such as weight loss or rapid muscle toning, rather than the long-term benefits, such as improving cardio-vascular health. A finding which coincides with Whitehead and Biddle's (2008) conclusions, that the girls who did mention health benefits were realistically speaking from an aesthetic point of view rather than a holistic health perspective.

Mitchell, Gray and Inchley (2015) also propose the influence of choice as a mediator of PA, similar to Whitehead and Biddle's (2008) 'desired structure of PA'. Lack of control and input into the choice of PE activities was a major reason for disengagement in Mitchell, Gray and Inchley's (2015) study, since the activities girls were presented with and the environment they were placed in were not considered valuable or relevant. Activities were consequently not emotionally satisfying for the girls and many disengaged. Conversely, when the girls were appointed more choice in terms of activity selection, enjoyment levels improved and feelings of 'dread' when attending PE classes decreased (p.602). Mitchell, Gray and Inchley (2015) specifically drew upon self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1986) as a framework for their study,

where three basic needs are required to be satisfied in learning environments for healthy psychological development of the 'self' and both intrinsic/extrinsic forms of motivation towards an activity to develop. These are competence, relatedness and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 1986). Within the study, the young women valued being consulted and listened to with regards to the selection of activities, and meaningful choice enhanced their experience. This supports what is ostensibly a common-sense idea, that if inactive people are required to increase their participation, their thoughts, feelings and desires surrounding PA should be carefully considered when designing opportunities. Frequently however, this is not the case and lack of choice and/or undesirable activities form the basis of many female-targeted PA opportunities.

Decreased participation levels and exploratory findings have formed the basis of numerous intervention-based studies (see Young and Stewart, 2006; Stadler, Oettingen and Gollwitzer, 2009; Cadmus-Bertram et al., 2015), as well as programmes, organisations and initiatives which seek to promote female engagement, such as This Girl Can (Sport England), Us Girls (StreetGames) and the Women in Sport charity. Similar to Mitchell, Gray and Inchley (2015), many of the intervention-based studies have employed behaviour change models and techniques in an attempt to improve female participation in PA and sport (Juniper et al., 2004; Pirzadeh, Mostafavi, Ghofranipour and Feizi, 2015; Wang and Wang, 2015; Sebire et al., 2016). The favour shown towards behaviour change frameworks for addressing physical inactivity in contemporary research will be critiqued later in the chapter. For now, however, the remaining side of the double jeopardy, social disadvantage, will be discussed, closely followed by a description of Crenshaw's (1989) concept of *intersectionality*.

2.4 Poverty, Deprivation and Disadvantage

There is much deliberation over how to appropriately use the concepts of poverty, deprivation and disadvantage, and defining and measuring each concept has been a challenging area within philosophy, policy and research (Saunders, 2004; Noble, Ratcliffe & Wright, 2004; Ratcliffe, 2007). Each concept accounts for different dimensions of social exclusion (where circumstances result in individuals not being

able to participate in key activities in society (Saunders, Naidoo and Griffiths, 2008)) and it is argued therefore that one single definition or measure should not be adopted as a universal term (Wolff, 2020). There is consensus among practitioners in that the definition assigned to poverty forms the basis on which interventions are drawn, so a political definition requires political intervention, economic definition requires economic intervention and so on (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006), illustrating the dynamic nature of defining the concept. Additionally, definitions of poverty are argued to be country-specific, time-dependent and often a product of the 'interests championed by the defining group' (Saunders, 2004; Minter, 1992; Nyasulu, 2010, p.148).

For the purpose of this thesis, guidance on the matter has been taken from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JFR). This is owed to the extensive research the Foundation has conducted into alleviating poverty within the UK. For the JRF, poverty occurs 'when a person's resources (mainly material) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation)' (2014, p.3). The bracketed sections account for the fact that being unable to meet *any* need does not necessarily indicate poverty, since not all human needs require access to material resources (for example, affection). Conversely, needs such as social participation and leisure do require access, and are consequently accounted for. To measure poverty, the JRF employs a multi-level approach which considers; (1) Minimum Income Standard - a measure of what the public believes is a sufficient income to afford a minimum acceptable standard of living; (2) relative income poverty – where households have less than 60% of contemporary median income; (3) absolute income poverty – where households have less than 60% of the median income, uprated by inflation; (4) material deprivation – where individuals cannot afford certain essential items and activities; and (5) destitution – where basic needs such as shelter, heating and clothing cannot be afforded (JRF, N.D.). This approach encompasses the concepts of absolute and relative poverty, which are based on financial inability to meet basic human needs/rights and the needs of a defined population/norm respectively (Notten and Neubourg, 2011).

Poverty is said to be generally associated with lacking the *financial* resources necessary to achieve particular goals; goals usually associated with staying alive and living in good health (Wolff, 2020). This is problematic, however, owing to the focus

on financial resources as a means to achieve goals and the resultant income-based social policies created to alleviate poverty, where provision of public goods or forms of social change might offer alternative solutions with significant advantages (Wolff, 2020). Nonetheless, poverty as a term has strong political resonance and urgency, and connects to over a century's worth of research which arguably negates its abandonment (Wolff, Lamb and Zur-Spiro, 2015). There is value, however, in considering additional terms which account for alternative dimensions of social exclusion.

Studies founded on poverty lines have been critiqued on the basis that they are disconnected from the lived realities of poverty (Lister, 2004; Saunders, 2005). In answer to this, many have turned to *deprivation* as a term more grounded in the conditions faced by those who experience it (Saunders, Naidoo and Griffiths, 2008). Mack and Lansley (1985) define deprivation as 'an enforced lack of socially perceived necessities (or essentials)' (p.39). This links closely to poverty in that a lack of financial resource is the underlying issue, but rather deprivation is a consequence of the deficit. When attempting to measure deprivation, Townsend (1979) developed a list of 60 indicators, incorporating the population's 'style of living'. The list included housing and housing facilities, diet, fuel and light, general conditions and security of work, education, health, and recreation. Lacking in or non-participation in these indicators was seen as a mark of deprivation. Whilst Townsend's indicators were critiqued owed to the methodology failing to allow for difference in choice of how people live (Mack, 2016), many of the indicators represent contemporary government measures for deprivation, as seen in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, which measures overall deprivation as well as specific forms. Those measured are income, employment, health, education, access to services, community safety, physical environment and housing (Welsh Government, 2020).

An additional term adopted by some working within social exclusion is *disadvantage*. Within the literature, descriptions of disadvantage are more prevalent than strict definitions, however, the Scottish Government offer a basic operationalisation of socio-economic disadvantage as 'living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others within the same society' (Scottish Government, 2017, p.5). The UK Government Equalities Office stated that the less favourable conditions are

as a result of a 'complex interplay of factors such as health, housing, education and family background, and the resulting lack of ambitions and expectations' (2010, p.14). Hepple further describes the causes of socio-economic disadvantage as 'lack of opportunities for poor persons to work or acquire education and skills, childhood deprivation, disrupted families, inequalities in health and poor access to social housing' (2010, p.20-21). Whiteman (2014) states that no matter how driven or able an individual may be, the circumstance of their birth holds significant bearing over their likely future. This has been highlighted by studies illustrating positive relationships between socio-economic disadvantage and poor health (Sarlio-Lähteenkorva and Lahelma, 1999; Schmeer, 2012) reduced academic performance (Kallio, Kauppinen and Erola, 2016), higher incidence of crime (Fergusson, Swain-Campbell and Horwood, 2004) and increased levels of stress (Goodman et al., 2005).

Wolff and de-Shalit (2007) point out that those experiencing disadvantage are located in relation to others, suggesting that the lower status associated is in part caused by, or at least tolerated by others in society. Wolff and de-Shalit thus analyse disadvantaged groups within the context of a community who may or may not care about one another (perhaps because they do not have a surplus of resources to do so), and in a society where disadvantage is not an inevitable law or outcome but one controlled by the social and political institutions of that society (2007). For this reason, there are targeted approaches to addressing socio-economic disadvantage and its repercussions, including supporting educational attainment (Department for Education, 2015) and community engagement interventions to address health inequalities and improve public health (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2015). Research into poverty/deprivation/disadvantage and PA has adopted various concepts and measurements to operationalise their studies, as will be highlighted below. For the purpose of this thesis, socio-economic disadvantage has been adopted to refer to the population targeted, owed to its broad conception of social exclusion as a result of socialisation processes and situational aspects, including family relations, housing location, and income, education and health inequalities.

2.4.1 Health Inequalities, Physical Activity and Disadvantaged Groups

McCartney, Popham, McMaster and Cumbers (2019, p.22) define health and health inequalities as a 'structural, functional and emotional state that is compatible with effective life as an individual and as a member of society' and 'the systematic, avoidable and unfair differences in health outcomes that can be observed between populations, between social groups within the same population or as a gradient across a population ranked by social position' respectively (p.22). Health inequalities have significant social and economic costs to both individuals and societies as a whole (WHO, 2018, p.1). They exhibit themselves and combine across various population groups, often governed by protected characteristics (such as age, sex, race and sexual orientation), geography (urban, rural) and membership of 'inclusion health' groups (vulnerable migrants, homeless populations, sex workers) (NHS England, N.D.). One of the most powerful indicators of health inequality is socio-economic status and research shows that the lower a person's socio-economic status is, the more likely they are to face health inequalities, heightening their risk of ill-health (Skapinakis et al., 2005; Kontopantelis et al., 2017; Rouxel and Chandola, 2018). Health inequalities can be characterised in a number of ways, ranging from differences in life expectancy, avoidable mortality, prevalence of mental ill-health and access to and experience of health services (The King's Fund, 2020). One aspect of the health inequalities faced by disadvantaged groups, is the lower PA levels historically reported by the demographic when compared to those residing in more affluent/favourable positions (Beenackers et al., 2012; Sport England, 2017; Welsh Government, 2020). The consequences of such are mutually dependent, in that a lack of participation results in poorer health while poorer health reinforces the lack of participation.

According to the European Office for WHO, the challenge of PA promotion within disadvantaged populations lies in the complexity of disadvantage; there is no universal 'unique disadvantaged group' nor 'unique' form of PA to promote (2013, p.3). Hence PA promotion for disadvantaged groups needs to take a similar approach to general PA promotion by employing target groups, but likely with more intense targeting, implementation and support, reflected in duration, funding and capacity-building needs for programmes (WHO, 2013). Analyses have indicated that throughout over 2000 countries worldwide, significantly higher levels of inactivity, as well as wider participation gaps between genders were prevalent in countries with higher levels of income inequality (Chastin et al., 2020). This trend has been mirrored throughout

England and Wales, with 52% of lower socio-economic groups reaching PA guidelines throughout the week in England compared to 71% in higher socio-economic groups (Sport England, 2020). Likewise, 49% of the most deprived groups were reaching targets in Wales compared to 60% in the least deprived groups (Welsh Government, 2020).

Withall, Jago and Fox (2011) conducted a study into the barriers and enablers for PA in low-income groups, researching a region within the 1% most deprived areas of England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Using interviews with both providers and participants, Withall et al. separated their findings into five key themes, namely, Attitudes, Motivations, Barriers, Enablers and Awareness (p.7). Attitudes incorporated awareness of the benefits of exercise, as well as both positive and negative feelings towards exercise, with some participants believing PA was 'irrelevant' to their lives. Motivations ranged from weight control to physical and mental health, to improving fitness, to socialising and enjoyment (the latter solely for providers). Barriers included lack of confidence, reluctance to attend alone, cost, perceived lack of competence, childcare issues and low priority compared to other areas of life. Enablers included fun, friendship, attending with peers, self-confidence, low-cost, integration of sessions into the community and strong PA availability. Finally, awareness surrounded knowledge of the benefits of exercise and available sessions, and word-of-mouth and personal contact as a recruitment tool and communication channel (2011, p.7).

Further support for the factors stated above can be found throughout the literature (Collins and Kay, 2014; Craike et al., 2018). Powell, Slater and Chaloupka (2004) conducted a study into the environmental barriers to PA based on socio-economic status, race and ethnicity. Higher levels of poverty were found to significantly reduce the likelihood of PA spaces, such as bike paths, parks and green spaces. Areas with lower poverty rates were associated with increasing availability of PA-appropriate space, illustrating the structural constraints to PA experienced by disadvantaged groups. Curtis, Hinckson and Water (2012) studied the perceptions of PA amongst primary school-aged children and their parent/guardians from socially deprived areas. The most common mediator for participation was cost, with parents on limited income experiencing competing demands and prioritising basic needs such as food and

shelter over activity. Cost rather than unwillingness to engage mediated participation from the young people, however, when structured activities were free from cost, they were usually held during parental working hours. This impacted upon transportation opportunities for the families with active travel found to be undesirable due to safety concerns, distance to activities and work commitments. Additionally, community connectedness and communication were perceived as important for parent/guardians. Carers desired increased communication between schools and themselves, perhaps through a neighbourhood 'coordinator'. This would allow parents to be more informed of planned activities, relay more trust to those providing opportunities for their children and organise 'car pooling' where possible to alleviate transportation difficulties (p.43).

As stated previously, those from deprived or disadvantaged backgrounds often reside in a state of financial poverty, heavily impacting their ability to engage in social activities and resulting in social exclusion. What is perhaps less accounted for, is the state of *time poverty* (Vickery, 1977) that they may also experience as a result of their financial position. The world has long been in a state of acceleration with regards to the pace of life (Levine, 1997). Technological acceleration in particular has resulted in less time being required to perform everyday tasks. Whilst this might ostensibly mean more leisure time is available, research indicates that, paradoxically, time poverty (characterised by having too many things to do and not enough time to do them), is increasing (Giurge, Whillans and West, 2020).

Time poverty encroaches on leisure time activity and has been shown to have negative health consequences, in addition to its impact on life satisfaction (Mullens and Glorieux, 2020). Whilst some individuals experiencing financial poverty could be considered more 'time-rich' (Spinney and Millward, 2010), possibly owed to a lack of employment or consistent working pattern, the JRF (2008) highlights that by escaping income poverty, many fall victim to an increasing time poverty which is unlikely to enhance health. This is supported by Strazdins et al. (2011), who regard time poverty as a health inequality in its own right, owing to the contribution of time in contouring health behaviours. Women have also been found to be more likely to experience both income and time-poverty than men, owed to the gendered division of care (JRF, 2008). This highlights how the increased caring expectations placed on women limits their leisure time and consequently their ability to set healthy examples for their children in

an exercise sense, in addition to increased difficulties being able to support children through their leisure, owed to income and time poverty. Beenackers et al.'s (2012) systematic review of socio-economic inequalities within leisure also raised awareness of an important dimension of PA; that lower socio-economic groups reported significantly higher levels of occupational PA and lower levels of leisure-time PA. It is possible, therefore, that the more holistic benefits of PA, such as improved mental wellbeing (Saxena, Ommeren, Tang and Armstrong, 2009) and social betterment (Coalter, 2005), might be negated by the stress or time poverty associated with one's employment. Thus, care must be provided to study the nature of one's PA levels and not accept increased participation without a critical eye, as will be illustrated later within empirical chapters of the thesis.

2.5 The Double Jeopardy for Physical Activity Participation

The term 'double jeopardy' was coined by StreetGames (2017) in recognition of the increased likelihood of physical inactivity faced by those who are both female, with deeply ingrained attitudes about gender-appropriate behaviour, and living in a state of social and economic disadvantage. StreetGames is a UK-based charity which seeks to 'harness the power of sport to create positive change in the lives of disadvantaged young people' (StreetGames, N.D.). StreetGames run a number of projects to achieve this, including Doorstep Sport, Fit and Fed and most relevant to this research problem, Us Girls. Us Girls is a programme and brand designed to increase and sustain young women's participation in sport and PA, particularly in disadvantaged communities (StreetGames, N.D.) The brand launched in Wales in 2015, providing sport and PA opportunities for disadvantaged young women by the mantra of 'at the right time, for the right price, in the right place, in the right style and delivered by the right people' (StreetGames, 2017, p.4).

2.5.1 Lisa and Little Lisa

StreetGames defined their Us Girls target audience in Wales in part response to a market segmentation conducted by Sports Council for Wales (now Sport Wales) (2008), whereby the general population were divided into categories of individuals. In total, 12 segments were created and labelled with a collective name (Mark, Huw,

Dot…). Ostensibly, every adult in Wales could be placed into one of the 12 segments based on their demographic characteristics (age, gender, income…) and lifestyle patterns (health status, exercise patterns, family circumstances) (Lord et al., 2016). The sport and PA behaviours typified within five of the segments warranted further research by Sport Wales. These were John and Ann (a couple), Sian, Christine, Steve and Lisa (Lord et al., 2016). Lisa was characterised as 18-35 years old, living with a partner or as a single mother, working a low-income job supported by state benefits and residing in social housing. Lisa was likely to be in good health, but vulnerable to negative lifestyle behaviour such as drinking and smoking. There tended to be some participation in PA, most frequently via indoor personal fitness activities, yet Lisa frequently faced barriers such as family commitments and lack of time. Lisa was most commonly found in metropolitan areas of Wales, the South Wales Valleys region and industrial areas of North-East Wales (Sport Wales, 2008).

Inspired by the typology and in the absence of a market segmentation specific to young people, StreetGames interpreted Lisa similarly to Sport Wales, yet aged 16-19-years-old to fit their target audience of disadvantaged youths. To consider the younger generation of girls living in similar conditions to Lisa, however, they developed 'Little Lisa'. Little Lisa was a young female aged 13-19-years-old, living in a Communities First (deprived) area and classed as semi- or inactive (StreetGames, 2017). Based on existing StreetGames data, as well as two years' worth of Us Girls insight gathered in Wales, a number of characteristics for Little Lisa and the nature of PA sessions she enjoyed were developed. These included making PA a social opportunity, having a fun, informal feel to PA sessions, not feeling judged, accessing incentives and rewards, flexible clothing options for PA, female-only PA opportunities, access to taster sessions and having relatable and identifiable leaders. Additionally, it was important that deliverers and leaders spend time understanding Little Lisa and her friends' various likes, dislikes, needs and pressures and continually review these throughout the programme, as well as dedicating time at the start to 'pre-pre' engagement, to build rapport and allow Little Lisa to familiarise herself with the PA opportunity before attending (StreetGames, 2017).

Market segmentation is a 'decision-making tool for the marketing manager in the crucial task of selecting a target market for a given product and designing an

appropriate marketing mix' (Tynan and Drayton, 1987, p.301). The concept was first introduced by Smith (1956) and has since become a core concept in marketing theory and practice, representing a key element of marketing strategy and a practice that perceivably drives much success within business (Wedel and Kamakura, 2000; Lilien and Rangaswamy, 2003). The concept developed out of Smith's recognition of an overall heterogeneous market consisting of a number of smaller homogeneous markets, where commonalities in consumers' needs and desires can be identified and targeted. With the increasing diversification of goods and consumer needs, market segmentation evolved as a strategic method to both understand consumer needs and use resources as efficiently as possible while providing the right offer for a target population, increasing the chances of consumption and success.

A number of benefits of market segmentation as a tool have been recorded. These include prompting organisations to evaluate their current standing and desired future directions (Dolnicar et al., 2018), more effective marketing for the needs of specific groups in an ever-expanding consumer market and more refined control over resources (Goyat, 2011). Naturally, however, there are also challenges within market segmentation. As Kotler and Armstrong (2001) point out, there are millions of consumers around the world with different needs and wants. Identifying a marketing mix to suit every consumer need would thus be impossible. Additionally, we cannot be sure how similar individuals within the same segment really are. Whilst demographic factors have frequently been used by companies as a segmenting method (age, socio-economic position, gender, ethnicity and so on), this has been critiqued as an untrustworthy segmentation strategy since there could be vast diversity in the wants and needs of individuals within that group (Straughan and Roberts, 1999; Goyat, 2011). Therefore, whilst the Lisa and Little Lisa typologies provided valuable insight into barriers and enablers for PA for women experiencing the double jeopardy, as well as suitable recruitment methods, it is crucial not to overinvest in such a strategy since the degree of diversity within segments and complex, multifaceted nature of physical inactivity also requires a more in-depth approach. To avoid applying such generalisations to entire demographics, where there is resource to do so, this research area warrants more personal, 1:1 approaches, something this research aimed to address. Little Lisa was thus approached with a critical eye.

2.5.2 Crenshaw's Intersectionality

StreetGames coined the double jeopardy based on data surrounding participation levels. Research revealed that just 35% of young people living in the most deprived areas were classed as 'hooked on sport' (meaning they participated in PA three or more times per week) compared to 46% living in the least deprived areas (School Sport Survey, 2013). Meanwhile 32% of women were classed as hooked on sport compared to 46% of men (Active Adults Survey, 2014). Combining these issues, it was found that just 25% of disadvantaged young women were classed as hooked on sport, hence facing the double jeopardy.

The double jeopardy is implicitly based on Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality, whereby various forms of inequality operate together and exacerbate one another. Crenshaw is a Black feminist legal scholar and a key founder of Critical Race Theory. She introduced the concept of intersectionality to demonstrate how various social, cultural and biological categories such as nationality, race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, (dis)ability and religion overlap and intersect to form systems of oppression, domination or discrimination. Intersectional theory thus recognises that identity markers (in this case, female and disadvantaged) do not exist independently of one another, but instead, each informs the other, frequently creating a complex convergence of oppression. The concept is rooted in earlier Black feminism, drawing on Beal's 'double jeopardy', King's 'multiple jeopardy' and Combahee River Collective's 'interlocking oppressions' (Carastathis, 2014).

Intersectionality specifically names White, male supremacy as the driving force behind categorisations of subordination and the persistence of hierarchies that allow some groups to advance while others lose traction (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991); a relevant point given the decreased PA participation levels of women and disadvantaged groups (not to mention the likely triple or even quadruple jeopardy faced by people of colour and disabled individuals within this population) compared to the dominant group of White males (Sport England, 2020; Welsh Government, 2020). Importantly, intersectionality as method refutes the use of one-dimensional frames for understanding behaviours and inequalities. On the contrary, intersectionality necessitates a more complex analysis which draws attention to the 'social hierarchy [that] creates the experiences

that produce the categories that intersect' (MacKinnon, 2013, p.1024). Adopting the double jeopardy as the foci of this research therefore required consistent reflection and attention upon the intersection of being female and residing in an area of disadvantage.

2.5.3 Situating the Double Jeopardy

KESS2 is a pan-Wales operation supported by European Social Funds delivered via Welsh Government. The organisation promotes links between industries and academics in the Higher Education sector in Wales to develop opportunities for collaborative research projects which invest in the future of Wales and Europe. As a KESS2 West Wales project, the original research proposal identified a need to address health inequalities (the double jeopardy) in the South Wales Valleys region. The South Wales Valleys (henceforth the Valleys) are a group of industrialised valleys, spanning from eastern Carmarthenshire to western Monmouthshire. Known for their heavy industrial past involving iron and steel production and coal mining, the Valleys in present day are more readily associated with a legacy of socio-economic decline, with consistently high incidences of long-term ill health and unemployment (Llewelyn et al., 2017).

With novel technologies, increased global competition for material production, and political forces surrounding climate change and global warming, the industries within the Valleys began to decline. While the steel works began to depart the Valleys before the first World War in a bid to cut transportation costs, thereby moving to coastal areas such as Port Talbot, it was not until the 1960s that the National Coal Board initiated a closure policy resulting in a reduction of working pits from 118 in 1960 to 52 in 1970, and a loss of 47,000 jobs (Rees, 1978). The geographical inaccessibility of the Valleys also meant that opportunities to commute to coastal areas for work were limited for residents unless they lived in the valley mouths, had private transport or resided in one of the few valleys served by British Rail at the time. With thousands of inhabitants unable to provide for their families, and the social problems associated with urban areas coupled with rural isolation, the Valleys suffered a duality of deprivation (Bennett et al., 2000). Effectively they have long been situated in a no-man's land between the countryside and 'the big city', a context that has been notoriously difficult to police

(Bevan, 2015). Whilst the heavy industrial past was once the heart of thriving communities, today it is a visible reminder of the area's population decline and economic deprivation (Statistics for Wales, 2008, 2009; Saunders and Moles, 2013).

The Valleys is regarded as an area of significant social and economic disadvantage, with many towns and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) recorded as the most deprived areas in Wales according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (Welsh Government, 2019). The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is a National Statistic produced by Welsh Government and the official measure of relative deprivation for local areas in Wales. The WIMD identifies areas with the highest concentrations of multiple different forms of deprivation, with the accumulation of each resulting in an overall area deprivation score from 1 (most deprived) to 1,909 (least deprived) (Welsh Government, 2019). The WIMD is made up of eight domains of deprivation, each of which is calculated using a range of indicators. The domains are income, employment, health, housing, education, access to services, community safety and physical environment (Welsh Government, 2019). Crucially, the WIMD does not provide a complete measure of deprivation in an area, but rather it accurately compares the relative deprivation of one area to another. It also does not account for the fact that non-deprived people may live in deprived areas while deprived people may live in non-deprived areas. That being said, WIMD is a popular and accessible tool for identifying areas of deprivation for the purpose of empirical research (Micic, Barnes and Gomez, 2012; Adekanmbi, Jones, Farewell and Francis, 2020; Lee et al., 2020).

The local authorities that form part of the Valleys are Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea and Torfaen, therefore reflecting a significant proportion of the Welsh population as a whole. Given the large population and geographical spread of the area, the research identified three local authorities in which to focus the fieldwork. These were Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil. During the planning stage of the fieldwork, the 2014 WIMD was used to identify deprivation levels in the areas. At this time, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil recorded the first and second highest amount of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales. Caerphilly meanwhile placed in joint seventh position with Neath Port Talbot

(Welsh Government, 2014). Caerphilly did however have two LSOAs in the top 10 most deprived in Wales (with the area of St James 3 recorded as the number one most deprived area in Wales), accompanied by one area in Merthyr Tydfil. Research also indicated that significant proportions of young people within these areas have long been living below the poverty line, with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil recording percentages of 35.5%, 34.7% and 35.2% respectively, higher than the national average of 31% (End Child Poverty, 2021; Welsh Government, 2020).

Deprivation was high in these areas across a number of domains, hence their overall high scores. For example, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly recorded the first, second and fourth highest number of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales for employment and second, first and fifth highest for education respectively (Welsh Government, 2014). Additionally, certain local authorities scored highly in specific domains, such as Blaenau Gwent having the highest number of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% for community safety and third highest for income deprivation (Welsh Government, 2014). Given the degree of deprivation recorded in these areas across the various domains, it is no surprise that there was also a significant degree of health deprivation, with Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly reporting the first and third highest number of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales and Blaenau Gwent recording the fifth highest (Welsh Government, 2014).

Research tells us that health inequalities are significantly more prevalent in areas of deprivation, with higher incidences of ill-health and negative health outcomes (Zhang, Cook, Jarman and Lisboa, 2011; Siegel, Mielck and Maier, 2014). Accordingly, all three local authorities have recorded lower life expectancies than the national average of 82.1 with Blaenau Gwent recording 80, Caerphilly 81.1 and Merthyr Tydfil recording 80.1 (Public Health Wales, 2020). A more substantial gap was prevalent however for healthy life expectancy, where healthy life expectancy for women in the most deprived areas of Wales was reported at 53.3 years of age compared to 70.2 years of age in the least deprived areas (Public Health Wales, 2020). Whilst the national average for healthy life expectancy was 62.4 years of age, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil recorded 56.5, 57 and 57 respectively (Public Health Wales, 2020). The incidence of chronic disease has been consistently higher in the Valleys region over the past two decades, where rates of heart disease, respiratory illness, mental illness

and arthritis were higher than the national average in 1998 and continue to be more prevalent in the aforementioned local authorities today (Welsh National Assembly, 1998; Welsh Government, 2020).

Additionally, research illustrates that the incidence of negative lifestyle behaviours has been consistently higher in the Valleys region compared to more affluent areas of Wales, likely contributing to the lower life expectancy outcomes (Welsh Government, 2020; Cockerham, 1997; Mehta and Merskylä, 2017). For example, the average number of people not eating fruit or vegetables was highest among all local authorities in Blaenau Gwent, with Merthyr Tydfil placing joint third, while Merthyr Tydfil homed the second highest rate of smokers in Wales with Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly placing in joint fifth (Welsh Government, 2020). Of utmost priority for this research, was the rate of physical *inactivity,* where Merthyr Tydfil recorded the joint highest rate in Wales with Bridgend, and Blaenau Gwent recorded the third highest rate. Caerphilly meanwhile reported the joint sixth highest rate of inactivity in Wales (Welsh Government, 2020).

Naturally, poor PA levels were also exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19. Sport Wales commissioned Savanta ComRes to conduct a representative survey of PA levels in Wales during the midst of Covid-19. Whilst PA levels increased for some groups, likely due to increased leisure time as a result of schools and workplaces closing and/or working from home and avoiding commutes, PA levels also decreased for certain demographics. Following a similar pattern to above, socioeconomic position had a significant influence over PA levels with the mean number of days engaging in at least 30 minutes of PA being significantly lower for disadvantaged groups compared to those in a higher socioeconomic position (Sport Wales, 2020). Additionally, whilst older populations (35-54) increased their PA levels, those aged 16-34 engaged in significantly less PA compared to pre-Covid times, while only 23% of children were meeting daily PA guidelines with 30% engaging in less than 30 minutes of PA per day (Sport Wales, 2020).

It is clear therefore that the areas selected for fieldwork were associated with significant social and economic disadvantage and were thus likely areas in which the double jeopardy was in operation for young women. This coupled with the impact of

Covid-19 on young people and disadvantaged groups warranted selection of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil as areas in which to study engagement with PA among young women, something that will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming *Methodology* chapter. It is also important to highlight that whilst the 2014 WIMD results were used to select local authorities for fieldwork, some changes occurred in the levels of area-deprivation throughout the duration of the research and up to present day, while some domains remained relatively stable. The latest WIMD was reported in 2019 where Merthyr Tydfil remained the area with the second highest amount of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales, while Blaenau Gwent dropped significantly from first to sixth and Caerphilly dropped from seventh to ninth (Welsh Government, 2019). More recent WIMD data suggests that high levels of deprivation are still prevalent within each chosen local authority, however, maintaining the justification for selecting the settings. Additionally, it has likely become apparent that Caerphilly has mostly presented lower deprivation levels than Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil, and indeed some other local authorities within the Valleys region. The justification for Caerphilly's inclusion will thus be discussed further in the proceeding *Methodology* chapter, specifically surrounding the selection of field settings.

2.6 Interventions to Address Physical Inactivity

Given the known benefits of PA (Warburton, Nicol and Bredin, 2006; Hayes and Kriska, 2008; White et al., 2017; Czosnek et al., 2019), in addition to the significant disparity between desirable and actual participation rates worldwide (WHO, 2020), numerous interventions have been developed to target inactivity and support people in fostering healthier practices. Interventions to address PA come in many different forms, often tailored towards a specific demographic. For example, interventions targeting school-age children (Watson et al., 2017), office workers (Abdin, Welch, Byron-Daniel and Meyrick, 2018), various ethnic groups (Banerjee et al., 2016; Bland and Sharma, 2017) and those suffering from disease/ill-health, including inflammatory bowel disease (Eckert, Abbasi-Neureither, Köppel and Huber, 2019), cancer (Swartz et al., 2017) and Alzheimer's disease (Du et al., 2018). Central to this thesis, are the PA interventions targeted toward women and girls and socially disadvantaged groups.

2.6.1 PA Interventions for Women and Girls

There are a number of intervention studies targeted at women and girls specifically, and these have drawn on various approaches, settings, concepts and frameworks to promote change. Of recent popularity, are the use of behaviour change frameworks and technological support. For example, Dishman et al. (2004), evaluated the effects of the Lifestyle Education for Activity Programme (LEAP) by actively promoting self-efficacy within a school-based setting. This programme drew on variables within Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as mediators of change when promoting PA participation. The study concluded that positive manipulation of self-efficacy correlated with increased PA among black and white girls. Taymoori et al. (2008) studied female PA uptake via randomised controlled trial (RCT) with three different groups in an Iranian high school. The first group's experience was based upon Pender's Health Promotion model (HP) (Pender, 2011) which also draws on concepts within SCT, another blended Pender's HP with selected constructs from the Transtheoretical model (TTM), including stages and processes of change, and the final group represented the control. No significant differences were found between the HP and control groups, while significant differences in PA uptake were found between HP/TTM and the control group at follow up, advocating a blended approach to address female participation.

Okely et al. (2017) conducted a group RCT whereby 24 secondary schools were tasked with and supported by researchers in designing an action plan for raising PA levels amongst female pupils. The action plan targeted three main areas, namely, the formal curriculum, the school environment and home/school/community links and was based upon formative data from the target population and individual needs of the specific school. PA outcomes were measured primarily by accelerometer-derived data. From baseline to 18-month follow up, there was a significant decline in participation rates with no differences identified between intervention and control groups. The researchers concluded that the *Girls in Sport* intervention was thus not effective in reducing participation decline in adolescent girls, holding the lack of school implementation responsible for the primary reason for the null effect. Okely et al. (2017) called for strategies to advance implementation in order to improve results. Harrington et al. (2018) explored the effectiveness of the 'Girls Active' programme for promoting participation. This programme was developed by the Youth Sport Trust and uses peer leadership and marketing to 'empower adolescent girls to influence school

decisions, develop themselves as role models, and promote PA to peers' (p.2). By use of RCT and accelerometer-based data surrounding light, moderate and vigorous PA, Harington et al. found that whilst some differences were identified at seven-months, Girls Active did not produce significant improvements at 14-months and conversely, control groups saw the greatest improvements for particular variables.

Camacho-Miñano, LaVoi and Barr-Anderson (2011) conducted a systematic review on PA interventions targeting young and adolescent girls. Of the 21 studies included in the review, 10 reported a favourable intervention effect upon PA outcomes. Of the 12 studies with an acceptable methodological quality, seven studies were rated as having high methodological quality, five failed to increase girls' PA and while seven were successful in doing so, their results were modest. Key recommendations from the studies included in the systematic review included gender-sensitive intervention approaches in schools, increasing choice, non-competitive and innovative activities in school-based interventions

2.6.2 PA Interventions for Disadvantaged Groups

Similarly to above, there are a plethora of intervention studies which seek to promote PA participation amongst socially disadvantaged, deprived or poverty-stricken populations. Cleland et al. (2013) conducted a systematic review of intervention studies which sought to increase PA in socioeconomically disadvantaged women. Of the 19 studies included in the review, 10 relied on theories of behaviour change, with four utilising the Transtheoretical Model and six opting for Social Cognitive Theory. Owed to substantial statistical heterogeneity, an overall effect of the interventions was not presented. Interventions including a group delivery component, however, were found to be statistically more effective than those delivered on an individual/community basis. Therefore, interventions which incorporate a social element may be more powerful for this population and increase the chances of successful intervention. Specifically, provision and reinforcement of social support, including instrumental (assistance with transportation), informational (sharing of educational resources), emotional (asking about the PA experience) and appraisal (encouraging or reinforcing activity) can make valuable contributions to promoting sustainable relationships with PA for this population (Cleland et al. 2013).

Lowther, Mutrie and Scott (2010) studied the effects of a fitness assessment, exercise consultation and control intervention over a period of one year in a socially and economically disadvantaged, non-regularly active community. Fitness assessments involve measuring particular characteristics such as height, weight, cardio-respiratory capacity, strength and flexibility and comparing against age and sex-related norms to determine an exercise programme tailored towards the individual's capabilities. Exercise consultations involved one-to-one person-centred interviewing surrounding becoming more active. Participants were randomly assorted into each category and measured for immediate intervention effect (baseline, four weeks and three months) and long-term intervention effect (three months, six months and one year). Most participants recorded significant increases in PA up to six months but, declined in the proceeding six months, suggesting that the crucial period for support and adherence is the period after the initial six months. However, those who participated in an exercise consultation significantly increased their participation after one year, in addition to exercise consultations recruiting more voluntary participants. This indicates that exercise consultation was both more desirable and more effective amongst the disadvantaged population.

Fjeldsoe, Miller and Marshall (2010) conducted an RCT into PA promotion via telephone short message service (SMS) amongst postnatal women living in disadvantaged communities. The intervention involved a 12-week community-based programme of goal setting with consistent, personally tailored SMS targeting SCT constructs, namely self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, goal setting skills, social support and perceived environmental opportunity for PA. Participants nominated a support person to monitor and help them reach their PA goals and activity was measured via self-report. Intervention exposure was shown to increase PA frequency and walking for exercise frequency at 13 weeks, illustrating a positive intervention effect. Post-trial interviews were also conducted, and findings indicated that SMS and use of a goal setting magnet (an erasable weekly planner in the form of a fridge magnet) were effective in promoting behaviour change. Support persons had little perceived effect, yet the behavioural change counsellor was evaluated positively, and highlighted for the personal connection between participant and intervention deliverer. The researchers did not conduct any follow-up examination, however, PA participation

did improve through the trial, suggesting that use of SMS, goal-setting and personal connection warrants further exploration in intervention work.

Beaulac, Kristjansson and Calhoun (2011) conducted a qualitative-based study to evaluate the effectiveness of a hip-hop dance programme delivered in a socially disadvantaged urban community in Canada. The intervention was developed in consultation with youths, parents and community partners and was consistent with the social-ecological model of health behaviour change (King et al., 2002). The main aims of the intervention surrounded enhancing dance skills and fostering positive relationships with peers and adult role models. Individual interviews and focus groups were utilised to evaluate the experience of the programme, in addition to a 9-item personnel survey. On average, participants attended 7.61 out of 13 sessions with a number of factors influencing attrition, including part-time jobs, homework, inconsistent programme timing and interruptions in transport provision. Satisfaction with the programme was rated highly with participants and parents reporting positive impacts on skill development, physical and psychological well-being, relationships and school performance. Participants also noted increases in PA levels as a result of the intervention. A limitation of this research was the subjective nature of the findings, with the reliance on self-reporting from cohorts meaning any objective increase in PA levels or hip-hop skills were difficult to determine. That being said, the qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate given its suitability to researching low-income and culturally diverse communities (Cardona and Joshi, 2007), in addition to its ability to generate data in complex areas; areas that may not be 'clearly formulated in your interviewees' minds in a way which they can simply articulate in response to a short standardised question' (Mason, 1996, p.40). Therefore, although objective measures surrounding PA status should be incorporated in any intervention which seeks to increase levels, there is real value in employing qualitative methods to explore the area, particularly given the complexity of the double jeopardy.

2.6.3 The Limitations of Previous Intervention Work

There are a number of key points to highlight within this intervention section. Firstly, the success of the interventions in promoting long-term behaviour change is at best partial. Whilst immediate increases in PA behaviour should be celebrated, it is crucial

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that a long-term measure is accounted for, in order to accurately gauge impact on sustainable behaviour. Secondly, where the aformentioned interventions do concur is in the value of social interaction. For Cleland et al.'s (2013) systematic review, statistical differences were present for those interventions that included an element of group delivery. For Lowther, Mutrie and Scott (2010) and Fjeldsoe, Miller and Marshall (2010), the opportunity to have exercise consultations and discussions with behaviour change counsellors increased the chances of success, a significant finding and one that was carefully considered when adopting a methodology for increasing PA participation within the target audience, outlined in the upcoming empirical section, *Walking and Talking*.

The aforementioned studies highlight the importance of incorporating a social element into intervention studies targeting disadvantaged groups. Similarly, social support and social climate and environment are reported as significant mediators of PA behaviour in adolescent women (Budd et al., 2018; Satija et al., 2018; Keane et al., 2020), while case study analyses conducted by Coleman, Cox and Roker (2008) revealed the friendship group as the primary influence over PA behaviour. This was found to be significantly more influential than family support, complimenting existing theories on adolescence that social life becomes more important than the family influences that characterise early childhood (Coleman, 2010). Interventions targeting the double jeopardy, therefore, should account for the significant influence of social climate and interaction in governing PA participation in young, disadvantaged women.

Thirdly, and of particular significance in dictating the chosen research approach, all of the interventions discussed rely on elements of behaviour change theories and focus on autonomous actors as drivers of change. The diverse intervention results, however, must be interpreted with a critical eye and go some way to indicate the value in exploring different theoretical approaches. Behaviour change approaches such as TTM have frequently been critiqued for poor implementation (Romain et al. 2018, as well as a failure to account for the numerous, complex factors which account for PA behaviour. Adams and White (2005) highlight that social demographic characteristics such as gender, age and socio-economic position are known to influence PA behaviour yet hold no ground within TTM framework, meaning TTM fails to account for a plethora of likely unacknowledged independent variables acting as confounding

variables. Additionally, the idea of a sole independent variable being transformed within a behaviour change approach is in itself questionable given the known impact of intersectionality where a 'highly contextualised combination of factors such as gender, and socio-economic status leads to the emergence of a unique dynamic of its own, that cannot be isolated from the interaction between the two variables' (Hopkins et al., 2020).

Adopting such generic models of change therefore exposes researchers to the dangers of underestimating the complexity of interventions required to enhance PA participation. Additionally, many intervention studies are implicitly (if not explicitly) based on the ABC framework (Day and Smith, 1996; Zohar and Luria, 2003) something that has historically played a key role within policy-based attempts to promote behaviour change (Prendergast et al., 2008; Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs, 2008). According to Shove (2010), 'social change is thought to depend upon values and attitudes (the A), which are believed to drive the kinds of behaviour (the B) that individuals choose (the C) to adopt' (p.1274). Many PA interventions thus work on the premise of ABC, that by relieving barriers (C) for specific populations, individuals' attitudes (A) and behaviours (B) will transform in a positive way, for example, subsidising costs or providing kit/equipment. The ABC framework has been critiqued, however, for failing to account for value-action gaps (Blake, 1999). Featuring heavily within sustainability research, this concept refers to the idea of 'why do people fail to practice what they preach?' (Smith and Louis, 2008, p.647). A clear contemporary example being the inconsistencies many individuals and organisations present between valuing the importance of fighting climate change whilst also engaging in environmentally harmful behaviours (Babutsidze and Chai, 2018).

This so-called attitude-behaviour split has also been documented in PA research. Countless studies have suggested that specific barriers prevent PA participation, yet frequently when these barriers are lifted, attitudes, behaviours and choices have not evolved to the extent where they could be hailed successful transformations (Keyserling et al., 2008; Bull et al., 2014). As Shove (2010) points out, 'the [value-action] gap is only mystifying if we suppose that values do (or should) translate into action' (p.1276), something that is proven to not be entirely accurate. This research thus argues that models such as TTM and ABC are too simplistic and mechanistic to

account for the complex process of transforming PA and human behaviour. This, in addition to the at best moderate results means such behaviour change frameworks are both conceptually and empirically limited. Despite well-publicised critiques, however, they are still heavily invested in, illustrated by TTM underpinning Sport England's (2019) nationwide recommendations for tackling inactivity.

From a sociological perspective, behaviour change frameworks like TTM and ABC perceive the agency-structure relationship (which will be discussed imminently) too simplistically, as one ultimately controlled by rational, autonomous individuals. Similar to opposing perceptions based on macro, normative structural theories, they are thus incapable of shedding light on the 'social, material and interrelational features of human activity' (Cohn, 2014, p.159) in between the ABC, stages of behaviour change and social world altogether. Spotswood et al. (2019) also point out that reframing sociocultural issues as moral responsibilities and thus placing the onus of responsibility on individuals for behaviour change can magnify social stigma (LeBesco, 2011), further legitimising socially Darwinistic neo-liberal policy-making strategies and the symbolic violence associated with them, in turn further enhancing social inequality (Cohn, 2014; Katz, Gravelin and O'Brien, 2018). There is a call therefore to explore alternative theoretical lenses which offer more sophisticated accounts of how the social world comes to be. Accounts where the basic domain of enquiry is 'neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time' (Giddens, 1984, p.2). Accordingly, this research employed theories of practice.

Chapter Three

Practice Theory
as a Theoretical Lens

3.1 Introduction and Structure of the Chapter

The chapter begins by narrating the foundations of practice theory as a cultural theory which evolved in response to the historic and problematic dualism of structure versus agency. It describes the key principles of a social ontology which places practice at the forefront of analysis, outlining the defining points of agreement between theorists, and further explaining how practice theory has come to be recognised as a family of theories with fundamental similarities. The chapter will proceed to align with a specific conception of practice theory, namely Shove, Pantzar and Watson's (2012) three elements model, owing to the simplified conception and ontological tools the model presents for exploring the complexity of PA participation within a hard-to-reach group.

Following that, Shove, Pantzar and Watson's (2012) discussion surrounding the dynamics of social practice, including how practices are carried across space and time, become intimately linked to one another as *bundles of practice*, and how the links between elements and practices form, sustain and break, with the latter resulting in the retirement and eventual disintegration of a practice (for example, domesticated households no longer cooking over an open fire due to the emergence of ovens and stoves). Consideration will also be shown to a number of sensitising concepts owed to the contribution they offer to the specific research area. These include Swidler's (2001) *anchoring practices* and Wetherell's (2015) *affective practice*. As the chapter closes, it will discuss how practice theory can complement or even advance some of the limitations of using behaviour change approaches to increase PA engagement highlighted in the previous chapter. Existing studies using practice theory in the area of PA will be outlined, illustrating how this theoretical lens is capable of shedding new light on an old problem. Finally, the research question, including the main aims and objectives of this project will be presented before proceeding to the methodology.

3.2 The Origins of Practice Theory

Thinkers once spoke of 'structures', 'systems', 'meaning', 'life world', 'events' and 'actions' when naming the primary generic social thing. Today, many theorists would accord 'practices' a comparable honour'.

(Schatzki, 2001, p.10)

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Practice theory is a cultural theory that evolved from the disciplines of sociology and philosophy, emerging since the 1970s against a backdrop of philosophical work by the likes of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger (Hui, Schatzki and Shove, 2017). Through a widespread dissatisfaction with the traditional vocabulary of both sociology and philosophy, cultural theories emerged as resolution since previous theories were critiqued for being *insufficiently inspirational* to explore the social world (Reckwitz, 2016, p.114). More specifically, previous theories frequently stagnated in one of two ontological camps; structure versus agency, or norm-orientated versus purpose-orientated action.

Sociologically, norm-orientated action, or *homo sociologicus* (structure) explains the social world as governed by collective norms and values and the social 'ought' present in particular societies (for example, Marxism and Functionalism). Purpose-orientated action or *homo economicus* (agency) meanwhile individualises subjective purposes, interests and actions as the work of rational, autonomous actors (Rational Choice Theory, Neoliberal approaches) (Reckwitz, 2002; Hopkins et al., 2020). Solely placing oneself in either camp has historically resulted in disregarding the impact of the other, and importantly, how the interaction between the two can come to represent the social world and particular behaviours (practices). Where cultural theories and in this case, practice theory, excel is in their ability to move beyond the problematic dualism of structure/agency or voluntarism/determinism and bridge the gap between the two, thus illuminating an historic blind spot in sociological research.

This blind spot was recognised by what are termed '1st generation' practice theorists, such as Pierre Bourdieu (1972) and Anthony Giddens (1984). It represents the implicit, unconscious layer of knowledge which enables a symbolic organisation of reality, something dismissed by both homo sociologicus and homo economicus. In contrast, cultural theories understand actions by:

> *…reconstructing the symbolic structures of knowledge which enable and constrain the agents to interpret the world according to certain forms and to behave in corresponding ways. Social order then does not appear as a product of compliance of mutual normative expectations but embedded in collective*

cognitive and symbolic structures, in a 'shared knowledge' which enables a socially shared way of ascribing meaning to the world.

(Reckwitz, 2002, p.245-246)

Naturally, the 'locus' of the social for cultural theories must therefore be located within those symbolic and cognitive structures of knowledge, and given the broadness of the terms, a diverse set of solutions developed. These primarily include mentalism, textualism, intersubjectivism and in the case of this research, practice theory. These forms of thought locate the site of the social in minds (both objective and subjective strands), signs, symbols, discourse and communication, social interactions (primarily language) and practices respectively. In addition to moving beyond the problematic dualism of structure versus agency, Reckwitz (2016) also highlights how practice theory specifically is capable of advancing another dualistic distinction found in cultural theories. Namely, on the one hand a culturalism that studies discourses and sign systems, and on the other, a materialism of biological processes (Reckwitz, 2002). According to Reckwitz (2016), the main tenet of practice theory is to 'seek the social in practices, in embodied routine activities subtended by implicit, collective knowledge' (p.114) and for that reason, practices belong to the realm of the 'genuinely social' at the same time as being anchored in the bodies of individuals and acting through them. Therefore, because practices depend on implicit, collective knowledge, they are inherently cultural, yet through being anchored in bodies or artefacts that are connected to bodies, they are also material practices.

As stated earlier, there are many philosophical precursors who have contributed to 'the practice turn', including Wittgenstein, Heidegger and pragmatists such as John Dewey (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and von Savingy, 2001; Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Since the 1970s, a core of social theorists increasingly recognised practice as central to social life and analysis (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and von Savingy, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002). Their foci varied, from Bourdieu's pursuit of 'praxeology', or a theory of practical knowing, in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972), to Giddens' version of practice theory in his *theory of structuration* (1979, 1984), to Foucault's (1984a, b) praxeological framework for analysing the relations between bodies, agency, knowledge and understanding (Reckwitz, 2002). Giddens' theory in particular

highlighted the *recursive constitution* of social structures, meaning agents carry and perform practices against a backdrop of rules and norms and in doing so, consolidate and (re)construct the social structures (practices). In terms of empirical sociological work, Garfinkel's ethnomethodology (1967) and Butler's 'performative' gender studies (1990) are considered key pieces of practice-based literature while Taylor's neo-hermeneutical model of embodied agency and the self-interpreting animal (1993a, b) is said to also follow a 'praxeological path' (Reckwitz, 2002, p.244).

Whilst the authors above incorporated the concept of practice into their work in various ways, it was Theodore Schatzki who, at the close of the 20th century, reenergised the field by publishing a novel take on practice theory as a site of ontology, accompanied by an influential theoretical vocabulary (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012), thus creating a social philosophy explicitly focused on the concept of practice. For this reason, the work of Schatzki will form the basis of much of these introductory sections. Schatzki's formulation was based primarily on the philosophies of Wittgenstein and Heidegger, in that *people do what makes sense for them to do* (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and von Savingy, 2001), providing an analytical category and ontological toolkit credited as a productive lever for understanding social order (Friedland, 2018). Over the past two decades, there have been a number of scholars who have further contributed to the practice turn, building upon Schatzki's work. These include the likes of Andreas Reckwitz and Elizabeth Shove, scholars who will be referenced frequently throughout this chapter and who, along with Schatzki, have come to be known as '2nd generation' practice theorists.

3.3 Defining Practice Theory: A Family of Theories

Given the varying impulses driving the aforementioned research, it is no surprise that there is no unified practice approach. Rather, there are key commonalities between thinkers and importantly, agreement on at least one fundamental principle which forms the basis of their modus operandi; that practices exist as organised sets of activity, that practices link and connect to form wider complexes and constellations – a *nexus* – and that this nexus forms the 'basic domain of study of the social sciences' (Giddens, 1984, p.2; Hui, Schatzki and Shove, 2017).

Whilst the diversity of practice theorists privilege different things in their conceptions, such as agency, discourse, the intersection of structures and individual behaviours (the latter of which has been adopted by this research) (Foucault, 1972; Garfinkel, 1984; Habermas and Burger, 2008; Schatzki Knorr Cetina and von Savigny, 2001, Shove et al., 2012), practice theory or theories of practice (used interchangeably) are considered a family of shared concepts and principles.

> *Practice accounts are joined in the belief that such phenomena as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformations occur within and are aspects or components of the field of practices.*

(Schatzki, 2001, p.11)

The field of practices represents the total nexus of interconnected human practices and according to Schatzki (2001), is key to demarcating a practice approach since all analyses that fall under the practice umbrella either (1) explore/develop an account of practices or the field thereof, *or* (2) treat the field of practices as the setting in which to explore their subject matter. Schatzki (*Ibid*) continues:

> *A central core, moreover, of practices theorists conceives of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understanding.*

(p.11)

Most theorists identify activities as human activity, whilst a minority of post-humanist scholars believe the activities bound into practices also include those of non-humans, such as machines. The majority of practice theorists would agree that activity is 'embodied and that nexuses of practices are mediated by artifacts, hybrids and natural objects' (Schatzki, 2001, p.11), although points of departure reign about the nature of embodiment and entities that mediate activity, including whether the entities are truly relevant to practices on a fundamental level. The emphasis on the 'embodied' nature of practices evolved from the late 20th Century transition (generated above all by feminism) towards understanding forms of human activity as fundamentally entwined with the character of the human body. This is rooted in the anti-Cartesian movement

which purports that the human body is the 'meeting place of both mind and activity and of individual activity and social manifold' (Schatzki, 2001, p.17). This prompted a core principle of practice theory to develop; that bodies and activities are *constituted* within practices (Schatzki, 2001).

> *Practices are the chief and immediate context within which the preponderance of bodily properties crucial to social life are formed, not just skills and activities but bodily experiences, surface presentations, and even physical structures.*

> (Schatzki, 2001, p.11)

Therefore, under this premise, practices must be *the* unit of analysis used to unpick and explore the social world, prioritised above the mind, normative rules and discourse. The aforementioned also has implications for the location of the self or individual in relation to practices, which will be discussed at length in the upcoming section, *Carriers of Practice*. Importantly, the properties of practice theory listed thus far are what demarcates practice theory as a distinct social ontology. As stated, the social represents a field of 'embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organised around shared practical understanding' (Schatzki, 2001, p.12). Within practice theory, the units of analysis privileged in other theories, such as the mind, normative rules, discourse, (inter)actions and so on, can only be analysed via the field of practices. For instance, actions are instilled in practices just as individuals are constituted within them. Language represents a form of discursive activity and is thus a practice phenomenon, while institutions and structures are considered effects of practices.

For Reckwitz (2002), *practice* in the singular refers to the totality of human action. *A* practice, however, represents:

> *a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.*

> (Reckwitz, 2002, p.249).

He continues, a practice represents a 'pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing that practice' (*Ibid).* Any given practice, be it cooking, shopping, cleaning or exercising, exists as a 'block' whose identity depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of the aforementioned elements, and importantly, this existence cannot be reduced to any one, single element, highlighting the significance of the 'DNA structure' of every individual practice. To account for this, Schatzki (2002) defines any given practice as a 'bundle of activities' or an 'organised nexus of actions'. Hopkins et al. (2020) highlight the core elements of recreational swimming which include the acquisition of the correct clothing (bather, goggles, swim cap), transport to a swimming pool, access to and funding for payment, navigation of opening times, knowledge of changing and showering protocols and of course, the act of swimming itself. Any alterations in one element will likely impact the others, thus impacting the practice of swimming as a whole. The interpretation of practices as bundles of activities consisting of interconnected elements provides a key area of exploration in terms of studying disengagement, owing to the possibility for identifying and shifting problematic elements to shift practice as a whole. This will be discussed in greater detail in upcoming sections.

3.3.1 Carriers of Practice

Within practice theory, practices exist as *performances.*

> *It is through performance, through the immediacy of doing, that the 'pattern' provided by the practice-as-an-entity is filled out and reproduced. It is only through successive moments of performance that the interdependencies between elements which constitute the practice as entity are sustained over time'.*

(Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012, p.15)

Therefore, any recognisable practice, such as swimming, only exists and endures because of countless recurrent enactments, each reproducing and reinforcing the interdependencies between elements of which the practice is comprised. Subsequently, in a radical departure from conventional theories which place understandings, meanings, know-how and reasoning as personal attributes, within this

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analysis, individuals feature as *trägers* or *carriers* of practice. Reckwitz (2002) urges that these phenomena should not be treated as qualities of the individual, but as 'elements and qualities of a practice in which the single individual participates' (p.250).

The träger is an agent who carries not only patterns of bodily behaviour, but also routinised ways of knowing, understanding and desiring. The knowledge, know-how and purpose of swimming therefore are not contained within the minds and bodies of swimmers. Instead, they are components of the practice of swimming of which the individual is merely a carrier. Individuals are thus neither autonomous agents nor norm-conforming beings, and since there are a multitude of social practices in existence and every agent carries out numerous different social practices, individuals represent the unique crossing point of practices. Furthermore, any given practice is not only recognisable to the carriers, but also (at least within the same culture) to potential observers. A practice is thus a 'type of behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different body/minds' (Reckwitz, 2002, p.250).

3.4 The Three Elements Model

In an attempt to simplify Reckwitz's (2002) all-encompassing definition of a practice, the three elements model was conceived. Often attributed to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), the model was originally offered by Shove and Pantzar (2005) while critically exploring the practice of Nordic walking. Previously described as *stuff, images, and skills,* the three elements were refined in later work to become materials, meanings and competencies. This model more succinctly captures the cognitive, physical and embodied dimensions of practice and is thus a more accessible tool for applying to empirical studies (Spotswood et al. 2015). This is because it allows researchers to scrutinise the trajectories of specific elements and the making and breaking of links between them, providing scope to analyse both stability and change without privileging neither agency or structure (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

Where theorists consider practices to be in a consistent state of formation, reformation and deformation, elements are considered comparatively stable and as such, are capable of circulating between places and sustaining over time. Thus, we are

consistently surrounded by 'things' that have outlived the practices of which they once constituted (Shove and Pantzar, 2006), granting the possibility for such elements to make a return to popularity. Examples here include the resurgence of vinyl, records and photographic film cameras which have all returned in recent years after hiatuses due to the popularity of digitalisation.
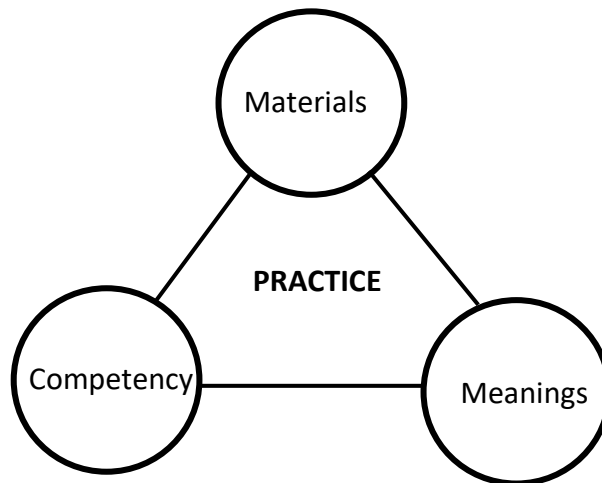
Figure 2: The three elements model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

Schatzki (2001) argues that to understand a specific practice, one must always account for the material configurations involved. Put more bluntly, Reckwitz (2002) states that 'to play football, we need a ball' (p.252). Any conception of practice must therefore account for the material resources required to enable the performance of that practice. Of course, the ball alone does not make the game. Knowledge of rules, competency in playing and motivation to do so all combine to constitute football as we know it, necessitating the addition of the remaining 2/3 elements of the model. In a departure from more conventional social theories, Shove et al.'s (2012) (and other practice theorists') conception of practice puts materiality at the forefront of analysis. This is due to the adoption of Latour's (2000) statement that artefacts 'are not 'reflecting' (society), as if the 'reflected' society existed somewhere else and was made of some other stuff. They are in large part the stuff out of which society is made' (p.113). Much emphasis must be given therefore for the constitutive role of things and materials in everyday life. For Reckwitz (2002), Schatzki (2001) and Røpke (2009), practices are inherently interwoven with objects and artefacts, and thus objects should

be treated as a constitutive element of practice. This position was shared by Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) who use *materials* to incorporate objects, tools, hardware, infrastructure and the body itself.

Know-how, background knowledge and understanding have appeared more frequently in accounts of social action, one example being Giddens' (1984) description of 'practical consciousness'. Similarly, we can consider cultivated skill, shared understandings of acceptable behaviour or 'good' and 'bad' performances, and even the ability to recognise distinct practices in particular cultures. For their conception, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) included multiple forms of understanding and practical and mental knowledgeability to represent the second element of their model; *competencies*.

Finally, Shove et al. (2012) 'collapse' Reckwitz's mental activities, emotion and motivational knowledge (2002) to create the final element of *meanings*, a term used to represent the social and symbolic significance of participation in a practice at any one moment. This also departs from Schatzki's (1996) concept of *teleoaffective structures*. This term describes how tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods are central to the organising and ordering of practice, as well as the location of social practice within a timespace (Schatzki, 2010). Teleoaffective structures highlight how activities are historically and geographically situated and are future-orientated in terms of meeting motivational goals. To demarcate, within the three elements model, meanings are treated as an element of practice, rather than something that exists outside of practice or figures as a driving force, as with teleoaffective structures.

3.5 Trajectories of Practice

Any theorisation of the social world must account for how society has both changed and stayed the same over time. Additionally, there are typically frequent points of departure between what one says and what one does in terms of behaviour, hence the prevalence of value-action gaps (Blake, 1999; Shove, 2010), where one's perception of their activities is different to what they actually do. It is crucial therefore to follow and map sayings and doings over a period of time, following the *trajectories*

of practice, in order to understand phenomena such as the double jeopardy (as will be outlined in the upcoming methodology chapter).

Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) refer to *trajectories* to conceptualise how the three elements (materials, meanings, competencies) interact. According to the three elements model, practices are defined by interdependent relations between materials, meanings and competencies and these elements must exist in the world and be accessible in order to integrate and subsequently produce a practice. In contrast, when these links are no longer sustained, practices will naturally disintegrate. Furthermore, practices can also evolve as elements and unique combinations of elements evolve, while the disintegration or evolution of practices leave trails of disconnected or abandoned elements that shed light on how/why practice transformed. Importantly, for practices to sustain over time, connections between defining elements must be renewed time and time again, suggesting that stability and routinisation are not end points of a 'linear process of normalisation', but 'accomplishments in which similar elements are repeatedly linked together in similar ways' (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012, p.25). Therefore, by studying and following the trajectory of a particular practice, we can deconstruct the practice down to its fundamental properties (elements), giving us the capacity to identify agreements and conflicts and consequently understand changes over time.

Naturally, individuals have significant influence over the trajectories of practice given that as a carriers' commitment to an activity develops or decreases, certain practices will become more deeply embedded or anchored in society while others disappear (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Individuals and their successive (or lack of) re-enactment thus have part dominion over whether social orders are sustained, stabilised or disturbed. This is a mutually reinforcing principle in that while re-enactment sustains a particular social order, where practitioners become committed to a particular practice, they may change within themselves and *become* what they do (Becker, 1977), eloquently illustrated by William Durant's earlier quotation, *we are what we repeatedly do* (1926). Building upon Aristotle's discussion on moral excellence, Durant argued that excellence is not an act, but a habit created by a consistent reproduction of constructive behaviours. The increasing enactment of running practices therefore sustains the practice of running whilst simultaneously

creating a running identity for the individual carrier. Exploring the micro-practices that occur in between macro, normative structures and individual agents can thus provide insight into how phenomena such as the double jeopardy come to exist, as well as how prominent certain practices are in forging desirable identities, particularly during the influential period of adolescence (Andrews, Foulkes and Blakemore, 2020).

Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012, see chapter two *Making and Breaking Links*) draw on the practice of driving to provide a comprehensive illustration of their theory in action, particularly how links have historically been made, sustained or broken to reinforce the practice of 21st Century driving as we know it. Where previous travel practices included horse carriages, cycling and foot, advancements and changes in materials, meanings and competencies rendered previous configurations as redundant for long-distance travel (at least in an everyday Western context). For example, the complex engineering once used to produce cars has been simplified, negating the need for many of the earlier materials. Cars have become accessible to the masses, unlike in their early evolutionary days, thus increasing mass competency and resulting in more cars on the road. In present day, cars are meaningfully understood as not solely reserved for the elite (although financial resource continues to impact their availability for certain populations) and a timesaving, less risk-intensive form of travel, hence their popularity. The aforementioned changes occurred over sometimes long periods, with each fundamentally transforming practice as previous configurations of elements became redundant.

Considering the subject matter of PA, Hopkins et al. (2020) discuss the emergence of 'spinning' alongside the reduction in active travel as a result of the prevalence of cars in contemporary culture. Where cars have become available to the masses, this has resulted in a reduction in active travel practices. Reasons include (but are not limited to) infrastructure designed and dominated by automobiles rendering cycling as dangerous (meanings), more difficult to accomplish on congested streets, particularly for those low in confidence (competencies) and with few cycling routes and lock-up facilities available (materials). In contrast, 'spinning' involves a stationary exercise bike often located in gyms (but also available for personal home use) which includes a weighted flywheel, enabling exercises which develop endurance and strength through a range of intensities and resistances. Spinning emerged from cycling and aerobics,

drawing on materials, meanings and competencies from both, illustrating how novel relations between elements can create a new practice which addresses the aforementioned limitations (it is safer, more predictable and accessible for those with lower competency providing you have access to a spin bike/gym, requires less materials and is arguably a more efficient fitness activity in terms of time spent). A natural conclusion for many is that it has become more sensible to drive to the gym and 'spin' or drive to school/work in order to avoid risk and inconvenience, thus transforming patterns of active travel.

Meanwhile conflicts between elements and practices have been shown to not only result in the eventual disintegration of certain practices, but also to generate specific practice-based 'rules' which influence whether a practice is performed by particular populations. For example, Spotswood et al. (2019) highlight how the three elements can 'hang together' in ways which inhibit participation in PA for young girls. In their school-based study, girls reported that boys would rarely pass to them during lunchtime football games. Whilst material resources were available, the resources were 'meaningfully understood as being "not for girls" – an understanding closely linked to their competence' (p.6). Lunchtime football henceforth became a gendered practice where girls were consistently excluded, thereby lowering their activity levels and potential to develop competence, as well as making them feel less inclined to pursue the sport (and its subsequent effect on the development of empowering meanings and competencies).

Similarly, drawing on the concept of intersectionality, Hopkins et al. (2020), discuss elemental clashes in the practice of swimming for ethnic minorities and more significantly, women from ethnic minorities. As discussed earlier, swimming consists of a complex configuration of interrelated elements, key elements of which being showering and changing practices and exposing one's body in a public space. For women from certain (but not limited to) minority ethnic backgrounds, it is not the act of moving through the water that causes them to disengage from swimming but the normalised practice of exposing one's body. Here we see a dispositional clash between the agent practicing their religion and one core element of swimming as it is typically practiced in Western culture. For many, practicing religion will take priority over PA and thus anchor day-to-day practice (as will be discussed in the upcoming

section *Relations Between Practices*), thereby generating disengagement from swimming. As we have seen in recent years, however, specialist full-coverage suits have been created for this purpose as well as the introduction of closed swimming sessions where only certain populations are granted access and shutters are implemented to prevent public viewing. This illustrates the revolutionary impact of a sometimes simple material addition, thereby advocating for practice theory's ability to deindividualise the issue of inactivity yet keep individuals very much connected to the solution. The question remains, however, over how accessible these material additions are for the masses, particularly when they frequently rely on macro institutions and their associated policies.

3.5.1 Practice Recruitment: A Note on Bourdieu

As stated earlier, according to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), the 'contours' of any one practice depend on 'changing populations of more and less faithful carriers' (p.51). It is worth considering therefore how practitioners are recruited by *practices as entities*, in order for the practitioners to *perform* said practices. Shove et al. (2012) use the ecological analogy to consider this, exploring which practices succeed in colonising people's time and energy and thus becoming 'mainstream' where others lose out. They firstly point out that practices are not evenly distributed across the population and not every individual is capable of performing every practice. The distribution of material and financial resources, physical and mental capabilities and social norms and desires, as well as the demands of the practice itself all influence whether it is within reach for a person.

Whilst Shove et al. (2012) highlight how social inequalities can restrict the adoption of practices, they also consider how the impact of a given practice on an individual's life and life chances encourages recruitment. Bourdieu's (1986) work becomes significant here as the likelihood of becoming a carrier of practice is closely related to the social and symbolic significance of performance, as well as the vastly different opportunities to curate the forms of *capital* (physical, social, cultural and so on) necessary for, and in turn generated by performance of that practice. Capital is defined as 'accumulated labour (in its materialised form or its 'incorporated', embodied form) which, when appropriate on a private, ie. exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables

them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour' (Bourdieu, 1986, p.15). Put simply, capital is a form of 'fuel' which enables agents to reproduce their position within the social field and represents the socially valued 'goods' that many of us strive to attain for power, such as money, networks and status (Stych, 2010).

Depending on the field, capital can manifest itself in a variety of forms. Bourdieu originally condensed the concept to forms of economic, social and cultural capital (1986). Of particular importance to this thesis are the latter two. Social capital refers to 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986, p.214). In conventional terms, social capital is the potential to secure benefits through social relationships and membership of particular social networks. For example, access to exclusive golf clubs and courses (including the degree of business transactions that occur here) based on who a person socialises with.

Cultural capital represents a form of familiarity with the legitimate culture within a society and is considered 'convertible', and distinguished into three fundamental forms: embodied, institutionalised and objective cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital refers to 'the long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243), representing the cultural preferences and behaviours internalised during socialisation, such as language and mannerisms. Institutionalised cultural capital is associated with the 'degrees and diplomas which certify the value of the embodied cultural capital' (Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p.156). That is the formal recognition of a person's cultural capital, an example of which being any kind of formal educational qualification. Finally, objective cultural capital represents the consumption and acquisition of cultural goods (books, pictures, dictionaries, machines and so on). An example here might include parents encouraging children to learn musical instruments, taking them to galleries or theatres and in the case of this research, passing on active habits.

Whilst embodied capital is widely considered a sub-division of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), it has been argued that the 'physical' is too significant to be merely

seen as a component of cultural capital (Shilling, 1991). The concept of physical capital was thus developed by Bourdieu (1972, 1984, 1986) and Shilling (1991, 2010) to represent the value and significance of the body in relation to the acquisition of resources. For example, physical capital can be converted into economic capital by labour resulting in financial payment, social capital in terms of respect, status and opportunities based on successful physical performance and cultural capital in the attendance and bodily performance of fans at particular sporting events or educational qualifications (at least in part) based on physical performance, in the field of physical education for instance. As highlighted by Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), the forms of capital accumulated and reproduced by a particular population or class group over time impacts which practices are accessible to that population. A prevalent example being the economic, social and cultural capital held by the upper classes enabling them to participate in sports such as sailing or polo, sports that typically exclude those from socially and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The recursive manner of capital accumulation by specific populations relates to another of Bourdieu's key concepts, *habitus*, which will be discussed below.

In relation to the aforementioned, inequities of access and practice performance are historically and time-based. They are time-based in that carriers will adopt and drop certain practices as their lives unfold, warranting study on how commitment to particular practices change throughout the life course (for example, the prevalence of adolescent drop out from PA). Meanwhile they are historically based in that past configurations and patterns of performance are crucial in predicting what happens next. They contribute to and reinforce the habitus, meaning the 'subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class' (Bourdieu, 1972, p.86). These schemes of perception structure an individual's (shared) world view, and in turn what practices they deem accessible, valuable, and henceforth perform, thereby reinforcing future practice patterns for their family and peers within the same social group (class). Habitus is a *generative scheme* (Bourdieu, 1984) and thus makes class-based predictions of practice performance based on an individual's background and training as a result of socialisation. It is crucial therefore to explore how individuals negotiate and sometimes break free from their assigned trajectories in order to understand how carriers are recruited for practices once seen beyond their reach. For

example, research could explore how nexuses of materials, meanings and competencies changed and enabled individuals to access said practices (for example, the sailing project delivered by StreetGames discussed in chapter six, *Triangluating Practice with Key Stakeholders,* whereby financial and material resource were provided by the charity so that competency and positive meaning could develop for this population surrounding the practice of sailing).

On the subject of recruitment, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) also highlight how new and emerging practices 'exploit connections forged and reproduced by practices that co-exist or went before' (p.53). Here they use Crossley's (2008) social network analysis, where he argued it was interaction in an already close-knit circle that generated punk, since the diameter and density of links within the circle enabled rapid interaction between members, establishing patterns of mutual obligation and enabling a productive concentration of effort and energy towards the new practice. Shove et al. (2012) also introduce the concept of *communities of practice* within their text, defined as 'groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise' (Wenger and Snyder, 2000, p.139). Logically speaking, if the diffusion of new practices reflects movements of people within close-knit communities, we could arrange groups, companies, or even regions to facilitate the necessary forms of interaction. In a more applied sense, we could look to communities of practice, such as inactive groups who share some common interest (for example, members of the same school, religious institution or medical centre) to explore relationships with PA and introduce an activity with the intention to maximise the pre-existing community links and increase the likelihood of social contagion within that group.

Since individuals will carry numerous practices at once, they will also belong to multiple communities at once. Given the overlapping nature of social networks which extend beyond the margins of any one practice, social networks are crucial in generating chance encounters, such as the 'social contagion' of Nordic walking whereby the practice was spread through the likes of neighbours with similar interests, meaning the opportunity and practice was not isolated to specific communities (Shove and Pantzar, 2005). Existing social ties are thus key for the formation and diffusion of novel practices.

Consideration has also been afforded to *how* practices become shared between practitioners since practical knowledge is born of first-hand, embodied experience and not 'discursive consciousness' (Lizardo and Strand, 2010). Research has explored this phenomenon in the fields of abstaining from drinking (Suchman, 1984), having sex (Gagnon and Mann, 1975) and serving cocktails (Spradley and Mann, 1975), with all illustrating how 'mimetic apprenticeship' (Lizardo, 2009, p.9) led to the absorption of know-how and understanding. Turner (2001) describes how practices can be understood as lessons which enable people to do particular things. It is conceivable therefore that learners will travel through particular stages when becoming a practitioner (Goffman, 1961, Becker, 1963), starting off as novices, outsiders or apprentices, before developing into fully fledged members of the community or 'full practitioners' (Becker, 1977; Lave and Wenger, 1991). For this reason, at any point in time, practices will be carried by people with different degrees of experience and commitment while some disengage along the way, something to consider during empirical work.

3.5.2 Relations Between Practices

Similarly to how elements link to one another to form identifiable practices, practices also link to form bundles and complexes. Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) differentiate between these with bundles representing 'loose-knit patterns based on the co-location and co-existence of practices', while complexes represent 'stickier and more integrated combinations, some so dense they constitute new entities in their own right' (p.62). The team draw once again on driving as an example of how discrete practices can become so inherently linked that the distinctions between them dissolve. For instance, when cars were first introduced, continuous motion relied on a series of linked but discrete practices. Starting the car was a mechanical process while indicating and overtaking drew on horse-riding skills. With the evolution of cars and growth in consumption, the foundational elements and practices that at first made driving possible have now linked to such a degree that driving is recognised and performed as a single entity (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Driving instructors might break the practice down for learners at first but once capable, the discrete practices are performed as one higher-level practice.

Space and time have a significant impact upon the bundling of practices. For example, brushing teeth, showering and using the toilet have become bundled together as a practice of 'getting ready' since they all need to converge around the material resource of running water, thereby necessitating the space of a bathroom, with carriers doing so to meet conventional norms of day-to-day hygiene. In this way, shared meaning can bundle practices in a similar way. For example, the need for privacy necessitates a singular work office, allowing practices of making work phone calls as well as private phone calls to the family or doctor to co-occur in the same location. The layout of buildings is thus a powerful force in dictating which practices become bundled. The recent opening of the Bike Hub in Cardiff being a prime example. The Bike Hub is a secure indoor bike-parking facility with a coffee bar, showers, lockers and a remote workspace. Having a space which facilitates such an array of practices has allowed travelling, exercising, showering and working to become bundled as one constellation. This is particularly powerful given the time and hygiene constraints for many people wishing to travel to work but not having the facilities required to comfortably do so. Given the time-poverty many people, particularly women, in present day face (Hyde, Greene and Darmstadt, 2020), as well as the expansive list of barriers to PA, time and space are crucial mediators in enabling practices to successfully bundle and thus increase PA levels. Due attention was thus provided to these factors throughout fieldwork.

In addition to collaborating, practices can also compete with one another in bundles (as highlighted during the discussion on practice recruitment) which can result in the eventual disappearance of a practice through lack of performance. As Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) highlight, however, it is difficult to determine whether relations between practices are competitive or collaborative. They use the example of internet use and family time, where some argue computer use colonises family time, eventually eroding the practice while others argue that computer use provides a common ground and mediates family time. It could be of value here to gather data on the amount of time spent doing both, but key to understanding will be the interrogation of meanings attributed to each activity and family members' accounts of whether the practices are indeed competitive or collaborative. Where PA has ostensibly become bundled with education within the school day in the form of PE, for many individuals the practices involved in the school day take a competitive form. Where PE and extra-curricular PA

lack sufficient changing time, desirable activities or require individuals to perform skills they are sometimes not accustomed to (Whitehead and Biddle, 2008; Mitchell, Gray and Inchley, 2015), other school day activities may 'win' and colonise time, such as skipping PE or choosing to socialise during lunch hours/after school.

On the subject of competitive practices, Swidler's (2001) concept of *anchoring practices* is a useful heuristic device. Swidler asks 'are all practices equal, or are some more equal than others?' (2001, p.88) to cleverly highlight how particular practices come to govern and organise others when they are more central, more controlling and more determinative. For example, a consistent finding in research into PA participation among females is the fundamental conflict between being active and being feminine (Whitehead and Biddle, 2008; Alvarinas-Villaverde et al., 2017). Exhibiting prowess in the fields of sport and PA has traditionally been seen as a masculine trait since the sporting arena is a key space for defining hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987; Messner, 2002), meaning being active can disrupt practices of 'being feminine' or 'being a woman'. Where being a woman takes precedence over being physically active in the ways certain activities demand, this restrains which PA practices are performed when women choose to be active, if they choose to be active at all. Similarly, we can consider the earlier example of religious practice anchoring PA participation, or the governing force of financing basic necessities over financing PA for young women experiencing the double jeopardy.

Spotswood et al. (2019) also provide evidence for the notion of anchoring practices, whereby walking to school was found to depend upon being in harmony with the goals and routines of the parent/guardian. Both occupational and educational practice, specifically the act of arriving on time, anchored travel practices and rendered walking as too time-consuming and thus undesirable for certain families, illustrating how one practice was governed or subordinated by another. Anchoring practices also play a significant role in reproducing 'larger systems of discourse and practice' and in certain circumstances 'practices can anchor or reproduce constitutive rules, rules that define things as what they are' (p.99). It is crucial therefore to consider the anchoring practices for both individuals and specific populations in order to identify the key practices that govern their daily lives and thus how subsequent PA practices are ordered in relation to them. Understanding how daily practice is ordered by anchoring

practices, as well as identifying and tracing the dissolution of links between elements and practices is key to understanding why young women disengage from PA, while also identifying areas for intervention to encourage the adoption of active practices.

In addition to Swidler's anchoring practices, this research also showed sensitivity towards Wetherell's (2015) concept of *affective practice*. Recent years have seen an increased focus on previously neglected facets of the social world, including space and spatiality (Low, 2001), bodies and the corporeal (Shilling, 2003) and artefacts and things (Latour, 1991). In addition to these categories, there has been an 'affective turn' (Harding and Probham, 2009; Reckwitz, 2016), concerned with the status of emotions, feelings and affects in social research. Defined as 'an ongoing flow (a poly-phony according to Damasio (1999)) of forming and changing body-scapes, qualia (subjective states) and actions constantly shifting in response to the changing context' (p.147), affective activity is understood as a form of social practice (Wetherell 2012, 2013). In an applied sense, the term describes how certain practices are laden with affective properties which can have powerful influence over the carrying, performance or withdrawal from any given practice. Instead of conceptualising affect as an internal property of individuals as has traditionally been theorised, practice theory advocates that affects are properties of the 'specific affective 'attunement' or mood' of the respective practice, and once a person is competent in enacting said practice, they are 'carried away by it' and incorporate and actualise its mood (Reckwitz, 2016, p.119).

In contrast to more automated accounts of emotion and affect, practice theory suggests that affective activity is a field of open and flexible patterns, with the order of those patterns emerging based on changing entanglements of constitutive elements. Fundamentally similar to the concept of practice itself, the order involved in affective practice constantly configures and reconfigures and on that basis is semi-routinised. Edwards (1997) highlights how even the most routinised forms of affective practice need to be continually customised and reworked to demonstrate the 'could be otherwise' logic of practice. The affective dimensions of any given practice are thus an 'assemblage for now which draws on past assemblages and influences the shape of future activity' (Wetherell, 2015, p.148). In this way, they are both cultural *and* material, as states of bodily excitation are 'persistent realities of their own right and yet their origins, effects and social intelligibility depend on cultural and historical schemata'

(Reckwitz, 2016, p.115). Reckwitz (2016) draws on falling in love to illustrate how the affective structure of the practice explodes the inside/outside binary. People practice love as a set of routine behaviours dependent on specific cultural patterns, often influenced by discursive practices and fields, such as romantic films and novels where 'codes' and affects of love are presented for imitation, while it is at the same time material since love involves states of real physical excitement, withdrawal and bodily reactions.

Falling in love as a bundle of practice, including its activities of experiencing butterflies in the stomach, buying flowers, or showing intimate affection for example, is thus fundamentally affective, but on closer inspection, all social practices are affectively attuned in one way or another. According to Reckwitz (2016), every social order as a set of practices is also a specific order of affects, and if we want to explain how practices work, we must understand the specific affects which are built into the practice. Thus, there cannot be social order without affects but the types and intensities of affects within practices can vary significantly, warranting investigation. For instance, commuting to work via a bicycle often involves getting hot, sweaty or wet as a result of weather and/or intensity causing perspiration. How the emergent feeling states are culturally contextualised and afforded meaning in a given social group then becomes of central importance in determining how/why the individual carries that practice. Some individuals embrace the feeling states of commuting, for example, taking perspiration as an indication that they have acquired the appropriate meanings and competencies of the practice and worked sufficiently hard. For the unaccustomed or unprepared, however, such a bodily state could have a much more negative affect, particularly if the affect clashes with a state induced by a more powerful anchoring practice (such as appearing traditionally feminine), thereby generating disengagement.

We can also look to affect generators and affective atmospheres to explore how practices are affectively tuned and why they are performed/disengaged from by carriers. An affect generator is an artefact within a practice that bears positive or negative affects. For example, the feeling state associated with a particular piece of kit in a given environment or the familiarity of a trusted racket. Sometimes related to superstition, such things can provoke positive, lucky or indeed hostile feelings when

performing a given practice, creating and reinforcing a particular affective mood based on the incorporation of said element. Meanwhile, there has been an increasing emphasis within work on affect on spatial atmospheres (Reckwitz, 2016), meaning the location of things within three-dimensional space and their interrelations constituting an environment. The likes of offices and exercise facilities are designed for specific purposes, with the orientation of furniture and artefacts and the holistic space as a whole giving them the capacity to produce what Böhme (2000), building on the work of phenomenologist Schmitz (1998), called *atmospheres.* Atmospheres, accounting for the relations between artefacts, other people within them and practices that occur within the space, are capable of affecting people while the experience of an atmosphere is in itself a practice, requiring familiarity with cultural codes and meanings. The affect associated with a given environment and subsequently atmosphere can thus have significant impact on whether individuals feel comfortable to practice a given activity. For instance, the feeling states for women who enter male-dominated weights rooms at their local gym. Understanding how this possibly daunting or unwelcoming affective atmosphere impacts women could be key to understanding their practice, illustrating the value in exploring affect.

3.6 Exploring Practice in the Field of Physical Activity

Whilst practice theory has been empirically honed within the fields of sustainability (Shove and Spurling, 2015; Hui, Schatzki and Shove, 2017), geography (Brzanczek and Wiegandt, 2009) and organisational studies (Gherardi, 2012), it is also being increasingly adopted in the field of public health owing to its alternative approach to promoting behaviour change (Spotswood et al., 2019). For example, an array of practice-based work has been conducted in the areas of smoking (Blue et al., 2016), drinking alcohol (Ally et al., 2016; Supski et al., 2017), and eating (Maller, 2015), while work surrounding PA and sport has been undertaken by Guell et al. (2012), Blue (2013; 2017), Spotswood, Chatterton, Tapp and Williams (2015) and Spotswood et al. (2019).

A likely reason for the adoption of sustainability-based tools and concepts in the fields of public health and PA adoption is the parallels between the issues. A pressing matter within sustainability work surrounds how, in a convenience-driven consumer culture,

we can encourage sustainable behaviour change towards more environmentally friendly choices. Similarly, a cardinal issue within public health is to encourage sustainable active lifestyles in inactive populations (World Health Organisation, 2018). Thus, it is not simply about terminating harmful practices, but recruiting practitioners and fostering new positive practices. Hopkins et al. (2020) adapted three key propositions from Shove and Spurling's (2015) discussion on social theory and climate change to translate Shove's conception of practice theory into a PA context:

> *(a) Consumption is usefully understood as an outcome of practice: most people 'consume' exercise and its associated elements not for their own sake but in the course of accomplishing practices.*
> *(b) Transforming PA behaviour within sedentary populations is sure to require different patterns of consumption and everyday life.*
> *(c) Therefore, social theories of practice provide an important intellectual resource for understanding and constructing different social, institutional and infrastructural conditions in which more positive exercise practices and healthier lifestyles may take hold.*

(2020, p.6)

Accordingly, research needs to account for how the day-to-day ordering of social practices affects how and why disadvantaged females consume PA, and how the nexus of practices within their lives could be positively transformed via intervention work to encourage healthier forms of consumption, ie. engaging in PA. To do this, the research took inspiration from Spotswood et al. (2019), who made the first attempt at applying the three elements model to PA in schools. Spotswood and co. used three core questions to examine how children engaged in PA over a typical school day. These were (1) what practices were available to children during a school day that required PA?; (2) how did the configuration of materials, meanings and competencies enable or constrain PA?; and (3) how were practices enabled or constrained by their ordering in relation to other everyday practices? (2019, p.4). The team conducted observations of PE lessons, break and lunchtime activities, afterschool clubs and The Daily Mile to capture the maximum amount of PA practices within the school setting. They then conducted focus groups and paired interviews with pupils, as well as interviews with parents and teachers to address the three research questions, with observations allowing the contextualisation of practices, interviews helping to reveal

the practice nexus for adults and focus groups allowing the team to explore meanings for the young people.

The three elements were highly significant in mediating PA within the study. The materiality of roads and playground apparatus dictated whether active travel and playground PA were considered safe, as well as allowed the children to attribute meaning to certain apparatus and create games. Competencies were required for navigating roads, performing PA skills and for teachers using different behaviour management styles to promote active learning whilst not allowing pupils to be disruptive. Pupils attributed feelings of fun and enjoyment to PA with the positive meaning encouraging uptake. Enjoyment was also contingent on other meaningful understandings, such as the possibility of meeting friends on The Daily Mile and the positive associations between the activity and rewards distributed, such as stickers. Where some pupils were fearful of tripping during a certain section of The Mile, a simple material intervention of matting transformed meanings (fear of falling) which helped sustain the practice. Importantly, this study highlighted how the configuration of elements had 'emergent properties as wholes which were not possessed by their individual component parts', highlighting the significance and frailty of favourable configurations (Spotswood et al., 2019, p.6).

Additionally, the research examined harmony and conflict between practices. As stated earlier, walking to school was very much dependent on being in harmony with the practices of parent/guardians. For one family, walking to/from school was understood as a parental support opportunity to converse with their daughters in a socio-material space free from distraction. In this case, parenting and walking to school were co-constitutive practices, bundled closely together, repeatedly occurring and securing each other in place (Meier et al., 2017). Conversely, while practicing friendship encouraged some pupils to run, this could also be a constraining practice since some would prioritise talking over running, thereby adapting The Daily Mile to walking and talking rather than running. This also had a disruptive effect on the practice as a whole since groups of talkers would gather and block the route, causing runners to go off track and get muddy shoes, a possibly negative material and affective disruption for some. Observations also suggested that different forms of friendship performance were gender-related, warranting further investigation.

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Spotswood et al.'s (2019) research made a valuable contribution to the field of public health research through a novel application of the three elements model (Shove et al., 2012) to children's PA during the school day. They illuminated the complex ways in which school-based PA practices were enabled and constrained by both elements and practice links, as well as the contingent nature of both adult and pupil practices and how they affect practice as a whole. They also illustrated where interventions should focus on creating habitual PA opportunities, highlighting where children's PA might have been in conflict with routines, practices and policies, thereby generating disengagement. For example, the connections shown between gender and sports and attainment and calmness in classrooms. Spotswood et al. (2019) naturally called for further work in the area; a call this research aimed to address. They also reflected on Watson's (2017) comment that the three elements model has little to say about the means through which power operates. Power is central to who has the legitimacy to impose programmes of change, whether teachers felt comfortable to adopt alternative behaviour management practices and the privileging of health and safety and/or educational attainment above PA. The emphasis on co-existence within the model obscures how and why 'some practices and practitioners are able deliberately to affect the conduct of practices and practitioners elsewhere' (Watson, 2017, p.173). The risk, therefore, is that politics and power become 'bracketed off' (Cohn, 2014) when they are in fact central to the processes involved in social change.

Additionally, Shove, Watson and Spurling (2015) critique the three elements model on the basis that whilst it can conceptualise the bounded objects that practitioners interact with (sports equipment, clothing and so on), the model is limited in that it is not yet fully capable of explaining the co-existing forms of materiality within which these objects function. The team proposed Schatzki's (2010) 'material arrangements' as a more suitable tool for exploring larger and more diverse configurations such as infrastructure, but attempted to advance the concept. Material arrangements is a broader concept located outside the immediacies of specific practice nexuses – practices transpire amidst a material context - unlike the three elements model which conceptualises materiality as a core element within practice (Hopkins et al., 2020). Schatzki's (2010) concept is not capable therefore of distinguishing between a background material feature of practice (the road, bicycle lanes, traffic lights) and the

more blatant, central role of a material mobilised in the conduct of a practice (the bicycle itself). A problematic issue when there is a need to understand how broad systems such as material infrastructure are implicated in the conduct of multiple social practices, as is likely with the double jeopardy population and PA.

Shove, Watson and Spurling (2015) henceforth identified four characteristics of material infrastructure to address this issue: (1) they are connective and extensive; (2) they sustain a range of practices at once; (3) they are collective; and (4) they are obdurate. The conceptual elaborations afford a more nuanced understanding of 'how materials co-exist with and influence social practices, as well as providing a material context to PA research studies' (Hopkins et al., 2020, p.8). A key example being incomplete cycle lanes and routes which decrease the safety of the route, thereby making them unattractive for certain populations (disadvantaged females for example). An issue similarly recognised by Spotswood et al. (2015), where fears over safety inhibited cycling for a young mother, while full cycling practitioners were perceived to be 'brave' and 'adventurous' (p.26), characteristics that are unlikely to be within reach for much of society. These elaborations were considered therefore throughout data collection and when analysing the co-materiality of practices.

3.7 Conclusion

To summarise both this and the preceding chapter, girls residing in areas of disadvantage require increased focus and resource to increase their PA levels and meet national recommendations for the betterment of their health. Whilst the insight collected surrounding Little Lisa provided valuable collective barriers and facilitators for individuals experiencing the double jeopardy to become active, there was a need for more rigorous, local and longitudinal baseline data for an improved understanding of the population. Additionally, the majority of interventions to increase PA participation have been based upon behaviour change approaches. Achieving mostly moderate results, these frameworks have been critiqued for their failure to account for the complex nature of PA participation, disregard for the impact of 'social, material and interrelational features of human activity' (Cohn, 2014, p.159) on everyday behaviour, susceptibility to value-action gaps (Blake, 1999), and framing of sociocultural issues

within the realm of rational agents, magnifying social stigma and symbolic violence and in turn enhancing social inequalities.

There is a call therefore for alternative theoretical approaches which offer more sophisticated and dynamic accounts of how the social world operates. To address this call, the research turned to practice theory owing to its unique focus of analysis on social practices ordered across space and time, rather than the experience of individual actors or societal totalities (Giddens, 1984). In contrast, utilising practice as the unit of inquiry allowed analysis to operate in between the opposing poles of structure and agency and the so-called stages of behaviour change (TTM, ABC), instead attributing PA (dis)engagement to socially shared practices, ordered and carried by individuals based on favourable and unfavourable practice element and bundle structures. The following chapter will outline the methodology adopted to conduct a qualitative practice-based research project to address the double jeopardy.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research approach adopted to explore the double jeopardy through a practice lens over the course of three empirical studies. This will include a description of the theoretical underpinnings of pragmatism, the adopted research paradigm, including its ontological and epistemological assumptions and how these aligned suitably with a practice-based analysis. Following the philosophical foundations, a more nuanced discussion of utilising a qualitative research methodology will take place, including the subsequent methods adopted to explore the double jeopardy in community-based settings and how pragmatist and practice-based philosophies were embodied throughout.

Here, detail will be provided on the corresponding axiological decisions when undertaking three distinct (but related) research studies: 1) exploring 'practice constellations' via observations and interviews with disadvantaged girls in the South Wales Valleys region; 2) exploring practice among community leaders and NGB stakeholders in a bid to triangulate alignments and conflicts in needs, capacities and desire for PA provision with those of the disadvantaged girls; and 3) piloting a coproduced practice-based walking programme to increase PA levels within the target population. Figure 3 provides a timeline of the research project, illustrating the dates when each empirical study was conducted, as well as a brief summary on the approach undertaken for the study.

Topics such as identifying field settings, negotiating access, sampling procedures, study designs and data analysis will be discussed here. Personal reflections will also be threaded throughout the chapter to illustrate reflexivity. The purpose, to provide the reader with a 'feel' for how the research process unfolded, as well as provide descriptive information about that process and an academic justification for the decisions made.

Please note that names for both individuals and institutions have been anonymised throughout the chapter (and thesis as a whole) via the use of pseudonyms to protect the privacy and identities of those who participated in the research (Wileset al., 2008).

Timeline and Summary of Research Design				
Study:	Phase:	Perspective:	Method:	Dates:
Study 1: Exploring Practice Constellations	i)	Girls residing in areas of disadvantage in community settings	Participant observation 3 field settings. Staggered starts per club, 1-2 visits per week for initial 3 months, reducing to biweekly, then sporadic visits in final months.	January 2019 – June 2019
	ii)	Girls residing in areas of disadvantage in community settings	Semi-structured interviews (n = 11)	November - December 2019
Covid-19 pandemic National and local lockdowns and restrictions.				March 2020 – May 2021 (Reopening date for community/PA spaces)
Study 2: Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders	i)	Community club leaders	Semi-structured interviews (n = 3)	June 2021
	ii)	Senior policymakers	Semi-structured interviews (n = 6)	July – November 2021
Study 3: Walking and Talking	i)	Natalie, a female residing in an area of disadvantage and member of the gymnastics club	Repeated semi-structured interviews (n = 6) Co-produced walking programme Practice-mentor pilot	May – July 2021 (including introductory discussion)

Figure 3: A timeline and summary of the research design

4.2 A Philosophical Overview

Taber (2012) emphasises the importance of researchers locating themselves within a particular paradigm. According to Bateson (1972), every researcher is 'bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which – regardless of ultimate truth or falsity – become partially self-validating' (p.314). This net represents their overarching research paradigm. The term was first used by Thomas Kuhn (1970) to mean a philosophical way of thinking. It refers to the philosophical assumptions or basic set of beliefs that guide action and define the worldview of the researcher (Lincoln et al., 2011). A paradigm is the 'broadest unit of consensus within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community (or sub-community) from another', subsuming, defining and interrelating the exemplars, theories, methods and tools that exist within that community (Ritzer, 1975, p.9). Subscription to a particular research paradigm thus dictates how individuals view and approach scientific enquiry (Salter and Wolfe, 1990), including the shared beliefs, values and generalisations that they bring to that enquiry surrounding the nature of reality and knowledge (Kuhn, 1970; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a paradigm comprises of four elements. These are ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality, that is the assumptions we make in order to believe something is real (Scotland, 2012). This helps researchers conceptualise the form and nature of reality and therefore orientate their thinking about a given research problem, its significance and how one might understand it and contribute to a solution (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Intimately related to one's ontology, is epistemology, concerned with the mind's relation to reality. That is, do we know things? And if so, how and why do we know them? The term refers to the study of the nature of knowledge and its justification, as well as how one might come to know something (Schwandt, 1997). To bridge the two, where ontology is concerned with *what we know*, epistemology is concerned with *how we know it*. Logically flowing from a given ontology and epistemology is one's methodology, concerned with how a researcher could go about acquiring that knowledge. Methodology incorporates the research design, methods, approaches and procedures used to produce knowledge (Keeves, 1997). Axiology, the fourth element comprising paradigm, meanwhile refers to the philosophical study

of value, concerned with ethical considerations and making morally defensible decisions (Finnis, 1980;). Axiology thus prescribes the values that guide the conduct of research, including what respect ought to be given to participants' rights, what moral obligations should be considered and how to minimise harm as a result of the research. A research paradigm, including its comprising elements, thus functions as an heuristic device, providing the conceptual and practical 'tools' to aid understanding of a research problem (Abbott, 2004, p.42).

There is widespread debate about the number of paradigms that exist within contemporary research, with debate often surrounding status as paradigm or perspective. However, five paradigms are widely accepted as the most prominent. These are the positivist, postpositivist, interpretivist/constructivist, critical and pragmatist paradigms (Mittwede, 2012; Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Hilton and Hilton, 2020). A brief overview of each paradigm will hereby be provided in an attempt to contextualise and differentiate pragmatism among its neighbouring paradigms, illustrating why it was adopted for this research.

Positivism adocates for and seeks objective truth, arguing that the world exists as it is, and truth should be determined via processes of observation and experimentation to test hypotheses and identify cause and effect relationships. The paradigm relies on deductive or top-down reasoning, whereby existing theories or models are tested, to provide explanations and make predictions based on measurable outcomes (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Positivism is most readily associated with a naive realist ontology, objectivist epistemology, experimental methodology and quantitative research methods (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Postpositivism meanwhile questions positivism's central tenets by rejecting the view that researchers can be independent observers of the social world. Instead, postpositivists argue that ideas and identities of researchers influence what they observe and subsequently what they conclude. Postpositivism thus pursues objective answers but with a willingness to recognise and work with any biases that influence the knowledge collected/developed (Little et al., 2020). This paradigm is associated with a critical realist ontology, modified objectivist epistemology, modified experimental methodology and quantitative research methods while acknowledging the value and validity of qualitative approaches.

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The interpretivist/constructivist paradigm meanwhile seeks to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), utilising inductive or bottom-up reasoning to produce theories which are grounded in data. Interpretivists/constructivists attempt to understand and interpret what subjects are thinking/saying/doing and how their individual contexts have influenced them to do so. Reality is thus understood as socially constructed (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). This paradigm occupies a relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology and naturalist methodology which frequently utilises qualitative research methods. The criticalist paradigm meanwhile seeks to address political, social and economic issues associated with social justice and oppression, often referred to as the transformative paradigm for its objective of transforming politics to enhance social conditions (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). A central focus of the critical paradigm is uncovering agency, hidden by social practices, which leads to liberation and emancipation (Guba and Lincoln, 1988; Martens, 2015). This paradigm is associated with a historical realist ontology, transactional epistemology, dialogic methodology and tendency for qualitative research methods, including forms of action research and participatory action research. Finally, there is pragmatism, the paradigm in which the researcher situated themselves and the approach to exploring the double jeopardy, warranting depth of explanation.

4.2.1 A Pragmatic Research Approach

Pragmatism emerged as a philosophical movement in the United States in the late 19th century, developing alongside social psychology, sociology, pedagogy and anthropology. Founded by scholars such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James Chauncy Wright and Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (see James and Kuklick, 1981), the pragmatist doctrine has been advanced over the last century by the likes of philosopher and social reformer John Dewey and political scientist Arthur F. Bentley (James, 2004; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Pragmatism's founders varied in their scholastic backgrounds but agreed on one fundamental principle: the rejection that science can access reality by the use of one singular scientific method (Maxcy, 2003).

Such a mono-paradigmatic orientation was not sufficient for these scholars, so instead, they created and argued for a worldview which advocated for methods of

research deemed most appropriate for studying the phenomenon at hand. Accounts of truth thus could be subjective, objective, scientific or humanist in orientation but all preserve 'utility, practical aspects and outcomes at the forefront of the research process' (Shah, Shah and Khaskhelly, 2018, p.93). Consequently, pragmatist founders sought more practical and pluralistic approaches to enquiry which allowed a combination of (mixed) methods to shed light on actual behaviour, the beliefs behind behaviour and the consequences that follow from different behaviours.

Derived from the Greek word, *pragma,* meaning action (from which the term 'practice' also derives), action depicts the central tenet of pragmatism (Pansiri, 2005). Pragmatists orientate the assessment of theories around a theory's capacity to solve human problems as they arise, functioning to 'relieve and benefit the condition of man' (Rorty, 1991, p.27). According to Kaushik and Walsh (2019, p.255), pragmatists believe that:

> *Human actions can never be separated from the past experiences and from the beliefs that have originated from those experiences. Human thoughts are thus intrinsically linked to action. People take actions based on the possible consequences of their action, and they use the results of their actions to predict the consequences of similar actions in the future.*

An understanding of the meaning of human action and beliefs being found in their consequences means that pragmatists believe the world is in a constant state of becoming, and action is the key to transformation. Therefore, instead of universal truths, pragmatism offers us *warranted beliefs*, which form as we consistently take actions in similar situations and experience the outcomes. Actions are then 'linked to consequences in ways that are open to change' (Morgan, 2013, p.26). Crucially, actions also 'depend on worldviews that are socially shared sets of beliefs' (p.27). Whilst no two identical experiences can be shared, experiences can be communal to a certain degree. Thus, worldviews can be both individually unique as well as socially shared belief systems (Morgan, 2013; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

Pragmatism was in part created to conclude the two diametrically opposed positions of positivism and interpretivism, putting an end to the so called 'paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989). If positivism/postpositivism were to be situated at one end of a paradigmatic

continuum, with interpretivism/constructivism at the other, pragmatism would hold court somewhere in the middle, accepting that there can be multiple realities that are open to empirical enquiry (Creswell and Clark, 2011). The paradigm is characterised by an ontology where reality is in a state of constant renegotiation, debate and interpretation based on its usefulness in new and unpredictable situations, an epistemology that combines objectivism and subjectivism and a mixed methods methodology, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Critiqued for its degree of flexibility and 'crude' summary as simply a 'what works' approach accompanied by a theory-free methodology (Morgan, 2013, p.2; Denzin, 2012), the absence of universal certainty in pragmatism is celebrated by pragmatists for escaping the 'pitfalls and contradictions of prevailing modes of enquiry while cohering with multiple sources of emerging thought and practice' (Wills and Lake, 2020, p.4). This provides space for original and new knowledge to be produced (Rorty, 1979).

Pragmatism is considered more flexible in its approach than the positivist/interpretivist paradigms, owing to its founding principle that a research approach should be adopted because it is the most practical method to explore a given research problem (Collier and Adcock, 1999; Brierley, 2017). Ontologically speaking, for pragmatists, reality is true in as far that it aids the development of satisfactory relations with other components of our experience (James, 2000). Truth is thus interpreted as whatever proves itself useful in advancing the human condition. Accordingly, a pragmatist epistemology is concerned with human experience, with much of the original thinking based on the work of John Dewey who adopted the term *theory of inquiry* to better represent his approach to knowledge. Inquiry is the 'controlled or directed transformation of an interdeterminate situation into one that is a determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole' (Dewey, 1938, p.104). It is a controlled transformation of a problematic situation into one that is integrated with knowledge and coherent action (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

Also of interest to Dewey and his theory of inquiry, was the concept of experimental learning or *habits*. The term represents the establishment and maintenance of a dynamic coordination with our environment which leads to habit formation (Kaushik

and Walsh, 2019). Through constant engagement with our environment, a learning process takes place where as individuals, we acquire a complex, yet flexible set of habits for action (Biesta, 2010). These occur in a semi-automated state and account for many of our actions in a given situation. Here we see a point of convergence between pragmatism and practice theory, specifically between Dewey's habits and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, which represents the socially ingrained habits, skills and dispositions possessed through life experience; a *feel for the game* (Bourdieu, 1977).

Importantly, the notion of habits as automated or blind trial and error stands in stark contrast to both Dewey and Bourdieu, who both advocated for a reflective and semi-self-conscious element of decision making and choosing intelligent action (Morgan, 2014). Bourdieu explicitly stated, 'I said habitus as not to say habit' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.122) to avoid the un-reflective, mechanistic and deterministic connotations of the term (Brown, Morgan and Aldous, 2017). Habitus instead combines habits and inquiry, so that a degree of automated and arguably blind acquisition occurs alongside intelligent acquisition based on learning and past experience, Bourdieu was post-dualist in this sense. For Bourdieu, as well as this research project, dispositions are acquired through the logics of practice (1990).

Rejecting the idea that knowledge is exclusively objective or subjective (and thus rejecting positivism and interpretivism), pragmatism embraces the two, often relying on abductive reasoning to move between deduction and induction and allow the researcher to be actively involved in creating both theory and data (Goldkuhl, 2012). As a consequence, reflexivity is a crucial component to any pragmatic research process. This is in order to continually acknowledge the decisions being made and methods adopted, ensuring that these are not adversely affected by the researcher's worldview, made up of their socio-political location, belief system and personal history (Morgan, 2007). Due to pragmatism's flexible and practical outlook on research design, there is often an automatic association with mixed methods research (Morgan, 2014), since pragmatism provides justification for the method which was previously lacking in philosophical underpinning. Pragmatic studies have been known to combine several different approaches and methods, potentially countering the limiting effects of aligning with positivism/interpretivism. Pragmatists are therefore capable of

answering Pring's (2015) call to be *eclectic* in their search for truth, using creativity to address a research question in the most effective way rather than simply following traditional paradigm mandates.

Adopting practice theory as the theoretical lens for this research thus aligned suitably with positioning the research within the pragmatic paradigm, allowing the researcher the flexibility to adopt a suitable research methodology to explore PA behaviour through a practice lens and contribute novel approaches and findings to an emerging body of research (Blue, 2013; Spotswood et al., 2015, 2019). Indeed, the parallels between practice theory and pragmatism have been outlined by Buch and Elkjaer (2015), converging on their eclectic research toolkits, commitment to overcome epistemological dualisms, agreement that experience/intelligibility is 'produced by purposive, socially mediated doings saturated with affects and emotions tempered by the physical arrangements that embed bodily activity' (p.9) and discussions of habits, routines and habitus.

In addressing the research problem, the researcher engaged with a systematic approach to inquiry created throughout Dewey's works and synthesised by Morgan (2014, p.1047):

Dewey's Steps	Researcher's Steps
1. Recognising a situation as problematic.	1. The intersectional relationship between being female and socially disadvantaged and its effect on PA participation was reported by StreetGames (2017), forming the basis of this KESS2 funded research project.
2. Considering the difference it makes to define the problem one way or another.	2. The researcher considered adopting various approaches to explore the double jeopardy, including a strictly Bourdieusian perspective as well as lived experience perspective.
3. Developing a possible line of action as a response to the problem.	3. A practice theory approach was adopted for its capacity to shift the unit of analysis away from individuals and macro structures towards socially shared practices, thereby illustrating value-action gaps prevalent within behaviour change approaches.
4. Evaluating the potential actions in	4. The researcher considered what research methods would align with a practice-based approach and how these

terms of their likely consequences.	would shed new light on the 'wicked problem' of the double jeopardy.
5. Taking actions that are felt to be likely to address the problematic situation.	5. The researcher henceforth conducted the research, adopting a qualitative methodology. The details and findings of which are outlined in the proceeding sections and chapters.

Table 1: Adopting Dewey's systematic approach to inquiry in a practice-based way.

4.3 A Qualitative Research Methodology

Although pragmatism is most frequently associated with mixed methods research, owing to its philosophical flexibility providing space for both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Biesta, 2010), this research opted for a purely qualitative research methodology. This was because qualitative tools were deemed most appropriate to explore how both physically active and inactive practices were carried across space and time by young, disadvantaged girls, as well as to explore how to intervene in their nexuses of practice. Retaining a pragmatic rather than interpretivist lens, however, provided the researcher with the opportunity to utilise a range of strategies to answer the research question (Clarke and Visser, 2018). For example, practices among the girls were objectively observed, with the researcher seeking key commonalities and elements between practices across field settings. When exploring the structure of elements and reasons behind the performance of those practices, however, subjective perspectives from carriers of practice were sought. Meanwhile, for the final study, an approach not overly dissimilar from participatory action research was utilised, which engaged the participant in coproductive activity. Pragmatism's variety of strategies and flexibility to employ research tools based on their utility for the research problem was thus key to its success.

At present, there is no universal definition for qualitative research. In fact, much like quantitative work, it is often defined by virtue of what it is not, and 'placed in opposition to the 'other' via the use of socially constructed dichotomies…such as art/science, hard/soft and numbers/words' (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.7). Qualitative research can be usefully understood as an umbrella term, used to describe a camp consisting

of many small communities with distinct languages and traditions (Walsh and Koelsch, 2012). Whilst these traditions can differ significantly, there are key commonalities and methodological premises that rein. Crucially, there is a principal aim to qualitative work, which is to enter the *phenomenon* and 'discover what is significant from the viewpoints and actions of people who experience it in relation to time, place, context and situation – and people' (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.14; adapted from Charmaz, 2004).

Ontologically speaking, Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that for qualitative researchers, reality takes the form of intangible mental constructions which are:

> *Socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or group holding the constructions.*
>
> (p.111)

Thus, qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with how subjective meanings are constructed by individuals (and shared) in a specific space and time. Attempting to capture the constructions and understandings attributed to phenomena therefore consists of 'walking a mile' in the individual's shoes. Guba and Lincoln (1994) continue their train of thought by discussing the epistemological standpoint, stating that:

> *The variable and personal (intramental) nature of social constructions suggest that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interactions between and among investigator and respondents. These varying constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutical techniques and are compared and contrasted through dialectical interchange.*
>
> (p.111)

Conducting qualitative research means entering into the world of the subjects, in order to understand and provide an insider's view of social life. This is described as an *emic* perspective, 'concerned with the quality and texture of experience, along with its dynamics and development as a process over time rather than with the identification of cause-effect relationships' (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p.15). Qualitative researchers typically work with small numbers of individuals or specific situations in an attempt to preserve the individuality of their analyses. Research methodologies are designed to

aid understandings of people, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they live (Myers, 2009) and within qualitative research, a variety of knowledge claims, enquiry strategies and data collection and analysis methods are employed (Creswell, 2003).

To address the research objectives, such as capturing key practices, forming an understanding of how practices are ordered, and intervening in practice, it required the researcher to firstly immerse themselves within the population of young, disadvantaged women and understand participation and practice from their standpoint. Specifically, the researcher opted for a collective case study approach, incorporating ethnographic observations and qualitative interviewing techniques (with repeated interview cycles for the final study) across a number of settings. An approach frequently adopted by pragmatists (Mills. Durepos and Wiebe, 2010), this was in an attempt to combine multiple qualitative methods to generate an opportunity for more complete explanations (Morgan et al., 2017). The core feature of a case study is the 'desire to derive a(n) (up-) close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of "cases", set in their real-world contexts' (Yin, 2012, p.4). For this project, a case did not represent a single person/group, but a number of settings relevant to the double jeopardy that represented a bounded system of interest (Stake, 2000). A collective case study is seen as an extension of an instrumental case study, where a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or develop a theory; 'it plays a supportive role and facilitates our understanding of something else' (Stake, 2005, p.445). A collective case study meanwhile extends the instrumental to include several cases, selected due to the belief that this will lead to deeper understanding (Stake, 2005). Yin (2012) points out that the in-depth, contextual focus of a case allows a wide range of topics to naturally evolve from the study, moving beyond a focus on isolated variables.

There is a wide array of case study research within sport and PA (Felton et al., 2006; Phoenix and Sparkes, 2009; Warner, Dixon and Schumann, 2009) as well as within health-related research (Wright, White and Gaebler-Spira, 2004; Whitelaw, Teuton and Scobie, 2010). Despite widespread use, there has been a historical 'conventional wisdom' associated with this methodology, that such a focused, singular approach cannot provide reliable information about the broader systems in society (Flyvberg,

2006). This notion has been supported by the likes of Denscombe (2010), who critiqued case study research on the basis of lacking generalisability. Flyvberg (2006) counters this point however, arguing that it is the strategic choice of case that influences generalisability and there *is* potential to generalise if the case is appropriately selected. For example, whilst no two individuals can have had the exact same life experiences, researching economically disadvantaged girls from a particular geographic location and their relationship with PA will likely allow us to at least generalise to other young women in similar situations. Flyvberg (2006) also critiques the over-emphasis on generalisability and regards it as 'overrated' as the main source of scientific progress (p.226).

Selection of cases and the specific methods associated with each study will be described in sections below, but it is important to note that these were not framed as separate or distinct studies. Rather, they were designed as progressive studies, with the findings from each study influencing the next. In line with pragmatist methodology, abductive reasoning was used throughout the research to move between practice theory and the emerging data. First, one must locate the research in its specific context.

4.4 Study 1: *Exploring Practice Constellations*

4.4.1 Identifying Field Settings

Three local authorities (LAs) within the South Wales Valleys region were identified in which to carry out the research. This was due to the high levels of social and economic disadvantage reported within the South Wales Valleys region (Welsh Government, 2019), as well as the geographical positions of the research team and institution. At the beginning of the study, two of the three LAs were included in the ten overall most deprived LA's in Wales. The remaining LA meanwhile recorded the highest percentage of Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% in Wales (Welsh Government, 2014), meaning there were significant pockets of deprivation within the area. The subsequent challenge was to identify appropriate settings within these LAs in which to conduct the fieldwork.

The aim of the research was to understand the relationship between PA and girls from disadvantaged areas within community sport settings. As stated earlier, a collective case study approach (Stake, 2005) was adopted for the first study in order to compare and contrast relationships with PA within settings of differing PA commitment. This approach involves 'studying multiple cases simultaneously or sequentially in an attempt to generate a…broader appreciation of a particular issue' (Crowe et al., 2011, p.2). The motive was to access performances of resistance and inhibition, as well as loyalty and devotion to PA, including the practices that sat somewhere in between. A continuum of PA commitment evolved from conversations with the supervisory team, along which three points of commitment were targeted. These were 'committed', 'semi-committed' and 'inactive'. Caution was employed, however, surrounding the term inactive which is explained below.

For the purpose of this project and to capture the age demographic associated with Little Lisa (StreetGames, 2017), the WHO definition of adolescence was adopted, defining it as the period between ages 10-19, where 'youth' represents ages 15-24 and 'young people' is used for those aged 10-24 (WHO, 2015). This age range became critical when defining the term inactive due to the likelihood of some of these girls participating in at least some form of curriculum physical education (PE) during data collection. The definition of inactive within this research therefore came to mean not participating in any additional PA; personal, community, extracurricular or otherwise. Whilst it transpired that PA adherence varied in each club (despite the targeted nature of the clubs), on the whole, young women with the desired characteristics were accessed in each.

The first setting identified was the largest gymnastics club in South Wales, operating throughout numerous sites located in the Valleys region. This club was selected for a number of reasons. For transparency, the club was the company partner and part-funder of the project. In line with KESS2 regulations, the director of the club sat as an advisor on the researcher's supervisory team, with the researcher required to spend 'company days' at the establishment during the PhD tenure. This alone did not justify selection. As a club with a successful pathway for elite and traditional artistic and rhythmic gymnastics, this setting provided access to a number of young people who spent multiple hours per week training. Much like Weiss, Weiss and Amorose (2009)

who selected female gymnasts as a target group to explore sporting commitment, the researcher too selected this setting to recruit 'committed' PA practitioners. An additional motivation to recruit this field setting, was that alongside the traditional forms of gymnastics offered, the club also had a thriving recreational provision, diversifying its offer to include emerging activities such as Freerunning, TeamGym (both of which will be described in upcoming sections) and adult gym, embodying an emerging trend towards providing more informal brands of sport and PA. Defining itself as a social enterprise, the club also acted as a community hub, delivering various community engagement projects for the benefit of local residents. Through their engagement with StreetGames (discussed further in the chapter), and the director's own research-driven background, the club was pre-invested in addressing the double jeopardy and eager to draw on the findings of this research to enhance practice within their organisation.

Whilst elite squads were accessible within the club, the researcher chose to deploy themselves alongside the TeamGym squad. TeamGym is more targeted towards recreational and informal gymnastics, frequently attracting older gymnasts and participants. It is a relatively new form of gymnastics, where gymnasts work in teams and deliver routines on three pieces of apparatus, namely floor, trampette and a tumbling track. It is seen as an extension of artistic gymnastics, and a place to go for those who do not wish to compete in all six (for men) or all four (for women) of the traditional artistic apparatus (British Gymnastics, N.D.). The squad at this club comprised of many who had withdrawn from artistic gymnastics for various reasons. These include failure to 'make it' in artistic, those who did not wish to be involved in artistic, and those who have come to gymnastics later in their life and perhaps 'missed the boat'. The researcher was thus informed that certain members of the squad had already experienced failure and dropout in their short lifetimes, yet had also experienced overcoming barriers and re-engaging. The squad itself trained multiple times per week and competed nationally (and in some cases internationally) throughout the year. Still very much committed to their craft, TeamGym participants added a novel dimension to your typical committed artistic gymnast.

The second setting identified was an extra-curricular Couch to 5K club (C25K) ran by a local secondary school. This became the semi-committed club. C25K is an NHS

endorsed, progressive running programme, designed mainly for beginners or those who wish to re-engage (NHS, 2017). With the help of the C25K smartphone application (app), over a nine-week period, runners are provided with the tools with which to complete a continuous 5-kilometre run. It is an extremely popular programme, with success stories often pasted over social media and health and exercise-related pages. The club itself took place once a week, after school hours and was run in conjunction with the local leisure trust. A community sport officer served as the club leader, often aided by a teacher from the school who sat outside the PE department. Interestingly, PE staff had no involvement in the club aside from advertising the opportunity. Not a conscious decision initially, but one that evolved for the better of the group. By definition, the club leader labelled the cohort as 'not your typical sporty girls'. The young women did not typically engage with PE or PA in general, and may not have identified well with PE teachers who often celebrate competition and skill mastery. Attending an informal C25K club, however, with a local community leader, supported by a non-PE teacher who had recently completed the C25K programme herself offered a greater degree of relatability and possibly comfort, concepts perceived to aid positive experiences for young people (Shaikh and Forneris, 2018).

There were multiple reasons for selecting this club. Firstly, the C25K programme itself is a pathway for the inactive to become active. Thus, the processes and practices that operated between 'inactive' and 'committed' points would likely be accessible. Secondly, this was a StreetGames supported club and so helped link the research with previous work undertaken on Little Lisa. The leader was associated with the StreetGames and Us Girls networks and was thus familiar and competent in delivering opportunities consistent with the StreetGames learning surrounding Little Lisa.

The final setting identified was a youth project, delivered through a Development Trust and funded by the Welsh Assembly's *Communities First* Programme. The club itself was a significant hub of adolescent activity within the community, often experiencing numbers of 60+ members, five nights per week. It attracted youths between the ages of 11-18 with an even split between the sexes. No cost was associated with attending the club and members were free to come and go as they please throughout its opening hours. The purpose of seeking out a youth club was in order to access a community

group whose sole purpose lay outside of PA. Specifically, the researcher was targeting young women who did not engage with PA.

Youth clubs provide a key environment for non-formal learning for young people (Kiilakoski and Kivijarvi, 2014). This club in particular placed great emphasis on educating members on lifestyle choices, often surrounding drugs, alcohol, empowerment and sexual health. This was in part influenced by the significant issues of such nature prevalent within the area. Along with lifestyle education, the club provided a variety of leisure opportunities. PA was thus one aspect of the youth club culture, not the primary reason for its existence which contrasted with the previous settings. The club secured the weekly use of an AstroTurf pitch, most frequently used to play football, as well as provided 'abs and pads' sessions, a fitness class derived from boxing. The club also collaborated with StreetGames in an attempt to better their offer, gathering insight from their female attendees on desirable PA offers. Despite consistent attempts to provide favourable opportunities, a significant portion of the female population did not engage, meaning the club was a fertile ground in which to explore inactivity as well as what disadvantaged girls choose to do during their leisure time.

4.4.2 Stage 1: Observations

The first study, *Exploring Practice Constellations*, comprised of two stages. The first utilised participant observation. Observational methods involve 'directly observing and recording how research participants behave within and relate to their physical and social environment as it unfolds' (Morgan et al., 2017, p.1061). It is the task of the researcher to capture a *written photograph* of the situation under study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). This photograph includes the systematic description of events, behaviours and artifacts within the social setting, allowing the researcher to form an understanding of the activities of the people under study (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Musante and DeWalt (2011) point out that whilst all humans are participants and observers in their everyday interactions, it is engagement in the systematic use of information gained during these processes, as well as its analysis that makes participant observation a research method in its own right.

As discussed earlier, adopting a practice perspective meant that observations of some kind would be fundamental to this project. Adopting this lens to explore physical inactivity among disadvantaged girls was a novel approach. A practice theoretical account of how disadvantaged young women behave within PA, as well as how materiality, meaning and competency mediate the practices they engage in was not readily available. Observing the population in their natural environment thus became a crucial step in building a practice picture and case study of PA within the cohort. In this way, Browne's (2016) call for visual methods to reflect the 'materiality, sociality and performativity of practices' (p.1) was addressed.

The aim of this stage was to observe a number of factors surrounding practice. Firstly, what practices the young women commonly engaged in throughout the settings, both in individual settings and to track common practices across all three. Secondly, what were the favourable and unfavourable elements of PA and other leisure practices, and thirdly, to uncover anchoring practices (Swidler, 2001) within the cohort; that is how key practices were ordered and prioritised within the groups. In accordance with the aim and objectives of the study, the focus of observations was not on individual thoughts, feelings or behaviours like many previous studies (Hamzeh and Oliver, 2012; Yungblut, Schinke and McGannon, 2012; Watson, Eliott and Mehta, 2015). Rather, it was on collective and shared forms of practice within the cohort. As stated in the preceding chapter, practices were the basic unit of analysis and the key to unlocking the double jeopardy within this project. Data was captured through making real-time 'jottings' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p.29) in a field note diary and writing post-session logs, expanding and reflecting upon points made.

Observations lasted for approximately five months with staggered starts in each club owed to fulfilling ethical requirements, such as obtaining DBS checks. During the first couple of months, the researcher visited each club once a week, sometimes twice depending on the number of sessions per week. This was in order to immerse themselves within the settings as much as possible, whilst also balancing their time between clubs and maintaining personal wellbeing. As data built up and initial analysis became possible, visits reduced to biweekly for the remaining months. In the field, the researcher adopted the role of 'observer as participant' from Gold's (1985) infamous typology. They had had minimal involvement in the social setting but were a regular

presence that participants became accustomed to. This allowed them to focus solely on observing the setting and not become distracted by tasks associated with more participatory roles. That being said, there were times where the researcher did take a more participatory role (such as providing some PA guidance in a C25K session). However, these were rare occurrences and mostly deemed important in terms of Sultana's (2007) striking a bargain for field access which will be discussed later in the chapter.

As noted by McInch (2017), despite conducting a wide array of preparatory reading, when the field is thrust upon a researcher there is no one there to hold their hand or tell them whether they are doing 'good' fieldwork (p.86). The researcher consequently followed in McInch's footsteps in taking the opportunity to undertake a pilot study. Where he used his daily commute to practise being a participant observer and taking field notes, the researcher used their KESS2 company days within the gymnastics club to gain experience. After some initial 'observer' sessions, the researcher became a gymnastics 'helper', attending two sessions per week in community clubs, acting as 'participant as observer' in one and 'observer as participant' in the other (Gold, 1985). This stage involved helping coaches to deliver sessions to a younger cohort whilst also developing observational skills. Throughout the first role there was little time to write in-session fieldnotes (Tenzek, 2017). Thus, this period became a lesson in memory retrieval strategies as much as managing the researcher's own behaviour and relations as a researcher (Walford, 2009). Whilst they opted for the second observational role during fieldwork, this was a valuable learning experience and provided much confidence to enter the field knowing there was a degree of know-how to draw upon.

During fieldwork, the researcher was consistently conscious of their duty to be 'both present and invisible, within and distanced from the events and activities of interest' (Elliot, 2015, p.136). To do this, and to acknowledge the impact of their subjective lens, the researcher consistently participated in a process of reflexivity. Reflexivity can be understood as the 'reciprocal interplay of one's relationship with oneself and others, or the twofold movement that takes one out into the world of others and returns one, changed to oneself' (Jackson, 2010, p.36). Reflexivity involves an intersubjective connection between subjects and contexts and creates a space in which to

acknowledge the presence of power relations, motivations and the normalisation of uncertainties (Frank, 1997).

In the first instance, they practiced reflexivity by making notes in a fieldwork diary. These were sometimes accompanied by recording voice notes on the researcher's iPhone. As Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2007) point out, note taking is a skill that needs to be worked on and developed, and in this case, the iPhone became an essential tool. When they was pushed for time, travelling from one session to another or perhaps they had two minutes away from participants and had something worthwhile to note, they could quickly record thoughts as a prompt for later. The value Murthy (2013) placed on technologically-mediated, ethnographic data collection methods was supported in this case. Notes would be expanded upon in reflective logs when the researcher had the time to do so, mainly at home, late in the evening.

The researcher entered the field as an 'outsider' (McCurdy and Uldam, 2014), albeit with shared nationality and a degree of cultural familiarity which could be considered insider traits (Hockey, 1993). Whilst club leaders did their utmost to put both the researcher and participants at ease, via introductions and involving them in conversations and activities to build rapport, the researcher was still very much aware of their status and how it affected their relations with participants, as well as what behaviour they would exhibit around them. The brief extract below details the evening where the researcher was mistaken for a local police officer by a member of the youth club:

> *In amongst the head-splitting tunes pumping out of the speakers, I hear the words 'are you a copper then?'. I turn around and it is Phil, a larger than life character within the club. A couple of others turn and face me, including Rachel who jumps in and explains my role as a researcher looking into PA within young women. He settles down and exclaims 'that's alright then. I thought you were Maria (a local police officer who frequents the club) last week and I can't stand her'.*

> (Field notes, 05/03/2019)

The researcher was later informed that Phil's family were well-known to the local police force and his relationship with visiting officers was somewhat strained. At this point, it

was approximately one month into fieldwork in this setting. This event raised the question of 'how many club members thought the researcher was a police officer (or simply not who they were told they were)', and the further power imbalance this might bring forth. Upon reflection, the researcher decided they needed to make some small adjustments to combat the mystery status. These mostly included making themself more accessible. They spent more time conversing with club members and leaders rather than attempting to blend into the background. Session time was balanced between communal and private spaces, encouraging members to ask questions whenever they felt curious and even engaging in games of pool. These adjustments, along with a regular presence at the club softened the outsider status, shifting the researcher from solely a non-member to a welcome non-member. The age (25) of the researcher likely contributed to their ability to immerse themselves and become accepted like this.

Adjustments in the remaining clubs were more minor in nature. Alongside educational opportunities and leisure pursuits, a key characteristic of a youth club is providing a social meeting space for youths (Robertson, 2001). For much of the sessions, participants were sat down conversing with friends, listening to music and so on. In contrast, in the gymnastics and running clubs, participants were tasked with activities, giving them less time to ponder over the identity of the researcher and the researcher more time to sit comfortably in the observer as participant role (Gold, 1985). Additionally, hierarchies of bodies already existed within these clubs where older coaches and younger participants were always present. The researcher was thus not such an obvious outsider in these sessions compared to the youth club. They still regularly engaged in conversations with gymnasts and runners, just not to the same extent as in the youth club since there was less time to do so. Frankly, feelings of guilt were common when speaking in those clubs, for leading gymnasts/runners off task. Efforts were subsequently made to arrive early to sessions and converse and build rapport before activities began. The researcher also adopted more of a 'speak when spoken to' attitude during activities to cause as little disruption as possible. This period of fieldwork became a lesson in employing various strategies and managing my behaviour so that it was appropriate to the particular setting.

A central tenet of this stage was to continuously 'make the strange familiar and the familiar strange', an idea realised by the 18th century romanticist poet Novalis and adopted by anthropologists today, such as Myers (2011). Slipping into autopilot was a heavy temptation when attending the same sessions for five months. Indeed, there were times where the researcher questioned whether a 'saturation' had been reached where new practices were not emerging and there was little left to report on. The researcher willed themselves to continue writing in detail, however, continuing to question their interpretations and consider how they aligned with a practice theoretical philosophy.

Saturation is a contentious term, said to have 'slipped into the lexicon of researchers in a way that assumes a shared understanding of the concept, when in reality neither its meaning nor its application could be said to have secured broad consensus among the research community' (Nelson, 2017, p.2). Hence it is often critiqued for its taken for granted status (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Rather than seeking a saturation point, the researcher sought Dey's (1999) concept of *theoretical sufficiency,* meaning data collection stopped when they were confident they had a sufficient depth of understanding in order to progress to the next stage of the research. The sense of urgency associated with funded PhD deadlines also meant that allowing observations to go on for longer would impede upon other areas of the project. Thus, it was important to keep progressing. Data analysis will be detailed in a separate section below but the findings were naturally employed to design the proceeding interview stage of the research.

4.4.3 Stage 2: Interviewing Practitioners

Once a practice picture of the population had been built via observations, the next task was to interrogate the picture. Accordingly, the aim of this stage was to form an understanding of how and why practices were carried and performed by unpicking the configurations of the elements to reveal favourable and unfavourable structures, as well as understanding how certain practices had bundled or become ordered for the girls. As noted by Shove (2017), there is no distinct practice methodology. Rather, once the essence of the practice under interrogation is decided, methods arise by determining the most appropriate way to explore this essence. A central tenet of

practice theory is its ability to decentre the subject (Rinkinen and Smits, 2016), hence questions emerge on whether practitioners should be used an informants of their practice. However, this research concurred with Shove (2017) in saying that if the research question surrounds cohorts of practitioners, it would be negligent to not engage with cohorts given their status as carriers and performers, providing that the object of research remains as practice (rather than individual cognitive factors).

To address the study aims, qualitative interviewing techniques were adopted. Interviewing is the most widely employed method in qualitative research (Silverman, 1997; Bryman, 2016). An interview can be understood as a 'specific form of conversation where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and the interviewee' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018, xvii). The qualitative interview meanwhile attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations' (Kvale, 1996, p.1) Qualitative interviews are often semi-structured or unstructured in nature, and characterised by terms such as in-depth, informal, open-ended and naturalistic (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Whilst there is great diversity between qualitative interview styles and traditions, Mason (2002) argues that all share certain core features:

1. *The interactional exchange of dialogue (between two or more participants, in face-to-face or other contexts).*
2. *A thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach where the researcher has topics, themes or issues they wish to cover, but with a fluid flexible structure.*
3. *A perspective regarding knowledge as situated and contextual, requiring the researcher to ensure that relevant contexts are brought into focus so that the situated knowledge can be produced. Meanings and understandings are created in interaction, which is effectively a co-production, involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge.*

(Adapted from Mason, 2002, p.62)

The final point in particular raises the importance of reflexivity given the researcher's influence on this construction of knowledge. In this study, a series of 1:1 (bar one) interviews were carried out with a selection of young women from each setting. In line

with a pragmatic, qualitative methodology, purposeful sampling was utilised to allow the researcher to select information-rich cases recruit individuals that were especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002; Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This is to address the aim of pragmatic, qualitative and case study work; to achieve depth of understanding (Patton, 2002). Numerous strategies underpin purposeful sampling. This study utilised a criterion-based strategy (Palinkas et al., 2015) with criteria included being female, aged between 13-18 years old and meeting the committed, semi-committed or inactive definition requirements. Many of the young women identified for interviews had also exhibited practices deemed worthy of further investigation during the observation stage.

Before commencing with participant interviews, it was important to conduct a pilot interview. In qualitative research, the researcher is often the primary instrument in data generation, whilst the interview guide and questions are at the heart of the process (Paisley and Reeves, 2001; Majid et al., 2017). Thus, conducting a pilot is a crucial step in preparing for a study, one that allowed the researcher to refine their technique and proficiency. Due to time constraints, the pilot was conducted with a fellow female PhD student within the university. Whilst the pilot data did not apply to the double jeopardy itself, the interview transpired to be a highly insightful, look into how adult responsibilities ordered PA engagement, as well as how early socialisation experiences have a lasting impact on how individuals consume PA throughout the life course. As expected, the pilot provided valuable lessons. Certain questions were considered and revised in future interview guides, alongside a realisation that more familiarity with the research guide was required. As Roulston, deMarrais and Lewis (2003) comment, one might anticipate a particular narrative within interviews, but one cannot know for certain what will arise. The task of actively listening whilst also formulating appropriate follow-up questions thus needed to be refined.

Interviews were semi-structured in nature, meaning they had a degree of predetermined order but were also flexible in the way that issues were addressed and allowed conversation and information to evolve naturally (Clifford et al., 2016). Young people are not always used to expressing views and experiences freely, thus it can be a challenge to enable and maximise their expressions, as well as their willingness to communicate in a rich manner (Hill, 1997). In answer to this challenge, the researcher

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incorporated examples and personal experiences into the interviews where necessary, acting as prompts to aid understanding of questions.

In total, 11 interviews were conducted. Five women were interviewed in both the gymnastics and youth club setting, and one from the C25K club. Spradley (1979) and Bernard (2002) both note the importance of availability and willingness to participate in research, and it is anticipated that the seasonal nature of this phase of study, taking place from October to December 2019, did not facilitate recruitment. Afternoons and evenings were frequently dark, cold and wet, inevitably affecting attendance and participation in the clubs (particularly the C25K club). This was a finding in itself, and one further confirmed during interviews and the final study *Walking and Talking*, the details of which will be outlined in the results section. Interviews concluded when a point of theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999) was reached, characterised by the consistent emergence of similar themes. This is not to say any form of saturation was reached or novel themes would not have emerged with continuation. Rather, a number of consistent practices and explanations were collected that cut across field settings, providing the researcher with a sufficient practice picture to analyse and take forward to the remaining studies.

Before proceeding to outline the methods selected for Studies 2 and 3 of this project, a brief description of the Covid-19 pandemic and its timeline will be provided. This is key to contextualising the decisions made and eventual research design for these studies, given the degree of challenge and disruption the pandemic and its associated lockdowns and restrictions caused the project. The official Welsh Government Coronavirus Timeline (2020; 2021) will be used as the main resource for this and it is important to note that whilst some aspects of restrictions and guidelines reflected those mandated by the UK Government, regulations for Wales were in fact issued by the Welsh Government and thus varied amongst the Home Nations.

4.5 The Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 was first recognised internationally on 31st December 2019 in Wuhan, China. From this point onwards, various public health regulations were initialised in an attempt to stop the spread of the disease. For example, frequent hand washing, controlling air

travel, and introducing self-isolation measures for those who were symptomatic. On February 28th, 2020, the first case of Coronavirus in Wales was diagnosed. By March 23rd, a full UK lockdown was actioned, where only essential services remained open. People were instructed to work from home, travel only if absolutely necessary (with fixed terms on what was considered necessary), avoid public gatherings of more than two people and importantly for the context of this research, exercise once per day, for up to one hour with members from the household (Welsh Government, 2020).

The aforementioned regulations were in place until June 1st, 2020, when the primary 'Stay at Home' message in Wales shifted to 'Stay Local'. This signalled the opening of non-essential businesses, allowed people to travel within 5 miles of their home and granted two households to meet outdoors. Over the following months, there were phased returns for various institutions, including schools (which until this point had been operating online), hospitality and tourism. By August 10th, gyms and swimming pools could re-open, resulting in increased provision of PA opportunities. The next few months saw an easing of Coronavirus restrictions with increasing freedom yet advisable caution. This was until cases once again began to spike, with local lockdown restrictions for the research participants being introduced on September 22nd, 2020, and nationwide restrictions on September 24th.

For the following months, Wales and the rest of the world experienced fluctuating levels of restrictions, with consistent advice to practice cautious behaviour. For example, socially distancing where possible, wearing face coverings, shielding vulnerable persons and generally acting quite differently to pre-Covid times. From May 17th, 2021, Wales progressed to alert level two off the back of the national lockdowns throughout late 2020 and early 2021. On June 7th, this progressed to alert level one. This meant that at the time of Studies 2 and 3, indoor hospitality and entertainment venues were reopening, with increasing numbers of people allowed to attend organised indoor and outdoor events. PA facilities, such as gyms, leisure centres and fitness suites opened a little earlier, on May 3rd for individual or one-to-one training (Welsh Government, 2021). These restrictions remained in place throughout the duration of the studies, meaning PA facilities were accessible to Natalie throughout Study 3. However, experiences and perceptions of Covid-19 varied from person to

person, so although facilities had reopened, people did not necessarily think, feel or practice PA in the same way as pre-Covid times.

In addition to considering the impact of Covid-19 on general life and its subsequent impact on the studies, literature on the impact of Covid-19 on PA practice also began to emerge. This will be discussed further, particularly surrounding its impact on the design of Study 3, in section 4.7.

4.6 Study *2: Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders*

The purpose of the first study was to develop a picture of practice among individuals experiencing the double jeopardy. This provided insight into the forms of practice deemed desirable and undesirable for disadvantaged girls, including what elements could be usefully incorporated into PA. It made sense therefore to hold practical discussions with the community leaders at the girls' clubs, in order to understand whether the girls' needs (surrounding materials, meanings and competencies) could be met with the clubs' resource and capacity. To further develop this insight and consider the research problem at a higher policy-based level (thereby creating more significant research findings and implications), senior policymakers from the clubs' national governing bodies (NGBs) were also interviewed. The purpose, to understand whether girls' needs and clubs' capacities to meet needs aligned with policy, guidance and practice dictated by NGBs. Results from each round of interviews (that is with the girls, club leaders and NGB informants) were thus triangulated in a bid to identify both agreements and conflicts, and therefore identify areas either most necessary for intervention or offering the most suitable conditions for intervention (where all parties were effectively on board).

To conduct these discussions in a rigorous and systematic way, qualitative semi-structured interviews were once again adopted along with purposive sampling. Given their pre-existing involvement in the research, the key gatekeepers, that is the individuals who granted the researcher access to the field settings by way of their leadership status, were recruited and agreed to be interviewed. For the youth and C25K clubs, these were leaders responsible for delivering the provision observed in the previous study. In contrast, the gymnastics leader was not the TeamGym coach,

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but a director of the club who was familiar with and oversaw TeamGym provision, whilst being heavily involved with insight gathering and community-based projects delivered through the club. To access insight into the policies and guidance that governed these clubs, stakeholders from their NGBs were also recruited. Recruitment and communication was facilitated here by the research team's pre-existing links and networks within Welsh (and British) sport development circles.

Specifically, an organisational director and previous Us Girls coordinator (working for Sport Wales at the time of the interview) from StreetGames, Simon and Lucy, were interviewed to align with the C25K club (although all field settings were connected with StreetGames). A chief operating officer from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales, Lloyd, was recruited to align with the youth club. Directors from both British and Welsh Gymnastics, Pete and Mari, were recruited to provide insight into the overarching policies which governed the gymnastics club (British Gymnastics), as well as more localised guidance and support (provided by Welsh Gymnastics), and finally, a director of policy and insight from Sport Wales, Ioan, was interviewed in order to gain a general understanding of the direction of sport and PA policy throughout Wales. This second study was conducted during the summer of 2021, shortly following a series of Covid-19 lockdowns. For safety purposes and in line with the guidance at the time which advised all those who could to continue working from home, all interviews bar one were conducted virtually over Microsoft Teams, audio recorded via Dictaphone and transcribed verbatim. The one interview that took place in person was with the youth club leader owing to the leader's preference and the assurance that neither them nor the researcher were showing symptoms of Covid-19.

Interview guides were created for each level of stakeholder, one for community leaders and one for senior policymakers. Questions were stable across different organisations and settings, albeit with different examples of practice to apply to their individual club/organisational contexts. Once again, it was important to conduct a pilot interview to refine this process (Majid et al., 2017), particularly since the researcher had not interviewed community leaders or NGB employees before. The pilot was conducted with an individual who the researcher had met multiple times throughout the project owing to their connections to Welsh sport development circles. They had previously worked at the gymnastics club, and leisure trust responsible for delivering the C25K

sessions, along with attending numerous StreetGames and Large Scale Change events within Blaenau Gwent which the researcher also attended. They were intimately familiar therefore with the notion of the double jeopardy and Little Lisa and were thus a prime and willing option with which to pilot the interview guide. Learning was once again taken from this process and implemented throughout the interviews, the findings of which are outlined in chapter six.

4.7 Study 3: Walking and Talking

In addition to considering the impact of Covid-19 on general life and its subsequent impact on the studies (outlined above), literature on the impact of Covid-19 on PA practice also began to emerge at the time of the study. It is worthwhile therefore to provide a brief discussion on the trends in PA participation throughout the pandemic and how they influenced the design of this study.

Broadly speaking, the pandemic corresponded with considerable decreases in PA behaviour and associated increases in sedentary behaviour. Stockwell et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review into changes in PA behaviour from pre- and post-Covid-19 pandemic (where post represents up until the publication date of the study). Of the 45 studies researching changes in the healthy adult population, 26 demonstrated measurable changes in PA participation, with 25 of these reporting a decrease in participation. Of the six studies researching changes in healthy child and adolescent populations, all demonstrated a decrease in PA participation. For sedentary behaviour, 26 studies were conducted into healthy adults, with 18 demonstrating a change and 13 of those reporting an increase in sedentary behaviour. Of the five studies measuring changes in sedentary behaviour for children and young people, once again, all reported increases. These findings have been replicated across numerous contexts and populations (Castañeda-Babarro, Arbillaga-Etxarri, Gutiérrez-Santamaría and Coca, 2020; Elnagger et al., 2020; Theis et al., 2020; Puccinelli et al., 2021).

In Wales, 1007 individuals aged 16+ participated in a survey surrounding PA during a Covid-19 lockdown period, motioned by Sport Wales and the market research company, Savanta ComRes. 34% of participants reported that they were exercising

more than usual during lockdown, while 33% reported they were exercising less (Sport Wales, 2021). Whilst no significant differences were identified in PA levels based on sex or ethnicity, socioeconomic status continued to have a significant effect on participation, with lower levels being recorded by those from lower socioeconomic groups (Sport Wales, 2021). The adoption of practice theory here was particularly useful in drawing out how materials, meanings and competencies were lacking in this group compared to more affluent counterparts, thus furthering the disparity in participation and subsequent health inequalities. Health status and age were also found to have significant effects on participation, with pre-existing long-term health conditions negatively influencing participation and engagement in PA being significantly lower for 16–34-year-olds than 35–54-year-olds.

Whilst numerous forms of exercise and PA were restricted during Covid-19, if not rendered impossible through lockdowns and facility closures, opportunities emerged for others to grow and succeed. For example, organised community sports were halted for many months owed to limitations on large gatherings and facility closures (Football Association of Wales, 2020; Wales Netball, 2020; Welsh Government, 2020). Participation in team and racket sports was down by 76% in England. Rates of walking for leisure, however, rose by 11% (Strain et al., 2022). In Wales, 49% of adults found new ways to be active during lockdown with the five most popular activities being walking (22% higher than pre-Covid), jogging (6%), exercise/workouts/fitness (6%), cycling (4%) and gardening (4%) (Sport Wales, 2021). Additionally, statistics published by the Department for Transport surrounding active travel noted 39% of people walked more than before the pandemic and 38% of people cycled more. Additionally, of those who increased their walking and cycling, 94% thought they would continue to practice active travel once restrictions eased (Department for Transport, 2020).

Covid-19 and its associated lockdowns provided space for less-competitive activities, some of which were more holistic in nature (eg. walking or gardening in and around nature) to thrive and as the statistics show, many people took up those opportunities. Nonetheless, from the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and up to the onset of the final two studies, it was unlikely that many people had been able to exercise in a way consistent with their pre-Covid exercise routine, whether this was due to issues with

provision and access or having the confidence to participate during a global pandemic. Many leisure settings were still not operating and where they were, few operated to the same extent as pre-Covid, with many restricting provision and customer turnaround in an attempt to control the spread of the virus. Meanwhile Ruffault, Bernier, Fournier and Hauw (2020) reported higher rates of anxiety surrounding returning to sport post-Covid-19 for females and younger competitive athletes. Furthermore, Sport Wales reported that just 25% of adults felt confident enough to return to gyms post-lockdown with just 20% feeling confident enough to return to sports halls (2021). Facilities reopening therefore did not necessarily signify uptake of services, as many people's attitudes and behaviours altered drastically as an effect of Covid-19.

Taking this into consideration, along with Sport Wales' report that in contrast to attending gyms and sports halls, 61% of adults felt confident enough to practice PA in parks, the decision was made to use walking as the foci of Study 3 and a vehicle to increase PA levels. Walking was one of a few activities that was easily accessible to the masses throughout Covid-19. For many people, walks can be done from the front door, for free or very little cost, with limited kit or equipment and importantly, the individual can decide the nature of the walk. It can be short or long, fast or slow, flat or inclined (depending on where you reside) and surrounded by various environments and people. Walking was an activity that could be relied upon remaining accessible, even if Covid-19 restrictions were to return to higher alert levels. It was an opportunity therefore, for Natalie to be consistently active if she chose to engage with the programme.

The final study aimed to pilot a practice-based intervention to increase PA participation in the target population. To do this, findings from Study 1: *Exploring Practice Constellations* were incorporated, along with emerging findings from Study 2: *Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders*, which was occurring simultaneously owing to the lasting impact of Covid-19. Whilst Studies 1 and 2 were successful in drawing out the elements of practice that were both facilitative and problematic in promoting PA participation, it was important to also evaluate whether practice theory offered novel tools to shift and transform practice, particularly since the adoption of the theory was in part motivated by a critique of behaviour change-based

interventions. Whilst enhanced understandings are crucial, if practice theory were to offer additional value in transforming practice, this would improve the likelihood of adoption within contemporary policy and practice.

To reiterate, there is no prescriptive or distinct practice method. Rather, the tools and methods adopted simply require an ability to keep practice at the forefront of analysis (Shove, 2017). When designing this study therefore, a degree of freedom was afforded to the researcher, particularly given the research's pragmatic grounding, to adopt methods most suited to the research problem and importantly, that were appropriate when transitioning out of Covid-19 lockdowns. As was outlined earlier, at the time of this study, PA settings were beginning to resume provision but with natural lags in returning to full capacity given the duration of closures and newly introduced guidelines surrounding working capacities and health and safety (UK Government, 2021). Communication and work were advised to be done virtually where possible, meaning work and education via platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams was still popular (and mandated in many settings). Research revealed that more informal activities such as walking, jogging and cycling increased in popularity throughout the lockdowns, whilst socioeconomic status continued to have a significant effect on PA participation, with lower levels recorded by those in disadvantaged groups compared to more affluent counterparts (Sport Wales, 2021).

In order to unite the aims of the research, findings to date, practice-based lens and circumstances surrounding Covid-19, a practice-based qualitative interviewing technique was adopted to evaluate a coproduced walking programme to increase PA levels. The study firstly involved coproducing a walking target with the participant (details of their recruitment will be provided below). The researcher adopted the role of *practice mentor* throughout the study, which was loosely based on the concept of life coaching. Life coaching is an emerging role which consists of a 1:1 relationship between a coach and client, centred on lifestyle change and goal setting. The life coach approaches behaviour change with a client from the view that self-identified and prioritised attitudes and judgements determine feelings, decisions and behaviours. The life coach will thus facilitate the client in unravelling distortions in thinking, whilst enabling them to learn alternative approaches to problems, enhancing their decision making and helping them achieve goals (Stober and Grant, 2006). It is highly

personalised with much of the work being intangible and involving emotional labour (George, 2013). Life coaching attempts to focus on a person's whole life rather than simply the problem at hand, and given its focus on the needs, values and priorities of patients, aligns suitably with person-centred approaches (Ammentorp et al., 2013), an element this research was also eager to incorporate.

Life coaches specialise in a variety of areas, from management to business consultancy (Grant, 2005) to increasingly, healthcare contexts. Health coaching has been defined as 'a practice of health education and health promotion within a coaching context to enhance the well-being of individuals, and to facilitate the achievement of their health-related goals' (Palmer and Whybrow, 2003, p.91). The approach has been used to combat a variety of health-related problems, including high blood pressure, weight management, quality of life, depression and PA (Newnham-Kansas et al., 2009) and has been shown to be successful in improving health outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged groups (Ammentorp et al., 2013). Life coaching thus provided a viable framework for intervention but naturally required tweaks to make it suitable for a practice-based intervention.

The role of *practice-mentor* adopted a similar approach, using 1:1 sessions and a person-centred engagement style to explore the participant's wider life while exploring their relationship with PA. Crucially, however, practice was consistently made the focus and unit of analysis (Shove, 2017), rather than the attitudes and values used within life coaching. Interviews thus surrounded unpicking the participant, Natalie's, daily practice, including the favourable/unfavourable elements, how practices were bundled together and how practices were ordered and analysed by discussing what practices she afforded the most resource and attention to. Detail and examples of attempts to shift practice will be provided in the *Walking and Talking* chapter, but generally, the approach involved Natalie revealing facilitative or problematic elements of walking (and her general daily practice) where the researcher would challenge her perceptions of these. The two would proceed to problem-solve, (implicitly) using the three elements model and the concepts of anchoring and affective practice to consider ways in which walking could become more attractive or achievable in Natalie's everyday life. Natalie was then encouraged to pilot these changes and report back

during the proceeding interview where the pair would co-evaluate and consider whether the changes could be implemented in a long-term, sustainable way.

In this way, the study leaned on a participatory action research methodology, whereby practices were planned, acted out, observed and reflected upon (Kindon, Pain and Kesby, 2007; Zuber-Skerritt, 2015). Reflections subsequently formed the basis of future planning, with the cycle repeating itself every week in an attempt to refine practice and embed walking in Natalie's daily life until the conclusion of the study. The cyclical nature of the interviews provided a space in which Natalie's practice-life could continually emerge, shedding light on the granular elements and relations between practices that this approach sought in order to understand how to shift PA participation. The extended and cyclical nature of the study also provided a space in which the researcher and Natalie could build rapport, a factor deemed crucial in building trust and proximity with research participants, thereby increasing comfort to share insight into their lives in a detailed way (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019).

Interviews once again took place over Microsoft Teams for the safety of both researcher and participant. Interview audios were recorded via the use of a Dictaphone and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The study also required an objective measure of daily steps to monitor whether Natalie was meeting her target. To do this, Natalie used her smart watch. A smart watch is a wrist-worn timekeeping device and 'general purpose, networked computer with an array of sensors' (Rawassizadeh, Price and Petre, 2015, p.45). Increasingly available as a consumer device, smart watches are frequently linked to smartphones, enhancing communication and lifestyle monitoring, and thus being capable of supporting/evaluating health in everyday life (Reeder and David, 2016). Smart watches have been shown to record accurate and reliable measurements of PA behaviour, comparable with devices used in clinical practice (Hataji et al., 2016; Martinato et al., 2021). Natalie owned a smart watch before the study began, so this was deemed an appropriate method to monitor daily steps.

In addition to interviews and daily step records, Natalie was also encouraged to record her walks using the application (app) Strava. Strava is a widely accessible smartphone app used to monitor and analyse participation in a wide range of activities, including

walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, and skiing (Strava, 2022). It is available free of charge on smartphones and has a range of additional features outside of activity monitoring, such as a social networking element, option to compete with others on certain routes and local and global daily/weekly/monthly goals (West, 2015). The purpose of adopting Strava was to analyse the distances and speeds of Natalie's walks so that when Natalie was lacking in time to meet her daily step target, she could walk at greater speeds and intensities to still induce health benefits.

A degree of reflexivity from Natalie was also encouraged, both during interviews and on the days in between. To promote this, the researcher asked Natalie to take photographs of enjoyable parts of her walks, as well as write reflective logs following the completion of a walk. Photo-elicitation is frequently incorporated as an element of qualitative methodologies and interviews as a way to elicit additional information and provide visual access to unobservable experiences and understandings (Richard and Lahman, 2015). Reflective logs and diary entries have been increasingly adopted as a qualitative research tool in order for participants to record the events of their daily lives (Toms and Duff, 2002). A particular strength is their capacity to encourage immediacy in data recording, providing participants with an opportunity to report an accurate and complete picture of their experience (Lewis, Sligo and Massey, 2005) rather than solely relying on recall when the time comes to be interviewed; a key reason for their inclusion in the study. Natalie was asked to record dates, times and locations of her walks in the logs and otherwise encouraged to write freely surrounding her experience, including what she enjoyed/did not enjoy and her what she felt during the walk. Although provided with the freedom to audio record or even film her reflective logs, Natalie chose to hand-write these, submitting them and her step records and photographs to the researcher via Microsoft Teams.

In terms of recruitment, purposeful sampling was once again utilised (Patton, 2002; Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). At the time of the study, the C25K club had not resumed to its pre-Covid provision while the youth club was in the process of resuming provision. Owing to the significant disruption and time constraints placed on the project as a result of Covid-19, the researcher made the pragmatic decision to recruit study participants from the gymnastics club who were consistently delivering sessions (and had done virtually throughout lockdown), facilitated by the club director who sat on the

supervisory team as an industry partner. The researcher attended a TeamGym session in May 2021, providing a verbal introduction to the study as well as providing information sheets to take home and discuss with the gymmasts' parents. Although originally seeking to recruit two to eight participants for the study, uptake was poor. Challenges of recruiting and retaining adolescents (particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds) in research studies are well documented (Jones et al., 2012; Park and Calmaro, 2013), likely exacerbated in this case by the transition period of returning to gymnastics following lockdown. Natalie was thus the sole volunteer and although represented a small, micro sample, for the purpose of trialing a practice-based, person-centred approach which sought rich detail of an individual's daily practice, one person was deemed sufficient for the study to go ahead. The strengths and limitations of the sample size will be discussed further in the *Discussion* chapter.

4.7.1 A Word on Access

While qualitative research can at times be a solitary undertaking, it is also a 'social process of negotiations, from entering, continuing in the field and even exiting a research site' (Bondy, 2012, p.578). Field relations and negotiations began long before field settings had been decided. Sitting on the supervisory team as an industry partner, the director of the gymnastics club became a gatekeeper of both her own club and wider PA networks throughout the Valleys region, granting the researcher the opportunity to build social capital within the Welsh PA grapevine. The director invited the researcher to a number of networking events in the early stages of the project where PA and sport development practitioners were present. Some practitioners (including C25K leader, Alice, StreetGames director, Simon and previous StreetGames employee, Lucy) were met multiple times in the lead up to fieldwork with care being taken each time to discuss the purpose and value of the project. The researcher was attempting to engage in 'striking a bargain' as Sultana (2007, p.380) phrased it, offering engagement with research findings in exchange for access to settings. This proved worthwhile when those relationships materialised into access to the C25K club and interviews with Simon and Lucy. Owing to the relationship with the gymnastics director, accessing the gymnastics club was an undeniably more straightforward process. Nevertheless, bargaining practices still took place, most notably when building relationships with participants. As Bondy (2012) points out,

striking a bargain is an ongoing process throughout fieldwork, with constant evaluations and renegotiations taking place to maintain access.

Accessing the youth club was an altogether more solitary effort and one to test the researcher's developing competency in external engagement. Initially, there was a conscious effort to venture outside of the 'StreetGames bubble' for the inactive setting. StreetGames are a far-reaching national organisation with a metaphorical finger in every pie with regards to PA in South Wales. It was desirable therefore to seek a club that had no obvious relation to the organisation and explore how delivery contrasted. It later transpired that the club were in fact involved with the organisation, using insight and delivering programmes designed by StreetGames such as Fit and Fed, a programme to address hunger, isolation and inactivity during school holidays (StreetGames, N.D.). To gain access, the researcher contacted the Youth Services Manager at the County Borough Council who subsequently arranged a meeting with the local youth leaders. From here, the youth club involved in the research was selected.

For the *Walking and Talking* study, Natalie was accessed and recruited through her participation in TeamGym and involvement in the observation stage of Study 1. A more detailed discussion surrounding recruitment and sample size for the *Walking and Talking* study will be provided in the forthcoming *Conclusion* chapter. Access to club leaders was straightforward given their pre-existing involvement with the project, with each leader being eager to be involved and share their perspectives. Accessing NGB policymakers relied more on the pre-existing networks of the supervisory team, particularly the director of study, given their experience in evaluating sports practice and policy throughout Wales (Bolton, Fleming and Galdes, 2007; Bolton, Fleming and Elias, 2008; Bolton and Martin, 2013) and role as a director on the board of British Gymnastics. The researcher was thus afforded a great deal of capital to draw upon by the supervisory team which undoubtedly facilitated recruitment for each research study.

4.8 Data Analysis

A key challenge for qualitative researchers is managing the volume of data that has been collected (Bryman, 2016). Organisation was thus paramount in systematically managing data from three qualitative research studies. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) highlight the benefits of recognising several distinct practices involved in data analysis, that allow researchers to handle their data effectively. First, 'writing fieldnotes gives way to *reading* them' (p.171). During the observation and interview stages, notes from the field diary and interview transcripts (audio files were transcribed verbatim) were transported to Microsoft Word documents. This was to aid the computer-assisted analysis that would be carried out later, as well as protect the data from accidental damage. Whilst initial analysis involved reading the field diary and transcripts and physically noting ideas and themes, this soon gave way to a more systematic approach using a qualitative data analysis software (QDAS), ATLAS. ti.

As opposed to earlier systems used by qualitative researchers, such as manual indexing, QDAS allows researchers to organise their findings and flexibly build code structures which support the emergence of new categories, as well as explore the complexity of meanings which were previously 'manually daunting' (Salmona and Kaczynski, 2016, p.6). QDAS has also been commended for making the analysis process more transparent and replicable, leading to enhanced credibility (Hwang, 2007). Despite well-documented benefits, many still approach the use of QDAS with a cautious eye. Holbrook and Butcher (1996) query the methodological 'straight jacket' (p.60) that might be imposed upon research activities by its use. The concern is that the parameters of the software begin to influence how the study is designed, with the researcher perhaps tailoring to the needs of the software rather than the research question itself (DeNardo and Levers, 2002). Thus, the use of QDAS should automatically include a critical, reflexive awareness of how the software influences research practices (Woods, Macklin and Lewis, 2015). Reinforcing the initial point, however, the use of QDAS was simply more time-efficient and effective in terms of project management, collating all data in one secure space.

In terms of the process itself:

> *Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis consists of various consecutive phases, which are on the most general level: preparing data and creating a*

project file, coding the data, using the software to sort and structure the data and querying the data with the aim of discovering patterns and revelations.

(Friese, 2019, p.1).

The above process was conducted via ATLAS.ti 8. This is a QDAS used heavily throughout the UK and United States, mostly within qualitative research, and used most frequently in interview and focus group studies (Woods et al., 2016). As a software, it is used to analyse large bodies of textual, graphical, audio and visual data, offering a multitude of tools with which to analyse such data. It was the myriad of tools that justified its selection for the study, and these will be described throughout the section. To begin, analysis initially consisted of creating separate 'projects' for each study (and separate stages for Study 1) within ATLAS.ti, consisting of three 'groups' (representing each setting). Relevant field notes and transcripts were then imported into their corresponding groups.

To reconvene with Emerson, Fretz and Shaw's (2011) distinct stages of analysis, once documents were imported, the process of coding could begin. Thematic analysis was adopted as the analysis approach for this research, which is a method for identifying, describing, organising, analysing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although critiqued due to possible inconsistencies and incoherence (Holloway and Todres, 2003), the theoretical freedom and flexibility of thematic analysis means it can be adjusted to meet the needs of many different studies and is capable of providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (King, 2004; Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is also capable of identifying and summarising key features of large data sets (King, 2004). Thematic analysis was therefore well-suited to both the level of data collected and the novel theoretical lens through which the studies were conducted. This is because it allowed key practices to emerge, as well as the materials, meanings and competencies that created and sustained the practices, represented by themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six steps to conducting thematic analysis:

1. Familiarising oneself with the data – this involves the researcher immersing themselves with the data, reading and re-reading transcripts, listening to

recordings and noting ideas. The researcher should have a comprehensive understanding of the interaction and familiarized themselves with all aspects of the data.

2. Generating initial codes – the researcher starts identifying preliminary codes which are features of the data that appear interesting or meaningful. Codes are more numerous and specific than themes but provide indications of the context of the conversation.

3. Searching for themes – this is the beginning of the interpretive analysis of the collated codes. Relevant data extracts are sorted according to overarching themes.

4. Reviewing themes – this stage involves a deeper review of the identified themes where the researcher questions whether to combine, refine, separate or discard initial themes. Data within themes should be coherent while there should be identifiable distinctions between themes.

5. Defining and naming themes – the researcher refines and defines the themes and potential subthemes, clearly operationalising each theme with a working definition.

6. Producing the report – the researcher transforms their analysis into an interpretable piece of writing, portraying the themes with empirical examples which relate to the research question.

(p.87)

Codes represent labels or tags used to allocate units of meaning to the descriptive information compiled during a study (Basit, 2010). Seidel and Kelle (1995) describe the process as 'noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures' (Basit, 2010, p.144). Coding proceeded in two phases, namely *open* coding and *focused* coding. Open coding involved reading documents 'line-for-line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p. 172). This was done in the early reading stages as well as later using ATLAS.ti. Focused coding involved line-by-line analysis on the basis of common themes identified in the open stage. Here the researcher uses a 'smaller set of promising ideas and categories to provide the major topic and themes' for the research (p.172).

Open and focused coding did not take place just once. It was rather a series of reading and re-reading, allowing the researcher to continually refine the codes and categories and produce over-arching themes. The code manager within ATLAS.ti was of particular use here, as every time a code was attributed to a particular note or quotation, all could be retrieved through searching that particular code, including across groups. This allowed the comparison of themes across the committed, semi-committed and inactive cohorts. ATLAS.ti also 'counted' codes, stating how frequently they occurred in the analysis process, indicating what the most common themes were. This is referred to as *diachronic reliability,* whereby there is stability in measurements over time (Kirk and Miller, 1986). The main themes in this project were identified through 'analytic induction' meaning analysis involved the 'systematic examination of similarities within and across cases to develop concepts, ideas, or theories (Pascale, 2011, p.53). There was a degree of deductive reasoning, however, where frameworks such as the three elements model influenced how certain practices were interpreted, illustrating a degree of abductive reasoning where the researcher moved between the two modes.

To conclude, raw data is naturally interesting to read, yet without a systematic analysis to illuminate the situation and social world under scrutiny, the reader is left with little to ponder (Basit, 2010). Coding therefore had a crucial role in attributing meaning to data, allowing the researcher to state something meaningful and discuss real-world implications of research, including what needed to happen next. In that vein, themes identified from each stage and study were used to design the method used in the next. Data analysis was thus a continuous cycle of the processes outlined above.

4.9 Managing Quality in Qualitative Research

Managing 'quality' was a continual process throughout the research project. In order to manage quality, particular judgement criteria were selected and importantly, selected based on their relevance to the pragmatic paradigm and qualitative, practice-based research methodology. To monitor this quality, the researcher engaged with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of trustworthiness, including the notions of credibility, transferability, dependability/confirmability and reflexivity that underpin it (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Credibility, understood as confidence in the 'truth' of the

findings, was managed in various ways. Practices, as in doings and sayings, were observable from the outset in the field. In order to recognise persistent patterns of practice, however, prolonged engagement and persistent observation were necessary (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). A period of five months was spent dropping into settings, with weekly visits for the first few. This provided sufficient time to track key practices across almost half a year, recording taken for granted details and forming a picture of who performed what. The interview phase of Study 1 further enhanced credibility since it provided the opportunity to question practice among its key practitioners, providing understanding into how and why they were carried and performed in the manner they were.

Qualitative interviewing techniques have been praised for allowing the researcher to access the meaning individuals attribute to their experiences in the social world (Silverman, 1997), and this meaning was a key element (as per the three elements model) to unlocking understandings of practice. Likewise, observation has been hailed the 'gold standard' among qualitative data collection techniques by Murphy and Dingwall (2007, p.2230) because of their capacity to reveal insights into behaviour that interviews cannot since individuals are frequently unaware of the practices they exhibit in the natural environment (Furlong, 2010). According to Mays and Pope (1995), there is also less risk surrounding issues with self-reporting. That being said, one cannot rely on their methods alone to ensure credibility without straying into a positivist mindset. To enhance quality therefore, the researcher engaged in processes of credibility-checking with leaders. An example of which being the 'white lies' one member of the youth club frequently shared surrounding their relationship with PA. Club leaders in fact pre-warned the researcher of these exaggerations, with Rachel, the leader who went on to be interviewed, becoming a key contact for the researcher, confirming or denying which revelations were accurate and aiding understanding and interpretation of the level of truth in the matter (Cope, 2014).

Sensitivity was also given to the 'Hawthorne effect' that may have come into play. The Hawthorne effect has been described as the 'Achilles heel' of observational research (Coombs and Smith, 2003), and describes how participants modify their behaviour when they know they are being watched, contaminating the pure social environment under study (Oswald, Sherratt and Smith, 2014). Alongside prolonged deployment in

the settings, the researcher managed their appearance and behaviour to try and limit the Hawthorne effect. It became apparent early on that the researcher's clothing had an effect on participants and was something that required reflection, as illustrated by the field note below from a 'competitive recreation' gymnastics session.

> *As they lined up at the start of the session, a young girl looked at me and looked at Fred (coach) and exclaimed "Oh no, we're not doing football, are we?" in a disappointed tone. He replied, stating that since it was a gymnastics club, we would not be doing football and there was no need to panic. We looked at each other and grinned. I'm going to have to question my outfit choices from now on…*

> (Field notes, 28/01/2019)

Being a keen sportsperson, the researcher frequently wore sports kit both inside and outside of fieldwork, kit associated with their playing preferences of rugby and football. Indeed, it was a good guess from the participant. This encouraged reflection upon the need to not unknowingly ostracise oneself from participants based on clothing. The researcher would be coming into contact with young people who did not identify with PA/sport and perhaps did not feel comfortable around those who did. The researcher was also conscious of the negative connotations surrounding masculinity and homosexuality that are often associated with female rugby/football players (Hardy, 2015) and to a degree engaged in 'apologetic' behaviours (Felshin, 1974). They did not change their dress completely but toned down the rugby/football wear at times. Such a renegotiation of identity did not always feel pleasant and the researcher appreciated that perhaps not enough credit was given to the participants to approach them with a welcoming eye, but the researcher felt it important to present themselves as a neutral being.

This was particularly prevalent in the youth club, where after C25K sessions, the researcher made a quick change from kit to jeans and t-shirts in an attempt to blend in with the casual clothing worn at the club. Certain incidents within settings suggested the researcher's presence was not affecting participants' natural practices. This was most noticeable when club members were engaging in mischievous or sometimes deviant behaviours in front of them but not club leaders. A decision had to be made in those instances, whether to inform leaders and sacrifice the little insider status the

researcher had been granted or turn a blind eye. Decisions were mostly made from well-being or health and safety perspectives here, with the researcher informing leaders of any behaviours that put those at risk while waiting for leaders to notice less risky behaviours in their own time so as not to become equated with authority within the clubs.

To address Lincoln and Guba's (1985) transferability and dependability/confirmability, thick description and audit trails were used. Thick description aided transferability by detailed accounts of field experiences allowing others to understand the social and cultural context of the conclusions drawn (Holloway, 1997). For example, conclusions made regarding disadvantaged girls' daily practice and relationships with PA were likely transferable to similar cohorts and settings, providing there was a thorough understanding of the context. Minor details such as the influence of certain weather patterns or items of clothing, were therefore described in as much depth as possible to aid comparisons. Dependability is concerned with showing that findings are consistent and could be repeated, whilst confirmability refers to the extent to which findings are shaped by respondents and not by researcher bias, motivation or interest (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Keeping records of the research path and the directions taken provided the project with a degree of transparency. The use of 'PhD Manager' became a crucial tool within the audit trail as it allowed the researcher to document each supervisory meeting, including the conversations that led to particular decisions. Processes of reflexivity also aided confirmability, encouraging the researcher to consider their biographical and theoretical lens, including any assumptions, preconceptions or values associated with them that might influence research decisions.

The practice theoretical lens was also of significance in facilitating trustworthiness across the credibility, transferability and dependability dimensions. Adopting practice as the unit of analysis meant that although meanings and competencies were slightly more subjective in nature, materials and socially shared enactments of practice were relatively easier to observe and confirm across settings, in addition to likely being easier to confirm across different cohorts and contexts.

4.9.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are present and permeate any given research process. They are of paramount importance in terms of maintaining privacy and protecting participants from harm (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2000). However, with the ever-changing landscape of society, as well as increasing regulation of research, the ethical process has been playfully termed 'walking the tightrope' by van den Hoonaard (2016). A metaphor the researcher became acutely familiar with. Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000) highlight the more subtle challenges associated with qualitative research compared to quantitative (which might be concerned with the ethical collection of human tissue samples for example). These include negating access to minority or underprivileged populations, issues of power imbalance between researchers and participants, and participants' willingness to share stories and experiences. This is in addition to arguments purporting that ethics committees simply operate in a manner more consistent with quantitative studies (Ramcharan and Cutcliffe, 2001). Although most researchers plan and conduct their research in ethical ways which do not wilfully coerce, harm or exploit participants, the extent to which ethics committees are able to 'ensure that research is conducted ethically' remains highly contested (Richardson and McMullan, 2007, p.116). Miller et al. (2012) point out that most qualitative researchers are met with the inherent tensions that characterise the paradigm itself, such as fluidity and inductive uncertainty; tensions that cannot be answered by static ethical guidelines and principles that are becoming increasingly formalised.

Researching young people adds an additional layer of challenge to research, owed to their classification as a vulnerable group (Bagattini, 2019). Common concerns surrounding working with young people include issues of consent (Farrell, 2005; Ford et al., 2007), the representativeness of children who participate in research (Clark, 2005; Hill, 2006) and the consideration of children's spaces as appropriate sites for research (Moss and Petrie, 2002). Consequently, these concerns were carefully considered throughout the design of the studies and corresponding ethics forms. The first step towards entering the field was to gain ethical approval for each study from the appropriate panel within the Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Committee. In addition to ethical approval, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance was required and obtained for two of the settings, as well as membership to British Gymnastics, allowing the researcher to operate within the gymnastics club. Also

provided, was a formal letter from each organisation granting the researcher access to the settings. In this way, leaders were acting as loco parentis.

For the observation stage, both informed consent from parents/guardians and informed assent from youths were sought. Under the Economic and Social Research Council's Framework for Research Ethics (2015), research staff and subjects should be made fully aware of the purpose, method and possible uses of the research, as well as any potential risks entailed. Whilst no consent is typically needed for ethnographic observational work that observes anonymous people in public spaces, the decision was made to include individual consent. This was to allow the fieldwork to evolve more organically, so that further research would naturally develop, leading to a smooth translation into the interview phase. Upon entering the field, the researcher was introduced to the participants of each club by the leaders. Participants were briefed on personal details as well as the details of the research. They were made aware of their right to not participate or withdraw at any given time, facing no repercussions in the process. They were also encouraged to ask questions if they felt curious about the research. Afterwards, information sheets and consent/assent forms were dispensed to club members, along with an encouragement to go home and discuss their potential involvement with parents/guardians. Dispensing forms in the youth club was particularly tricky, given that numbers sometimes reached 70+ per night, as well as the carousel of changing faces that appeared throughout the week. Efforts were therefore made to continually introduce the researcher to those they had not met, as well as continue to encourage an open dialogue between them and the participants.

Within the field, time began to pass and despite regular reminders from leaders, very limited consent/assent forms were being returned. There was no reason to believe that participants were opposed to the observations. At no point did the researcher experience any negativity towards the research, any participants wishing for them to leave or stop observing, or any participants leaving the club owed to their presence. The researcher was also never informed of any of these scenarios by club leaders. This was simply put down to the forgetfulness of participants (as many participants stated when queried), giving gaining parental consent its notoriously 'difficult' reputation (Unger et al., 2004, p.52). Not wanting to gain assent without the

corresponding parental consent, the researcher held out in the hope that forms would eventually arrive, which in hindsight was naïve.

Upon reflection, the level of consent sought was disproportionate to the level of risk entailed in the research, and the nature of the project resulted in an unfortunate disconnect between what was requested (with honest intentions) in the ethics form and what was realistically possible and necessary in the field. To tackle this issue, under the guidance of the supervisory team and ethics committee, the researcher retrospectively attempted to gain assent from as many participants as possible. Far from ideal, but this was agreed on the basis that loco parentis was provided by leaders, negating the need for parental consent. This was in addition to the wholly un-sensitive nature of observations which focused on collective practices rather than individual actions. Unfortunately, this period corresponded with COVID-19, meaning the nation went into lockdown. Hence gaining assent was even more difficult, if not impossible for a period of time. This period of uncertainty represented the most intense 'low' of the project as a whole, with a great deal of stress arising from whether or not the researcher would be able to use the data. The utmost effort was therefore put forth into gaining assent once lockdown relaxed, ensuring that the observations and practices that were to underpin the project as a whole were not lost. An unpleasant time but perhaps a lively example of the trials and tribulations of gaining ethical approval and its translation into conducting research in the real world.

A similar line of action was taken for the interview stage, albeit without as many teething problems. Information sheets, as well as informed consent and assent forms were dispensed and for the most part were returned in a timely manner. Similar to above however, there were two young women eager to participate who met the interview criteria but consistently forgot to get their forms signed. Taking their age into account (both 16+ so the latter end of youth) and one's position as a youth worker within the club, the club leader offered to provide a signature on the consent forms. Not wanting to neglect these valuable stories and experiences, both the young women and the researcher accepted, and assent/consent forms were signed. Upon discussion with both the supervisory team and the chair of the ethics panel, it was decided that retrospective informed consent should be sought from the women's

parents/guardians. Thankfully, this was gained, and the data could be used, once again highlighting the challenges associated with gaining consent for young people.

In line with the ethics applications, all research during Study 1 took place on club premises, with interviews being conducted in accessible rooms in plain sight of club leaders. During many instances, club leaders would in fact drop in and out of the rooms as interviews were often conducted in their office space. In the case of Study 2, all participants were over the age of 18 and consented to speak on behalf of their organisations, with all bar one interview occurring via Microsoft Teams. The one interview that took place in person was once again conducted on club premises. Additionally, both participant assent and parental consent were gained from Natalie before commencing with Study 3, *Walking and Talking*. All interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams with Natalie instructed to position herself in household spaces with open doors where her parents could be in close proximity to the interview. A private Microsoft Teams channel was created in which Natalie could submit her walking materials to ensure confidentiality (discussed further below), accessible only to the research team, Natalie and her parents.

As a guiding principle of ethical practice, anonymity was maintained for both individuals and institutions to the highest level possible via the use of pseudonyms (Tilley and Woodthorpe, 2011). Despite the use of pseudonyms, Murphy and Dingwall (2007) highlight the danger of participants remaining identifiable to one another in research. Owing to the generic nature of the research questions, however, answers were not of a sensitive nature and are unlikely to be recognised or cause serious harm between participants. The convention of confidentiality is seen as a key pillar of qualitative research and is upheld as a means to protect the privacy of participants, to build trust and rapport with research participants and to maintain ethical standards and the integrity of the research process (Baez, 2002; Kaiser, 2009). Maintaining confidentiality was an ongoing process throughout the research, from its design, to the collection of informed consent/assent, to the dissemination of findings. For the purpose of confidentiality, all data collected was stored either in a secure file on a password-protected computer or in a locked drawer, both accessible only to the research team. Data collected will remain stored there indefinitely for future research purposes of meta-analysis, so long as the re-analysis is for the same purpose as

consent was originally given. Research participants were also made aware that any data collected from them would be subjected to the most rigorous data protection practices that comply with the latest General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Chapter Five

Exploring Practice Constellations

5.1 Introduction

The chapter outlines the results from Study 1: *Exploring Practice Constellations* which was conducted in two progressive phases. Firstly, participant observation was utilised over a period of five months to build a practice picture for disadvantaged girls in each setting. Secondly, 11 semi-structured interviews took place with girls from each setting (n = five from the gymnastics club, five from the youth club and one from the C25K club). The phases of study have been presented together to illustrate how practices and themes blended into one another throughout the study and were built upon throughout both stages of research. Research findings will be presented thematically with a consistent application of the practice lens, utilising the three elements model and a number of sensitising concepts to highlight where shifting the unit of analysis offers value for understanding and transforming behaviour in a novel way. To highlight the practical implications that result from the research, the majority of this section will cover key points of convergence across settings. Significant points of departure will also be infrequently presented, however, owed to the implications for the individual setting and external clubs rendered similar in nature.

Figures 4 and 5 outline the characteristics of the research sample used within this study. Figure 4 details the field club staff who were present throughout the observation stage and are mentioned in field note extracts throughout this chapter. Figure 5 meanwhile details the girls from each field setting who participated in interviews during phase two of the study. Following Figures 4 and 5, Figure 6 highlights the objectives being addressed and relevant study for this chapter, drawing on the conceptual model of the research used within the *Introduction* chapter.

Pseudonym:	Field Setting:	Role:
Rachel	Youth Club	Senior Youth Worker
Maria	Youth Club	Police Officer
Fred	Gymnastics Club	Gymnastics Coach
Susan	Gymnastics Club	Director and Coach
Helen	Gymnastics Club	TeamGym Coach
Alice	Couch to 5k Club	Club Leader
Grace	Couch to 5k Club	Guest Coach

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Sofia	Cardiff Metropolitan University	Pilot Interview Participant

Figure 4: A sample table for field club staff and the pilot interviewee

Pseudonym:	Age (at the time of the study):	Field Setting:	Role:
Amelia	16	Youth Club	Attendee
Jessica	14	Youth Club	Attendee
Daphne	16	Youth Club	Attendee
Lottie	16	Youth Club	Attendee
Rosie	16	Youth Club	Attendee
Chloe	15	Gymnastics Club	Attendee
Gwen	14	Gymnastics Club	Attendee
Kelly	18	Gymnastics Club	Attendee
Lauren	16	Gymnastics Club	Attendee
Lizzie	15	Gymnastics Club	Attendee
Liv	15	Couch to 5k Club	Attendee

Figure 5: A sample table for Study 1, Phase 2 interviews

AIM

To critically examine the relationship between physical activity and girls from socially and economically disadvantaged areas through a practice theory lens.

OBJECTIVES

To critically analyse practice theory as a tool to enhance community sport and physical activity provision as well as its potential for influencing contemporary sport policy.

To deploy sensitising concepts such as 'anchoring practices' and 'affective practice' as tools to assess how and why physical activity is ordered in practitioners' lives in a manner which reinforces the double jeopardy.

To examine collective practices among disadvantaged girls with varying commitments to physical activity throughout community settings in the South Wales Valleys.

To examine practice, policy and provision in community settings and national governing bodies in order to identify alignments and conflicts in needs between girls, club leaders and policymakers.

To pilot a coproduced practice-based intervention to increase physical activity participation in the population of disadvantaged girls.

STUDY 1   STUDY 2   STUDY 3

Conceptual Lens

Anchoring Practices

Materials

Affective Practices, Atmospheres & Generators

PRACTICE

Competency   Meanings

Practical Implications   **Theoretical Implications**   **Policy-Based Implications**

Figure 6: A conceptual model of the research, emphasising Study 1

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5.2 Inhibiting Practices

The first key practice and theme to be introduced is *inhibiting practices*. The primary reason for this, other than it being omnipresent throughout all settings, was that it was often performed alongside many of the other practices outlined in the remainder of the chapter. Importantly, inhibiting practices presented themselves as secondary practices to more anchoring activities such as *smartphone attachment, navigating males and getting dressed* (although the aforementioned could also be empowering and promote PA, depending on the nature of utilisation). Due to the prioritisation and attention afforded to these anchoring practices, practices of inhibition within PA settings were common and could be observed as a discrete practice across each setting with its own set of materials, meanings and competencies. Consequently, inhibiting practices will be presented throughout the chapter where appropriate. For now, however, an explanation of the practice and a selection of empirical examples will be provided to illustrate how the practice was performed by the cohort.

Throughout Study 1, research participants were putting themselves in positions to be active, whether in the gym, on a football pitch, running track or even positioned on an exercise bike. It was observed, however, that despite voluntarily taking up that position (attending the after-school club, leaving the youth club and travelling to the AstroTurf pitch), many would not capitalise on the opportunity and exercise in a manner consistent with the aims of the session. For example, many would not run in the running club, and many would not play football during football sessions. Inhibiting practices thus came to represent instances where girls were physically in a position to exercise, where sufficient conditions (Coalter, 2013) were met, and yet one could visibly observe them holding back from participating or not affording the effort that was consistent with the aims of the session. This practice is likely best highlighted through the use of empirical examples.

The gymnastics setting exhibited the least inhibiting practice overall but, owing to the nature of the club and its committed population, perhaps gave light to the most interesting examples. In the TeamGym setting, coaches were strict in keeping gymnasts on task. The inhibiting practices here surrounded skipping turns when the coach turned away or impeding tumbles and vaults, often laughing or conversing

during the run up which naturally distracted the gymnast and affected movement execution. During an early gym visit, the researcher observed a freerunning session. Freerunning is defined as a more competitive, acrobatic and expressive extension of parkour (Foucan, 2008); the definition of which is to move 'rapidly and fluidly through the urban environment, reflexively interpreting the objects encountered not as obstacles but as opportunities for movement' (Bavington, 2007, p.392). While parkour requires efficiency of movement, incorporating skills such as running, jumping, leaping and climbing, freerunning seeks aesthetic mobility; hence parkour would make no use of a double front flip for example (Derakhshan and Machejefski, 2015). Gymnastic skills are thus transferable into freerunning, and in an attempt to broaden their offer, the club provided an accessible weekly freerunning session, where participants would train in aesthetically overcoming obstacles via varied gymnastic movements.

The freerunning session was open to anyone aged 7+ and was mostly populated by individuals aged approximately 7-11. A group of four women, however, stood out as much older, clearly in the midst of adolescence rather than childhood like the remainder of the group (WHO, N.D.). They were aged approximately 14. Among this group was an ex-National Development gymnast. Although this individual had left the elite pathway years earlier, owed to her experience and continued attendance, it was expected that she would still possess a basic level of gymnastics competency. On the contrary, she appeared to inhibit her skills, to the point where she would struggle with a basic handstand. It was observed that within the younger male and female participants, there was an element of competitiveness and drive to be the best. Among the older girls, however, they appeared to remain at the level of the worst gymnast, suggesting a different meaning was attributed to being the most skilful in the group for these girls. This was most clearly observed than when *conquering the wall* (field notes, 30/01/2019).

To represent an obstacle, the coaches used a soft top apparatus resembling a wall. Participants had to run, jump and climb to overcome the wall, which many of the younger participants (male and female) succeeded in doing. In contrast, despite a significant height advantage, the adolescent girls (including the ex-gymnast) did not. Upon closer inspection, the aforementioned individual almost conquered the wall on nearly every attempt but appeared to give up on the last step. Instead of a lack of

ability, it seemed as though a lack of effort or *want* to conquer the wall was in fact preventing her from getting over. Especially given that significantly younger and smaller girls, with less physical capital and likely competency, were throwing themselves at the wall and consistently overcoming it. Similarly, when the group were offered free time to use apparatus how they desired, the older group chose to stand around talking rather than attempt any movements.

The older group appeared to be more self-conscious than their younger cohorts and more driven to avoid judgement. When the wall was announced as the next task, one of the older group stated that 'this is rubbish' and refused to participate, instead choosing to sit and observe. In terms of ability, this individual was perhaps the least capable of the group, suggesting that sitting out was more a process of saving face than a real aversion to the activity. What was interesting, was that the older group would more readily conform with this type of behaviour than challenge themselves and put maximum effort into completing the movement.

A contrast appeared between the older girls and the younger participants, where age seemed to be the deciding factor. It appeared as though the younger females felt considerably more free to challenge themselves with no fear of judgement, whilst the older girls turned in on themselves and inhibited their abilities, likely in fear of failure. Their attendance but limited efforts in the session then raised question of the purpose of their attendance. There was no concrete answer to this, but discussions with leaders surrounded the lower age-range exhibited in the group providing a welcome reprieve from the social gaze of their everyday lives, so they might have felt more comfortable to develop competencies and experience the materials within the gymnastics club because they understood it as a less threatening environment than attending a local leisure centre for example. What was apparent, however, was that the gaze, even if decreased, still persisted and was likely a problematic element for the girls.

This could be unpacked from a number of theoretical standpoints. The social gaze discussed is inspired by Foucauldian analysis, used heavily within feminist research to highlight the disciplinary function of surveillance and the male gaze and how that constrains female practice to align with normative ideals (such as appearing feminine) within contemporary society (Foucault, 1990, 1995; Ponterotto, 2016). However, this

degree of gaze could also extend beyond males towards the club leaders, who might have internalised judgements and expectations surrounding the degree of effort that should be exerted from adolescent females and within gymnastics settings (particularly if the leaders hail from a traditionally artistic gymnastics background). A degree of unpacking leaders' meanings and understandings could thus be valuable in lowering their expectations for more informal sessions such as freerunning. Given the focus on disadvantaged girls specifically, it could also be argued that fear of failure and thus aversion to 'putting oneself out there' could be both class and gender-based (highlighting the intersectional nature of the double jeopardy) (Jackson, 2003, 2006; Borgonovi and Han, 2021). Finally, consideration could be given to the power of group identity where inclusion gravitates towards the effort of the least able so as not to 'leave anyone behind'.

Therefore, there was likely a degree of gender (and potentially class)-based performativity at play within the group. Something that could be tackled using the three elements model as a framework. Creating a communal exercise environment free from gaze would be impossible and potentially unhealthy, limiting the development of coping mechanisms and competencies for when participants experience social gaze. To truly empower these girls to challenge themselves with no fear of judgement/failure, transforming their meanings and understandings of such concepts would likely be more beneficial.

Other instances of inhibition were frequent and varied in their motivations. In the C25K club, examples included girls choosing to play hangman rather than run outside, in addition to being sedentary on exercise equipment in the gym rather than exercising on them. Youth club participants inhibited activity in a number of ways, with many threaded throughout the chapter. Daphne, one of the most active members of the youth club cohort provided an interesting example of inhibition, almost to the point of withdrawal. When offered to attend a national leadership course for her chosen sport, Daphne was instructed by a leader that she was not allowed to smoke on the organisation's premises (field notes, 27/02/2019). At once, Daphne was explicitly reluctant to take the opportunity due to the ban on smoking. During interviews, Daphne expressed powerful commitment to her sport and engaged in healthy behaviours when training/playing. When asked by the leader (in front of her friendship group and the

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researcher) whether she would waste the opportunity due to not being allowed to smoke, Daphne laughed and did not respond, presenting disdain for the idea. Knowing her relationship with the sport, this was surprising and illustrated how an unhealthy practice was anchoring Daphne's behaviour, leading to inhibition. In this instance, PA and smoking could not successfully bundle due to the leader's intervention (as well as the realistically opposing objectives of smoking and PA which in fact, have been overcome by many practitioners, highlighting the significance of smoking as an anchoring practice), meaning it was a choice of one or the other, with Daphne suggesting that smoking held greater significance and meaning for her. The focus of intervention to shift practice here would be to unpick the meanings behind smoking, shifting the micro-negotiation to one that favours PA rather than smoking.

Practices of inhibition were driven by sometimes powerful, sometimes arbitrary motivations. As will be illustrated throughout the chapter, motions to avoid verbal abuse from males, circumvent judgement from peers and 'fit in' were understandably capable of causing the women to inhibit their activity. Yet, at other times, seemingly less meaningful practices, such as taking a photograph or video also led to circumventing exercise. Across the case settings, it seemed as though for many, PA was not powerful enough a practice to anchor participants' behaviour when compared to other activities. Part of this chapter will therefore attempt to unpick the reasons behind this, in order to prescribe recommendations for making PA a more governing force in young women's lives.

5.3 Smartphone Attachment: A Fifth Limb?

Smartphones are regarded as one of the most prevalent material objects of contemporary society (Konok, Pogány and Miklósi, 2017) and form an integral part of 21st century living, with 99% of people aged 16-54 owning and using a mobile or smartphone in the UK (Ofcom, 2020). The multifunctional nature of smartphones means numerous forms of gratification are possible, including entertainment, information-finding, socialising, coping strategies, and social identity maintenance (Panova and Carbonell, 2018). However, the increasing dependence on smartphones as an essential element of daily life is not without its pitfalls. Smartphones and their applications have been shown to be beneficial in the prevention and treatment of

chronic disease, such as diabetes (Bain, Jones, O'Brian and Lipman, 2015) and cardiovascular disease (Hamilton, Mills, Birch and Thompson, 2018). Research also indicates, however, that smartphone use is increasingly associated with sleep disturbance and depression, as well as representing a form of addiction (Lemola et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2015). Not yet included in the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), research has illustrated how closely smartphone addiction resembles many other substance-related disorders that are included, in terms of compulsive behaviour, functional impairment, withdrawal and tolerance (Lin et al., 2014). Although no official diagnostic category has been created, many regard smartphone addiction as a significant and growing behaviour addiction, and crucially, children and adolescents have been identified as the most vulnerable group (Ghosh, 2020).

Data collection revealed that smartphone use was significant and universal across all three case settings, representing one of the most cardinal and anchoring practices in the young people's lives. Smartphones thus symbolised a 'fifth limb' that could not be easily detached from their bodies, minds and importantly, practice. Throughout data collection, smartphones were used by participants for a variety of reasons, not least of which involved capturing photographs and videos; the significant prevalence of which justified analysis as a discrete practice in itself which can be found below (*2.2 'Life Through the Lens'*). The remaining primary activities included communication, social media, knowledge provision, performance analysis, lifestyle monitoring and music streaming. It was evident that smartphone use was a powerful practice which anchored participants' lives (Swidler, 2001), and crucially, mediated their involvement in PA in a variety of ways, as illustrated below.

5.3.1 Smartphones and Performance Analysis

Of the three case settings, the gymnastics club exhibited the least smartphone use. This was due to an NGB and club-specific mandate, stating that gymnasts' mobile phones were not permitted in the gym. Thus, smartphones were meaningfully understood as not allowed and during most field visits, were absent from sessions. Occasionally however, they would appear, frequently for the purpose of analysis. For context, coaches in the club did occasionally use their own smartphones to film

gymnasts' movements. They would subsequently use the footage as a visual aid to coach specific elements of skill. This likely reinforced smartphone (and particularly their camera) use becoming closely aligned with perceived competency, encouraging gymnasts to occasionally bring their phones into the gym. On those occasions, smartphones would most often appear at the latter end of a session, when coaches were distracted, and gymnasts might have been allotted spare time to work on specific skills. Their appearance usually resulted in a contagion effect, as demonstrated below:

> *Lizzie asks Helen (coach) to watch her tumble. She also asks Natalie to video it. They then swap. This is the first I have seen of phones being used in the gym. I am not sure where it has come from, nor where Lizzie has been keeping it throughout the session ... Around four people are now having their tumbles/vaults filmed. One gymnast is even standing on a beam to capture the best angle.*

(Field notes, 08/03/2019)

Subsequent interviews with TeamGym participants confirmed that informal performance analysis and coaching (many of the young women were moving into coaching and young leader positions within the club) were a key use of smartphones within the gymnastics setting. Chloe, Lizzie, Kelly and Lauren all favoured using smartphones to video individual skills, as well as skills between peers and in a coaching environment. In her interview (04/12/2019), Chloe specifically highlighted the benefit of visual representation and how it enhanced learning when compared with audio teaching/feedback alone.

Performance analysis is an increasingly accessible and often necessary element of coaching and performance, allowing coaches to technically analyse skill execution as well as that of opposing teams or competitors to identify interventions, training and tactics (O'Donoghue, 2014). The data suggested that receiving feedback via performance analysis was an enjoyable experience for the girls and perhaps one to incorporate more often. The availability and capacity of smartphones meant that performance analysis was more materially available than ever before, allowing competencies and meanings to develop in both the practice of analysis and the practice of gymnastics. Additionally, whilst enhancing skill execution, the footage was often published throughout the participants' social media networks, improving self-

esteem, pride and allowing them to craft certain identities based on PA practice. This will be discussed further in the forthcoming section *Life Through the Lens.*

5.3.2 Lifestyle Monitoring

Mobile technologies and applications (apps) which monitor specific elements of daily life are now readily available throughout contemporary society, via smartphones, smart watches (such as Fitbits and Apple Watches), tablets and so on (Wang et al., 2014; Helf and Hlavacs, 2016; Wang et al., 2016). At present, many smartphones arrive with a built-in tracker, automatically monitoring activities such as daily step count, distance travelled and hours active. In addition to this, apps which measure particular aspects of life and health, such as the menstrual cycle, nutritional intake, sleep patterns and exercise levels are available either free of charge or for a small price. Mobile health apps are thus becoming key tools for individuals to monitor and transform their own PA behaviour (Ho, 2013). The significant use of technology in each case setting, as well as the emphasis placed on such instruments in recent health interventions seeking to improve positive lifestyle behaviours (Pludwinski, Ahmad, Wayne and Ritvo, 2016; McEwan et al., 2019; Pope et al., 2019) led to a questioning of its prevalence within the field settings.

When interviewed, 67% of the research participants reported using health monitoring apps, with 50% of all participants using step counter technologies. The remaining participants meanwhile used fitness apps, dedicated to measuring nutritional intake and exercise indicators, such as heart rate. For some, daily step counts were solely informational. For others, counts became a motivating force with which to get more active. For Liv, counting steps became a personal competition, with each day's score driving her to improve on the next. For Jessica, counting steps became a competition with her peers. In contrast, gymnast Chloe monitored steps with her peers in a supportive rather than competitive sense.

> *My friend really tries to do 10,000 steps every day and I've been helping her with that. And then obviously if I'm helping her with that I've got to try and keep up with it.*

> (Chloe's interview, 04/12/2019)

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The perception of lifestyle monitoring devices was positive amongst the research population. Alongside their motivating effect, step counting technologies were an opportunity for both social competition and support. The feedback they provided was received positively, illustrating how a material artefact enhanced competency in PA and social support. During interviews, some participants perceived themselves as inactive because of their limited participation in organised sport or fitness. As conversations evolved, however, it became apparent that some of these women were indeed active, just in a more informal, active travel sense. After all, most of the research participants were not legally allowed to drive. Thus, active travel constituted much of their time spent socialising with friends and moving around their local area. The material addition of step counter technologies was therefore vital in allowing meaningful understandings of counting steps as a form of PA and social support to develop, in addition to encouraging individuals to perceive themselves as competent in those activities.

5.3.3 Additional Smartphone Activities

As stated earlier, smartphones were used for a variety of reasons throughout the case settings but crucially, in the youth and C25K club, they were almost always present. Within the youth club setting, this was the most notable observation upon arrival.

> *Everyone is glued to their phones. Rachel tells me about a couple who come here but don't talk. Instead, they choose to Snapchat each other across the room.*

(Field notes, 19/02/2019)

Young people who were positioned in the same room would still choose to communicate via their smartphones. Whether people were speaking, playing pool, doing arts and crafts or playing football, these activities would often have to exist alongside smartphone activity. Multi-tasking was thus a constant process. When people had a moment to spare, they would instantly reach for their phone as a sort of filibuster, as though existing alone and undistracted in time and space was not desirable. Indeed, multitasking other activities with smartphone use has been shown to be a common practice and one that can negatively impact upon face-to-face

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interaction (Amichai-Hamburger and Etgar, 2016). Smartphones formed such an integral part of the youth club experience that young people would even bring their chargers, so not to be without their device for any length of time. This in turn affected how they navigated space, positioning themselves near plug sockets and thereby illustrating a degree of technological determinism.

Alongside communication, a key tenet of smartphone practice was to fulfil knowledge provision. Internet access now grants information at the touch of a button, and some of the young women utilised this to participate in PA. For example, gymnast Gwen reported using her smartphone to access fitness workouts during her interview (04/12/2019). Similar to Gwen, Jessica and Kelly (youth and gymnastics club, 26/11/2019; 14/11/2019) also reported finding exercises online, particularly using a fitness app that prescribed workout guides. This data highlighted the benefits of material information and competency-based guidance on PA being readily available. Among the participants, the information was well-received, suggesting that rather than fighting the 'fifth limb', PA providers should incorporate, perhaps signposting to relevant materials in order to promote competency and meanings both inside sessions and in the girls' own time.

Whilst the above are positive examples of how smartphones have been used to guide and mediate PA, fieldwork also yielded evidence of inappropriate uses. The significant attachment to smartphones amongst the research population often distracted individuals from exercising proficiently during PA opportunities, resulting in inhibiting practices. This exhibited itself most frequently in the C25K club. In terms of smartphone activity, C25K participants mostly spent time capturing photos and videos, the details of which will be covered in section *2.2 Life Through the Lens.* Many used their phone to listen to music during sessions, while some used the C25K app itself to guide them through, activities that once again could be facilitative or problematic for PA participation based on the nature of engagement. Navigating how to successfully utilise practice anchors to promote PA participation will be discussed and critiqued in the proceeding *Discussion* chapter.

The key observation was that only a minority (usually between one and three participants) would attend the C25K club and exercise without constant smartphone

interaction, and it was usually these women who were exercising in a manner consistent with the aims of the session. Instead of running, the heavy smartphone users would walk for most of the session, despite repeated efforts from club leaders to encourage them to run. In the gym, scrolling through social media would take precedence over any focused concentration on using exercise machines. Whilst participants were usually moving, the majority were never exerting themselves during sessions. Rather, they would stroll around the pitch or meander from machine to machine, spending five minutes on each before switching and applying very little resistance or weight to their activities. It must be appreciated that in those sessions, participants were still moving, which is favourable to being sedentary. It is problematic however, when it is assumed that attendance at a running club automatically translates to young women being physically active. The issue, is that many of these women are recorded as engaged, influencing the reputational success and future funding of such clubs, influencing PA statistics throughout the country and possibly risking the eventual distraction from girls as a target group. Upon inspection, many of the young women were not running in their running club and were unlikely to be exercising enough to meet national PA guidelines, and practice theory was key in unravelling this owing to its granular focus on what participants were actually doing. Future research therefore needs to be critical with regards to how successful PA sessions and interventions are measured and be mindful that attendance alone is not enough, an idea discussed further in the *Discussion* chapter.

In addition to the distractive nature of smartphones, there were also instances of negative influence. The most telling of which was an exchange with Janet, a young woman who occasionally attended youth club sessions (field notes, 26/03/2019). After questioning the purpose of the research, Janet proceeded to discuss her desire for a body piercing, hair dye and a 'the line down the stomach'. What Janet was referring to, was abdominal muscles (abs). It transpired that Janet had very little understanding of what abs were or how to develop them. She questioned whether 'putting on fat' was the way to achieve abdominal muscles, and whether drinking 'milkshakes' would help in her quest. Here, Janet was referring to protein shakes, an exercise supplement frequently used by athletes and which forms an integral part of the '*fitspiration*' (or *fitspo*) culture that exists on social media, particularly Instagram (Tiggemann and Zaccardo, 2018). Fitspiration is an online trend dedicated to inspiring individuals

toward a healthier lifestyle through exercise and diet-related content (Carrotte, Prichard and Lim, 2017). It operates on the premise that 'strong is the new skinny' (Boepple et al., 2016, p.1; Tiggemann and Zaccardo, 2018, p.1) and has consequently been critiqued for its problematic messaging surrounding body image, food-based guilt, excessive or compulsive exercise behaviours and overweight stimatisation (Boepple and Thomson, 2014).

This was a brief discussion with Janet that did not materialise further owed to her infrequent attendance at the club. Upon reflection, there may have been a degree of social desirability and response bias at play (Collins, Shattell and Thomas, 2005), where Janet was attempting to relate to the purpose of the research with the limited PA knowledge she had, and may have had no plan to achieve the 'line down the stomach'. Nonetheless, it is an important indicator of how young women can passively absorb online trends and the potential impact upon their behaviour. Janet had no knowledge surrounding abdominal exercises yet thought drinking (protein) 'milkshakes' would provide her with abdominal definition. In contrast, without exercise, it would likely do the opposite. Social media use, and specifically the volume of time spent engaged in 'photo activity' (posting and viewing photos) is heavily correlated with body image disturbance (Meier and Gray, 2014). The effect that platforms such as Instagram, whose modus operandi is the posting and sharing of photos, and are highly populated by young, female users (Pew Research Centre, 2019; Statista, 2020) therefore needs to be scrutinised carefully, to ensure that messaging surrounding PA is appropriate and clear. To control the outputs of a platform with 854.5 million users worldwide (Statista, 2020) would be a monumental task. Enhancing education and meanings attributed to such ideas on the other hand, would be more within reach in educational as well as community and sports-based settings.

5.4 Life Through the Lens

Today everything exists to end in a photograph

(Sontag, 1977, p.19)

Susan Sontag's quotation brings life to one of the most interesting observations of fieldwork. In all three case settings, it was evident that participants, to a degree, lived

their lives through a lens. Here, a lens most often represented that of a smartphone camera. Capturing photographs and video footage variously functioned as performance analysis, an opportunity for appearance evaluation, communicating, and socialising, and was a key anchoring practice within the research population. For many, its anchoring property dictated participation in PA, and frequently the nature of that participation.

As mentioned, there was a significantly larger volume of smartphone practice within the C25K and youth clubs. Observations indicated that individuals were often just as invested, if not more invested, in *appearing* physically active, rather than actually *being* active. Care was taken by participants to ensure they appeared connected to the aesthetic of PA and exhibited an active identity, yet when considered objectively, little exercise was being carried out. Prioritising a PA aesthetic, that is employing methods to appear active whilst simultaneously doing little PA, was a practice that exhibited itself in a number of ways and will be presented throughout the section. In accordance with the topic being currently discussed, the most efficient way to display a personal identity in a digital age was to use photographs and videos and disseminate via social media networks, an activity many of the girls practiced.

'Let's do a boomerang!' (field notes, 12/02/2019) was a quotation that seemed to capture the motivations behind many of the C25K participants' attendance. As touched on earlier, getting the majority of the club to run in the C25K club was often a difficult task. When leaders would offer photograph opportunities however, participants would become energised, jumping at the photo opportunity, requesting to view it, add filters and access it via social media. It was not uncommon for girls to request photographs during C25K sessions. Alongside the walking and occasional running, when the girls were outside, performing handstands, cartwheels and certain jumps were also popular activities and crucially, photo opportunities.

Club leaders were astutely aware of the participants' desire to do gymnastic skills, as illustrated by Grace, a member of the local leisure trust who covered for usual leader, Alice, on one occasion. The girls ran in that session more than had been observed previously, owing to Grace's refusal to allow constant walking, as well as an element of positive reinforcement. Grace later revealed that she had struck a bargain with the

young women in order to get them running. Specifically, she 'bribed them with handstands'. After a period of running, handstands (captured through photographs) were exactly what the young women began doing (field notes, 26/03/2019). When leaders posted photographs of the session to the school's physical education pages, participants would request the social media handles in order to re-post to their own pages. Hence the interesting relationship between wanting to be seen in the running club by peers but in reality, doing very little running/activity began to emerge, in addition to the desire to perform gymnastic skills rather than run. The publishing of such skills on social media indicates that the aesthetic pleasure derived from handstands was greater than that of running and was thus meaningfully understood as a more desirable skill to perform.

Navigating the case settings, there were multiple occasions where young women were observed examining themselves through their smartphone cameras.

> *One girl is filming herself on the treadmill. Or at least has her front camera on throughout the duration of the run. Does she want to see what she looks like when running? No, there is a wall of mirrors directly in front of her. It seems she just wants to see herself through a lens. Is this being recorded? Where will this footage go?*

> (Field notes, 19/02/2019)

> *There are four girls currently on the treadmill. Three are taking selfies.*

> (Field notes, 12/03/2019)

> *A young girl comes and sits near me. She's sat alone, examining herself through a Snapchat filter.*

> (Field notes, 28/03/2019)

This behaviour is unsurprising, given that we are currently living in the so-called *selfie era* (Chae, 2019; Tremblay, Tremblay and Poirer, 2020). Selfies are self-portraits, photographed using smartphone cameras and published via social media (Orekh and Bogomiagkova, 2017). Research suggests selfies are highly effective in garnering attention and popularity on social media, receiving 1.1-3.2 more 'likes' and 'comments' than general image posts and crucially, that young women are globally the most

prominent group to post selfies (Souza et al., 2015); a trend this research supports given the rarity of males observed capturing images of themselves in the clubs. Capturing selfies whilst exercising could thus be understood as a feminised practice within adolescent girls. There are various theories surrounding what motivates individuals to take selfies, ranging from self-expression and representation (Qiu et al., 2015), boosting self-esteem (Alblooshi, 2015), self-empowerment (Williams and Marquez, 2015) and narcissistic or exhibitionist traits (Halpern, Valenzuela and Katz, 2016; Maddox, 2017).

During interviews, participants were questioned on whether they took selfies or pictures of themselves during PA sessions, why they did so and what they thought motivated others to take pictures. Some admitted to engaging in the practice, whilst others stated their awareness of peers participating. Some participants also identified peers who they considered prioritised appearing active over being active. For those who practiced taking selfies/pictures, there were both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Some reported capturing (or planning to capture) images/videos to show 'before and after' stages of exercise. Taking progress pictures is a common practice amongst those looking to lose weight (McGuire et al., 1999) or improve fitness and one that features heavily in contemporary advertisements surrounding weight loss/muscle development programmes (Santilli and Shiffer, 2019; Matthews, 2020). One participant with experience of progress pictures was gymnast, Gwen. Gwen reported feeling unsatisfied with how her body looked at certain times. Her perception of particular bodily features made her feel sad, yet she persevered with capturing images in an attempt to resolve the issue.

> *Obviously at the start you're not as happy but you get happy because you've seen how far you've come or how you've made amendments to everything…I get sad for a bit and I'm like, "Actually, I don't want to look like that, let's fix it."*

> (Gwen's interview, 04/12/2019)

Gwen specified that progress pictures were to be kept to herself as an internal motivation to sculpt her body as she saw fit. In contrast, Rosie (youth club) stated that

if she were to publish a PA photo on social media (something she was considering doing soon), it would be a progress picture (12/11/2019). Rosie did not expand on why she would publish a progress picture on social media but stated that she had made positive lifestyle changes with regards to increasing PA in the previous months and was feeling positive about bodily improvements. When queried about peers taking pictures in PA settings however, Rosie thought individuals were attempting to make others aware that they were in a PA setting, and to 'show off' to those they required approval from. This was not a lone appraisal, as five other participants who were interviewed revealed they had witnessed peers posting pictures whilst in PA settings, with five participants (including Rosie) believing it was some form of attention-seeking behaviour. Posting pictures associated with PA thus might have been understood as a method and competency in fitting in with peers.

Kelly meanwhile appreciated both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits and sharing, believing that people posted pictures of themselves exercising to motivate themselves as well as those who view the pictures (14/11/2019). Analysis revealed that individuals in the less active settings (C25K and youth club) recorded more instances of observing this 'attention-seeking' behaviour, whilst those in the gymnastics setting perceived taking photos of PA to be more associated with motivating themselves or others, suggesting the degree of commitment to PA had an effect on the meanings attributed to posting pictures of activity, highlighting an area to target for intervention.

A pattern emerged whereby less active individuals associated taking pictures with showing off or attempting to be perceived as active, rather than for any intrinsic exercise-related reasons. During data collection, individuals would regularly be seen filming each other doing mundane things for no apparent reason. No negative reactions were observed, suggesting the young people were comfortable and being photographed/filmed was an everyday occurrence in an age of digital storytelling. What was interesting, however, was that storytelling surrounding PA was deemed popular, even so far as spreading to those who were limited in their engagement with PA. This indicates that being perceived as active was indeed fashionable and desirable, suggesting some of the battle was won. However, the disposition towards actually being active was yet to emerge and PA was not a powerful enough anchor of behaviour. A value-action gap (Shove, 2010) therefore continued to persist, where

young women were putting themselves in positions to increase PA levels but continued to do very little; they were *inhibiting practice.*

5.5 Navigating Males

During data collection, it was observed that males had a significant impact over the activities practiced by females in PA settings. In the youth club particularly, males mediated the participants' involvement in PA and various other activities. For example, they frequently claimed the music system, refusing to hand over control to female cohorts without leader intervention, and they also sustained a hierarchy of space within the club which revolved around the use of the pool tables. The room held two pool tables and was often the hub of social activity on any given night. There was a smaller pool table, often used by the younger cohorts, and a larger table mostly populated by older males. Older females were frequently seen sat around the bigger table, spectating, conversing or using their smartphones. During observations, the leaders stated that the younger males had to 'earn the right' to play on the big table. Older males would invite them to play, and by proving their worth or winning, they would be allowed back on. A form of exclusionary practice (Zinn, Weber, Higginbotham and Dill, 1986; Claringbould, Knoppers and Elling, 2004; Bridges, 2019) was at play, and when the older males were not present younger attendees would swarm to the bigger table.

Likewise, when the older males were absent, the older females would frequently use the pool table. A specific instance of exclusionary practice stood out during fieldwork. Lottie, an older female was playing against an older male who had recently become a young leader within the club. The two were sharing a pool cue and following the leader's shot, he slid the cue along the floor away from Lottie. She proceeded to retrieve it and carry on playing. The male did this again after his next shot and before Lottie could pick it up, another male considerably younger than Lottie picked it up, feigned to jab Lottie with the cue and slid it further away from her (field notes, 05/03/2019. In a later session, Lottie was once again playing pool. This time, an older male attempted to poke her in the bottom with his hand while she was taking her shot. Lottie did not react to either of the instances but simply carried on playing as if nothing had happened. These instances were uncomfortable to watch. Not overtly violent in nature, but certainly teetering towards the line of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2000),

whereby power differentials and oppression are rooted in habitus, performed unconsciously and accepted as 'just the way things are' (Martin, Ferguson, Hoek and Hinder, 2021, p.69).

Leaders would intervene in these situations when they were reported. However, the issue was that these exclusionary practices were so taken for granted that they were rarely reported and rather just accepted by the females, reinforcing the gendered hierarchy and modelling of this practice among younger girls and boys. Acts of symbolic violence from males were thus frequent and difficult to extinguish given that they were so deeply rooted in the habitus of the club and population. Rosie noted the boys' problematic behaviour during her interview:

> *Researcher:*   *I've noticed the boys have dibs on the tables a lot. Does this affect the way you play pool? When the boys are around?*
> *Rosie:*   *It doesn't affect where I play pool, but the boys like to mess around and ruin the game for the girls if they can't have the pool table.*

> (Rosie's interview, 12/11/2019)

Exclusionary practices and symbolic violence were equally, it not more prevalent in more physically demanding activities. During football sessions in the youth club, as the boys became more boisterous and aggressive in their play, the female participants' level of effort and engagement noticeably dropped. Within these sessions, the girls appeared to be in a lose-lose situation. Being on the boys' team meant that they were rarely passed to or included, whilst playing girls against boys meant that they were frequently beaten because of the overall disparity in footballing competence. This was not an experience isolated to the youth club. Lauren (gymnastics club) elaborated on her experience of exclusion during physical education (PE) lessons:

> *We used to do lessons where we'd do football or basketball with the boys and the girls. All of us girls would be the same, we just wouldn't be involved as much because the boys wouldn't give us a chance. And then when they did, they were like 'Oh you've done it wrong'. So, you just felt like I don't want to do it because they're going to judge us however we do it.*

Lauren later stated that the frequency of exclusionary practices generated dis-engagement in PE. Yet, when a supportive male peer actively involved her in the activity, she did not need to fear public rejection and had an increased opportunity to build competence because that male would pass her the ball. A similar instance took place in the youth club when skilled female footballers, such as leader Rachel and footballer Daphne, joined in during 'kick about' sessions. Rachel and Daphne matched the level of aggression and skilfulness shown by the males, providing a model of practice which proved effective, reflected in the increase in involvement and effort from the girls. This highlights that although males have a significant effect on females practice within PA settings, the presence of an ally or role model can positively mediate their effect. What is problematic, however, is when those in positions of power instead reinforce the gendered hierarchies of PA settings, as illustrated by Liv's PE experience:

> *You get the teacher to tell them (boys) to pass to the girls and include the girls but they never do it, so I end up literally standing on the side and just kicking a ball about.*

Liv also stated that teachers often succumb to the males' desires more readily when choosing PE activities:

> *The teacher said 'you're doing netball next lesson' to the boys because we always do football, but the boys just won't do it, so we end up going outside and basically just end up doing football.*

Without straying too far into educational contexts, the data suggested that in Liv's school, teachers were contributing to a gender-based hierarchy in PE lessons (Brown, 2005) whereby the wants and needs of males were prioritised over that of females. Using the three elements model to unpick this example, promoting and celebrating competence at a highly skilled level in male-dominated sports was taking precedence

over inclusion and skill development for girls. Materials and space were dominated by males via increased opportunity for them to develop skills and thus master ball work and space navigation, contributing to understandings of mixed PE sessions as unwelcoming environments for girls and experiences where their needs and desires were not considered. PE teachers often control the means of activity in school settings, and thus should be invested in creating fair and equitable environments in which all participants can develop competence in an activity, in order to encourage lifelong participation. The same could be said for any PA setting in which the focus is on increasing engagement in PA rather than being tailored to performance development in a specific sport. The implications of this example will be discussed further in the *Discussion* chapter.

Male judgement was also a common issue and fear across all case settings. Many of the women had previous experience with males passing comment on both performance and female bodies. Liv described how the presence of boys in the gym would result in her walking rather than running, out of fear of what they might say about her and their history of vocalising cruel thoughts in the past. When questioned about circumstances that made her hold back in PA, Lizzie (gymnastics) described the intimidation she felt in the presence of the elite male artistic squad.

> *Lizzie:*   *I tend to enjoy Sunday sessions more because there is only TeamGym in. Obviously, the boy gymnastics group, and they're a really high standard, I feel intimidated by them.*
> *…*
> *Researcher:* *When the boys are around then, how do you think the way you do gym changes? Do you think it does change?*
> *Lizzie:*   *I think it does change because they tend to watch you quite a lot and it makes you feel a bit, 'ah, I don't really want to do it'.*

(Lizzie's interview, 14/11/2019)

Similarly, symbolic violence operated in the other field settings. On one youth club occasion, Lottie was in charge of the music. Her choices of easy-listening Pop and RnB stood in stark contrast to the loud and heavy Techno music played by the boys, so much so that one of the boys exclaimed 'don't start putting slit your wrists songs on' (field notes, 28/03/2019). On the same night, Rosie was playing a game of pool and the spectating males provided a running commentary. At one point, Rosie stopped

and justified her performance by responding 'oh well I'm not very good at pool'. Her tone was notably apologetic, as though she had to defend or justify herself and her display.

The examples provided here illustrate the level of male surveillance the girls perceived to exist, as well as physically existed. Male performances, music choices and general behaviours were rarely subjected to symbolic violence in the way female practices were and it was clear this critique and exclusion had a detrimental effect. The girls understood that exercising in the presence of males would open them up to judgement and criticism and thus inhibited their own performance at times, subtracting from their competence in a given skill. Daphne was perhaps the most comfortable with male critique and mixed participation, stating that the boys she had played football with were generally supportive, that males were entitled to their opinion and she was confident enough to accept it (03/12/2019). Daphne also went on to describe the enhanced enjoyment she experienced from beating the boys. What was crucial here was that, Daphne was a very talented footballer and pool player, whose competence matched many of her male peers. Being accepted and appreciated was thus always within reach for Daphne, where it was less likely for less confident or skilled participants.

Exclusionary and symbolically violent practices would often go unchallenged unless the women complained to club leaders. During those instances, leaders would hand over control of music systems, for example, or instruct the boys to behave fairly. Having to complain to achieve fair opportunity at once placed the girls in a subordinated position, however, and many chose to simply accept their situation rather than complain. The girls had little expectation of the boys to change their behaviour. Rather, Amelia understood it as simply the boys' *'nature'* (12/11/2019) and decreasing effort and engagement levels were often preferable to being excluded, physically hurt or verbally abused by being called *'slags'* and other offensive names (26/11/2019). At least in this way, exclusion was on the women's terms and no one else. This understanding of violence and exclusion as the boys' nature relates to Bourdieu's quest for 'anamnesis' of the hidden constants' (2001; Witz, 2004), whereby a historicisation of the processes of gender naturalisation was sought. This was developed further by Wacquant (1992) who additionally built on Durkheim's 'cum fundamento in rei' or 'illusion found in reality' to highlight the 'cultivated nature' (p.249)

shown by boxers in his study. The boys' masculinities and accordingly, symbolic violence was being constructed through practice. In this line, where practices naturalise gender, one can also use practices (and practice theory) to disrupt and reform gender/gender relations.

To summarise, males had a significant impact over how the women practiced PA and instances of surveillance (Foucault, 1990), symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990) and gendered performativity (Butler, 1990) were common. In many cases, materials (such as footballs, the football pitch and the pool tables) were consciously and subconsciously restricted to male use, limiting female access. This influenced female understandings of whether activities were *meant* for female use, and if they were, whether in the presence of males their right to participate became secondary to that of males. In most cases, the latter was believed to be true. Competence in the aforementioned activities was lower with the exception of a few women who regularly participated outside of the club, yet efforts to develop competence were disturbed by restricted materials and gendered meanings, despite activities taking place in settings where learning ought to be carefully nurtured for all. The result of the above was limited participation in PA opportunities from the women, and on the occasions where they did participate, engagement was often inhibited for fear of judgement, harm or verbal abuse from males.

5.6 Getting Dressed

Clothing and kit were significant mediators of PA throughout the case settings, as well as sources of capital. The clothing individuals choose to wear is intimately related to how they both exhibit personal and collective identity, demonstrating how they wish to present themselves to the world (Swain, 2002; Woodward, 2007). Of particular importance to this research theme, were the material and meaning elements. In some cases, materials and meanings implicated in uniform/clothing aligned with desired identities and could draw individuals towards an activity. When elements misaligned, however, the disorder was powerful enough to drive individuals away.

5.6.1 Branding

Of the three settings, the youth club allocated the most freedom to its participants in terms of structure and policing. No specific clothing or uniform was associated with the club and thus what an individual wore often provided an insight into how they wished to present themselves within that setting. Many opted for branded clothing, with popular designer brands such as Levi's, The North Face and Tommy Hilfiger frequently making an appearance. For example, practices of purchasing and wearing branded items, along with explicitly mentioning the purchasing of these items to leader, Rachel, who wore similar items, was a method of gaining capital for attendee Daphne (field notes, 19/02/2019).

Branding was particularly useful in creating a sense of identity for the research participants. Wearing specific materials indicated competency in fitting in with a particular group, as well as successfully attributing meaning to what items were on trend. During observations, a group of young leaders within the youth club were awarded personalised sweatshirts. Upon receiving them, the girls instantly put them on, where they remained for the rest of the session (field notes, 28/03/2019). Similarly, on two occasions in the C25K club, branded water bottles and hoodies were distributed (free of charge) by the leader on particularly miserable (weather) days. This was a tactical bargaining attempt to encourage the women to run outside. By possessing the materials, the group could exhibit a sense of identity when using them outside of sessions. The leader also understood the artefacts as affect generators which could successfully get the girls engaged in the session and active.

The power of branded clothing was most prevalent within the gymnastics setting. Here it is important to highlight the distinction between branded fashion clothing, purchased from retailers, and branded club clothing, purchased or gifted from the gymnastics club. Importantly, both materials were sources of social and cultural capital for the girls. TeamGym was purposely more casual in nature than traditional artistic gymnastics, uniform expectations included. During competitions leotards were compulsory, as they were for artistic squads. In contrast, during training, whilst artistic squads were expected to wear leotards, the TeamGym squad could dress however they chose (so long as it was appropriate to train in). Despite the freedom afforded to the group, the gymnasts mostly wore black branded club t-shirts and shorts/leggings, almost constituting an informal uniform of their own.

> Lauren: Sometimes we'd feel we are a squad; we should be treated like a squad. But at the same time we didn't necessarily always act like a squad, so it was fair. We wanted to have more fun than other squads would.
>
> Researcher: Whose decision was it to wear more relaxed kit? Did it come from the staff or you guys?
>
> Lauren: Most of us were older so most of us were like 14 or 15 to it was more that we just didn't want to wear a leotard anymore. So, it was more we'll wear sports bras and tops.

<div align="right">(Lauren's Interview, 04/12/2019)</div>

Dressing differently to artistic, but collectively as a TeamGym cohort was a method of expressing collective identity, even if this identity was not perceived to be as highly valued as artistic by the girls. Sports bras and tops were understood as a more age-appropriate materials for the older girls in the group, illustrated especially when those from the younger TeamGym squad would train with the older group. There was a noticeable contrast between the older girls in their dark coloured top/bottom combinations and the younger group in their eye-catching and brightly coloured leotards. At what age the girls were driven to blend in rather than stand out was not captured, but based on the groups, it appeared to (tentatively) be somewhere around age 10-12 where meanings and subsequent materials and competencies began to shift.

5.6.2 Authoritative Outfits

Those moving into leadership roles within the gymnastics club also discussed the impact of branded club clothing. Specifically, the sense of authority and club identity it promoted.

> I think I felt more power, authority. I like walking around…if I've finished coaching, if I ever pop to the shop, I like wearing it because…it says (club name) on it so it's like 'she goes to (club name)'…It's nice because it's called '(club name) academy'.

<div align="right">(Gwen's interview, 04/12/2019)</div>

Once the women transitioned into coaching roles, they garnered a sense of pride from being seen as a member of the club. Chloe discussed how coaching kit identified her as someone with authority within the club. Club T-shirt still present, a material change from shorts to tracksuit bottoms represented a change in role for the women. They were now coaches with separate meanings and competencies expected of them. They had a responsibility to behave professionally, and the younger gymnasts were expected to treat them as a leader. Clothing was not the sole driver of performing this role of responsibility. However, the women perceived the specific uniform to be beneficial in allowing them to perform their leadership roles as an affect generator.

5.6.3 Sportswear as Everyday Wear

Common in all three settings but most interestingly in the youth club, was the prevalence of sportswear. Outside of the weekly football sessions, very little PA worthy of specialised kit (playing pool excluded, for example) was taking place. Nevertheless, a large majority of participants frequently wore sportswear, such as leggings, tracksuit bottoms and (most often) trainers from mainstream sport brands such as Adidas and Nike. Despite fieldwork indicating that the youth club was associated with the highest levels of disadvantage among participants and location, no disparities were seen in dress between the case settings, indicating that resource was consistently afforded to mainstream clothing items, indicating that it was an anchor of dressing practice.

In recent years, branded fashion sportswear has become everyday apparel. Designed with exercise pursuit in mind yet worn for an array of daily tasks, sportswear now stretches to catwalk trends and Highstreet fashion options (Bruun and Langkjær, 2016). The prevalence of sportswear within the youth club particularly, indicated that young people were comfortable in active wear, and even driven to present themselves as athletic. Once again, we see the interesting relationship arise between seeking to appear physically active but doing little PA when given the opportunity. In this case, sportswear is currently understood as fashionable, and thus to appear culturally competent in making fashion choices and perceived by peers as an individual who understands trends, some might have been choosing to wear it. Based on the

favourable attitude towards sportswear during data collection, disengagement from PA therefore was not solely driven by resistance to wearing it. Nevertheless, interviews confirmed that specific material elements of sportswear were powerful enough to dictate (dis)engagement in an activity.

5.6.4 Components of Kit: '*Skorts? They are something else…*'

Elements of sportswear were problematic for different reasons among the case settings. Some individuals were conscious of not showing 'skin' when exercising, leading them to carry/wear a jumper to ensure bodies were covered. When queried on this, Jessica responded 'because if you're fat, boys make fun of you' (26/11/2019) highlighting how symbolic violence from males was once again anchoring and constraining female practice. Amelia also practiced covering up when wearing sportswear, describing the uncomfortable experience of tight T-shirts that 'cling' to you (12/11/2019). Amelia specifically avoided anything that appeared tight around her arms, chest or stomach, opting for sweatshirts to mask this. Despite being keen to join a local cheerleading club, Amelia stated that her aversion to the typically tight-fitting kit was strong enough to prevent her from trying the sport.

For Daphne and Lauren, skorts (a pair of shorts with a panel resembling a skirt attached over the top of them) were problematic, insofar as Daphne stated that she would 'never, ever, ever be seen in a skort' (03/12/2019). By her own admittance, Daphne was a tomboy, and found the forcing of skorts on girls and shorts for boys within PE to be a sexist attitude, incited through uniform provision by the school. Skorts are considered a heavily gendered item of clothing (Flanagan, 2014) and hostility towards them has been frequently recorded (Krane et al., 2013; Gubby and Wellard, 2015). This, along with a perceived lack of physicality, was compelling enough to drive Daphne's dislike for netball. More prevalent in PE and netball settings specifically, the lack of enforced skorts seen in community and other sport settings was a positive for Daphne and facilitated practice rather than inhibiting it.

Given the inclusion of a gymnastics setting, leotards became a prevalent topic within interviews. For the TeamGym cohort, relaxed uniforms during training were a welcome

reprieve from the expectation of leotards during their artistic years. Whilst most participants accepted leotards as constituent of gymnastics with little background thought, they also discussed the uncomfortable nature of wearing them for long training sessions. Descriptions ranged from 'hot' to 'tight' to 'sweaty', highlighting the negative affects the materials generated with gymnasts generally favouring wearing shorts and sports bras/T-shirts.

> *I do prefer it. I never used to like wearing a leotard whenever I was in artistic. They were just uncomfortable, and I feel like with a crop top and shorts, you feel a bit freer because everything's not so tight.*

(Lizzie's interview, 14/11/2019)

The (coproduced) decision from the club to allow gymnasts to diverge from traditional leotards during training was received favourably. An inspiring and increasingly prevalent decision among gymnastics clubs, given the heavily mandated uniform requirements of competitive gymnastics set out by the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (Smoot, 2017), and re-emphasized by NGB's and clubs on a more local level in historic years (British Gymnastics, 2019). During interviews, Chloe highlighted a dimension of leotards that reinforced her favour for TeamGym kit. Specifically, the intra-group competition leotards promoted whereby participants appeared in new leotards each week the more sparkles, the better. With this realisation, Chloe was confronted with the uneasiness that not everyone was able to afford new leotards and likely felt uncomfortable in sessions, something that became more prevalent as she moved into coaching. Crucially, Chloe stated that she felt as though she *had* to engage in buying more leotards, not that she necessarily needed to. It was more a performance of competency in meeting social norms and trends, highlighting where those experiencing economic disadvantage may lose out on accumulated social or cultural capital through lack of material finance and thus material clothing.

Whilst the practicalities and equality of dress among PA cohorts must be carefully considered, the findings in this section suggest that dress is an integral element of practicing being active. It should thus be treated as an opportunity for intervention and positive transformation rather than a sanction. In an age with increasing fluidity surrounding both people and place, it is almost archaic to impose such a level of control over what people wear during organised PA (compulsory skorts during PE

lessons as a prime example). Organisations are asking society to engage with PA via their own will. It is therefore the duty of organisations to make PA as accommodating and welcoming as possible.

5.7 Social Experiences

For most of the practices/themes introduced above, a social dimension was present. Whether that be communicating via smartphone, sharing photographs to social media or dressing in line with social trends. This section will thus be used to identify additional social practices, including the materials, meanings and competencies that underpinned them, as well as how they became bundled with PA and other practices.

5.7.1 Anchoring the Social

For many participants, socialising was an anchoring practice in their everyday life and one they would prioritise above most activities. Sociability anchored many of the practices the girls chose to engage in, from communicating via smartphones, to eating food, to attending their respective clubs, with the girls being competent in bundling multiple practices. When queried whether socialising would take priority over being physically active, many within the youth club setting stated that it would; unsurprising given the overall relationship with PA within this 'inactive' setting. For the gymnastics club, there was a clear history of prioritising PA over social activities, perhaps influenced by the gymnasts' competitive backgrounds. However, interviews revealed that priorities were beginning to shift.

Half of the weekly research hours spent at the gymnastics setting were on a Friday evening, from 6:30-8pm. This in itself represented commitment from the older individuals within the group, as they chose to sacrifice social activities on a Friday evening to train. The greatest squad numbers (particularly from older teens aged 16-18) were seen during the early days. As time passed during fieldwork, the older members of the squad withdrew or transitioned into leadership roles. Interviews revealed that this was in-part driven by an increasing priority on social activities. Chloe (aged 15) had the most to say on the subject:

When you get to about 14, 15 you start making more friends at school, going out, doing more plans and sometimes you feel like gym gets in the way of that and you'd rather go out.

For a lot of my life, I've sacrificed a lot of social things for gymnastics. As I was growing up my friends would ask me to do something and I'd always say I can't, I've got gymnastics. But I never used to mind that. But then as I got older, I started to feel like I was missing out on a lot of things, especially with my friends. So, I do more things, go more places.

(Chloe's Interview, 04/12/2019)

Whilst Chloe's transition into coaching (and away from participating) was also driven by an increasing focus on schoolwork and developing a long-term career in coaching, increasing emphasis on social activities was a clear driver in her withdrawal from exercise. It should be noted, however, that at one time, the gymnastics setting *was* her social activity. Most of the gymnasts spoke fondly about Sunday afternoons at the club. Due to a break in training, the squad were given a few hours of spare time on Sundays. Time they would use by walking to the shop, purchasing food and eating together in the club or on a nearby field. Chloe described the scene as follows:

We'd have a few hours and we'd just sit. I used to love Sundays. That used to be my favourite day and I'd look forward to it…We'd have a picnic and then we'd do gym in the field. We'd all work together, we'd do acro and team building stuff…And I do miss that because now nobody stays on a Sunday at all…It made us so much closer.

(Chloe's Interview, 04/12/2019)

For Chloe, Sunday afternoons were the most enjoyable time of the gymnastics week, speaking about the experience with sentimentality. The positive social experiences were not entirely lost at the time of the interview, despite Sunday afternoon trips coming to an end. Chloe still mentioned the comfort associated with walking into the club, seeing friends and chatting to staff, even so far as describing it as a 'second home' which illustrated the affective atmosphere within the club for generating positive feelings. The conversation indicated, however, that the social opportunities provided at the club were not powerful enough to rival those offered by her peers anymore,

hence the shifting of priorities. Rather than promote PA opportunities where people turn up, play and go home, there could be value in adding additional social elements, such as group food/drink opportunities before or after sessions.

5.7.2 Exercising (as) Social Opportunities

For many of the research participants, PA was practiced as a socialising opportunity. Spending time with friends, along with the opportunity to meet new people, were core elements of practice and drivers of engagement across all three case settings. The level of conversation during PA sessions illustrated the importance of communication amongst attendees and although a fine line to tread (the level of discussion at times inhibited practice), the opportunity to socialise was key to PA engagement.

Liv (C25K) socialised across a range of activities. During observations, Liv was one of the most committed attendees. Alongside C25K, running with her neighbour and walking around her hometown with her friendship group, Liv had begun playing rugby for a local team. This took priority over seeing friends and she had aspirations to develop as a rugby player. The travelling to sessions and missing out on opportunities to see friends was worthwhile as her social needs were being fulfilled by the rugby team. Rugby and socialising had thus become successfully bundled here.

Lizzie (gymnastics), Amelia and Jessica (youth club) also described how for them, exercising was an opportunity to spend time with family and friends. Gymnastics allowed Lizzie to see friends that she would not otherwise see (14/11/2019). For Amelia, participation in PA was driven by her sister (12/11/2019). Together, they would diet and exercise at the gym. When queried about how providers could make PA more attractive for Jessica, she offered that by having her friends attend sessions alongside her, she would be more interested. Within this research, socialising has proven a significant anchor of daily life, even anchoring PA within the bundled practice of the two and thus the more (positively) social providers can make exercise opportunities, the more likely young women experiencing disadvantage are to engage.

5.7.3 (Fast) Food for Thought

A bundled social practice that emerged within the youth club, not directly related to PA but certainly related to promoting a healthy lifestyle, was eating fast-food. To set the scene:

> *Driving past, I see the youth club sandwiched between a kebab shop, a fish and chip shop, a Greggs and a waffle shop, while the corner shops take their place on the periphery. As I park up and leave the car, the first sensory overload arrives in the aroma of fish and chips. It fills the air and ushers me into the youth club. Upon entering, I can see why. It is 6:40pm and there is food everywhere. Chips, kebabs, Chow Mein, crisps, energy drinks, fizzy drinks, chocolate.*

(Field notes, 05/03/2019)

The youth club food practices were shaped by its geographic location with processed or 'junk' food available at every turn. On any given night, the club was extensively populated by food such as this. The leaders of the club worked to counter it, banning energy drinks and involving attendees in their Fit and Fed programme. Fit and Fed is a StreetGames project, designed to offer PA and nutritious meals for vulnerable young people (StreetGames, 2020). During the study, Fit and Fed sessions were mostly populated by the older female group, many of whom were later interviewed. The club would educate the girls on how to prepare a nutritious meal and would often offer that meal to those attending the club that same night. The club did its best to promote healthy eating, but with some youths admitting to buying junk food four times a week, the club was clearly combatting deeply engrained eating practices.

Club hours ran from 6-9pm, with many of the youths opting to stay for the whole session, five nights per week. Thus, club members needed feeding. The local food provision was fast and according to Rosie, tastier for most of the youths. This was likely due to the high-sugar, high-sodium and high-fat content in the food, with low nutritional value but enhanced taste (Bhaskar and Ola, 2012). There was limited accessibility to healthier options in the nearby area, yet when leaders provided healthier food, this was still not received as favourably as the fast-food. Buying food was almost an expression of autonomy within the club. It was an opportunity to exercise freedom of choice, compared to eating pre-decided meals at home or at school. The consistent favour shown towards fast-food was problematic, however, in

that limited PA was taking place in addition to consistent intake of foods known to contribute to the rise of noncommunicable diseases, such as obesity (WHO, 2020).

Alongside being a basic physiological need, eating also contributed to fulfilling a social need (Maslow, 1943). Individuals would purchase and eat food in groups, indicating that it was a social activity. Rosie reported that before she began taking her fitness more seriously, she would frequently choose to purchase fast-food and sit with her friends eating rather than participate in a PA session. Social eating was also practiced by Lizzie (gymnastics). When spending time with friends, Lizzie stated that her group would frequently visit McDonald's where her peers would purchase food (14/11/2019). Whilst Lizzie occasionally enjoyed this, she stated that she did not enjoy eating there all the time and felt pressured to purchase something because 'everyone else is getting it'. In this way, sociability was anchoring Lizzie's eating practices. Material availability for young people means that affordable fast-food restaurants were more within reach than healthier (and often pricier) alternatives. Eating fast food was then ostensibly a by-product of having somewhere to go, indicating the bundled nature of the relationship between socialising and eating.

It was important to consider the shared practices and dispositions within the area when exploring eating fast food and employ an air of caution with terminology. Processed foods are not overly problematic when ingested in moderation, while meals such as fish and chips have been a staple of the British diet for many years, particularly in working class communities (Walton, 1994; Panayi, 2022). It is problematic, however, when food consumption practices such as those exhibited within the youth club create dispositions, tastes or embedded practices within a population, where competencies in identifying health-conscious food decrease or understandings of junk food being acceptable multiple times per week become prevalent, creating a culturally shared anchoring practice that echoes throughout the habitus and future generations, creating cycles of unhealthy eating practices.

Data collection revealed that practices of eating and exercising were also bundled. This was most prevalent amongst participants who had some understanding of exercise nutrition, illustrated more so (but not limited to) the gymnastics club. PA participation frequently influenced what type of food participants would choose to eat,

with some justifying fast-food by virtue of the amount of exercise they did, and others trying to maintain a healthy diet to complement their increased level of exercise.

For most of the participants interviewed, fast-food was understood as acceptable in moderation, due to their ability to burn excess calories during exercise. The findings indicated therefore that those involved in PA were more conscious of maintaining a nutritious diet. Education (such as the Fit and Fed programme) could be an important intervention in highlighting materials, developing competency, and promoting healthy meanings surrounding food. However, nutritional education is effectively redundant without accessibility, particularly for disadvantaged groups. For those at the youth club, the most accessible food was fast food. For Chloe, chocolate and fizzy drinks available in the club reception when she did not have time to visit the shop between sessions while the leisure centre used for C25K sessions offered an array of solely fast food via the vending machines. The findings indicate that the young people will eat no matter what, whether to meet physiological need or maintain social bonds. Thus, organisations and geographic areas (in the area planning sense) must do better in the infrastructure of food provision so not to create cultures of fast food, as this research has highlighted the ease with which anchoring practices, such as socialising, can bundle with unhealthy practices if given the opportunity to.

5.7.4 Social Appraisals

The final sub-theme of *Social Experiences* surrounds instances of PA that were experienced as social appraisal. As stated earlier, avoiding male judgement and its associated repercussions (being laughed at; verbal abuse) was a key driver for some of the girls to refrain from engaging in PA and often led to inhibition. Data collection also illustrated fears of social appraisal within female cohorts and leaders, as illustrated by Gwen's motivation to avoid judgement from her fellow squad members (extract provided earlier). Whilst Chloe enjoyed the group ethos of TeamGym, she described how social comparison could sometimes cause her to inhibit her efforts:

> Chloe: *If you're not progressing and everyone else is it makes you feel like you're falling behind and you can't do it.*

Chloe was the most highly skilled member of the squad. Yet, participation was still understood as an opportunity for others to judge her competency. Fear of judgement was also evident within the youth club setting. During an evening football session, an instance of inhibiting practice driven by social appraisal was witnessed. It was a boys versus girls match. The physicality exhibited was even across the teams, however the higher skill level present amongst the boys resulted in their victory. At one point, a young woman left the pitch and stood next to the researcher, visibly upset (field notes, 27/08/2019). When asked what was wrong, she stated she had been told off by another girl for scoring an own goal. After some brief encouragement, the individual rejoined the game. Observations revealed she had a greater competency level than the majority of the girls and it transpired she played football in school. She had much to offer her team, yet one negative exchange resulted in her withdrawing from the game. How social appraisal is received and responded to holds a powerful influence over how individuals engage with PA. Those with a 'hardier' personality might be capable of coping with negative appraisal. Within this hard-to-reach group, however, where confidence in PA was often not forthcoming, negative appraisal could result in young women turning in on themselves and inhibiting their own engagement. Removing negative appraisal completely would likely be impossible. Leaders taking more responsibility for the kinds of appraisal they allow to take place, as well as educating participants on negative social appraisal and how to cope with it, however, would not be impossible and will be discussed further in the upcoming chapters.

5.8 Closing Remarks

The practices and themes detailed throughout this chapter provide a snapshot of a complex and ever-changing practice constellation that exists for individuals experiencing the double jeopardy, presented in Figure 7 below. Practices of smartphone attachment, capturing photographs and videos, navigating males, getting dressed and socialising were all implicated in PA behaviour and anchored daily activity to a high degree. They were both successfully and unsuccessfully bundled with PA (the latter of which describing instances where the practice, such as taking photographs, anchored activity to such a degree that limited PA was occurring) and

highlighted favourable and unfavourable elements that could be incorporated/removed from PA to create more attractive and accessible opportunities for girls to engage.

For example, Figure 7 outlines the some of the elements, anchoring practices and affect generators involved in using technology. Smartphones were materially available to all of the research participants. Using smartphones was an anchoring practice, with using social media representing another key practice within that. Appearing physically active was understood as socially important and relevant, meaning girls had to become competent in crafting an active identity through taking photos of themselves in active environments (C25K gym for example) and posting online. Images of themselves and their bodies changing as a result of exercise could generate feelings of happiness, motivation and satisfaction for some, particularly those in the gymnastics setting who were knowledgeable and competent in meeting PA recommendations. However, for those who were less competent in meeting PA recommendations and had inaccurate understandings of what it meant to be active, appearing active and presenting an active identity on social media appeared to be prioritised over being physically active, thus inhibiting their activity. Practice theory was thus useful in illustrating where misalignments in elements existed and also where value-action gaps were present, where participants' actions did not correspond with their verbal intentions. The theoretical lens was highly useful therefore in identifying small but powerful changes that could be made to successfully shift practice, decentering individuals from their inactivity but keeping them very much connected to the solution.

Study 1

Anchoring Practices

Using smartphones/technology – monitoring activity, social media, taking photographs/videos
Socialising
Getting dressed
Navigating boys

Materials

Smartphones
Smartwatches & monitoring devices
Social media
Clothing/Kit
PA Settings/Environments
PA Equipment
Food/Drink

Affective Practice, Atmospheres & Generators

Weather & environment
Boys & hierarchies of space
Images/videos of activities
Comfortable PA settings and 'second homes'
Exercise & bodily states

Practice

Meanings

Appearing physically active vs being physically active
Gendered activities
Gender & the natural order
Social judgement & surveillance
Online personas
Clothing identities

Competencies

Meeting PA recommendations
Crafting identities – 'active', 'feminine'
Navigating gender relations
Coping with judgement
Using technology in PA
Dressing appropriately

Figure 7: Key findings from Study 1 presented through the conceptual lens

Practice theory was useful in illustrating where value-action gaps were present, where participants' actions did not correspond with their verbal intentions. Instead of expecting this smooth translation between intentions and behaviours, however, the theory illustrated how this was a practice in itself, frequently a practice of exclusion or inhibition. The theoretical lens was highly useful therefore in identifying small but powerful changes that could be made to successfully shift practice, decentering individuals from their inactivity but keeping them very much connected to the solution.

Additionally, what became prevalent across all three case settings was that those who had real lived experience of sufficiently intense PA sessions (that is sessions capable of meeting national PA guidelines), such as running for the duration of a C25K session, participating in a TeamGym session or playing a standardised game of football outside of the youth club, were the ones whose behaviour was most anchored by PA. These were the individuals who had also historically participated in PA from a young age, as a result of early experiences and family engagement in exercise, in addition participating regularly in PA outside of their respective settings (and within the setting in the case of the gymnastics club). The girls who had not had these experiences

exhibited practice that was more readily anchored by other activities, such as socialising, using smartphones or eating. It is possible that these girls were lacking in experience in the embodied feelings and affects associated with exercise. They had limited or no experience of gasping for breath after an activity, exercise-induced perspiration, feeling a '*burn*' or the aching of muscles following activity and experiencing exercise *euphoria (*Genc et al., 2015; Buckley, 2020*)* and thus had no disposition to seek these experiences. This lack of familiarity with such feelings thus meant they possibly did not enjoy the forms of exertion associated with intense PA sessions and instead attempted to avoid them by being more readily anchored by other practices.

It is also possible that these girls were not afforded the choice to experience and identify activities that aligned with their PA preferences. Their socio-demographic characteristics, such as place of residence, socioeconomic position and gender, along with the gendered hierarchies of PE and PA might have resulted in more alternative forms of PA not being available or attempted within satisfactory conditions (free from symbolic violence for example). The girls could thus have been resistant to the limited forms of PA they had experienced rather than PA as a whole, while the interpretation was the latter. The importance of early, positive experiences and the degree of choice (and sufficient conditions (Coalter, 2013) required to try) activities in the eventual embodiment of PA behaviour, somatised as disposition and thus an anchoring practice, ie. leading individuals to be fully immersed and allow daily practice to be governed by PA, were thus key points of consideration throughout the remaining studies, owing to their impact upon PA practice for individuals experiencing the double jeopardy.

Chapter Six

Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders

6.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the second study of the PhD project, whereby a series of interviews were undertaken with key organisational stakeholders. Following the first study where disadvantaged girls in community settings were observed and interviewed surrounding their everyday and specifically PA practice, it became clear that the perspectives of those who led the community settings as well as those who regulated the community settings would also be of value.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to collect perspectives from each level of participation and provision, from community participant, to club leader, to senior NGB employee. This was in order to identify materials, meanings and competencies implicated in PA from each perspective and identify alignments and misalignments between the three levels, thereby identifying areas of opportunity for intervention. The interview guide was designed in response to the themes that emerged from the first study. For example, topics such as using technology in PA, the significance of kit and clothing and socialisation as an anchor of practice. For club leaders, the questions were more granular in detail and applied to their setting, providing real world examples of practices or perspectives collected at their establishment. Other stakeholders were asked broader, high-level questions surrounding the same topics but how their specific policies trickled down to influence provision and practice within clubs.

In line with the project's theoretical approach, the interview questions were consistently situated within a practice paradigm. Consideration was afforded to create questions which revealed how provision was enabled/constrained and regulations and policies were activated based on specific practice elements, including materials, meanings and competencies (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Findings from community club leaders were grouped (n = 3), as were those from national/senior organisations (n = 6). These will be presented separately and thematically, and in an attempt to avoid a chaotic or 'jumpy' account, the implications of both perspectives, and specifically their degree of alignment with each other, as well as with the needs of the girls, will be discussed in the proceeding discussion chapter.

Figure 8 details the characteristics of those who participated in Study 2, while Figure 9 highlights the relevant objectives and phase of study within the research as a whole.

Pseudonym:	Organisation:	Role:
Rachel	Youth Club	Senior Youth Worker
Susan	Gymnastics Club	Director and Coach
Alice	Couch to 5k Club	Club Leader
Simon	StreetGames	Director
Lloyd	Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales	Chief Executive Officer
Lucy	Sport Wales (Previously StreetGames)	Senior Officer
Ioan	Sport Wales	Assistant Director
Pete	British Gymnastics	Director
Mari	Welsh Gymnastics	Head of Development

Figure 8: Study 2 sample table
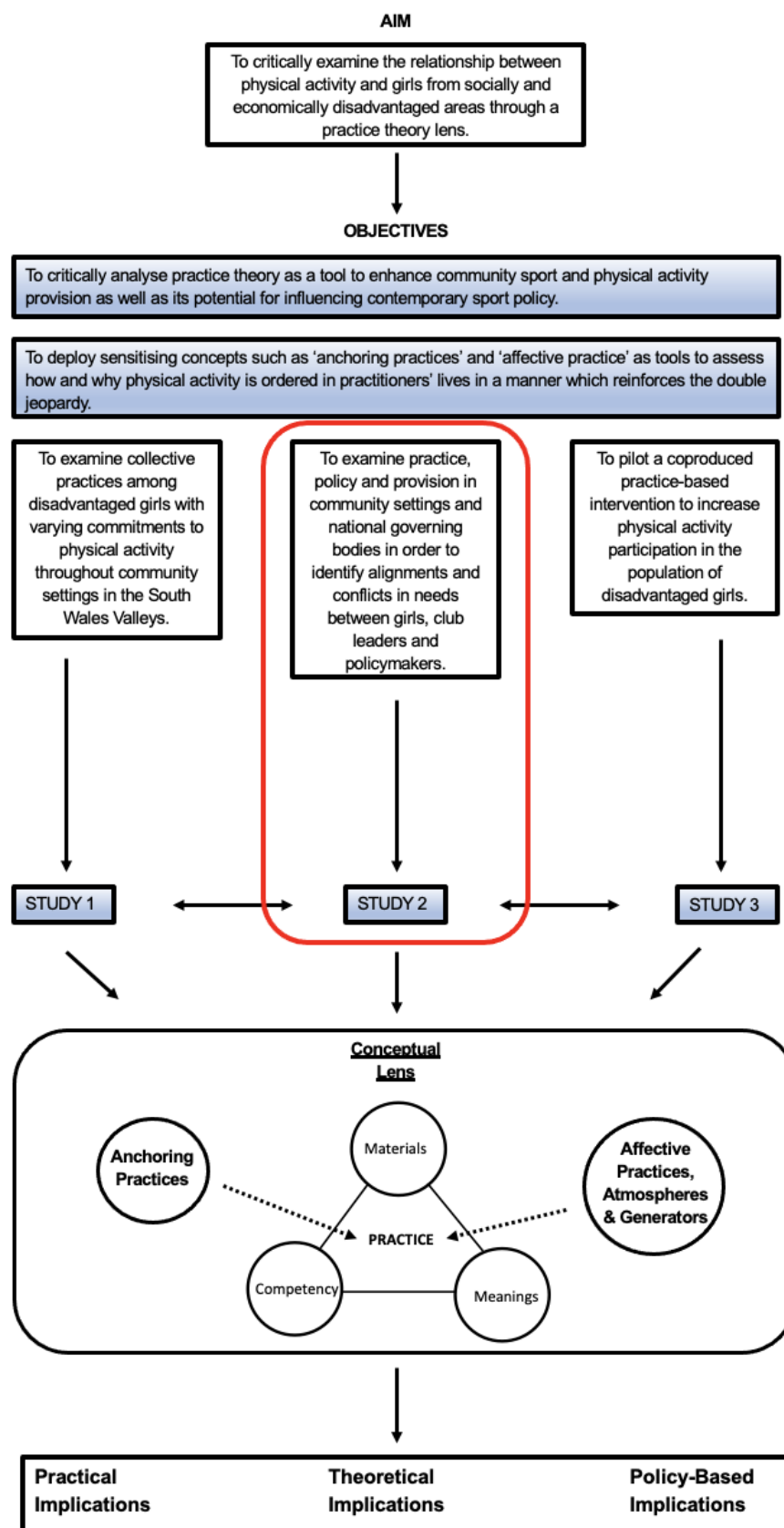
Figure 9: A conceptual model of the research, emphasising Study 2

6.2 Club Leader Perspectives

One semi-structured interview was held with a leader from each case setting. Specifically, this involved a director and artistic coach of the gymnastics club, the leader of the C25K club and employee of the local leisure trust, and a senior youth officer at the community youth club. The first two interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams while an opportunity arose for the third to be conducted in-person on the youth club campus. Interviews lasted between 1-1.5 hours and surrounded the aforementioned topics, the findings of which will be outlined below.

<u>6.2.1 Technology in PA and Everyday Life</u>

By Alice's (C25K) own admission, the influence of technology was not going to 'go away' (17/06/2021), so it was more sensible to adopt it as a tool to enhance sessions rather than fight the trend. All club leaders were on board with incorporating more technology into their provision in various forms, given its status as an anchor of practice among young people. It was also acknowledged that in many cases, the inclusion of technological materials into PA practice positively influenced the experience, whether that be promoting participation, increasing motivation or effort or improving performance and skill execution. Leaders were therefore more amenable to incorporating technology given the positive impact reported in this project, as well as observed by themselves within their own settings.

The impact of Covid-19 was repeatedly acknowledged as a driver of growth in technology incorporation. For both the gymnastics and youth club settings, presenting sessions and tasks via technological means during lockdown was perceived as the most favourable option for both providing members with activities as well as securing 'live' interaction. For example, during lockdowns, the only option for the gymnastics club for hands-on (admittedly a significantly more detached form of hands on) coaching, where skill execution could be observed and critiqued in real time, was by providing online sessions via videoconferencing software.

Of course, not all skills could be executed within the confines of gymnasts' houses through lack of equipment, lack of space and most importantly, safety concerns,

highlighting the inequalities of opportunity faced by those experiencing social/economic disadvantage. However, platforms like Zoom allowed the club and various other providers to make the best of a bad situation. Additionally, as will be discussed in the policymaker interviews, Covid-19 almost forced club leaders to upskill themselves in using technology, resulting in increased investment in materials, and enhanced competency and understandings surrounding suitable forms of technology to employ for virtual delivery.

6.2.1.1 Life Through the Lens Continued…

Susan, director and coach of the gymnastics club, observed the desire for capturing photographs and videos within the gym, as well as the snowball effect that appeared to take place once one gymnast revealed their smartphone.

> *The boys, for example, last week had one phone out for filming some tumbling and next thing we knew there were five phones out.*
>
> *British Gymnastics which we typically follow. For the young people we're fairly strict in saying no phones in the gym and we email out and we also say 'Don't bring your smartphone to gym because if you lose it then on your head be it'.*

<div align="right">(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)</div>

Limiting smartphone use was a safeguarding issue for the club, dictated by NBG policy. Smartphones were meaningfully understood as a risk for the gymnastics club, but one they were committed to controlling as best they could given the popularity of using smartphones among the young people. Smartphones were therefore allowed to be used in the gym providing they were used for analysis purposes and thus a practice that met the needs of both leaders and participants in terms of enhancing competency and one that smartphones were materially prepared for.

> **The girls seem to be really favourable towards them as a form of analysis. They all mentioned filming skills and I suppose it helps for visual learners…**
> *It does yeah. Even as a coach I'll say 15 times 'Your leg is bent' and I've had kids before that you can see they're looking at you like 'It's not, what are you on about?' and you've got to film one and then show them and they have a massive realisation and correct it then quite quickly. And they like to celebrate*

as well if they've done something. There's something in gymnastics that your parents and your friends can't really see what you can do, so they do like it to be able to film it and celebrate.

(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

Susan reiterated a point previously made by the girls, that capturing photos elicited pride and contributed to the crafting of identities. As Susan points out, gymnastics frequently takes place in controlled settings where risk assessments have been conducted and safety measures are in place. As will be discussed later in the chapter, school-based gymnastics was perceived to be a far cry from club-based gymnastics, with significant disparities in teaching ability, session content and participant competency. Gymnasts would rarely get opportunities to showcase their high skill levels outside of the club setting, were it not for smartphones and the primary sharing opportunities of social media. Being allowed to capture personal gymnastics content therefore was an opportunity to illustrate competency through the materially available platform of smartphones and social media, to craft personal identities and possibly gain social and physical capital among peers.

Susan recognised how valuable it could be for gymnasts' engagement to allow this and sought opportunities to do so in a safe manner, describing a photographer linked with the club who occasionally visited to take action shots and upload to the club's social media pages. Susan highlighted that the demand for photographs was much higher than the club's capacity to take them, however, highlighting a lack of materials and competency. Susan believed a more technologically competent staff member was required, as well as a more significant focus on the older TeamGym girls as the target crowd since this had not been afforded before. To develop the club's provision of technology therefore, technologically inclusive policies, opportunities to upskill via training or specialist staff positions and enhanced focus on the teenage population may be beneficial.

Elsewhere in the settings, the C25K club was particularly aware of the desire to capture images of exercise and agreed with the observation that photographs/videos did not always translate to sufficient PA taking place. When queried about how leaders

could ensure taking photos did not take priority over being active, Alice was cautious not to forbid taking photos altogether.

> *It's kind of like don't say 'Right, stop taking pictures girls' you know because they're going to, and they want to and that's fine. But 'Come on let's get moving after it' kind of thing or you know 'Let's walk and take a video'…'If you're going to do a TikTok, do a TikTok of you all moving'… I say it's not going to go away and just kind of like using it as a tool rather than trying to fight it, I guess.'*

<div align="right">

(Alice's Interview, 17/06/2021)

</div>

What Alice was alluding to, was creating and reinforcing practice bundles between PA and capturing photos/creating social media content; a prime area of potential with regards to shifting practice. What is crucial however, is that the association already existed for the girls – just not in the necessary structure. Taking photographs in exercise settings was an established practice and one the girls frequently engaged in. The issue was that for a large cohort of the C25K group, their understanding of participating in C25K and 'exercising' was more anchored by taking photographs than being sufficiently active. Therefore, for the entire C25K group to meet PA guidelines in future, it would likely be more worthwhile for Alice and her colleagues to develop the meaning of being physically active with the girls, as well as the competency to know when they are and are not qualifying as active.

Activities could include regulating smartphone use more closely to ensure that they are only used at appropriate times for appropriate reasons (C25K app, taking a photo before/after activities rather than during), regulating PA more closely to ensure that it is being done for sufficient time, at sufficient intensities and so on, physically taking the group through a PA experience which qualifies as PA (60 minutes of moderate intensity walking/jogging/gym activities) and asking the girls to reflect on how it feels and what elements of the experience indicate to them that they have been active (being out of breath, muscle soreness over the following days). As discussed in the previous chapter, this could require a careful balance between regulating practice more carefully, but still allowing the girls a degree of freedom and choice within the activity in order to meet their needs. Here, the delivery and leadership styles become crucial. This research project would advocate for using a person-centred approach,

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something the C25K club had experience in doing which will be discussed in full later in the chapter.

6.2.1.2 Exercise Technology

Leaders were equally aware of the power of monitoring devices as anchors of participation, especially in the youth club and C25K settings. During the Covid-19 lockdowns, the youth club had to be particularly creative in terms of retaining engagement with young people since the club was physically closed. As restrictions eased, leaders engaged in outreach work whereby they were permitted to communicate and organise outdoor activities for the young people. When restrictions were more stringent, however, it was more difficult to meet their aims of providing opportunities for young people to engage in activities related to health and well-being, sport and fitness, and music, drama and culture. One way in which they targeted health and well-being, was through workout challenges.

> *We had over 40 participants who took part in the month's challenge and sent us videos of them doing online workouts. We gave them all Fitbits and they were able to keep that Fitbit then after the project.*
>
> **And they increased their physical activity levels as a result of it?**
>
> *Some of the challenges we'd set it at 10,000. No, they wanted 20,000 the first week. And if we'd set it at 30,000 the second week it would have been 50,000. Somebody would send one in of 17,000 'Oh I can beat that' and they would send in. So, it was really successful. We were blown away by it and blown away by the feedback from parents…One young person in particular, he would sleep all day and be on his game all night, he retook part in the project, he was more physically active, he was happier, he was out every day, he was sleeping when he should be sleeping.*

> (Rachel's Interview, 18/06/2021)

The youth club were successful in engaging 40 young people in PA during lockdown through the use of Fitbits and intra-club competitions via social media and group chat platforms. Where delivery mechanisms were limited, the youth club used their resources to purchase material artefacts for the young people in Fitbits, believing that being able to consistently see their achievements was of greater personal value to the young people, developing both their meaning surrounding PA, as well as their

competency in using technology and being physical active. This example highlights the three elements at work, illustrating how the addition of a small material artefact worked to positively shift practice by enhancing meaning (signifying when participants were being active and allowing understandings and embodied feelings of being active to develop) and competency (in meeting PA targets and using technology to increase PA levels).

Overall, the findings from this study indicated that in places, more training and upskilling opportunities were required for PA deliverers with regards to technology, more flexible (albeit safe) policies given the increasing emphasis on technology and smartphones within young people's lives and more support for deliverers in terms of developing practice relations between PA and technology, to ensure that technology does not become the anchor of practice instead of PA. These findings were presented to the organisational stakeholders, the results of which will be presented further in the chapter.

6.2.2 The Social Dimension of Physical Activity

The importance of encouraging a social dimension in PA opportunities was actively prioritised in provision. Susan (gymnastics club) discussed how her involvement with StreetGames had transformed the club's provision to a degree. National squad development was no longer the sole priority, with social opportunities to be physically active becoming an equally important form of provision. A key recommendation from StreetGames and particularly Us Girls learning, aimed at girls in disadvantaged communities, was that PA opportunities should be social, allowing space to interact whilst being active (StreetGames, 2017). It was clear that StreetGames' learning was being translated into provision in the three settings, particularly within the gymnastics (TeamGym, Freerunning) and C25K club which were essentially extensions of Us Girls projects.

The importance of social opportunity became especially important to the leaders following Covid-19 and the lockdowns. Susan had the following words to say about the gymnastics club:

Covid has identified to us how important the social side of it is for young people. Perhaps this is just a useful reminder for me to remind coaches that actually when we're mopping down the apparatus at the midpoint of the session, there isn't a massive need to rush. Let them sit down and spread out and actually take five minutes to have a chat.

(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

Susan's extract illustrated how meanings were shifting for staff as a result of Covid-19. Instead of preventing interaction during sometimes intense sessions, staff were realising that what might seem like pointless chatter was actually a principal part of attending gymnastics and a primary need for the young people. The above extract suggests that understandings and possibly the regulation of sessions was about to shift to allow this to occur more readily. What was difficult for Susan, however, was the trade-off that inevitably came with allowing more interaction. Firstly, with parents' perceptions of allowing interaction and secondly, socialising being prioritised over the exercise itself.

In our experience, it's whether the parents are happy to pay. I think they still see it as they're paying for gymnastics tutoring and for them to learn all these skills.

We know they come for social reasons, but they also want to come to be gymnasts and learn skills and one thing we collectively, as coaches, find is that when you give them an inch they take a mile…With the TeamGym guys I sometimes think they would spend the whole 90 minutes lounging round and chatting and to what extent is that okay?

(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

Susan's extract highlights how whilst staff practices were shifting to enable more social experiences of gymnastics, the meaning attributed by parents was about maximising financial investment and skill mastery for their children. As Susan points out, for youth PA providers, it can be equally important to satisfy parents as much as the target audience of children. Misalignments in meanings and needs, however, are commonplace between the participating children and the financially responsible parents. This illustrates the value in communicating with parents as to why socialising should be an integral part of any PA opportunity and is more likely to create sustainable PA habits if permitted.

Susan also discussed an issue observed during the first study, in that if given the opportunity to socialise, some youths would let this not only anchor the activity but take over completely. This can be difficult to balance, but perhaps it is about explicitly outlining the times to be social and the times to be active. For example, cleaning equipment and cool downs could be prime social opportunities, whilst skill-based drills require full attention and limited chatting. Additionally, sessions could almost be 'chunked' so that five-minute social breaks are physically incorporated into the session. Communication and expectations of conduct would likely be key in enacting these opportunities, requiring meaning and competency-based work. Susan also discussed the possibility of introducing more social spaces to the gymnastics setting.

> *A café space is something that we're really lacking … it's about us being more conscious of those things as well and facilitating and enabling them. Sometimes they happen despite us, which is fine, but I think we need to be better attuned to giving them the opportunity rather than them having to snatch the opportunity.*

> (Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

In 2022, the gymnastics club proceeded to open the café space to great success. The club now had an infrastructure which enabled socialising. As the first study uncovered, adolescents sometimes simply need somewhere to go. Rather than withdrawing from exercise through missing social opportunities, social opportunities could be provided through gymnastics. The club was therefore providing a material setting, enabling new social competencies at the gym to develop and allowing meaning to shift so that the club was understood as an inherently social setting. The cafe space also unlocked new potential for parents and carers, providing a space for socialising, remote working and waiting. The café provided personal and professional development opportunities for gymnasts, as well as a range of incentives, highlighting the value in holistic settings where certain practices can be bundled together and carried out in one location, thus negating conflicts in practice and the sense of time-poverty characterising contemporary life (Giurge, Whillans and West, 2020).

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Similar to the subject of café and leisure spaces, interviews also surrounded more holistic PA provision and settings which enabled informal and social forms of exercise. At the gymnastics club, Susan and her colleagues had recently set up a sports equipment library:

> *Well, we've just got a kit basket filled with stuff and the aim there is being around family engagement. There's family toys, there's swing ball, there's a crazy golf set. We've also put gym stuff in there because we're aware during lockdown that not everybody could afford kettle bells or matts or bits and pieces so that's been really popular, both the gym stuff and the family stuff.*
>
> (Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

During the interview, the topic of discussion evolved to where girls who were not part of a sports club, did not have the physical and mental know-how, financial or material resources or confidence to enter traditional PA settings (gyms, sports clubs) could go to experience PA on their own terms.

> *One thing we did do over half term, one for the younger group and one for the teenagers. The older one we had quite a lot of the young leaders and the comp rec and TeamGym age come, and they loved it and they were coaching each other, they were filming tricks. Basically, let them have a social club in the gym and have free rein. I've never recognised that we could do that or seen the value in it.*
>
> (Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

The club had the materials in terms of equipment but was constrained by space and time. Piloting this approach during a school holiday, however, proved successful. The discussion progressed:

> *Even at the gym we could put a badminton net out that could be just there as a sort of informal opportunity and if we promoted it more as a social Saturday for an hour and a half on a Saturday evening or Saturday teatime, 'Come with your mates, do something, don't do something, do whatever you want.'*
>
> (Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

Open PA opportunities were something Susan wanted to develop. The idea that young people could have an informal PA and social space could satisfy a number of needs. Materials and resources could be readily available through the equipment library, meaning individuals could choose what activity they wanted to experience on the day and would not need financial resource to purchase equipment or rent spaces. If the space was created and marketed as an informal setting, and the affective atmosphere remained so during visits, individuals could experience less social gaze than traditional sport and fitness settings, particularly if female-only provision was created which many stakeholders within the project) advocated for. Whilst leaders might not traditionally lead the sessions, they could be on hand to supply knowledge and competency where required from the young people. Naturally, such a novel approach would come with its challenges, such as ensuring the appropriate target audience is being engaged, which will be discussed further in the *Discussion* chapter. However, by design, it could provide firstly, a place to go, and secondly, a place to go and be active for those young women who do not have the confidence, the physical and mental competence, or the financial and material resources to utilise more traditional forms of provision.

Discussions with the other two club leaders revealed how vital the social dimension of PA could be through a number of examples. Whilst these were discussed in less depth than those above, they warrant highlighting given their significance and support of wider literature. Firstly, during the initial fieldwork in the youth club throughout 2019, Rachel encouraged an interview to be arranged with Lottie. Age 16 at the time, Lottie did not engage in PA and felt no desire to since stopping at age 15 on account of not enjoying anymore. Outside of active travel, Lottie did no other PA, did not participate in PE in school and had no intention to begin participating. Fast forward to mid 2021, and Rachel revealed that Lottie had completely transformed her behaviour, attending the gym five days a week. During that time, Lottie had left school, secured a job and become a young leader within the youth club, developing much of the social media content and providing resources for the active challenges throughout lockdown. When queried on the driver of this change, Rachel said:

> *She's at that age now where not only is kind of body image important to her but health and well-being is important as well and she understands the benefits of physical activity... A lot of the older girls now have gone to college, or they've*

got jobs and I know Lottie is part of a wider group of girls that meet up and go to the gym.

As Lottie transitioned into young adulthood, meanings shifted for her, and health and well-being were becoming increasingly important. Additionally, where Lottie had previously allowed socialising to completely anchor her behaviour owing to an understanding of PA as not enjoyable, PA was now an anchoring practice and one that was successfully bundled with socialising, illustrating the ease with which the two can co-exist and evolve. Active socialising could meet a number of needs for the young group, from keeping them accountable in attending and being active, to providing a support network to try new activities and promote their health and well-being. What is clear is that the social element was a key enabler of being active and likely in driving the desire to be active for some of that group.

Finally, leaders concurred that social judgement was a particular concern for the girls, with issues around body image, being 'seen' while exercising, peer comparison and participating with boys being prevalent. Fear of judgement is a common issue during adolescence when being accepted by peers becomes increasingly important for many, meaning few individuals want to stand out for the (perceived) wrong reasons (De Bruyn and Van Den Boom, 2005; Cowley et al., 2020). When discussing how to aid this, meaning development appeared the most sensible approach that was within reach for leaders. Therefore, it could be of value for all clubs to undergo this form of training (for want of a better word) for female participants, where time is carved out of sessions to interact and work through these issues. For example, challenging perceptions that it is negative to be seen exercising, actively challenging avoidance behaviours, understanding how/where to seek female-only sessions if they are desired, and problem-solving around how to cope with peer comparison; all of which seek to shift meanings and competencies to promote PA practice.

Providing time for problem-solving and communicating rather than being active might not be a traditional form of provision for these clubs, and clubs might well argue that this would not sit within their remit, especially if they are being paid to deliver technical training (a clear issue for the gymnastics club). However, meanings are often deeply

ingrained and can have significant influence over whether a practice is performed or not, even if materials and competencies are satisfied. This arguably warrants more effort and time on behalf of the provider if they are looking to sustainably shift practice. On a pragmatic level, provision would not be completely transformed to discussing feelings every session for the whole session. What could be valuable, however, is educating providers on the power of the meaning element within practice and guiding them on how to recognise conflicts which justify spending extra time with individuals to unpick them.

6.2.3 Gender Considerations

Considerations of gender were prevalent across each field setting, including the impact of males and problematic elements of PA specific to female experience, such as navigating menstruation and other bodily changes. Observations revealed instances of criticism and exclusion from males within all clubs, often leading to female withdrawal and inactivity. Interviews further supported these observations with many of the girls confirming they would avoid certain mixed-sex scenarios in PA to avoid the forms of symbolic (and sometimes physical) violence they had historically faced. These instances were most frequently reported in the youth club, where there was the most opportunity (of the three settings) for mixed activities. To counter this, the youth club employed a number of practices, including consultations:

> *Through the consultation, that's where it was identified that the girls wanted girls-only sessions in terms of football, which we did … I think the majority of the girls that we did the work with were more confident to do physical activity and football in particular by themselves with the other girls.*

> (Rachel's Interview, 18/06/2021)

The team actively listened and reconfigured elements to suit the group's needs. Rachel was mindful, however, of not taking sex segregation too far unnecessarily.

> *I think some of the girls are confident enough and should challenge the boys and be more confident about their abilities but for us as youth workers, we need to support the girls in doing that … when it comes to other stuff then we shouldn't have to separate. We shouldn't have to have a girls-only competition, because that goes against what we believe in.*

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Rachel highlighted that certain activities could not be won or lost on sex-based biological differences (playing pool for example) and developing the girls' ability to cope in mixed-sex activities was important. That said, the girls in this study were not always equipped to deal with the behaviours exhibited by males, and whilst sex-based differences did not always account for performance, the dominance over certain spaces by males and subsequent time spent mastering skills did. Provision was thus a practice of balance between allowing same-sex opportunities where necessary but encouraging girls to challenge boys where they felt able to do so. To achieve this, the staff challenged stigma surrounding female athletes, with Rachel acting as a model of practice.

> *It only takes a flippant comment from one of the boys, 'Oh we don't want her on our team, she's crap' and then that young person not only won't take part for that session but potentially won't play with that group of young people.*
>
> *There's been the comments 'Oh we don't want girls on our team' but to be honest with you, it's funny because the older boys I've worked with for quite a few years don't tend to say that now because I play football.*

This illustrates that practice can indeed shift with concerted efforts, despite taking time to do so. Rachel and certain girls within the club were highly competent at both football and pool. They visibly competed with the boys. Rachel also reported coproduced codes of conduct for both young people and staff. At the time of the interview, all staff were female and were outwardly passionate about gender equality. Rachel reported comments being made about the club needing a male staff member but believed the method which female staff employed to deal with male aggression was more effective, since in her experience when there were male staff, boys appeared to become more aggressive. Staff were actively teaching girls how to challenge male behaviour, removing them from sessions where necessary, and whilst no person should have to face unnecessary aggression, by challenging the behaviour, staff were providing practice to imitate. Importantly, gender considerations also translated to the meaning behind indicators of success for Rachel, illustrated when she was asked whether she

would sacrifice 'a pitch full of boys for a few girls doing what they want to do' on a biweekly basis to ensure equal opportunities. Rachel replied, 'I might get a lot of backlash with it, but yes I would', highlighting the commitment to enhance female opportunities.

All three settings discussed the influence of menstruation on PA habits, with particular emphasis on period poverty, whereby girls do not have access to menstrual products or safe, hygienic places to use them (Action Aid, N.D.). In gymnastics, Susan reported how leggings or shorts over the top of leotards had historically been understood as an indicator of individuals being on their period. Additionally, leggings and shorts were discouraged in training on the basis that gymnasts would feel bare when competing, which could potentially be off-putting. Gymnastics kit is objectively revealing on the basis that it allows the scrutinisation of body positioning and skill. The gymnastics club were flexible in how they regulated kit, encouraging gymnasts to wear what they felt comfortable in providing it was safe. However, gymnasts could ostensibly be in a lose-lose situation. If they were not comfortable enough to dress 'bare' on a given day, they could choose to cover up, but this was at the expense of the room assuming that they were on their period.

This might appear a trivial association but during adolescence when (avoiding) peer judgement is particularly significant, along with increasing concerns around body image (Gillison, Osborn, Standage and Skevington, 2009; Wertheim and Paxton, 2011; Tiggemann and Slater, 2013), an instance where effectively both situations could be uncomfortable, could be capable of driving participants away. The youth club delivered workshops surrounding periods to ensure girls understood that they could coexist with PA with the right materials and competence. Naturally, without the materials and understanding of how to use them, PA could be rather unpleasant, which is why club provision was so crucial for those who did not have parental support or monetary resource to prepare effectively.

6.2.4 Adopting a Person-Centred Approach

It was evident that each field setting had committed to adopting a person-centred approach within their provision which anchored and enabled many of the themes

reported in this chapter. Susan credited StreetGames in particular for the gymnastics club's broader understanding of sport and PA, particularly for teenagers experiencing social disadvantage. In the past, Susan and the club had worked with StreetGames across a number of projects, becoming almost a pilot club for new approaches and reporting learning through case studies. Susan believed their work with StreetGames was pivotal in transforming practice.

> *We've got that culture embedded at the club and I think StreetGames, they've enabled us in a way. They provided some funding, some staff training … The Us Girls project came to an end but it was massively important. We learnt an awful lot from that project and although we don't run Us Girls branded sessions, the learnings have been applied so we utilise it in terms of developing TeamGym, Comp Rec.*
>
> *It was about a menu of opportunities, so going from national squad and national squad development to actually far more social opportunities to be physically active on their own terms … it's about being person-centred.*

<div align="right">

(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

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This approach was mirrored by the C25K and youth club:

> *Everything we try to do at youth is led by young people, so it's their choice. Every quarter we plan in terms of what we're able to provide and what the young people want us to provide.*
> <div align="right">(Rachel's Interview, 18/06/2021)</div>

> *I think it's really important to consult with the girls and really find out what they want and tailor the offer around them.*

<div align="right">

(Alice's Interview, 17/06/2021)

</div>

Target audiences were thus at the forefront of provision design for these clubs, which proved effective.

6.2.4.1 *Insight into Using a Person-Centred Approach*

Alice described how leaders encouraged discussion during sessions. Leaders made a concerted effort to ask about the girls' daily lives and encourage them to share

worries or struggles if they needed to. Alice believed this was how leaders built such strong rapport with the group and secured engagement for a long period. Their skills in doing so were perhaps best illustrated by Liv, the one C25K group member who volunteered to be interviewed for the previous study.

> *[Liv] is a good example of someone who's hard to crack. She would come and whinge the entire time she was there. If it was sunny, it was too warm. If it was cloudy, it was too cold and you really couldn't balance that with [Liv] but we persevered. We joked with her like 'come on [Liv], you can't complain about something else', she'd laugh and we'd build rapport. We would always say to her 'see you next week' or if she wasn't there one week but came back the following week we would make a point of 'oh we missed you last week'.*
>
> *Just giving them that time and showing them that they are valued as part of the group and as an individual. I don't think anyone went unnoticed in that group.*

(Alice's Interview, 17/06/2021)

What Alice outlined might appear insignificant instances of chatter, but really, they were concerted efforts to make Liv feel valued and part of something. They took the time to build rapport, they persevered when Liv complained, they made Liv accountable when she missed sessions, and gave her the support she needed to be active. These ostensibly minor gestures reinforced C25K as a bundle of practice with a key element of social support consistently running through it, something many of the group required to be active.

6.2.4.2 *Engaging with Adolescents*

Susan in particular discussed using a person-centred approach with the adolescent population at the club. For context, the club was highly successful in retaining gymnasts beyond the typical age of dropout, whether through gymnastics participation or young leader opportunities.

> *The teenage girls specifically, we have to be more flexible, and we have to be more young-person centred. We have to go with them and allow input into the session in many ways. They often enjoy periods of a session where they can sit down and chat and socialise.*

Susan recognised that keeping *all* gymnasts beyond age 18 was not likely but reinforced that if you can keep one or two, they become models of practice for the younger generations. The continual presence of older gymnasts would likely encourage imitation from younger cohorts, as they meaningfully understand that gymnastics, in multiple capacities, is still possible for them, even beyond the typical age of drop-out. An example of the club's person-centred practice was provided by Susan and related to a female member of the TeamGym cohort and her choice of training apparel.

> *It was quite a difficult training session, she must have been boiling. She was in a hoody and leggings … having done gym in a hoody, having to flip upside down and all sorts and I'm like 'she must really want it on'. The head coach side of me wants to say 'take your hoody off, you shouldn't be doing gym in a hoody' but I didn't. I didn't say anything at all … I could have said 'you've got to have a leotard on, take your hoody off' and actually she feels so uncomfortable that she finishes gym.*

This minor instance could have turned into a stubborn exchange between the gymnast and Susan, but Susan made the decision that providing it was safe to do so, the gymnast's choice to wear a hoody should be respected, prioritising her needs over a potentially trivial rule of traditional gymnastics attire. Whilst the material was technically not allowed, it was understood as a comfort to the gymnast and was not affecting her competency to a significant degree, meaning in training, gymnastics was still possible as this particular elemental configuration. A small-scale example and negotiation, but a valuable instance of a leader evaluating whether it is more beneficial for a young person to have autonomy over their PA practice, rather than having it dictated to them which could be potentially cause disengagement.

Flexibility was evident in all three settings. However, it is not always possible to meet the desires of a cohort. Indeed, capacity and resource are crucial to provision, in addition to safety concerns and for many clubs, the need to sustain a pre-existing identity and meet their organisational aims, often dictated by NGBs. That being said, when needs cannot be met, there is still value in communicating it effectively so that

those requesting the changes can understand the meaning behind why the changes are not possible. Susan noted her experience in the club:

> *There's very often times that we say no. In freerunning we don't allow them free time. We know they want it, but we consider it to be a little bit unsafe and we're not 100% comfortable, so it's trying to meet them half-way and if we can't accommodate it's explaining why we can't, it's not just 'No'.*

(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

Naturally, some clubs are stretched more than others in terms of staff capacity, time and financial resource. The leaders were questioned on any difficulties they experienced in adopting the approach:

> **Have you found it a struggle to be more person-centred?**
> *No, I think we've managed it quite effectively and efficiently. I'd say we're really lucky that we've got a core coaching team who actually recognise the need for us to be flexible and person-centred … why should one child, who's perhaps more talented and enjoys traditional gymnastics more, why are they more important than a young person or a child that wants to come in once a week to have a really fun experience? … I think it's recognising that spectrum.*

(Susan's Interview, 11/06/2021)

Susan highlighted how the monetary resource and education provided by StreetGames initially enabled the person-centred approach to be adopted at the club. Beyond the initial investment by StreetGames, the culture of the club was responsible for sustaining this practice, where each staff member allowed it to anchor their everyday practice. This neatly highlights the processes involved in shifting practice. Materially, financial resource was required. For meaning, education surrounding the approach was provided by StreetGames. Together, these allowed competencies to develop so that individual meanings were transformed, materials were made sustainable, and competency and practice shifted.

Rachel meanwhile discussed the conflict between trying to guide young people down more positive paths while retaining an approach where personal choice is paramount.

Sometimes it's difficult when we deliver in workshops because our provision is all about young people having a choice and we never force them to take part in anything. If I rocked up and said 'we're going to do a workshop about the benefits of physical activity' they would probably say 'no, I'm cool', but if I then said 'how about while we're having a game of something, we talk about the benefits' …let's do it instead and then we can talk while we're doing. I think that would work.

We need to be very careful because if a young person comes in with food from the fish and chip shop, it might be the only meal that person has had all day … So, we try but like I said, it's difficult for us because at the end of the day, it's that young person's choice.

(Rachel's Interview, 17/06/2021)

Encouraging young people's autonomy was difficult when they were engaging in negative lifestyle behaviours. In isolation, indulging in occasional fast-food or having inactive weeks would not drastically affect a young person's life course. However, habits developed during adolescence can echo for years to come (Freeman, Scott, Waxman and Arcona, 2000; Todd et al., 2015), so encouraging health-enhancing behaviours during a key stage of socialisation, while leaders have influence over a captive audience, warrants taking advantage of. In addition to the conflict in encouraging personal choice but only within certain confines, leaders also had to consider that their cohort might not be eating anything other than a fast-food meal on a given day, or might not have the materials to exercise or resources to shower and wash clothes, given the degree of disadvantage in the area, meaning positive lifestyle behaviours were not always in reach for this population.

Overall, the person-centred approach sits well with a practice-orientated approach, given the innate problem-solving and reconfiguration of elements based on input from the target audience, something a practice-orientated approach would look to do, as highlighted in the proceeding chapter. As with all findings in this chapter, however, input from governing organisations will dictate how the clubs involved in this project, and indeed any club, design their provision, so ensuring all parties are on the same page for want of a better term, is paramount.

6.3 Senior Policymakers' Perspectives

Six stakeholder interviews were conducted with the parent organisations of the clubs, in addition to wider organisations which influence sport and PA provision throughout Wales. As parent organisations of the gymnastics club, a Head of Participation from Welsh Gymnastics, as well as a Participation Director from British Gymnastics were interviewed. This was to capture insight from the UK-wide objectives, as well as insight and awareness on a more local level within Welsh Gymnastics. A senior leader from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales (BGCW) was interviewed, owing to the extensive youth work many of their daughter clubs carry out, particularly through the vehicle of sport. In relation to the C25K group, and its connection to StreetGames, two senior officers were interviewed (one of which had recently left and joined Sport Wales). Finally, given the importance of increasing participation in Wales young, disadvantaged females, an interview with a senior leader of Sport Wales' Insight team was interviewed.

As outlined at the beginning of the chapter, interview questions were designed around the emergent themes from previous phases of study with both young people and club leaders. Thus, the purpose of these interviews was to consider the themes previously identified and consider the extent to which agreements and conflicts between what was desirable, possible, and supported in practice by each party. Questions were framed at a higher level, substituting granular, local details for wider practices which appeared to be occurring across numerous settings, important in being able to locate the wider implications from this research and possible responses (in policy and practice) that could be implemented. The remainder of this chapter reports on these findings and is structured around five sections.

6.3.1 Facilitators, Not Deliverers

There was a clear consensus during interviews that the national stakeholders regarded themselves as advocates and facilitators rather than deliverers of sport and PA. Perhaps an obvious statement given their roles in governing organisations, but the conversations that followed provided valuable insight into the ways they facilitated provision, and the influence they hold in steering the direction of change through a trickle-down effect to more local settings.

We recognise that we don't deliver the vast majority of what happens in the sport. The sport is delivered through clubs and other partners and providers.

(Pete's Interview, British Gymnastics, 09/07/2021)

From our perspective, it's educating our workforce and our clubs etc around that too. Obviously, as an NGB, I'm not in every club if that makes sense? But that's a large side of it is to educate and support people to have those conversations and understand their policy side.

(Mari's Interview, Welsh Gymnastics, 18/11/2021)

For Sport Wales, their provision was targeted towards the NGBs who arranged the trickle-down effect to community clubs. In terms of how education and support was delivered to target audiences, this varied between organisations. For Sport Wales, this involved recruiting experts to deliver training and sharing best practice to infiltrate the sport sector in Wales.

We have a club solutions network, which provides basic sort of support and best practice and a lot of case studies of where this is done well in Wales and digital engagements, community, communications, safeguarding, that type of practice is all evident there. We've got a series of other training programmes, CLIP is one of them which is a communications, learning and insights programme.

Generally, where our upskilling and our support and training comes into play, it's us sort of connecting those in with experts. Because we're never going to be the expert in this field, though we can signpost and ensure that we put those experts in front of the people we work with.

What we do a lot of is the conversational learning, sharing reflective practice and best-case scenarios … it would be informal training and I use training in so far as we are not telling people, but we are sharing experiences and having a dialogue about what can be done differently and better.

(Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

Sport Wales' practice prioritised developing competency and meaning through open dialogue and sharing best practice. How NGBs and clubs absorbed and implemented the lessons and approaches, however, was open to interpretation for each organisation. Welsh Gymnastics operated via a partnership agreement between them and British Gymnastics, so the policies were common but there was a guaranteed

Welsh voice within that policy. Welsh Gymnastics supported Welsh clubs specifically, in terms of providing knowledge and information as well as recruiting experts for training delivery.

> *Whether it's ourselves or finding a partner who is an expert in that environment, that's probably where we'd look to. Interestingly, we just put out an insight survey specifically asking those questions of what training and support would you (clubs) need during this next period.*

> (Mari, Welsh Gymnastics Interview, 18/11/2021)

Similarly, the BGCW also discussed offering training as continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, particularly during Covid-19 lockdowns as there was increased capacity to design and deliver them owing to club closures.

6.3.2 Practicing Technology

Through their roles as facilitators, and gatekeepers of funding, the policymaking organisations involved in this research steered how practice could and should transform. Whether this was adopted on the ground varied, but for the community clubs in the study, there was clear unity between the national organisations' direction of change and their provision. One area where organisations were particularly focused on supporting and upskilling workforces, particularly against a backdrop of Covid-19, was in digital technology.

> *We have an assistant director for digital transformation. We are very aware of the need to move into that sphere more.*

> *We did a future gazing piece of work… one of the things that came out was digital transformation. Both the shift in terms of delivery of sport, people are now more conscious about doing it virtually, from home, by social media networks or literally by VR, but that also creates the dynamic between the inequalities, again of those who have access to that technology and the expense of the technology and those who don't.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

> *There's an opportunity for the clubs to do more with technology but they need to get that infrastructure in right and that's something we identified during the*

pandemic, we realised how poor the poor people were in regards to technology. They didn't have IT to do their schoolwork at home, they didn't have broadband

(Lloyd, BGCW Interview, 06/08/2021)

Both Sport Wales and BGCW recognised the transition society is making towards the digital sphere and how sport and PA were increasingly being performed, facilitated or influenced by digital technologies. However, disadvantaged groups often did not have the materials to access the internet or do homework, likely resulting in a lack of competency and meaning surrounding digital practices which may set them apart from more affluent peers. This was partially countered by Lucy, who stated that 'what we found is a lot of young people, even if they are living in areas of deprivation, will have an iPhone. And a lot of them would have that over having a meal at lunchtime or whatever it was' (Interview, 19/08/2021). Smartphones were ever-present in the youth club, the most *overtly* disadvantaged setting of the three, suggesting there were some grounds for this statement. However, this did not account for broadband availability within the home or mobile data allowances outside of areas providing free WiFi.

Access to technology, and particularly smartphones is now considered a vital part of everyday life, especially in developed countries such as the UK given the degree of activities that occur through them (Wang, 2016; Almunawar, Anshari, Susanto and Chen, 2016), such as communicating, accessing local and national news, emergency alerts, accessing bank accounts and navigating. Not having access to digital technologies therefore would be a highly debilitating form of social exclusion in present day, given that a significant part of everyday life and practice occurs through them. It is a problematic narrative, therefore, that disadvantaged groups having access to up-to-date technologies signifies them not being disadvantaged, as is frequently framed, since one must consider what other necessities have been sacrificed to ensure that technology remains accessible

Increasing access to digital materials also meant increased responsibility for stakeholders and organisations. Firstly, settings had to improve access and staff had to be upskilled. Lloyd discussed how BGCW hired an IT person to improve general digital provision throughout the organisation and put a funding bid in to provide WiFi

throughout all clubs. Lloyd also discussed how, due to Covid-19, volunteers in clubs, (and particularly the older demographic) were forced to upskill in digital competency since that was the only way to communicate with people outside of their immediate family for many. E-learning modules were also provided to facilitate this. Secondly, encouraging the use of digital materials came with safety concerns, particularly for adolescents undergoing a key period of socialisation and influence.

> *For a lot of sports clubs and organisations it can be quite scary just because there are some things on social media that we want to steer females away from.*
>
> *There's one stat I read and happiness in young females has dropped I think … I've had conversations with girls around this stat and said you know, 'why do you think its fallen?' and social media comes up every time.*

(Lucy, Previously StreetGames
now Sport Wales Interview, 19/08/2021*)*

The impact of Covid-19 and associated lockdowns also resulted in a responsibility to transform policy and governance to reflect the forms of provision that were possible. This was perhaps most significant for British Gymnastics, as illustrated by Pete.

> *Up until Covid we were very clear within our governance structures … gymnastics can only happen within a club environment, under the coach and that's all that can happen. All of a sudden we had a lockdown and we've got a position where, unless we change this, no gymnastics is going to happen. So all of a sudden we had to move pretty quickly in terms of actually, yes, you can do it at home, you can do it over Zoom but here's how you do that in a safe environment…*

(Pete, British Gymnastics Interview, 09/07/2021)

Given the increasing emphasis on digital technology both prior to and as a result of Covid-19, organisations offered education for clubs on how to incorporate technology into PA opportunities. Simon (StreetGames) discussed a key finding from insight conducted in 2013 surrounding young females and the importance of their social media profiles and how they anchored social circles, peer groups and frequently mental health. Insight which was packaged as a training opportunity:

We thought that we need to help providers know this … How many of us have told kids to get off their phones during a session? I was one of those … We asked ourselves, say "Well actually what if we allow kids to embrace the technology within the sessions? What if we work with children and young people and ask them how a session could be better, embracing the technology and social media platforms that you care about?" I think what we ended up with was a good training package, so we offered that out to our entire network..

One project in Caerphilly had WiFi available for all their customers that entered the building, so they said "What we'll do, we'll just make it available to the girls that enter the building" but it completely changed the engagement they had with those girls to the point where they extended the session by half an hour to allow for that technology break.

(Simon, StreetGames Interview, 16/07/2021)

Simon provided an example of how incorporating technology into a PA session actually increased engagement, with the duration of the session being extended to allow a technology break but not subtract from the amount of PA planned to take place. This is a simple change, shifting session structures, and competencies and meanings of provision, but providing clubs have the facilities and staff resource to implement, could have far-ranging implications in terms of engaging participants whose practice is more readily anchored by using smartphones and technology. It is a practical example of striking the balance between the aims of the session (PA) and elements which could facilitate engagement (technology breaks).

Finally, given the status of digital technology as an anchoring practice in PA and various other areas of life, national organisations were exploring emerging methods of education and engagement for young people through working with social media influencers. These are individuals who have built large networks of followers on social media by posting visual and textual content surrounding their everyday lives and hold significant influence over groups of viewers (Abidin, 2016; De Veirman et al., 2017). As discussed in the earlier chapter, young people are at risk of passively absorbing online trends with limited understanding of the wider implications of engaging in specific behaviours (as illustrated by Janet's plan to develop abs by drinking 'milkshakes'). Studies have highlighted that the influencer business is largely dominated by women, with women being shown to follow more influencers than their male counterparts and rely more on electronic word of mouth as a means of social connection (Prendergast, Paliwal and Chan, 2018; Hudders and De Jans, 2022).

Furthermore, influencer content now represents a significant portion of young people's daily media consumption, with parallels being drawn between character marketing shown to influence young children's consumption (using animated characters on product packaging for example) and social media influencer marketing for older teens (De Droog et al., 2012). Specifically, mechanisms that encourage parasocial relationship formation and identification with animated characters for young children can also occur for adolescents identifying with social media influencers and viewing them as attractive and trustworthy characters (Lee and Watkins, 2016; Smit et al., 2020). Over time, such investment in said characters can contribute to the formation of associations for young people between influencers and the products/behaviours they are pushing. It is crucial therefore to ensure that positive messages are broadcast.

> *We've actually worked with social media influencers around targeting messaging around return to sport … those mechanisms (social media influencers) were much better at reaching young audiences. So, I think there is something in terms of how do you work with current people who might be giving out the wrong information, to be able to give the right information out. So, rather than us creating it, us working with those who are more influential in that sphere.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

Simon from StreetGames also discussed how local characters were used as social influencers before social media influencing became a well-known practice. He described insight into the 'Brand Me' generation, where girls were taking up to 50 selfies before selecting one to upload to social media and if this did not reach a certain amount of 'likes' within a time period, the post would be removed by the girls. An example which clearly supports the observations surrounding life through the lens and crafting identities through social media performance and branding.

6.3.3 Changing Measures of Success

Interviews revealed a clear transition was occurring amongst organisations with regards to how they measured success. Naturally, this had a significant impact over

how PA was being delivered on the ground, as well as how evaluation data was being collected by clubs. Ioan from Sport Wales had the following to say:

> *In the past, we've funded in part on membership figures … we're no longer asking for that membership data. How many people are attending a session is of interest but actually, what are they doing at that session, how are they enjoying that session, have they grown in their confidence, have they grown in motivation?*

<div align="right">(Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)</div>

Ioan described how historically, Sport Wales had granted funding based on membership data. In present day, however, they were seeking to address the gaps in knowledge as well as potential negative practices these types of evaluation outcomes encouraged. Examples discussed here included instances where attendance numbers in settings were strong but practices such as taking photos or talking anchored the exercise, so whilst membership data suggested positive levels of engagement, participants were not always active in a way that reflected the aims of the session. Ioan also stated that one of Sport Wales' key roles was encouraging clubs to understand that 50 people in the session but not being physically active was not preferential to 30 people that come, enjoy and are more inclined to come back. The purpose of this transition was to encourage club partners to understand PA participation as a journey which had to be nurtured.

> *Taking a person-centred approach in a complexity-friendly way, which is to say we're not assuming outcomes, we want to understand the process and the journey, and what does the learning tell us and then be reflective about what we need to change. That's the real challenge, how do we introduce something which is pretty radically new, which is going to drive completely different outcomes, to completely different behaviours. It means we're no longer holding people accountable in the things we've always held them accountable for, does create some conflicts. What I can say is that we as an organisation are pushing our partners to understand the experience rather than the numbers.*

<div align="right">(Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)</div>

Using numbers as an indicator of success had historically occurred in other organisations that were interviewed. Pete from British Gymnastics described the pitfalls of doing so:

You have a situation where clubs have huge waiting lists, so if somebody leaves it doesn't matter, they get the next person in … The experience didn't matter so much and the care around some of the things, it didn't matter that all those people were from the same community because it's people coming in and paying the bills. Why do we need to go and get more teenagers in because actually we get enough young people in? … The waiting lists became a badge of honour.

(Pete, British Gymnastics Interview, 09/07/2021)

These badges of honour signified a form of exclusive cultural capital among clubs. British Gymnastics were thus also implementing a shift in practice with regards to measuring success. Specifically, Pete described the increasing emphasis on social outcomes, noting enjoyment, engagement, and quality of experience as key characteristics, connecting well to the changes Sport Wales raised. Pete also noted that clubs were increasingly looking at provision from a business perspective with customer experience at the forefront rather than a typical sports club who 'just do sport'. Although the gymnastics club described themselves as a social enterprise so fundamentally different from a business, both necessitate understanding experience to improve performance and/or community benefits.

StreetGames placed understanding the experience of participants as a core mission, illustrated by their emphasis on pre-pre-engagement, the 5 Rights of StreetGames, and the education and uptake from clubs on the ground. Overall, this transition to using experience as a marker of success aligned well with a practice-orientated perspective, since both attempt to consider context and personal experience (including materials, meanings and competencies within that) to understand patterns of behaviour and shift practice.

6.3.3.1 Staying Accountable

Lucy advocated for more measurements surrounding outcomes and learning, and particularly 'shouting about the things that have gone wrong' in order to share experiences and approaches to aid organisations experiencing similar issues. Increased accountability was a transition Lucy reported to be ongoing in her new role in which new measures of success were being developed. Historically she felt organisations had not held themselves to account in measuring and reporting success.

For example, when success was determined by numbers, Lucy critiqued how organisations did not necessarily reflect or act suitably when those targets were not met.

> *We try and retrospectively fix things. So yeah, for me I think accountability is so important. I think we need to be much better at what we're measuring and why we're measuring and less about you know, you haven't got X amount of young people participating but actually the other factors like what's your gender split? What are you doing for these protected characteristics? What does your community think of you?*

<div align="right">

(Lucy, previously StreetGames,
Now Sport Wales Interview, 19/08/2021)

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Overall, the practices surrounding monitoring and evaluating success as a sports/PA organisation was shifting and as many of the interviewees highlighted, this had implications across provision and delivery on the ground. Attempting to create a positive and sustainable journey with PA was significantly more complex than getting numbers through the door, something which evaluation measures and methods needed to reflect. Organisations would have to truly engage with participants surrounding what works and what does not; an area where practice theory could be of real value in providing a framework to unpick favourable and unfavourable elements, as well as a dynamic problem-solving approach for shifting practice as was piloted in the study *Walking and Talking*, outlined in the proceeding chapter.

6.3.4 Evolving Forms of Physical Activity and Sport

The move towards PA meant that those organisations more traditionally sport-focused were evolving differently and transforming their offer. More specifically, each organisation was working to provide more informal brands of activity, shifting away from many of the characteristics that reinforced the essence of modern sport, such as competitive, outcome-based, rule-based, highly skilled, organised and characterised by the wearing of specific uniforms/kits (Guttmann, 1978). The transition was likely influenced by societal trends towards more individual, non-competitive and leisure-based sports, such as jogging, yoga or various fitness classes (Sport Wales, 2020; Sport England, 2021). More importantly, practice was also shifting based on feedback

from target audiences, with organisations adopting flexible, person-centred and needs-based approaches to providing active opportunities.

> *I don't know if you've heard of Running Punks which has popped up in a really informal, non-structured social running group. It's not a competition structure but it's engaged a lot of people who have now become runners who don't necessarily, would never have become runners through a traditional Welsh Athletics of sports structure.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

Both Pete and Mari from Welsh Gymnastics discussed how TeamGym was a strong retention tool for gymnastics clubs, as the (sometimes) less serious and social nature of the activity appealed to the older demographics who frequently exited gymnastics during adolescence, supported by the gymnastics clubs' retention of girls aged 18+. Sport and PA being provided in a more informal way provided space for many of the favourable elements discussed in this thesis to be dynamically incorporated. A prime example that was discussed during policymaker interviews, and aligning with findings from the first phase of study, was the social element.

> *Males were really interested in competition with their friends, and that's the key thing, 'with my friends'. Females were more interested around individual activities with their friends … provision within itself is a social activity so if they're running an informal community engagement provision for children and young people, make sure it feels like a social activity and not necessarily a structured coaching session.*

> (Simon, StreetGames Interview, 16/07/2021)

As Simon highlighted, PA is a social activity in itself, with the two practices bundling in many instances. This led StreetGames to ask organisations to consider how they could enhance the social 'feel' of PA before, during and after sessions.

> *Things like introducing gatherings at the start of the session … include things like music in a session that changes the way the young people actually engage with sport and it still feels part of social engagement … What can we do socially beyond the session?*

> (Simon, StreetGames Interview, 16/07/2021)

Organisations were thus considering favourable elements and how they could incorporate them into PA without subtracting from the activity itself, so were already implementing elements of a practice-based approach to an extent. The aim of this research is to further develop the tools and framework to do this even more effectively, so that it can be shared and adopted by more organisations. Provision was also designed based on the needs of the specific communities of interest.

> *When you're thinking about double jeopardy, how much opportunity are these young girls exposed to? And that's where these different sports come in is to you know, 'I'm not going to be able to afford X equipment or I don't feel comfortable walking into a golf club … That's really important to make sure that everyone gets a chance to try something that they may not have been able to otherwise.*

> (Lucy, previously StreetGames,
> Now Sport Wales Interview, 19/08/2021)

Lucy reported examples of sailing projects and schools who swapped male and female PE teachers so that students were exposed to different sports beyond the traditional 'boys do football, rugby and girls doing netball and hockey'. The latter, in an attempt to combat practice bundles that had become differentiated by gender. Additionally, a sailing project was purposely targeted towards those who did not live near the coast and through socioeconomic status, would be unlikely to have any other opportunities to try the sport.

6.3.4.1 Diversifying Partners

Ioan discussed how the increasing diversification in the organisations Sport Wales was working with.

> *Sport Wales genuinely believes that there is a sport for everyone and if they're not active, it's because they haven't found what works for them … There are certainly deliverers of sport, and it might be traditional deliverers of sport, like an NGB or it might be untraditional deliverers of sports, for example, the Urdd who do a lot of other things.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

Urdd Gobaith Cymru is Wales' largest national youth organisation who provide opportunities for 8-25-year-olds through the medium of Welsh to enable them to make positive contributions to their communities. Their provision includes the Eisteddfod yr Urdd, an annual Welsh-language festival celebrating literature, music and performing arts, as well as residential opportunities and crucially for this project, community sport. Working in a similar sphere to the youth club and BGCW, the Urdd have limited responsibility to provide traditional forms of sport, meaning they were frequently better placed to recruit more inactive populations and provide informal sport and PA sessions.

Sport Wales were also increasingly focused on promoting positive early experiences in sport and PA, a key mechanism of which being promoting multi-sport experiences rather than early specialisation in a particular sport.

> *We want someone doing athletics on a Tuesday, gymnastics on a Friday, rugby on a Saturday so that the different experience in different environments, creating a love of sport generally but also different social connectivities and different groups of friends. Creating those ultimate experiences and therefore you might drop off of sport at 12, 13, 14 but you've gone into another and you've transferred your experiences into it.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

Sport Wales were thus attuned to promoting physical literacy over early specialisation, to avoid the burnout and eventual dropout that frequently occurs in young athletes (Mostafavifar, Best and Myer, 2013; DiFiori et al., 2014) so were encouraging multisport experiences where various transferable skills and multiple friendship circles can develop so that individuals are always equipped to pick up another sport when their motivation to participate in one drops.

6.3.5 Relaxing Kit Standards

Clothing had a profound effect on decisions to be active and anchored participation in a variety of ways. Thus, in the pursuit of PA, organisations were, where possible, relaxing their clothing policies. This was most pronounced in the gymnastics club, evoking response from both British and Welsh Gymnastics.

The only regulations would be aligned to health and safety … both of those things are evolving quite quickly as the world that we are in, so we have just recently amended our clothing policy around competition to make it more appropriate for a newer generation. It's about finding a balance because some of the challenge we have with it around competition is that especially the higher end elite … some of the scoring with the sport, you need to be able to see the flexibility around the joints and the positioning of joints … But with that there's challenges around the appropriateness of making older girls, teenage and post-pubescent girls wear leotards.

(Pete, British Gymnastics Interview, 09/07/2021)

Mari from Welsh Gymnastics also spoke about shifts in clothing policy, such as the safe wearing of the hijab during gymnastics. Both organisations were evolving policies to increase inclusivity for females, and importantly, through an intersectional lens. As Lucy (previously StreetGames, now Sport Wales) highlighted, there are a myriad of reasons why participants may wear/not wear specific pieces of clothing and equipment and dictating these can often become such a problematic element of activity that it is capable of driving people away, the opposite of what providers want to achieve. According to Lucy, StreetGames encouraged clubs to practically weigh up whether certain pieces of clothing, even if not traditionally associated with the sport/PA in question, were really a health and safety hazard. Ultimately, there is likely a reason for individuals wishing to wear certain things, so, whilst complying with health and safety, it is important to be as inclusive as possible in what participants are wearing.

6.3.6 Evolving Facilities: Physical Activity Libraries

Lucy discussed her previous experience with a 'boot recycling station' whereby individuals donated spare pairs of football/rugby boots for participants who did not have appropriate footwear. Similarly, Lucy and various other stakeholders discussed the growing trend in *equipment libraries*:

We learned through Covid that access to equipment is quite tough for some communities. You access your equipment through school or your local club, but if I'm not part of a club then how am I going to practice, how am I going to have a go at it? … A lot of sports organisations donated equipment and we'd give it over to young people so they could take part in their own homes.

Equipment libraries worked much the same as a standard library, where individuals could sign equipment out in their name and practice the activities in a space they felt comfortable in, beyond the typical leisure centres or gyms that the equipment might usually be found in. This is an ideal approach for shifting practice, especially with disadvantaged communities given its capacity to provide materials that otherwise would not be accessible, and the opportunity to transport those materials to varied spaces depending on personal preference. Interestingly, Lucy thought the development of similar kit libraries would further shift practice owing to increased accessibility and opportunity by having the appropriate clothing.

Following the earlier discussion with Susan (gymnastics club director) surrounding libraries and open PA facilities, the idea was presented to Simon from StreetGames, who confirmed during his interview that the idea was progressing:

> *We're in the early stages of particularly thinking about how we can influence capital investment of space. Like what you just described there where an individual might want to participate but doesn't want to go to a leisure centre, doesn't want to go to a club but actually needs a bit of space in their community there they can just go and experience things. It's how we can adapt space in communities that is accessible for everyone to be physically active, and sat alongside that, how we educate the community that the space is there for them.*
>
> *We are starting to think about what is it that we could do differently, particularly with our BAME communities. Is this something we could do with local multi-use games areas where we could black out the outside of a multi-use games area and place in there a library bank of equipment so BAME females can go and participate in private without fear of going against things relating to their culture.*
>
> *How can we put some blinds up on the walls, shut the curtains … That happened in Neath Port Talbot. If you speak to (sport development officer), he'll say that the one thing that came out of that sport provision, of all the money they had, they spent £300 on changing a facility and that really shifted the engagement. Not just with the numbers but the quality of engagement with the girls.*

(Simon, StreetGames Interview, 16/07/2021)

StreetGames were thus undergoing a process of exploring how elements of PA, including the settings and social gaze demanded by certain environments, could be manipulated so that favourable conditions were promoted, and positive elements aligned to increase the chances of participation. Such a dynamic, problem-solving approach focusing on taken-for-granted elements like cultural expectations being exactly what this theoretical lens is advocating for, albeit with an increased focus on the theoretical tools associated with the theory.

6.3.7 Influencing Education

Throughout interviews, there was a significant emphasis on the educational sphere given its role as a primary socialisation agent for young people and a setting which anchors many of young people's daily practices. The organisations discussed issues around how PE and PA had been historically delivered in schools and its implication on the PA habits of young people.

> *Our teachers are not necessarily skilled or confident always in the delivery of those things, so we need to get past that barrier.*
>
> *I think there's a cycle of challenge for us in we know that girls and young girls have poor experiences, either because of the curriculum or generally of sport. We also know that we're talking something in the region of 65% of teachers are female. So, if we have a load of young girls who have poor experiences of sport, then become the sports providers in schools, understandably their commitment or their engagement or their confidence in doing so is waivered. We need to break that cycle somehow.*
>
> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

> *We've just run a talent ID pilot around children and young people who get missed out on the pathway because of affordability … What we were finding is that, as kids coming through the community, recommending kids with talent, schools were saying 'Well, they don't engage very well at school' … These are talented kids that aren't engaging in school but actually, the schools aren't engaging with them well enough.*
>
> (Simon, StreetGames Interview, 16/07/2021)

Stakeholders noted numerous issues within the delivery of PE and PA within schools, including provision from teachers who have limited skills and confidence in delivering

PE (often due to negative experiences of their own PE during school years (Elliot, Atencio, Campbell and Jess, 2011)), as well as the nature of school as an institution and its PE/PA delivery not capturing young people, even when they are proven to be proficient in PA/sport. As Ioan pointed out, the impact of early negative experiences in PE/PA are even more problematic when individuals who have these negative experiences not only become inactive but become educators who are responsible for developing meanings and competencies in PE/PA when they are not engaged themselves. Thus, it is crucial to promote positive experiences early in life so that they become sustainable habits throughout the life course.

6.3.7.1 The New Curriculum for Wales

The New Curriculum for Wales will be implemented over the coming years with full roll-out expected by 2026 (Welsh Government, 2022). The purpose, for the National Curriculum to reflect the enhancements in technology and society since its initial introduction in 1988, and to provide children with the knowledge, skills and experience required to excel in contemporary life. The New Curriculum will be focusing on six key areas of learning and experience: mathematics and numeracy, humanities, expressive arts, science and technology, language, literacy and communication and importantly for this project, health and well-being (Welsh Government, 2022).

This strand will educate pupils on looking after physical and mental health, including emotional well-being, healthy eating, positive decision-making and developing healthy relationships (Welsh Government, 2022). The New Curriculum will be adopting a more holistic, whole systems approach to developing individuals, with key targets within the health and well-being area surrounding (but not exclusively) providing meaningful opportunities to be physically active in a variety of roles and environments (including indoor, outdoor and around water), developing connections between health-enhancing practices such as sleep, PA and diet, and developing skills, experience and networks to promote positive health and well-being through PA (Welsh Government, 2022).

It is well documented that not all experiences with PE are positive for the many and can lead to disengagement from PA entirely based on negative past experiences (Morgan and Bourke, 2008; Ladwig, Vazou and Ekkekakis, 2018). Therefore, as

gatekeepers of knowledge and competency surrounding delivering sport and PA, as well as the transition in curriculums providing a prime opportunity to influence practice, recent years have provided a valuable space in which to impact the agenda for PA within schools. Given their role as the primary sport and PA body in Wales, Sport Wales had been consulted on the subject:

> *We've been involved in some of the thinking behind the health and well-being area of learning which involves physical activity within the curriculum and in its broader sense that it isn't just confined to a curriculum lesson but rather a cross curriculum activity. We're working with Natural Resources Wales and Public Health Wales around resources to support the delivery of mechanisms within schools.*
>
> *It (New Curriculum) is about the experience and the enjoyment rather than skill mastery, but in the sense of the skills you develop through sport rather than developing a skill to do sport. Rather than 'I'm going to be good at using a cricket bat' it's 'I'm going to do cricket and therefore I'm going to be good at teamwork and communication and leadership'. So, it's how do we ensure that doing sport is about personal development, rather than succeeding in a particular sport.*

(Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

Ioan proceeded to discuss how Sport Wales were advocating for the more informal brands of PA alongside the traditional sports to cater to a wider variety of needs. He also discussed recommending the adoption of a person-centred approach in delivery, for educators to recognise what opportunities young people want in order to subsequently provide them. Simon noted that StreetGames were fundamentally community-focused and evolved so due to the level of support historically provided for schools which meant that community provision was left behind. Given the extent of StreetGames' insight and competence in engaging inactive groups, however, Simon was open to sharing learning.

6.3.7.2 Captive Audiences

All organisations recognised the expertise and influence they could deliver in the educational sphere, and this was in part driven by recognising the need to get things right in schools, given the far-ranging impact it could have on future PA habits.

Specifically, organisations understood the need to take advantage of captive audiences.

> *I would like to see a physical activity person in every school … We have children go to school who are not hitting activity levels. Is it too late by a certain age? That's where, for me, the school environment is accessible and it's so important.*

> (Mari, Welsh Gymnastics Interview, 18/11/2021)

> *That captured audience. We're already in schools and creating a lifelong participation is much easier to get people involved at that level, that they'll have a lifelong enjoyment of sport, than trying to capture someone at 17, 18, 19, who's never had an interest in it.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

As noted by Mari and Ioan, young people are in school, and participating in PE, by mandate. Using that time and space to develop competency and confidence with certain materials and activities, to create positive meanings and associations between being active and having enjoyable experiences is crucial therefore if we want to maximise contact time and provide young people with the tools to progress and be active outside of education, especially if they are given limited opportunity to be active at home. It is appreciated that the issue of inactivity is more complex than simply maximising contact time with captive audiences. However, the presence of a captive audience alongside the negative experiences in PE that have been reported throughout this thesis illustrate the need to shift practice within this field to promote PA engagement in both educational and community settings.

Sport Wales were also looking to diversify partners (related to the aforementioned section) in order to reach inactive groups. For example, this included working with relevant religious institutions as a way of engaging minority ethnic communities:

> *A mosque in Newport might not see themselves as a sports deliverer. But they've got a captive audience of people there, who don't necessarily go to a traditional sports club but within that environment, they feel comfortable, they know the people around them, they would be interested in doing sport in a really informal way.*

> (Ioan, Sport Wales Interview, 09/07/2021)

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Governing organisations were thus attuned to the potential offered by non-traditional sport/PA providers in engaging the more inactive populations. Retracing the subject of captive audiences, interviews revealed that educational settings provided a functional form of PA for young people and when education stopped, like during school holidays for example, participation in PA reduced significantly.

> *During school holidays they became almost sedentary. Their steps heavily dropped because the walk to school dropped … Those provision that form part of their term-time habits disappear during a school holiday, and for a family where the household is on low income, the driver to seek alternative isn't there because the priority of spend isn't like those that perhaps come from more affluent backgrounds.*

> (Simon, StreetGames Interview, 16/07/2022)

Simon illustrated the need for PA opportunities to be implemented into the day to such a degree that they are unavoidable, since without them, sedentary audiences are unlikely to be active via their own free will. In present day, where technology provides increasing options for sedentary leisure time, such as watching television or gaming, many practitioners are anchored by these practices over PA. Having active institutions and environments, where PE or a Daily Mile is incorporated into the day, or cities and towns demand active travel by removing or penalising motorised transport options, are thus valuable opportunities to increase PA, as they remove the element of free will that so often discourages participation. Of course, as a society it is important to try and create more positive relationships with PA so that people are active via their own free will. However, in the event that this does not work, the above could be a valuable and effective contingency. This will be discussed further in the upcoming *Discussion* chapter.

6.4 Conclusion

Overall, interviews revealed clear instances of unity between the guidance and regulations stipulated by governing organisations and what was being adopted by clubs on the ground, highlighted by Figure 10 which presents club leader perspectives, policymaker perspectives, and indeed perspectives voiced at both levels. The concept

of affect was used less within Study 2 due to conversations focusing more on organisational provision and the girls/target population not being involved as participants. There was a brief discussion, however, on the feelings that informal PA spaces could generate for those who were less comfortable and competent in traditional sport and PA settings, and the need for PA spaces to exist for them.

Continuing the findings from Study 1, the figure below illustrates the key elements and anchoring practices involved in both community and policymaker provision, including some of the differing materials, meanings and competencies required for each level of provider to fulfil the necessary practice. For example, community providers were aware that socialising was a key anchor for young people. In order to successfully incorporate social opportunities into sessions, however, club leaders had to transform their negative perceptions (meanings) of social time during PA and the desire to combat it, and instead use it to promote engagement. Additionally, where the gymnastics club wanted to address the need and desire for socialising from young people, they were often met with opposition from parents who were funding their child's coaching. Leaders thus had to become competent in managing parental expectations. From a policymaker perspective, to encourage community providers to transform how they measured and demonstrated impact, governing organisations would likely have to provide material support, such as reporting templates, transform their organisational meanings of what demonstrating impact should look like and be competent in communicating that to community organisations. They would also be responsible for providing educational opportunities for community providers to develop competency and positive meanings in doing so.

Additionally, all three field settings were increasingly practicing a person-centred approach to understand participants' experiences and journeys with PA, as well as relaxing the boundaries of traditional sports and clothing standards in specific settings in order to appeal to a wider audience. These changes were made possible owing to the support from parent organisations, across the relevant materials, meanings and competencies. In this way, there was a degree of congruence between the practices that governing organisations were stipulating, how field clubs were performing those practices, and what needs and desires girls in clubs were voicing, with all three levels interacting in an almost cyclical process of continuous learning and development.

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This work is ongoing and so neither the community setting, nor the national organisations had perfected their practice and indeed, each organisation was continuously exploring how they could improve their regulations, guidance and provision. The *Discussion* chapter will outline the key points in terms of how the practices performed by young women, club leaders and national organisation leaders both align and misalign, as well as the implications for PA practice as a result. It will also discuss the value in adopting a practice-based theoretical lens, for its ability to draw out novel insights and opportunities for elemental and practice bundle re-constellation to provide favourable conditions for PA for this population.
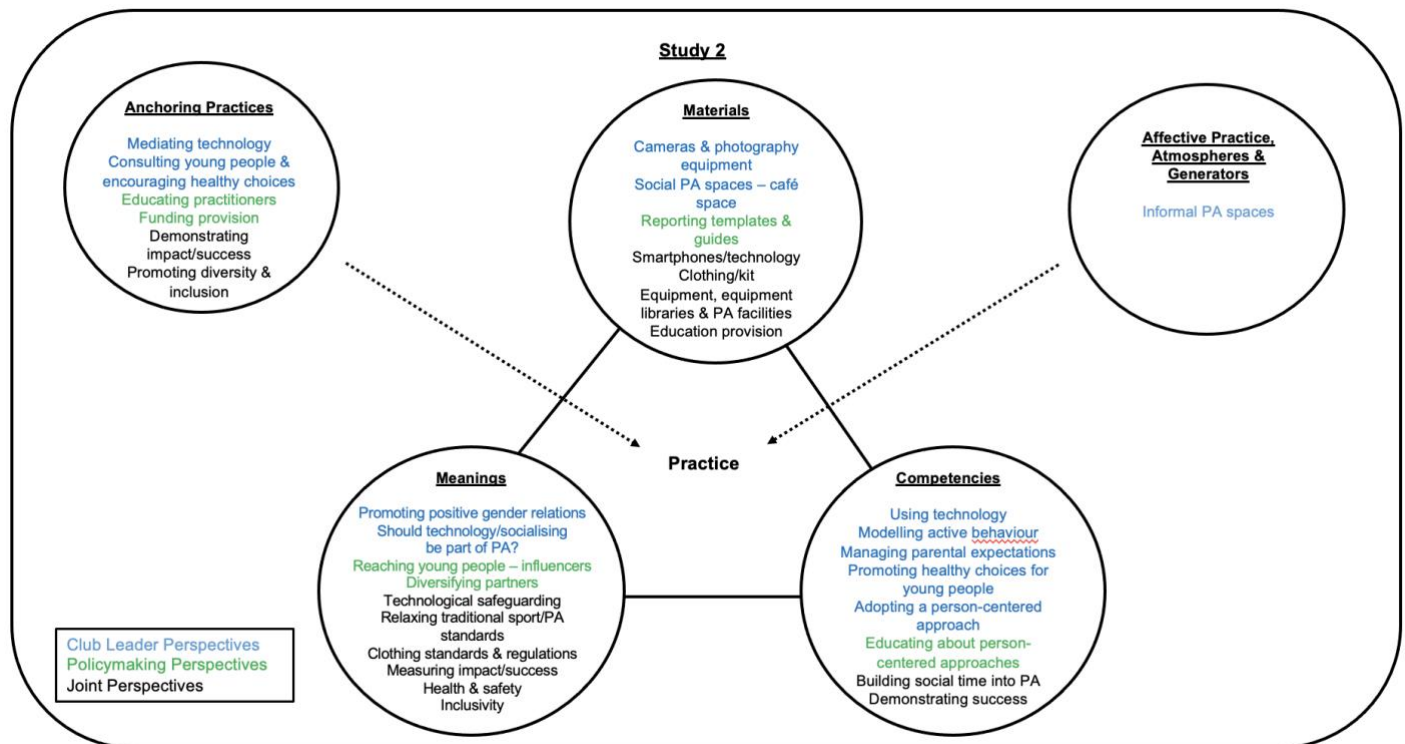
Figure 10: Key findings from Study 2 presented through the conceptual lens

Chapter Seven

Walking and Talking

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the key findings that emerged from a pilot study which sought to increase PA levels in one seventeen-year-old female from the gymnastics field setting via a coproduced walking programme. Figure 11 outlines the relevant objectives and phase of study detailed within this chapter.
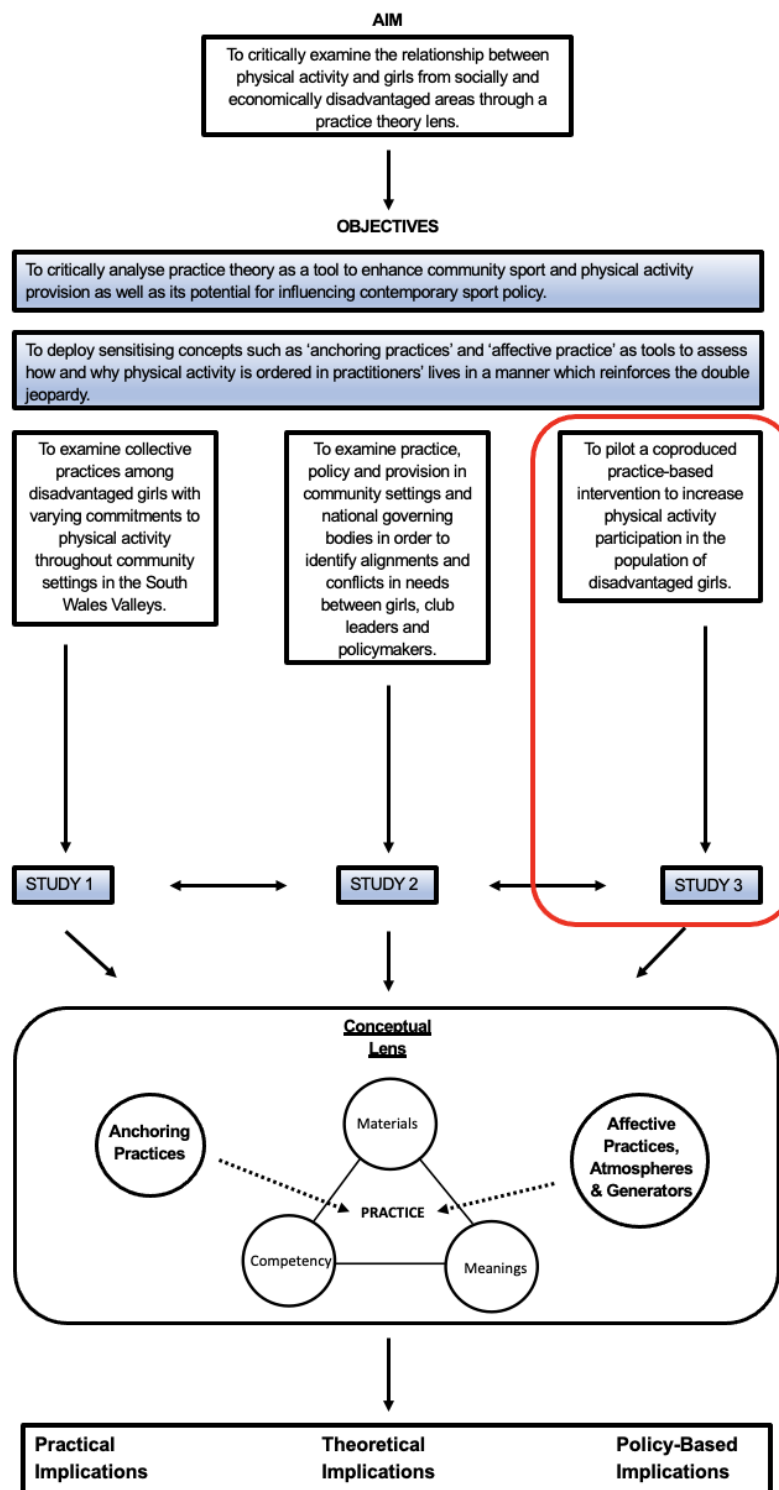
Figure 11: A conceptual model of the research, emphasising Study 3

As will be discussed in the proceeding *Conclusion* chapter, difficulties in recruitment meant that the sample size for this study was smaller than originally anticipated. That said, the small sample size was deemed suitable to pilot such a novel, in depth approach to shift practice and ensured that a high degree of focus could be afforded to the individual involved, particularly important when adopting a person-centred approach (as outlined in the preceding *Methodology* chapter). To reiterate, the study involved coproducing a walking programme with Natalie (pseudonym), a TeamGym participant from the gymnastics setting, and evaluating her experience and attempts to increase PA levels via a practice-based lens. The study lasted approximately eight weeks with seven interviews being conducted via Microsoft Teams, along with daily step records, diary entries and walking photographs being submitted to the researcher to supplement the data. The study leant on participatory action research methods where practices were planned, performed, observed and reflected upon to continually interrogate elements and bundles of practice to increase the likelihood of sustainable shifts in activity.

In addition to the circumstances surrounding Covid-19 and trends in resultant PA participation that influenced the selection of walking as a practice for increasing PA levels, outlined in the *Methodology* chapter, some context surrounding Natalie's background and the nature of the walking programme will be provided. Natalie had been a gymnast since a young age, withdrawing and re-joining the sport a number of times throughout her adolescence. During one of her re-joining periods, Natalie made the transition from artistic gymnastics to TeamGym, remaining in this discipline from this point onwards. Natalie regarded herself as an active person, consistently training twice a week at the club and participating in various other activities through her education and leisure time. During the lockdown periods of Covid-19, however, she recognised that her fitness, and especially strength and aerobic capacity had suffered. Finding the project 'interesting' and wanting to regain her pre-Covid fitness level, Natalie volunteered to participate in the study.

An introductory interview was completed on May 28th, 2021, with the programme officially beginning on June 4th. The final interview took place on July 28th with seven interviews taking place altogether and six occurring during the walking programme. During the first interview, Natalie and the researcher discussed what she wanted the project to look like. Specifically, how she wanted to go about increasing her levels of walking. Natalie was in college during the weekdays but was soon to be finishing for her summer break. She participated in gymnastics twice a week, on Tuesdays and Sundays, and had a part-time job on the weekends working in a dessert shop. Natalie wanted to focus her walking to weekdays after college, as she felt this would be the best fit for her weekly schedule to ensure that she committed to the programme. During the initial interview, Natalie was briefed on some general guidelines around walking targets, in order to gauge how many steps a day she would like, and realistically could, aim for.

Natalie was informed about studies recommending between 10-12,000 steps per day for people her age to negate the chances of disease or ill-health in later life (Tudor-Locke et al., 2011; Hallam et al., 2018). We also discussed how finding the time to reach 12,000 steps a day might be difficult, so in response, she could look to increase the speed of her walks (rather than distance) in order to induce the desired health benefits. Based on her pre-study walking records, Natalie felt a target of 7000 steps per day would be manageable for her at first, and if this was being reached with ease, the target could be reconsidered.

As will be explained later in the chapter, overall, the number of walks Natalie completed was less than anticipated and highlighted a persistent value-action gap (Shove, 2010) in Natalie's practice. However, throughout the study, six walks were undertaken by Natalie, alongside full-time education for just over half of the study, a part-time job, biweekly gymnastics sessions and various other activities that formed her daily life. Additionally, Natalie engaged extremely well with the more analytical side of the study, uploading a small number of diary entries, photographs and walking records, completing six in-depth interviews and consistently challenging herself to answer any questions put to her, no matter how introspective. A number of key themes, elements and bundles emerged which influenced Natalie's uptake of PA and wider practices. These will be outlined below.

7.2 The Nature of Physical Activity

As the weeks progressed it became apparent that a number of factors surrounding the nature of PA affected how and why Natalie was active. Frequently, whilst an individual factor was noted for influencing Natalie's activity, this factor could be favourable or unfavourable on different days and in different settings. This highlights the capricious nature of PA engagement and how delicate the relations between practice elements can be.

<u>7.2.1 Competitiveness</u>

Firstly, the competitive element of an activity and competitive behaviour performed by those participating in it was highly influential and anchored Natalie's engagement on many occasions. For context, Natalie was enrolled on a Sport Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) Diploma at her local college. Alongside the theoretical study of sport, this involved a number of mixed-sex practical sessions per week. This proved a highly effective practice for increasing Natalie's PA levels, and also provided an opportunity to discuss the nature of the various sports she was exposed to and unpick what the favourable and unfavourable elements were. It became apparent early in the study that competitiveness was broadly a negative factor for Natalie with small pockets of positive influence when certain conditions were satisfied.

When discussing her involvement (or lack of) in some practical sessions, Natalie said:

> *I think it's because I'm not as competitive as everyone else but like they're so farfetched and into the sport and then there's just me on the sides and I'm just like, I'm not bothered if I win or not.*

(Interview 3, 18/06/2021)

Where PA sessions were highly competitive, Natalie appeared to inhibit her own participation, making the admissions that 'I don't really do a lot' and 'I think I stand

around a lot'. As conversations developed, it transpired that the competitiveness Natalie was describing was most often exhibited by the boys in her class.

> *'I'm not a very competitive person…the boys are so competitive, it's unbelievable. But then there's me and I'm like, I just play the sport. I don't care if I win or lose'.*

<div align="right">(Interview 2, 11/06/2021)</div>

Natalie's BTEC class was mostly populated by males and due to Covid-19 and the subsequent regulations on indoor activities, practical sessions were often based around outdoor, male-dominated activities such as rugby, football and cricket. Natalie had mixed opinions on these sports.

> **Do you have any preferences in terms of what activities you like doing in college?**
> *Anything but rugby. I hate rugby.*
> **How do you feel about what else you do, football, netball, hockey?**
> *We haven't done hockey yet. But I'm getting round to football. I'm not the best. But I normally get chucked out by the boys but I'm alright. And netball I done in school so I'm not too bad at that but I'll give anything a go.*

<div align="right">(Interview 1, 04/06/2021)</div>

Natalie further supported her statements by saying that the boys often took *'it too far'* and were *'too forceful'.* When the boys were given free rein to be competitive and forceful during practicals (which appeared to be frequently), instead of getting involved, Natalie often stood back and reflected on the situation.

> **How do you feel when you step back? Are you happy to be out of it, do you wish you were more involved or do you wish they were less competitive?**
> *When I step out, I'm still a little bit involved which I don't mind but then it's quite funny just like watching them and their mindsets, so I don't mind it.*

<div align="right">(Interview 3, 18/06/2021)</div>

Although Natalie by her own admission could have become more involved in these sessions, it was clear that she did not feel safe to do so and neither did she want to

be involved in those sorts of activities. The nature of the sessions and the sports chosen might well have been a consequence of Covid-19 regulations, but the reality of male wants and needs being prioritised over females' in educational sport settings is not uncommon. For instance, during interviews, Liv described how teachers attempted to provide more female-dominated activities during PE lessons but on account of the boys' refusal to participate, would frequently defect back to male-dominated activities.

Natalie opted to study a Sport BTEC for her own educational and professional development yet felt more comfortable standing aside and spectating activities rather than getting involved and developing knowledge, competency and meanings in the field of PA. Male competitiveness and symbolic violence became an exclusionary practice for Natalie (and possibly other females in the class). Once again, we see the possibility of a gender-based hierarchy exhibiting itself in practical sessions, actively contributed to by teachers allowing this practice to occur and thus inequitable meanings, competencies, domination of materials and spaces, and eventually dispositions to embed. Natalie made no mention of staff asking the boys to be less forceful, suggesting it was acceptable within classes. In the process of meaning-making, Natalie was learning that in PA settings, male forcefulness and aggression was tolerated and that it was easier to stand aside and let it happen rather than fight a losing battle and potentially risk injury. In this instance, Natalie was made to understand herself as the problem for withdrawing from the activities rather than the male dominance, further influencing the meanings she developed

At a time where PA should be equally accessible for all, male domination should be challenged rather than encouraged by those responsible for delivering PA. If not, there is a risk of far-ranging implications for subordinated gender relations in both sport and wider society. As discussed in the preceding chapter *Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders*, the forthcoming New Curriculum for Wales offers new possibilities given its focus on health and well-being to challenge the hierarchies that have consistently exhibited themselves within traditional sports, and thus is a prime opportunity to shift practice.

Whilst contact sports and overly competitive performances from the boys caused Natalie to inhibit her participation, there were some instances where competitiveness was perceived positively. Natalie repeatedly stated that in encouraging her to walk more, monitoring devices would be helpful as she could compete with herself and track her progress.

> ***Do you think you'd ever employ goal setting or little competitions with your friends or anything like that?***
> *Yeah definitely and I like to compete with myself quite often as well 'cause I like to see how far I've come within the past few weeks.*

(Interview 4, 23/06/2021)

> ***How do you think we can ensure we meet these conditions (suitable conditions to encourage maximum PA) in the future when you're exercising?***
> *I think it I pinpoint how far I went for my walk and then tried to beat it every week I think that would help. I know that if I'm just walking sometimes I get bored and just want to get it done but if I had something like that set, that I know I can do, I'm more likely to do it.*

(Interview 6, 28/07/2021)

Natalie was more comfortable with the idea of competing with herself rather than other people. Whilst the idea of competition traditionally must include multiple competitors, with the primary aim of overcoming these individuals (Krein, 2007), Howe (2008) argues that self-competition is indeed possible, particularly when individuals are understood as complex '(self-)constructions' of heterogenous components (desires, motivations, projects) and past, present and projected future experiences rather merely than 'atomistic' persons (p.3). For Howe, self-competition occurs for two primary reasons: to better one's previous performance and to resist the desire to quit (2008). In Natalie's case, she employed self-competition to monitor and better her performance compared to previous instances. During lockdown, a Strava group was created by her college teachers where students were encouraged to exercise and compete for the top place on the leader board. This suggests the teachers were the primary practitioners understanding and promoting competitiveness as an unquestionably core element of PA, despite evidently losing certain students along the

way. Despite Natalie going walking and enjoying using Strava as a means of monitoring her walks, she did not engage with the Strava group, stating that:

I did go out on a few walks but because I'm not the most competitive person, it didn't really bother me that I wasn't on there.

Competing with oneself implies substantially less risk than competing against others, both in terms of safety and any social judgement that may arise from not competing successfully, supported by fieldwork findings along with findings from fellow research studies (Flacking, Jerdén, Bergström and Starrin, 2014; Cowley et al., 2021). Therefore, only engaging in competition with herself could almost be a self-preservation or control mechanism for Natalie, as she could consistently dictate the meaning behind what constitutes a poor performance or loss and whether it is meaningful to her or her peers, in turn affecting perceived competency. Importantly, there was an element of competitiveness that was facilitative for Natalie, so this was piloted as a facilitator in increasing her walking practice.

Throughout the programme, discussions surrounded building upon the 7000 daily step target given that the school term ended during the programme and Natalie was faced with more leisure time. In the first few weeks, daily step counts increased, suggesting the programme effective. However, by the halfway point, where Natalie had more spare time, step counts began to decrease. This was compounded by Natalie taking up more shifts at her part time job, where she was on her feet for hours at a time, making small but frequent movements around a kitchen. Unfortunately, it was not possible to track steps here, but what the records did show was that Natalie engaged in less walks after finishing college for the summer, despite arguably having more spare time. Additionally, there were discussions about practicing longer or faster walks in an attempt to reach daily PA targets. On the contrary, Natalie's walks centred around the same distance of 1-1.5 miles and a speed of 2-2.3mph, failing to meet the threshold of a brisk walking pace and potentially limiting the health benefits associated with walking (NHS, N.D.). On one occasion, Natalie did complete a longer walk of approximately 5km. This was a coproduced challenge, and one Natalie appeared to

enjoy. Nonetheless, she did not complete a walk of this distance again during the programme.

7.2.2 Control Over the Activity

Interviews revealed that a favourable element of PA, and specifically walking, was the amount of control Natalie had over the activity and the subsequent flexibility to fit into her day in a manner of her choice, representing both meanings and competencies. This included personally dictating when she walked (in line with daily moods and activities), where she walked, who accompanied her and for how long/fast. When queried on the three most important factors that allowed and encouraged her to do PA, one of Natalie's answers was:

> *As long as I can make it my own. So, with walking, I don't have to go, I don't have to push myself as much as I would have in the gym. So, I like making it my own.*

(Interview 4, 23/06/2021)

This was a consistent statement from Natalie, repeated throughout most of our interviews.

> *I like that you can just go out and do it (walk) whenever you want. There's lots of different places you can go to as well, to have a walk and it's not just like the same thing all the time and you're in control of it, so you can change it up, you can do what you want with it.*

(Interview 1, 04/06/2021)

Despite having the freedom to walk whenever she wanted, even if alone, this was not something Natalie frequently did nor desired to do. On the contrary, one of the most important conditions that needed to be satisfied for Natalie to walk was having company (which will be introduced later in the chapter). Nonetheless, having the freedom to do so, even if the opportunity was not taken, was perceived positively by Natalie and was something she did not associate with many other activities. Additionally, whilst having the flexibility to make the walk her own was a significant

positive for Natalie, a favourable by-product was the lack of external control. Something she was used to in gymnastics.

> *With walking you haven't got someone shouting at you about what you've got to do, and I can go out for as far as I want, I can go for as long as I want.*

<div align="right">(Interview 5, 13/07/2021)</div>

Natalie reported mixed feelings around external control and the stricter coaching styles she was exposed to in gymnastics.

> ***How do you find being coached? Do you like being coached or would you rather have more freedom?***
> *I think it works better in different settings with me. So, like in the gym (gymnastics setting) I like being told what to do because if I'm not I'll just sit around and do nothing. It's kind of like I don't know what to do. But then when I'm walking and in the gym and stuff I like doing stuff on my own 'cause I know what I can do in them kind of settings.*
> *…*
> ***What forms of coaching have worked well for you? What do you like? Strict or informal or?***
> *If I'm working well on that day I like it when the coach is like yeah, just keep doing what you're doing and I'll give you pointers here and there. But then I also like it when if I'm not working so well that day they're a bit more strict on me so that I feel like I have to do something.*

<div align="right">(Interview 4, 23/06/2021)</div>

Stricter coaching styles therefore were capable of motivating Natalie when she wasn't performing her best in gymnastics and provided a sense of structure to sessions that she needed. This is in exception to one particular coach, aforementioned in the previous section, whose strict coaching style was not received positively.

> *She wasn't the nicest coach to be honest.*
> *…*
> ***Are you glad she's not around anymore? Was she affecting your enjoyment of those sessions?***
> *Yes, definitely.*
> *…*
> ***What was she doing that you weren't so keen on?***
> *She definitely had favourites. You could see who her favourites were. She would let them get away with everything and then she'd shout at everyone else.*

Following discussions with the director of the gymnastics club, it was acknowledged that this coach was not a good fit for the type of ethos nor experience the club wanted to create for the TeamGym squad, believing that the coach had higher than intended aspirations for the squad that were not necessarily within reach. Criticism of the gymnasts therefore was frequent. At present, the coach has left the club and an individual with more closely aligned goals to the club has taken their place. Whilst Natalie agreed that strict coaching had its purpose at times, the more extreme versions created a negative experience for Natalie and others within the setting. Changing coaches can be a difficult process, but the positive reports from both participants and staff following the exchange meant it was worthwhile in promoting positive experiences and aiming to keep gymnasts engaged where they may have otherwise withdrawn.

As a final mention on control, Natalie advocated for an element of choice within educational PA settings.

> **How do you think we could make those people who weren't really interested, how do you think we could get them more involved?**
> *I think by doing sports that we choose rather than what the teachers put on, that would definitely help more.*

This finding is consistent with interviews from the previous phase of study. It is appreciated that education staff must work to a curriculum (with a more flexible curriculum incoming in Wales, a key focus of which surrounds promoting holistic 'health and well-being' (Welsh Government, 2019)) and often naturally operate in line with their own specialist skills when choosing activities. However, as this research has shown, many young people would like to have more input into the activities they participate in. Whilst it is important to develop skills in these activities in readiness for practical assessments, there could be more appreciation for the broader objective of exposing young people to different activities beyond traditional UK provision and

creating as positive experience as possible, in the hope that it increases the chances of finding a suitable activity and engaging in lifelong participation.

To conclude, having an element of control over activities was a highly favourable experience for Natalie, and something she would like to consistently have. There was an appreciation, however, that in certain settings, being coached/led was advantageous, especially at the performance and skill acquisition end of the participation spectrum. Walking as an activity therefore provided balance to Natalie's participation, providing a reprieve from the heavily structured gymnastics setting and allowing her to craft her experience as she wished. Walking is thus a favourable option for those looking to have autonomy over their activities and on a broader scale, providing input and choice where possible is desirable and shown to promote positive PA experience.

7.2.3 Further Facilitators

Discussions revealed Natalie's wish for a somewhat complex form of PA that rendered many sports/activities as undesirable. Contact or forceful sports such as rugby and dodgeball were not enjoyable activities, whilst opportunities to be social during PA was highly favourable. Online exercise provision was received positively in small doses. Albeit helpful during lockdowns, repetitiveness led to tedium. Natalie had historically played netball but concluded that it was not her 'type of sport'. This was attributed to the stop-start nature of netball, where a player can be fully involved in the game at one moment and detached the next due to the ball moving down/up court.

Activities that Natalie did enjoy were volleyball and badminton, potentially because of the constant engagement. Natalie had more to say on the subject of badminton, so much so that it became an area of exploration during interviews. Natalie stated that badminton was an activity prescribed by the teachers when her friendship group did not want to do any of the other sports on offer. From that point onwards, Natalie perceived it as a fun activity, even describing how she would find herself getting competitive in badminton. This illustrates that it was not a rejection of competitive activities that Natalie desired, just that competitiveness was only facilitative under certain conditions. Understanding the meaning behind these conditions was thus key

in facilitating PA. Recognising that badminton was a viable option for Natalie, and importantly, her friends, a homework task was set for her. Between interviews, the researcher and Natalie explored opportunities to play in Natalie's local area. Key information included the location of courts, cost, and any other opportunities at the location that Natalie might be keen to try.

A number of courts were available in the local area, as well as squash courts which Natalie said she would be open to trying, especially given that she had a friend who played both sports. Badminton courts were priced at £7.40 for two people per hour, while the price for a squash court was £6.70 per hour which Natalie said she would be happy to pay. The aim of this task was to develop Natalie's competency in knowing where to look for PA opportunities in the local area. To make her proficient in searching online or calling a local leisure centre to enquire. Although these may seem like straightforward tasks, they are not necessarily undertaken by young people (or the even the general public, especially if individuals are inexperienced with exercise). With Natalie's maturing age, she needed to begin taking responsibility for being active and finding desirable ways to do so, this was one method to achieve this.

The homework task was set during Interview 3, meaning there were approximately five weeks between the introduction of the idea and the final interview. During that time, Natalie was consistently queried on whether she had played badminton with her friends, or whether she had any plans to in the near future. She did not. Time was consistently cited as a barrier to playing, as will be discussed later in the chapter. However, despite the negative outcome regarding plans/actions, Natalie consistently stated that the idea itself was desirable, and was something she intended on doing once time allowed. She still needed to experience the process of organising and playing a game, however, to build competency, employ appropriate materials, and meaningfully understand it as positive/negative to decide whether it was an option for future exercise. As with many other instances throughout the study, here we see the value-action gap (Blake, 1999) persisting.

7.3 The Social Dimension of PA

Perhaps the most significant element that emerged from interviews, rendering a practice favourable and mediating engagement in any given activity for Natalie was the social dimension. It is well-recorded in the literature that individuals, particularly young women, like having friends and family present during PA with social support being known to enhance PA engagement and experience for this population (Springer et al., 2006; Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald and Aherne, 2012; Laird et al., 2016). Natalie frequently discussed how the presence of her friends drew her to activities and kept her engaged:

> ***How much do you think your gymnastics participation is driven by seeing the other girls that are there? Do you think if they went away, then you'd be tempted to not keep going?***
> *Yeah, I think if the rest of the girls quit, I think I'd finish. But at the minute my passion is still there for the sport.*
> *…*
> ***Were you intent on moving over to TeamGym for that reason (upper range of TeamGym) or did you kind of fall out of artistic?***
> *I think it was introduced just after I quit for the second time and I came back and Fred was introducing TeamGym and I think all the girls went and I didn't know anyone in artistic so I thought I may as well go and try it out and then I've stayed there ever since.*

<div align="right">(Interview 1, 04/06/2021)</div>

As the extracts highlight, participation from peers in gymnastics was pivotal to making Natalie begin and remain at gymnastics. When queried on instances of withdrawing from gym and what made her return to the sport, missing the people was a key driver in her re-joining, highlighting socialising as an anchoring practice. This supports the finding that young women can be drawn to PA on occasion simply because their friends are there. For some, PA participation could even be a by-product of socialising, as it appears PA could be substituted for any number of activities so long as the primary need of socialisation is being met. PA provision should therefore utilise this fact, creating and reinforcing the social dimension of PA and bundling the practices together to encourage attendance and sustained participation.

The social element was also important during Natalie's walks. All bar one of the walks during the programme were accompanied by either her friends or her mother. The walk she conducted alone was a pre-agreed challenge between her and the

researcher, to gauge whether she was comfortable walking alone in readiness for future occasions where PA could only be conducted alone. Early on in the programme, Natalie stated that she much preferred walking with others for enjoyment reasons, but also safety concerns.

> *You can never be too safe these days and where I live is quite a dodgy place, so there's a lot of weird men about and I'm just a bit wary but then I just tend to like being around people all the time.*

(Interview 1, 04/06/2021)

> *I think I could go out for a walk on my own, but I don't think I would enjoy it as much. I have gone out for a walk a few times on my own before, but I would prefer to be with someone. I don't like just being in my own thoughts.*

(Interview 2, 11/06/2021)

Natalie's reference to a 'dodgy place' suggests a negative and possibly threatening affective atmosphere was at work, influencing the meaning behind walking alone as an affective practice associated with risk. An understandable perception given contemporary events such as the murders of Ashling Murphy and Sarah Everard, who were jogging and walking home respectively on well-lit, familiar routes (Rainbow, 2021; Manifold, 2022). For these reasons, Natalie was repeatedly asked to only pilot walking alone if she felt comfortable to do so, and was advised to walk during well-lit, daytime, hours, on a familiar route and to inform others of where she was going. During interviews, discussions were had surrounding engaging in photography or listening to music/podcasts (providing it was safe to do so) in order to distract from being alone with her thoughts; something Natalie consistently wanted to avoid. Natalie did go on one walk alone and instead enlisted the help of her dogs to keep her company. Although she reported her two Labradors were *'bonkers'* on the walk, Natalie agreed that the dogs were enjoyable company and distracted her from feeling alone. She concurred that this could be an option for the future when others were unable to join.

This was an important exercise during the problem-solving process. It was identified early that Natalie did not like to be alone and consistently required company to engage in PA. This is not always possible, however, and as Natalie matures, potentially

entering full time work or continued education, it was important to acknowledge this and take responsibility for being active, even when ideal conditions cannot not be satisfied. Although this was one sole occasion out of a six-week programme, it was a valuable experience for Natalie, proving that there are means of enjoying PA even when company is not guaranteed. With hope, Natalie developed some positive meaning and competencies around walking alone, being capable of employing specific materials for social company and understanding that it could still be a positive experience without human contact.

All of Natalie's remaining walks were completed with friends or family. After hearing of the walking programme, Natalie's mother offered to join her on occasion. Natalie's mother suffered with a chronic pain condition. She was advised that exercise may alleviate some symptoms but struggled with activities such as running or weightlifting.

> *I think it was just nice to catch up with my Mam because normally I'm in college and she's in work and then she's normally cooking or like putting the boys to bed and I go to bed, so we normally don't get that much time to catch up, so it was just nice to get out.*

(Interview 3, 18/06/2021)

Walking with her mother became an enjoyable experience for Natalie. Spending time just the two of them was not a regular practice in their day-to-day life owed to commitments and competing demands. Walking was thus an opportunity to be active, to the benefit of both of their health, as well as provide that all important bonding time. A practice bundle was developing between the act of walking and Natalie spending time with her mother, in so far as walking was becoming usefully understood as an opportunity to carve out alone time with her. In future, Natalie may associate spending time with her mother with walking, and hopefully engage in the practice more. These are the types of relations this study attempted to build, incorporating favourable and necessary elements of day-to-day life into PA opportunities. Whilst it is well-reported in the literature that many people drop out of PA due to changes in priorities, where socialising becomes more important with age (Dwyer et al., 2006; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2021), this was a prime opportunity to highlight that the two can occur in unison and provide a holistic opportunity to enhance well-being.

The same could be said for walks with Natalie's friends. Natalie described her friends as *'not very sporty people'* but ones who were happy to go walking, and frequently were the drivers of getting Natalie walking pre-study. Walking was potentially understood by her peers as more a social opportunity than a form of PA. For instance, Natalie reported on one occasion that her friend had recently passed her driving test. Looking for something to do, they took a 20-minute drive to a park where they proceeded to walk. Natalie went on to report that she had a list of places she'd like to go and walk once she passed her test, something she was working on during the interviews. Specifically, she sought access to flat walking areas, compared to the hilly valley area she was confined to by residence. Being able to drive unlocked a new realm of practices for the friendship group, in so much as 'going for a drive' transformed into a drive and a walk.

By her own admittance, Natalie was the most active member of her friendship group and had been since a young age. Part of Interview 4 surrounded asking Natalie to acknowledge this and realise her potential in being a champion of PA amongst her friends, given the power of social influence. When queried on whether she actively tried to influence her peer group to participate, Natalie said:

> *Yeah, I used to quite a lot when I was in comprehensive school. 'Cause a lot of my friends didn't do anything at all. So, I'd try and convince them, like I hated going to the gym, but I'd be like oh do you want to come to the gym with me on this day or do you want to go and do this this day or do you want to go for a walk or something. I would try and get them to go out.*

> (Interview 4, 25/06/2021)

Natalie did not have much success in encouraging her friends to be active. Importantly, however, Natalie recognised that she could be a positive influence. She identified herself as someone who her friends could rely on should they choose to get active. She offered to accompany them when accessing exercise settings and materials, to build competency and develop confidence and meaning around PA as something they could do together. When asked if any of the friends had historically taken up PA on account of her influence, there was one exception:

My one friend, she started going to the gym more often now. So, I think it helped her a lot.

…

Why do you think she went from not going to going? Was it your influence or do you think there was something else at play?

Well, I started going to all the exercise classes with her. I think she started going with her Mam and then I kind of joined her.

(Interview 4, 25/06/2021)

Whilst Natalie may not have been the sole influence on her friend adopting regular exercise, it is likely that she was a significant factor. The value of her offers cannot be underestimated, given how influential we know peer influence to be (Finnerty et al., 2009; van Hoorn et al., 2014). Encouraging young women to be trail blazers among their peers potentially warrants more focus and attention.

To conclude, the social dimension of PA was paramount for Natalie and facilitated, if not resulted in many of her walks throughout the programme. It was also intimately related to a number of other themes within the study. For instance, Natalie frequently spoke about the happy feelings evoked from the community buzz she felt on certain walks. A joyful affective atmosphere presented itself, where she was pleased to see other people being active in their local area following a string of Covid-19 lockdowns. During walks with her friends, she would occasionally scroll through social media in an attempt to stay connected with her social world. This, in addition to the social networking dimension of Strava, illustrates how intimately connected technology, socialising and PA can be. On other occasions, whilst walking and socialising with friends, they would purchase food and eat, talk and walk. These minor elements that were occasionally present all counted towards making it a more positive experience. These elements were studied and used to encourage sustainable participation in walking and PA, illustrating the value in using a practice approach.

7.4 The Environment

7.4.1 The Weather

Environmental conditions transpired to have a substantial impact on Natalie's experience of walking and frequently anchored her consumption of the practice. Whilst certain conditions were unfavourable, Natalie at times overcame them, but it is anticipated that these conditions contributed to the relatively low number of walks carried out throughout the programme as a whole. Weather in particular had significant impact over how a walk was perceived by Natalie. This was not isolated to one form of weather. Rather there were various forms that influenced Natalie's experience.

> **What do you think it is about the rain that puts you off?**
> *It's just depressing sometimes. The cold and damp and dark and it's like you just don't want to be out there sometimes.*
> *…*
> *If it's absolutely boiling, I don't like to do gym. But then, kind of the same when it's freezing cold as well. Like if I'm freezing, I just don't want to get up.*

(Interview 1, 04/06/2021)

> **How did the weather make you feel when you were out walking? Was it a little bit uncomfortable, you didn't really want to be in it or?**
> *I didn't mind it so much because it was warm. But if it was cold and it was raining, I wouldn't have been out.*
> *…*
> *I think that on the first walk, when it was absolutely boiling, I think that had a big impact on it because it was so hot and there was no shade. So, I think I should probably go for a walk in the shade when it's so hot.*
> *…*
> *Hot weather – it always makes me feel better but then as we were going on and it was getting hotter and hotter, I think I was getting a bit grumpy. I was starting to feel uncomfortable.*

(Interview 2, 11/07/2021)

> *I don't think I really mind the rain. I think it's more hot weather that I'm bothered by.*

(Interview 3. 18/06/2021)

The extracts above highlight Natalie's fluctuating opinion on the impact of weather. What remained stable, however, was Natalie's appreciation that the weather itself was a strong anchor of her participation. When questioned on her walks or PA experiences,

weather was a consistent factor she turned to in measuring the experience. What was difficult to interpret, however, was the changing weight of influence afforded to each weather condition. Despite the statement from Interview 3 surrounding not minding the rain, later in Interview 5, when asked what conditions needed to be satisfied to walk, Natalie stated *'as long as it's not raining'*. Given the unpredictable nature of Welsh weather, by Natalie's standards, there would almost always be a reason not to exercise outdoors if she allowed the weather to exert such an influence.

Given the right conditions, the weather could also be an anchor of appeal.

> *'I think the weather kind of convinced me to go because it was like, I had nothing else to do, my steps were quite low I think and I was like, why don't I just go for a walk. It's nice weather, it's not too late, I should get home at a decent time.'*

> (18/06/2021)

Whilst many weather conditions appeared to encourage PA inhibition to avoid particular feeling states and affective atmospheres (such as the uncomfortableness of walking in hot weather or the *'depressing'* aura of being outside on a dark, rainy evening), other conditions inspired movement. The issue is that many places (and Wales especially) cannot guarantee favourable weather conditions. By allowing an uncontrollable force like weather to hold such power, Natalie was instantly decreasing her opportunities to be active, illustrating a lack of competency in dealing with certain weather patterns. Problem-solving questions were therefore put to Natalie to challenge this behaviour.

> **When winter comes around and there isn't much daylight, we might get wet, we might get cold and we're going outside, how would you say you'd maintain your activity levels? Would you keep walking or do you think you'd turn to a different activity to get your daily exercise?**
> *I'd probably do regular walks, maybe like once a week or something but then I'd probably try to add in like a home workout or something rather than go out as often.*

> (Interview 3, 18/06/2021)

On those days where maybe it's been too hot, and in the future as well, how do you think you could problem-solve against that? What could you do instead to make sure you're active?
When I was walking down the canal, I was just tipping water over my head and I think that helped a lot. I think in hot weather there's nothing I can do…I just can't stand it.
In the future, would you consider going into an air-conditioned gym or anything to counteract that?
Yes.
Is *gymnastics academy* quite cool when you go in or does it get pretty hot in there?
They've got fans and air conditioning in there but because it's all made out of tin, it's also hot.

(Interview 6, 28/07/2021)

Natalie responded positively by accepting that weather was a mediator of her PA participation and showed willingness to turn to other activities when conditions were unfavourable. This highlighted the value in adopting a practice approach over an extended period of time since it illustrated the consistent impact of weather and influence of sometimes slight changes in temperature or rainfall (light to heavy for example) that impacted Natalie's practice and resultant inhibition. Specifically, the practice approach highlighted the elements requiring transformation in order to promote PA practice. In the event of bad weather, Natalie stated she would turn to home workouts. Home workouts have gained popularity in recent years, particularly throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns where they were one of the few activities available to the masses. Advancements in technology (materials) have meant that a wide range of home workouts targeting various elements of fitness have been quick to create and release online with little or no cost to participants. The likes of 'Chloe Ting' and 'Natalie Jill' have become household names for many, with numerous educational institutions even turning to 'Joe Wicks' during lockdown by advocating for students to participate in his weekly PE classes to remain active. This shows the weight of influence online personalities and coaches can have, and how favourable their provision can be given its accessibility to the masses (and especially those who have no other option for PA, ie. no gym memberships, equipment at home and so on).

Whilst Natalie stated that she would likely turn to home workouts, when discussing them during Interview 3, she had mixed reviews. Natalie stated that whilst she had

participated in them for a few weeks during lockdown, she then began to withdraw from participating as they were *'the same thing all the time'* and *'too repetitive'*. Along with participating in home workouts, Natalie's gymnastics club also used Zoom to substitute in-person sessions. These would include strength and conditioning sessions, skills sessions (limited within confines of the home) and various challenges. Natalie recalled one particular Zoom session:

> *I remember the one Zoom that I had to do with all the little kids, and I had to balance kind of on my head and I'm thinking why do I have to do this, it's not beneficial to me.'*

(Interview 3, 18/06/2021)

Natalie felt the content of the session was not appropriate for her age nor skill level, which caused her to question her attendance. Lockdown was a transition period for many institutions, as they were exploring how to transfer content to digital platforms in the most efficient way. It is understandable, therefore, that not all sessions were gold-standard by the gymnasts' measure. This is an important finding, however, in that content needed to feel tailored to the appropriate age/skill level, and perhaps advertised as such, for Natalie to fully engage, so whilst home workouts and online sessions are beneficial in that they can be disseminated to a wide range of audiences, they need to keep their target audiences at the forefront of their provision. Otherwise, they are at risk of losing them through a lack of specificity to their target population.

The key finding from this section is that weather was highly influential for most forms of exercise. But the one activity that weather could not govern, was gymnastics. It is appreciated that the gym is indoors so perhaps not as 'risky' in terms of rain and cold, but by her own admittance, the gym could be highly unpleasant on hot days which affected Natalie's enjoyment. Gymnastics, however, was an anchoring practice and unbreakable habit in Natalie's life, and one that very few elements or practices could govern for any extended length of time. Likely, because the practice relations underpinning Natalie's experience as a whole were perfectly aligned, if not simply a consistent set of relations that she has become accustomed to and was satisfied enough by. It is these types of practice relations, and subsequent habits that PA

providers should continually try to identify, create and reinforce to encourage lifelong participation.

7.4.2 Walking Atmospheres

In addition to weather, Natalie discussed the various affective atmospheres she experienced on her walks which influenced her evaluation of the activity. Mentioned previously was the daunting experience of walking alone, where Natalie was concerned for her safety owed to the possibility of 'weird men'. In contrast to the unsettling atmosphere Natalie was trying to avoid by being alone, there were certain atmospheres that contributed positively to her experience. During walks to her local park, Natalie spoke fondly about seeing people in her community. Playing football, walking dogs; people were simply going about their business on a warm summer's evening, and this reinforced a positive feeling for Natalie.

In addition to the people, Natalie appreciated being in among nature, with the associated wildlife and scenery on show. Natalie commented on how usually she was *'always on her phone'* and never appreciated the beauty of her local area until she started getting out in it. Importantly, by her own admission, she needed to get out into the area to see that being on her phone was not necessarily the more desirable activity. During Interview 2, the conversation turned to memories and triggers on walks. Natalie was queried on whether certain landmarks or songs for example could unleash affective responses during walks.

> *I've grown up where I live now. So, like a lot of it I forget and then I'll see something and be like, I remember when I built a tree house there.*
> *…*
> **So, it's kind of reconnecting you with your surroundings?**
> *Yes.*

> (11/06/2021)

The purpose of this line of questioning was to encourage Natalie to think about how the affective elements of walking/PA could add additional layers of satisfaction to her experience, and hence she could consider targeting them on days where she needed

an extra push to be active. Natalie spoke openly about how a community buzz or seeing beautiful scenery added enjoyment to her experience. These things can at times be easily accessible, particularly in the South Wales Valleys region where beauty spots are aplenty. As Natalie ages and gains more freedom (learning to drive, for example), these elements will become even more within reach. Motivating Natalie to reflect on this therefore was hopefully a lesson in recognising how to create favourable conditions for PA, and experience benefits that go well beyond the primary PA outcomes – such as the nostalgia associated with revisiting childhood 'stomping grounds' or the aesthetic pleasure of areas of natural beauty.

7.5 Time for Physical Activity(?)

One of the most crucial factors behind people's PA behaviours, across a variety of populations and contexts, is time (Welch et al., 2009; Paýan, Sloane, Illum and Lewis, 2018; Kass et al.,2021). More specifically, whether there is enough (or perception of enough) time to be active. Time was a consistent theme throughout each interview and naturally determined the co-produced aims of the walking programme, as well as what was physically achieved.

At the beginning of the study, Natalie wished to concentrate her walking to weekdays on account of working a part-time job and attending gymnastics on weekends. Whilst Natalie was in college on weekdays, there were numerous occasions where she finished early, meaning she had time to go out walking, even before her Tuesday gymnastics session on some occasions. Importantly, according to Natalie, weekdays felt like the best fit for her schedule to get the walks in. Objectively, she may well have had more time on weekends since her shifts lasted approximately 4-5 hours which was likely shorter than the average time spent in college. Additionally, Natalie would likely have more access to company and a wider variety of locations on a weekend. The purpose of a practice approach, however, was to identify what felt a possible fit in a daily constellation of practices. As it transpired, Natalie's perception of free time (and subsequently walking time) diminished as the study progressed.

The co-produced walking target for the study was 7000 steps per day. This was something Natalie felt comfortable with and felt was achievable. When queried on how

often she wanted to try and get out walking, Natalie stated that she was going to *'try and get out as much as she* can'. This was quite a vague target and in retrospect, allowed the walks to never really become a routine occurrence. It was anticipated that the amount of walking Natalie was doing would increase following Interview 4, when the school term concluded.

> *I think I'm going to start going out a bit more now 'cause obviously I'm not in college now. So, I'm not getting that hour a day.*

(Interview 4, 25/06/2021)

Crucially, from this point onwards, walking should have increased since Natalie's time spent doing college practicals, and thus being active every weekday, diminished. What actually occurred, was a decrease in walking. From Interview 4, completed on 25/06/2021, Natalie only recorded two more walks until the study concluded on 27/7/2021. It is important to point out that prior to this, Natalie had only completed four walks, recording two during the week after the first interview and one each in the following weeks. This was accepted, however, on the basis that she was being active during her college hours and participating in gymnastics twice a week and at the very least, one walk was taking place per week. Before Interview 4, Natalie hit her target of 7000 steps on 11 out of 20 weekdays, without accounting for the extra steps she completed during college practicals and gymnastics (owed to not being able to use her monitoring device). Following Interview 4, Natalie hit her target on 7 out of 20 weekdays. Outside of gymnastics sessions, she was not participating in any purposeful PA. When questioned over what was inhibiting her walking, Natalie's perception of time was identified as a powerful anchor.

Since finishing college, Natalie found that she was being frequently called into work. She worked in a dessert shop and owed to the time of year where many were free from education and the weather was pleasant, business was picking up. Natalie had very little time to prepare for these calls. Unlike the weekend where shifts were factored into her day, weekday shifts were last-minute dashes to get into work and frequently ended up consuming the day.

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So, are you working much? Have you got your shifts for next week, or actually the rest of this week as well?
It's more relaxed with them just phoning me on the day to be honest.
I remember when I was in college and uni, I had this job where if they were busy they'd call you up and you'd sort of change your plan. How do you enjoy that aspect, you know, getting the last-minute call? Is it a little bit frustrating or do you appreciate them giving you the hours or?
I don't mind it because I just learn now not to plan too much ahead.

(Interview 5, 13/07/2021)

It is important to highlight that during these shifts, Natalie was spending 4-5 hours on her feet. She was making small but frequent movements around the work area, and thus was not engaging in sedentary behaviour. Despite not being able to use her monitoring device in work due to health and safety (similar to gymnastics), it is likely that Natalie was recording a good volume of steps during shifts. Still, Natalie was questioned on how she could fit more walking into her days. Specifically, she was challenged on whether it would be possible to go walking before or after shifts:

After a shift or before a shift, what do you end up doing?
I normally just have a shower and go to bed. I finish my shifts at like half 7…I normally think it's just time to go to bed.
…
Maybe you start work at midday, has the idea of going for a quick walk beforehand or after popped into your head? And just what has made you decide against it?
I have tried going for a walk before work a few times but then I get so exhausted then when I get into work and when I get home, I don't have any time cos it's so late.

…

Out of curiosity…are you making time for gymnastics? 'Cause you know, you've always done it and it's kind of a habit for you or is it the enjoyment of gymnastics where you won't sort of sacrifice for work or having a rest?
I definitely enjoy it but it's just sort of routine that I just do it automatically.

(Interview 5, 13/07/2021)

There are a number of things to unpick here. Firstly, no matter how busy work had been or how tired she was feeling, Natalie rarely sacrificed a gymnastics session. This illustrates the uncompromising force of the anchoring practice in her life. Where

walking was seen as a choice, carried out if the mood and conditions were right, gymnastics was an immovable practice that would not be sacrificed lightly. In an attempt to study this immovable practice anchor, Natalie was regularly asked what it was about gymnastics that she liked so much, ie. what kept her there. Noting factors such as seeing her friends and enjoying the skill acquisition, Natalie often returned to the fact that it was simply a habit. The conditions (the people, the place, the content) and thus elements of practice all satisfied her to such an extent that during the time of the study, she did not question her participation; unlike previous times where certain conditions made her withdraw (online classes, periods of withdrawal). This illustrates the value in (1) deliverers consistently providing suitable conditions in which individuals can foster long-term habits, and (2) identifying and tracking (ostensibly) minor elements of practice, in order to understand how those suitable conditions can be met.

Secondly, there is worth in challenging individuals on their perceptions of time, including their intended methods of overcoming constraints. Natalie was 17 at the time of the study and it took place during the summer months, possibly the most favourable conditions in terms of dry, warm weather and extended daylight hours. Interviews revealed that Natalie did not want to go to university and would instead like to move to Cardiff and find a job, potentially as a personal trainer. This role would provide easy access to exercise settings, in which case meeting PA guidelines in future may not be a hardship. However, the job market is uncertain, and with her part-time role alone, Natalie was struggling to commit to the relatively accessible target of going walking as much as possible. Natalie was queried therefore on how she could remain active if holding down a more traditional 9-5, desk-based job.

> **If we imagine that you get into a job that wasn't very active or sporty, maybe it was a desk job or something like that, how do you think you could find ways to be active in your daily life?**
> I think if it's quite close walking to and from work and going to the gym quite often and being as active as I can outside the workplace.
> …
> **With active travel and walking or cycling to work in the mornings is there anything you wouldn't like about that? Is there anything that would stop you doing it on certain days?**
> Probably the weather 'cause especially if it's a desk job you don't want to be sat there in soaking wet clothes all day.

So, if it was a normal day and you cycled in would you be prepared, if you needed to, to happily go and shower before work or does that seem like too much hassle?
Yeah, I probably would.

<div align="right">(Interview 4, 25/06/2021)</div>

Natalie's response was positive, highlighting that she had considered this possibility and was prepared to act in ways to overcome it. That being said, in the here and now of the study, an increase in working hours directly affected Natalie's decision to be active. We cannot assume therefore that the same would not happen in future when she is likely to experience longer hours and increasing commitments. Nonetheless, this was a valuable conversation in highlighting the sorts of conditions that need to be in place for active travel to become likely. Without the material elements such as in-house showers in the workplace or a safe infrastructure, Natalie would be unable to participate in active travel. Without the materials in place, she would likely never have the opportunity to develop the competency to cycle to work, or the meaning to interpret the 'good' days to cycle from the 'bad' days. Consulting employees and members of communities as a whole therefore is the first step in unlocking what elements are desirable, in order to evaluate whether they are possible, worthwhile and sustainable in the long-term, and using practice as the object of study is a useful method to understand elements alone, as well as how they interact to create systems of behaviour. Additionally, given the challenges outlined by Natalie in fitting walks into her daily life, active travel could have been one area for exploration and intervention, something that will be considered further in the *Discussion* chapter.

7.6 Motivation

Motivation was unsurprisingly a key theme throughout the interviews. As with any individual, motivation for PA and other behaviours frequently fluctuated for Natalie. Interviews attempted to uncover what drove Natalie to perform certain practices while avoiding others, as well as identify tools to encourage uptake of health-enhancing practices.

7.6.1 Health and Well-Being

From the first introductory interview, Natalie stated that one of the main reasons for her involvement in the study was to improve her fitness and physical health. What also evolved from the study, was Natalie's awareness and use of PA to enhance a more holistic sense of well-being. During the first interview, Natalie was asked her opinion on what constituted PA. Interestingly, her answer revolved around getting outside, the mind and enjoying the activity because in her words, 'if you don't enjoy it, there's no point doing it'. This was a more holistic view than anticipated, prioritising the more mental and emotional elements rather than the typically physical or bodily (admittedly these can be interpreted as one and the same). Throughout the study, Natalie continued to highlight how PA enhanced her health and well-being, which reinforced her to do more and promoted a sense of reciprocity.

During the first interview, Natalie described how she often used walking as a vehicle to 'clear her head'. When questioned about days where Natalie felt measurably more down than usual, she stated:

> *I'd drag my Mam out for a walk or something. I normally do exercise when I'm feeling like that.*

> (Interview 1, 04/06/2021)

As mentioned earlier, Natalie's mother also suffered with a chronic health condition. In addition to the company and chance to have some alone time together, Natalie was acutely aware of the benefits their walks could offer her mother and sought to encourage them. Natalie's carrying of walking as a practice thus diffused into her mother's practice. Natalie also noted the mood-enhancing outcomes of PA:

> *They (the walks) have definitely helped to improve my mood. If I'm feeling a bit down, I'll think - I'll go on a walk - and then I feel a bit better.*

> (Interview 6, 28/07/2021)

Natalie frequently discussed the sense of accomplishment she garnered from her walks. When asked what she liked about them, she said *'I like the fact that I've felt like*

I've actually gone and done something, and I've been productive…it makes me feel a lot better about myself' [Interview 2]. Natalie experienced a similar feeling in gymnastics when mastering skills:

> *When I'm doing a skill, I'll feel really positive about myself or like if I get a new skill, it makes me happy and then it pushes me to do more.*

(Interview 1, 04/06/2021)

Natalie had strong awareness of the positive effect being active had on her general mood and well-being, so much so that even on 'down' days, she would still motivate herself to get moving.

> ***How do you feel about your general relationship with PA? What do you think it's like?***
> *I think it's actually really good 'cause even on the days when I'm not feeling the best and I don't get out I push myself to go out 'cause I know that it will make me feel better.*

(Interview 4, 25/06/2021)

On the subject of pushing oneself to be active, it transpired that Natalie was once again, as with making time to be active, far more likely to do this where gymnastics was concerned compared to any other activities, highlighting the power and solidity of embedded and anchoring practices. This evolved out of a conversation surrounding '*being comfortable with being uncomfortable'*. Throughout interviews, Natalie stated that she found activities like running and walking up steep inclines not enjoyable on account of tiring easily and feelings of unpleasantness. As with many forms of exercise, there is a degree of uncomfortableness, especially if you are seeking to promote physical fitness (for example, developing anaerobic capacity or building muscle mass). Uncomfortableness is frequently indicative of improvements in fitness, and thus future endeavours will likely be more comfortable if you consistently push through discomfort to a place where you are capable of sustaining the specific intensity/distance/weight/speed. Natalie had experience with this practice, highlighting how meanings and competencies can change with experience to promote certain forms of practice:

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Have you ever experienced overcoming that sort of process in a different sport? Maybe in gym where your muscles were aching, you weren't enjoying that much or you couldn't master a skill and you didn't like that side of it but you pushed on and you came out the other side?
It's sort of like that in gymnastics quite a lot 'cause of my wrists. I've got tendonitis in my wrist and sometimes I find it quite hard to do gym. So, I just try and do as much as I can and push through it and then at the end of the session I feel really rewarded that I just carried on going.

'I think it's because I've done gymnastics for so long and I just enjoy it so much that I don't mind being in that uncomfortable stage'. But with walking and running, I don't do it so often so I just don't enjoy it as much as I do gym.
…
*****Have you found yourself doing that throughout the programme? Pushing yourself a little bit more?*****
Yeah, sort of. When I go down my friend's house, it's only like a two-minute walk from our house but it's a really big hill. So, I've sort of been walking from here, obviously my house more often that being oh Mam will you come and pick me up and stuff.

(Interview 4, 25/06/2021)

The aim of this discussion was not to encourage pushing through pain, injury nor ill-health. Rather, it was for both parties to acknowledge that at times, PA can feel difficult and uncomfortable at first, but providing we work within our limits and listen to our bodies, pushing through that can make for the most advantageous health benefits, as well as increase our comfort and ability to do the activity in future through fitness gains. These conversations also indicated some reasoning behind Natalie's value-action gap in saying she wanted to walk but not performing the practice, thus identifying an area to intervene.

Whilst Natalie had reservations about pushing herself on walks or runs, the extract highlights how the study encouraged her to start, where the simple practice of walking up a hill had replaced the practice of asking her mother for a lift. Additionally, when Natalie was challenged to increase her walking distance, she completed a 5km walk and found the experience enjoyable. Whilst the study and its associated structure could not continue to be a source of external motivation for Natalie, the programme at least provided an experience (including the competency and meanings developed through that experience) to motivate her in future. It would not have been possible to

spend any more time nor resources in driving Natalie to make walking a regular and consistent practice in her life, especially given the risk of extinguishing her interest in a voluntary study which she could have withdrawn from at any time. However, the study aspired to work through the early walking experiences with Natalie, in the hope that she would develop the meanings and competencies to make walking (or any other form of PA) a regular practice in her life. One capable of withstanding or co-existing with competing practices and anchoring her daily life, just as gymnastics had done since she began all those years ago.

7.6.2 Tools to Enhance Motivation

Given the nature of the study, it was important to have an objective measure of the amount of walking that was taking place. To record this, Natalie used her Fitbit watch to count steps and Strava to record the details of her walks (including distance, speed, incline, duration, and various other factors). Whilst the key purpose was to have that objective measure in order to compare pre- and post-programme, the practice of monitoring became a form of motivation for Natalie.

From as early as Interview 1, Natalie noted how she felt tracking her progress would help significantly so that she could look back on previous records and have tangible evidence of improvements. Natalie expressed frustration at times over not being allowed to wear her Fitbit during working hours and for certain activities (gymnastics). Natalie suspected that she would be doing a high number of steps during these times, in addition to recording positive fitness measures during bouts of high-intensity gymnastics work. We discussed the possibility of using other monitoring materials, such as pedometers during working hours if Natalie's desire to track her activities was enough to warrant purchasing. Interestingly, although Natalie was mostly positive about monitoring her PA behaviours since they motivated her to do more, she did report some negative effects. Specifically, whilst they were a facilitator for reaching her daily target of 7000 steps, beyond that, they became a barrier in motivating her to do more.

__Throughout the study, we've engaged in a process of goal setting, our 7000 steps a day, a long walk…do you find that's been beneficial or not so much?__
I think on the days when I'm not doing much, it does push me but then on the days where I'm not looking at it, I tend to do a lot more. I'm not looking and thinking I've done 7000 steps now, I don't need to do anything else.

(Interview 6, 28/07/2021)

As Natalie described above, on her more inactive days, practices of monitoring and goal setting were helpful as they motivated her to get moving and hit the baseline target. However, on days where she perceived she could have done more, Natalie found that she stopped herself as she felt as though meeting the baseline target was sufficient and no further activity was necessary. This is despite repeated discussions surrounding the need to increase her speed/distance/step count for nearly every one of her walks in order for them to meet the threshold of PA (if walking was her only activity of the day) (Tudor-Locke et al., 2011; Hallam et al., 2018; NHS, N.D.). Therefore, whilst monitoring and goal setting can be facilitative practices in providing the motivation to perform a practice, they may not be powerful enough to guarantee it, as illustrated by the numerous days where Natalie did not meet the 7000-step target.

7.7 Conclusion

To summarise, Figure 12 highlights the main findings from Study 3, with Natalie's main anchoring practices consisting of socialising with friends and family, school and employment, gymnastics and using a smartphone/technology. Each anchoring practice could have both a positive and negative influence on Natalie's PA levels, depending on how it was bundled with PA and the specific materials, meanings and competencies that underpinned its relationship with PA. For example, Natalie studied a BTEC in PE at college, part of which required her to undertake practical lessons in sport, something which should ostensibly raise her PA levels. However, whilst Natalie expressed a desire to be active and was indeed active in her own time via gymnastics and some walking, she frequently did not engage with practical PE lessons properly owing to their competitive nature and the domination of space and resource by her male classmates. The meaning attached to the lessons was negative for Natalie, who rendered them potentially dangerous and unpleasant due to the boys' boisterous

behaviour. This thereby affected her competency in certain activities, possibly impacting the practical grades she could attain, as well as her competency sharing spaces with boys and expressing her needs to teachers. It also would have affected her access to the materials associated with certain sports that were being studied in class.
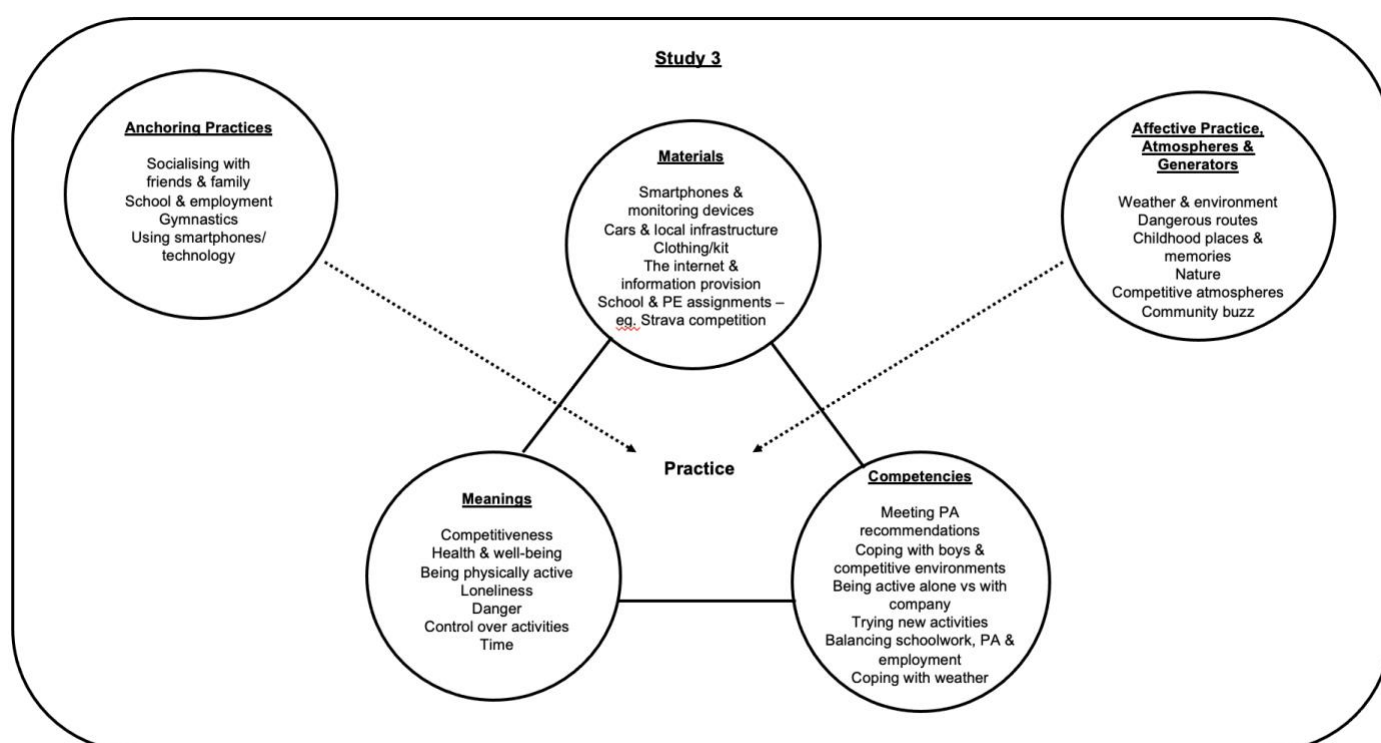
Figure 12: Key findings from Study 3 presented through the conceptual lens

Socialising was also a powerful anchoring practice for Natalie. In many instances, she would not walk without company since she did not want to be alone with her thoughts and associated certain routes and times of day with danger when travelling alone. To be sufficiently active, however, there will be times when one needs to exercise alone. Efforts were thus made during interviews to propose materials which could provide company and safety assurance, such as music/podcasts and her family dogs, which could in turn shift her meanings and competencies to be able to walk even without human company. The concept of affect also came through particularly strongly during Study 3, with Natalie discussing the impact of childhood memories located in particular socio-temporal spaces, positive feelings arising from a post-Covid 'community buzz'

and the impact of ever-changing weather states and how this affected her motivation to practice PA.

As was discussed throughout the chapter, a value-action gap continued to persist throughout Study 3 for Natalie, and she did not successfully reach the walking target set at the start of the study. Despite expressing a desire to do more walking and participate in activities such as badminton, Natalie did not regularly achieve these. Even after finishing college for the summer and ostensibly having more time to herself, Natalie's time and practice quickly became anchored by her part-time job. This was prioritised above PA and left Natalie feeling too tired to be active before or after work, despite likely having more time to herself than in term-time and what would likely be more time to herself than when she enters full-time employment in the future. Natalie needed to continually work on the meanings associated with PA and time, as well as develop her competency in managing time and prioritising PA participation if she wanted to meet her desire to be active. The conceptual framework outlined in Figure 12 was thus useful in highlighting the specific elements, and links between them, that governed Natalie's practice and PA engagement, highlighting the areas that required intervention during the practice-mentor interviews and indeed in Natalie's future life.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

8.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters reported on three stages of fieldwork undertaken to explore the double jeopardy via a practice theory lens. Whilst there was significant variance in roles and responsibilities between participants as well as distinct aims associated with each study, a number of discussion points emerged which permeated each stage of research. Given the global emphasis on increasing PA levels, diminished participation reported from young women residing in areas of disadvantage, and the only moderately successful attempts to transform such patterns via behaviour change approaches, there was clear value in exploring an alternative lens. Whilst there is much room for refinement in adopting a practice-based approach to explore and intervene in physical inactivity, the aforementioned fieldwork and proceeding critical discussion will highlight where theories of practice can shed new light on a stubborn problem.

The chapter begins by critically evaluating the three elements model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012) as a tool to explore the double jeopardy. Specifically, it will discuss how the model was used as a vehicle to both uncover and intervene in practice relations. Following this, the discussion turns to the value and use of sensitising concepts and in particular Bourdieusian theory owing to their additional conceptual value. Next, the chapter presents a critical discussion surrounding the challenges of addressing the double jeopardy, before offering a number of practice-based solutions to these challenges which could be incorporated across each level of participation from community engagement up to NGB provision and policy. As indicated in the preceding results chapters, there were degrees of both congruence and conflict between the needs and desires of the girls, community leaders and stakeholder organisations. These alignments and conflicts are highlighted throughout the chapter to indicate where they provide the most fruitful opportunities for intervention.

8.2 Practice Theory as Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research project was to shed new light on an old problem. Namely, to employ practice theory as an alternative theoretical lens to explore physical inactivity within young women residing in areas of social and economic disadvantage.

Since much intervention work in the field of PA has been both implicitly and explicitly based on models of behaviour change (Beaulac, Kristjansson and Calhoun, 2011; Budd et al., 2018; Keane et al., 2020) this research sought to compliment and further develop the knowledge base in the area, as well as pilot and refine the use of practice theory, and specifically the three elements model, (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012) as a conceptual and practical intervention tool.

The rationale for adopting practice theory specifically was to shift the unit of analysis away from rational agents or macro structures towards something capable of highlighting the dynamic relationship between the two (illustrated below in Figure 13) and the blind spot that characterises both camps (homo sociologicus and homo economicus / structure versus agency). That is the implicit, unconscious later of knowledge which enables a symbolic organisation of reality. This form of knowledge and organisation is inherently social since it is embedded in collective cognitive and symbolic structures, in 'shared knowledge' (Reckwitz, 2002, p.246) which enables a socially shared method of ascribing meaning to the world. It is paramount therefore in understanding collective human action. Practice theory demands social practice as the unit of social analysis, understanding social phenomena like the double jeopardy, and the knowledge, meaning, human activity and historical patterns of behaviour associated with it, as components of the field of practices (Schatzki, 2001). The research therefore aimed to develop an account of the practices that underpin the double jeopardy, including how and why they are carried across space and time by disadvantaged young women, as well as how to intervene in the field of practices to promote more positive patterns of behaviour.
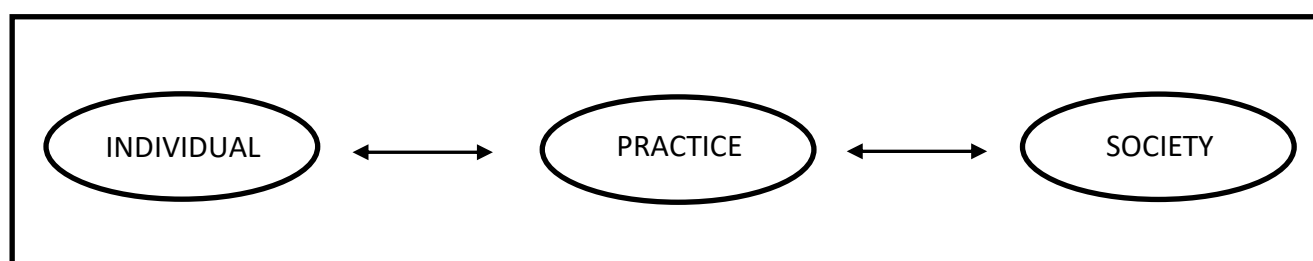

Figure 13: The reciprocal relationship between individuals, practice and society

8.2.1 Uncovering and Intervening in Practice

The three elements model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012) was selected as the primary practice framework for this research owing to its simplified nature, conceptual clarity and subsequent 'parsimonious' approach to behaviour change (Spotswood, Chatterton, Tapp and Williams, 2015). Employing this model allowed a dissection of discrete practices. Specifically, this meant the ability to break practices down into their core components: (1) materials, 'integrated into practice and allied to requisite forms of competence and meaning' (Shove and Pantzar, 2005, p.57); (2) meanings, including shared knowledge, understanding and experience which can be unconscious or symbolic in form, and; (3) competencies, the embodied knowledge and skills required to 'succeed' at the performance of a practice (Shove et al., 2012). Both meanings and competencies are intimately linked to Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, with knowledge, understanding, know-how and skill frequently existing as sets of shared dispositions, produced as a result of one's 'training' or socialisation into the world. The existence of any one practice depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of the aforementioned elements, whilst the elements of neighbouring practices can also become intertwined with the primary practice in loose or tight complexes and bundles. The individual thus represents the crossing point of multiple practices (Reckwitz, 2002).

In addition to outlining the three elements model, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) offer guidance on promoting transitions in practice, that is behaviour change. Importantly, they highlight that social theories do not prescribe any specific form of action. Rather, they allow us to see the world in a particular way, influencing how problems are framed and thus what types of interventions are deemed possible and worthwhile. Whilst discussing how contemporary policy-making strategies in the field of climate change have relied upon economics and psychological behaviour change strategies (United Nations Environmental Programme, 2008; Institute for Government, 2009; UK Cabinet Office, 2010), Shove et al. identify the routes through which policy interventions could promote more sustainable transitions in behaviour through practice theory. Specifically, policy makers can and do influence:

   a) *The range of elements in circulation.*
   b) *The ways in which practices relate to each other.*

c) *The careers and trajectories of practices and those who carry them.*

d) *The circuits of reproduction.*

(Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012, p.104)

Spurling et al.'s (2013) recommendation for shifting practice follows a similar programme of thought, stating that core elements and the links between them can be recrafted while we can substitute and transform the way different practices interlock via bundling, sequencing and synchronisation.

Employing the three elements model allowed the researcher to identify the most significant elements underpinning inactive practices. This was achieved by using interviews and observations to isolate both elemental agreements which facilitated particular behaviours, as well as elemental conflicts which generated inactivity. For example, the material infrastructure of the youth club provided multiple avenues for socialising. The collective understanding that socialising was an important activity in a young person's daily life, as well as competency in socialising with female adolescents meant that much of the girls' practice within the club was anchored around sedentary forms of social interaction. In contrast, whilst active forms of socialising were possible, engaging in mixed football was understood as potentially harmful because of physical aggression and exclusionary behaviour from boys, affecting the girls' perceived competency and resulting in the AstroTurf court becoming a gendered arena of subordination. Socialising whilst playing football, as the boys did, was thus not as favourable for the girls who instead often chose to spectate. This instance offers various avenues for practice-based intervention. For example, one could target the meanings boys attribute to their dominating practices, educating them on why it is inappropriate in an informal PA setting. Likewise, one could adapt the infrastructure of the youth club to facilitate another PA space in which active socialising could occur for the girls. Either way, this highlights how analysis can enable intervention creators to create a 'complex but rigorous web of interrelating factors which can form the basis of a multi-layered behaviour change strategy' (Spotswood, Chatterton, Tapp and Williams, 2015).

The above represents an example of intervening in a single practice, and specifically its meanings, to promote behaviour change. Importantly, we can also intervene at the point of the links between bundles of practices that co-exist together and organise the time-space of social life (Schatzki, 2002; Warde, 2005). An example here is the co-dependence of smoking and drinking, particularly for social smokers (Sims, Maxwell, Bauld and Gilmore, 2010; Bauld, 2011). Within this research, Lizzie discussed how practices of socialising and eating became bundled to such a degree that time with friends was often spent at McDonald's where Lizzie felt pressured to purchase food. By fulfilling social needs, Lizzie was frequently ingesting unhealthy food. The likelihood here was that McDonald's was one of the few places where the group could position themselves and interact for long periods, in any weather and for a relatively low cost. Interventions could thus target the link between eating and socialising to substitute eating practices for healthier forms of socialising (such as PA) or promote healthier social eating through increased access to nutritious settings and options. As with any bundle or practice complex, the trajectory of one practice will likely affect the trajectories of others, meaning they can (and often should) be analysed and transformed with both in mind (Blue, Shove, Carmona and Kelly, 2016). It is not only the integration of elements therefore that can transform practice, but the strengthening or weakening of relationships between practices in particular socio-temporal spaces.

Within practice theory, individuals are captured by specific arrangements, and these sustain so long as individuals continue to devote their time, attention and resources towards them. Interventions, policy-based or otherwise, thus only create impact when they are taken up in (and through) practice. This means considered, practice-orientated interventions which surround the widespread distribution of materials, meanings and competencies, along with the role of policies on configuring relations between practices, shaping their trajectories and the careers of those who carry them, both forging and breaking links, relationships, networks and partnerships, offer a conceptual framework to build programmes which address systematic challenges such as climate change or physical inactivity (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

8.2.2 Sensitising Concepts

In addition to utilising the three elements model, this research employed the concepts of anchoring practices (Swidler, 2001) and affective practice (Wetherell, 2015) as heuristic devices to compliment the theory. Swidler's anchoring practices (2001) was employed to highlight how certain practices are more readily adopted by certain populations, taking up more time, attention and resource and thus becoming central and governing practices in their daily lives. They do this by operating as enactments of implicit 'constitutive rules' (Swidler, 2001, p.95), an example of which for females could be complying with gender norms and appearing feminine (Mahalik et al., 2005). One consequence of this anchoring practice is the avoidance of sport due to its reputation as a site and celebration of orthodox masculinity (Connell, 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The concept has been used to understand the ordering of human activity as well as shifts in primary practice and forms of practice, prevalent within the fields of journalism (Meijer, 2020; Raetzsch and Lünenborg, 2020), teaching (Nelson and Johnson, 2017), management (Ahrens, 2017) and breast cancer activism (Radley and Bell, 2007).

The concept was particularly useful in understanding the nature of how practices were bundled and ordered for young women, and often differently for the committed participants compared to the more inactive or semi-active participants. Where activities such as socialising or using social media were bundled with PA for almost all of the girls, the anchoring practices were weighted differently across the continuum of participation with the more inactive individuals being governed by more sedentary forms of activity. Understanding how practices are ordered differently for different carriers is key for understanding where the locus of intervention needs to be, as well as being valuable for transferable learning in terms of understanding how and why PA becomes an anchor of practice for the more committed individuals, highlighting what elements and practice relations might be useful to develop to promote sustainable active practice. Whilst it is beneficial therefore to study the span of practices across a carrier's life, there is value in putting particular analytical emphasis on anchoring practices given the role they play in reproducing larger systems of discourse and practice (Swidler, 2001).

A sensitivity was also shown to Wetherell's (2015) concept of affective practice. The term describes how practices are laden with affective properties. Rather than

conceptualising affect as an internal property of individuals, practice theory places affects as properties of the 'specific affective 'attunement' or 'mood' of the respective practice' (Reckwitz, 2016, p.119). Once a person is competent in performing a given practice therefore, they incorporate and actualise its mood. Whilst seeking to uncover the affective properties of particular practices, the research drew on affect generators and affective atmospheres to understand how affective properties influenced the carrying of practices across space and time. This was most prevalent within the *Walking and Talking* study with Natalie.

As Covid-19 lockdown restrictions eased, Natalie discussed the community buzz and joyful affective atmosphere that formed part of her walking practice. The *depressing* aura of being outside on dark, cold, wet evenings served to inhibit Natalie's walking and promote sedentary activity, intensified by the safety concerns surrounding walking in a *dodgy place*. Natalie also discussed memories precipitated by affective atmospheres and generators in her surroundings, revealing how revisiting certain landmarks reminded her of building treehouses in her childhood, thus reconnecting her with her surroundings. Incorporating a line of questioning surrounding affect served to encourage Natalie to consider how affective elements could add additional layers of enjoyment or satisfaction to her experiences, something she could draw on when she needed extra motivation to be active, was feeling more down than usual or simply wanted that form of emotional connection. In this way, it was a practice in developing competency and meaning in understanding how walking/PA can be laden with affect and how we can use this to make activities more appealing or problem-solve and combat when negative affects are particularly powerful.

The concept was useful therefore to understand why certain activities were favourable or unfavourable based on the idea of affective properties of certain practices, identifying an additional area of exploration and intervention. The key when incorporating the concept of affect, as highlighted by Wetherell, McConville and McCreanor (2019), is to not fall victim to fetishising affect or emotion, isolating the 'affecting moment' or 'hit of events' (such as fury, tears, elation) as the unit of analysis (p.29). Rather, researchers should study how patterns, orders and regularities of affect derive from past practices, identities, material-social locations, and forms of privilege or disadvantage that embed specific forms of affect and reinforce their absorption by

a particular practice for a particular population, thus shedding light on how affects are collectively experienced as a dimension of a given practice.

Finally, references to Bourdieu's key theoretical concepts have been and will continue to be infused throughout this thesis. These include the concepts of field, capital, habitus and symbolic violence, included for their ability to further develop the research findings through a practice lens given Bourdieu's significant contribution to the origins of practice theory in Outline of a Theory of Practice (1972) and published work thereafter. Specifically, the addition of Bourdieu's concepts addresses a notable gap within the three elements model and practice theory more widely, that is the absence of politics and power, and specifically how they operate within the theory, a significant discussion when studying disadvantaged populations. Simply put, practices are neither evenly distributed nor evenly accessible across populations and as such, the material benefits of those practices are also unevenly felt. This will be discussed further in the conclusion of the thesis, under *Limitations and Future Research Directions.*

8.2.3 Evaluating *Walking and Talking*

The purpose of the *Walking and Talking* programme was to pilot an alternative form of PA intervention. As has been discussed throughout this thesis, interventions which have relied upon behaviour change frameworks have frequently received moderate results at best (Carmacho-Miñano, LaVoi and Barr-Anderson, 2011), frequently due to a tendency to overly simplify the complex process of PA participation (Adams and White, 2005; Hopkins et al., 2020). Whilst the simplest aim of the pilot was to increase moderate PA levels as a result of increasing daily steps, the wider aim, as with any novel research methodology, was to pilot a different approach for understanding and transforming practice.

This is not to say concepts and elements of behavioural science were not incorporated into the study in an informal way. For example, as with Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, the programme attempted to enhance competency and autonomy in the subject so that she was capable of going walking and working PA into her daily schedule and practice. Likewise, one could argue Natalie did loosely

transition through stages of behaviour throughout the walking programme, exhibiting behaviours typically associated with the action, maintenance and relapse stages of the transtheoretical model (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984). However, the pilot attempted to overcome the pitfalls of such approaches, not limiting itself to facilitating linear progressions through stages of behaviour or seeking to satisfy a fixed number of needs (attitude, competency, autonomy etc) and expecting behaviour to transform as a result. In essence, the approach was more based on 'doing' and addressing materials, meanings and competencies through this.

The researcher adopted the position of a sort of *practice mentor*, discussing Natalie's relationship with PA, in addition to her daily life and how PA could be incorporated more successfully. Where barriers or elemental conflicts were reported, the researcher attempted to challenge perceptions and uncover accessible ways to overcome them. Natalie was then encouraged to trial these and report back on her experience. The aim of increasing Natalie's PA levels by reaching 7000 steps per day on weekdays was not consistently met. However, whilst this was one indicator of success of the programme that was not achieved, the real aim and value lay in piloting a novel approach which uncovered new understandings and methods to transform behaviour, or in this case, shift practice. With that in mind, this was a valuable exercise in using a practice-based approach. Adopting the three elements model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012), and concepts such as anchoring practices (Swidler, 2001) and affective practice (Wetherell, 2015) provided analytical tools to study the alignments, conflicts and links between practice elements and bundles at a granular level. By studying relations in such close detail and repeatedly challenging existing constellations of elements and practices, one could intervene in a more rigorous and sustainable way.

For example, socialising was a key anchor of practice for Natalie. Walking and socialising became somewhat bundled as one sociable form of PA for her, and to avoid such intimate bundling that the practice of walking could not occur without having company, the pilot sought to intervene. Whilst music, podcasts and photography were discussed, Natalie opted to walk alone with her dogs, something she deemed a positive experience and viable option for when human company was not available. This exercise targeted multiple avenues to shift practice. It offered material additions

such as music and dogs as a filibuster for human company. It promoted competency by influencing Natalie to trial walking alone. This meant she developed experience in walking safely, knowing what materials to employ when was alone to ensure she still had a positive experience, and simply being competent at being alone. This in turn allowed the development of positive meanings, that walking alone could be done whilst catering to potential safety risks and being alone with thoughts was not the negative experience she might have anticipated.

In everyday life, practices will compete for time, space and resource (Watson, 2012), and we often see PA lose out to more heavily prioritised activities. Accordingly, the pilot also sought to harness perhaps the most powerful anchor of Natalie's practice, socialising, as a means to promote walking. For example, Natalie did not get much time to herself with her mother due to commitments and competing demands. Walking was something Natalie's mother was eager to do owed to pre-existing health conditions. The pilot thus encouraged practice links to develop between being active and bonding with her mother, encouraging a bundle of practices to develop since it was an opportunity to address multiple needs via one practice. Put simply, this bonding might not have occurred without the opportunity to walk, or if it had occurred, might have been done in a sedentary way. It was an attempt therefore to 'kill two birds with one stone' and substitute isolated practices with one bundled version (Spurling et al., 2013).

Crucially, adopting a practice-based approach was also fundamental in uncovering the value-action gap that continued to persist throughout the walking programme. To reiterate, a value-action gap illustrates a value-behaviour inconsistency where strongly held beliefs, desires or values fail to translate into corresponding action (Blake, 1999; Shove, 2010; Peattie, 2010; Essiz, Yurteri, Mandrik and Senyuz, 2022). Used heavily within sustainability research (Young et al., 2009; Farjam et al., 2019; Park and Lin, 2020), the value-action gap (sometimes termed intention-behaviour gap or attitude-behaviour split) has also been evidenced in lifestyle behaviours such as exercise and healthy eating (Rhodes and Dickau, 2012; Rhodes and deBruijn, 2013; Faries, 2016). Natalie consistently demonstrated a value-action gap. She showed a desire to play badminton with her friend but never did. She verbally committed to walking on more days, for longer or faster periods but did not consistently do so. The practice approach

was highly useful in isolating the granular practice conflicts which reinforced the value-action gap, providing a further space in which to intervene.

The aforementioned are just three examples of ways in which practice theory provided a toolkit for identifying core elements of behaviour/practice as well as how certain activities can be bundled together and become co-dependent based on suitability and common goals. Uncovering such explanations subsequently provides practical grounds in which to intervene, whether by having empirical evidence of a value-action gap, working with participants to recraft elements and practices, or substitute or transform how practices interlock via bundling, sequencing and synchronisation (Spurling et al., 2013). As with any pilot, there is much room for refinement. For example, with regards to the value-action gap specifically, the researcher as practice mentor could have challenged the participant more on the inconsistencies between their intentions and behaviours. Naturally, however, this is a fine line to tread with voluntary participants and particularly young people. Additionally, the research could have piloted different elemental or bundle transformations or incorporated a long-term follow up measure to gauge Natalie's practice post-programme. A key recommendation from this research therefore will be to further develop the approach, building the body of work surrounding practice-based interventions by employing various research methods to highlight, challenge, problem-solve and evaluate behaviour when attempting to shift practice.

8.3 Challenges for Addressing the Double Jeopardy

8.3.1 Embedding Practice from a Young Age

It is a common finding that adolescents, and particularly female adolescents begin to prioritise other interests as they age, where activities such as socialising, educational attainment and building romantic relationships begin to anchor young people's time (Inchley, 2013; Mikaelssom, Rutberg, Lindqvist and Michaelson, 2020; Bhatnagar, Foster and Shaw, 2021). Additionally, there were a number of material, symbolic and competency-based conflicts that resulted in the girls from this research withdrawing from PA, including fear of judgement and exclusion from males, lack of motivation to participate, lack of time (or lack of competency/motivation to make time), and

compulsory yet undesirable uniforms and kits, all of which have been well reported in the literature (Clark and Paechter, 2007; Whitehead and Biddle, 2008; Corr, McSharry and Murtagh, 2018; Cowley et al., 2020; Rosselli et al., 2020).

A less reported finding, although one that has likely been present if not explicit in numerous studies into girls' PA participation, was an unwillingness to be 'comfortable being uncomfortable', that is dealing with negative affective bodily sensations when exerting oneself and pushing the boundaries of fitness. This was best illustrated by Natalie who, when encouraged to increase the intensities of her walks or try running during the *Walking and Talking* programme, would frequently not do so on account of feeling uncomfortable with the bodily sensations (despite agreeing to increase the intensities during interviews, illustrating a persistent value-action gap (Shove, 2010)). In contrast, Natalie would often persist through uncomfortable gymnastics sessions despite experiencing painful sensations caused by tendonitis in her wrists and as a result of having one leg shorter than the other.

Stating 'I feel really rewarded that I just carried on going' (Interview 4, June 2021), Natalie strived to conquer any negative bodily sensations in gymnastics, suggesting she carried a different symbolic meaning and competency to perform this practice compared to pushing the boundaries of walking/running. The likely factor here was the embedded practice Natalie had built and continually reinforced through years of gymnastics participation, meaning she was capable and comfortable to push herself beyond negative bodily sensations in the name of skill mastery but also knew when to withdraw from sessions on account of pushing too far and straying into damaging territory. Gymnastics was such an embedded practice in Natalie's life that despite dropping out of the sport on a few occasions, she always returned on account of missing the experience and the people, in addition to attending sessions during 'off days' where for those same reasons, she would miss planned walks as part of the research programme.

An additional factor that likely allowed Natalie's practice to embed, as well as characterised many of the 'committed' participants' behaviour in the field settings (that is those individuals who participated in a way consistent with the aims of the session and thus were meeting their PA recommendations) was early experiences in sport and

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PA. Interviews revealed that many of those within the gymnastics setting, as well as Daphne from the youth club and Liv from the C25K club (both of whom were participating in sport and PA outside of their respective field clubs), had positive early experiences in sport and PA where they had been participating from a young age and were encouraged and supported by family members to be active. The impact of positive early experiences and family support on sustained and lifelong relationships with PA are well documented (Thompson, Humbert and Mirwald, 2003; Lounassalo et al., 2019; Strandbu, Bakken and Stefansen, 2019).

There is significant value therefore in targeting young children with positive, early PA experiences in a variety of settings so that active habits and dispositions can form as early as possible. As some of the girls stated, they did not always have positive experiences in PE due to the gender-based hierarchies exhibited by teachers, exclusion from male students and compulsory kits. They also desired more choice of activities to sample and choose from. For many children, PE is their only opportunity to be physically active. It is essential therefore to take advantage of the captive audience and provide enjoyable experiences that encourage children to repeatedly engage. Additionally, given the power of the family as a primary agent of socialisation (Foote, 2000) and the need for familial support in allowing young people to engage in PA (Ha et al., 2019) there is value in the continued investment in family engagement projects, such as those delivered by StreetGames and indeed the gymnastics setting within this research. This research would argue, however, that there is additional value in adopting, even if loosely, the tools associated with a practice approach to further develop existing PA/PE provision and family engagement projects. That is to incorporate the points and tools discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter and as with the *Walking and Talking* programme, continually support, challenge and evaluate people's relationship with PA where there is capacity to do so, in order to conquer elemental conflicts that result in inactivity.

8.3.2 Necessity and Functional Activity

The *Walking and Talking* programme revealed that for Natalie, her PA and daily steps were the highest, and sedentary time the lowest, on days where these were necessitated, often by external forces and institutions. Natalie had to attend college,

she had to at least minimally participate in college practicals to pass her course, and she had to spend long hours standing at work if she wanted an income. Whilst gymnastics and being active with friends were choices, they were significant enough anchors of behaviour to warrant being a necessity, potentially because they fulfilled a social need.

Natalie's walking and activity levels were highest on days where the aforementioned activities took place, suggesting that we cannot underestimate the value of necessity in encouraging PA participation. It is appreciated that PA participation is based on a complex interaction between many factors. However, evidence suggests that where there is no other choice but to walk or be active, many people will do so. For example, the policy and infrastructure of cities such as Amsterdam has been designed with active travel in mind, providing safe routes and prioritisation for bicycles and walkers while limiting the use of motorised vehicles (Rietveld and Daniel, 2004; Buehler et al., 2011). Research has identified that in Amsterdam, men and women complete 41% and 55% over the minimum recommended PA level per day respectively through walking and cycling (Fishman, Böcker and Helbich, 2015). The 'human infrastructure' of active travel specifically has reinforced the practice over time, making it a normalised activity and anchor of practice that is increasingly performed by future generations and area newcomers (Nello-Deakin and Nikolaeva, 2019).

In contrast, when more freedom or choice is afforded, in a world where PA has effectively been engineered out of our lives to make way for convenience, we have more opportunity and are potentially more likely to adopt competing practices. This was highlighted by Simon, where StreetGames insight identified that sedentary time for young people increased significantly during school holidays due to the disappearance of term-time habits. Simon also highlighted how this was especially pronounced for disadvantaged families who could not afford youth provision in the school holidays since the priority of spend lay elsewhere. This mirrored findings by Weaver et al. (2019) who identified that after a 3-week holiday, children engaged in 33 minutes more sedentary time and 12 minutes lee moderate-to-vigorous PA per day. Additionally, Emm-Collinson et al. (2019) found that cost, location and age appropriateness were key barriers for signing older children up to school holiday

provision, with a reliance on grandparents for caring duties during school holidays often also contributing to increased sedentary time.

Studies have identified that increased sedentary time is associated with increased television, computer or gaming activity (Khunti et al., 2007; van Sluijs, Page, Ommundsen and Griffin, 2010; Carson et al., 2016). Acknowledging the significance of technology as a material and symbolic element in young people's lives, the youth club team incorporated Fitbits into their lockdown provision, encouraging the youths to get active, monitor their progress and report it back to the club. Rachel found this to be a highly effective method of engagement, with the young people consistently participating and exceeding step targets, the older teenage girls engaging with the project and one individual with a particularly poor lifestyle transforming their behaviour by increasing PA levels, sleeping during the night and feeling happier overall.

To conclude this section, functional PA could offer a fruitful avenue for increasing PA participation. Infrastructure plays a key role in where PA can take place while institutions play a key role in when PA can take place, including the degree to which it is necessitated (Spurling et al., 2013). The relation between the two thus offers a valuable area of study and whilst transforming travel infrastructure and habits is a monumental task, small steps could be taken to encourage such behaviours. Examples could include incentivising PA and active travel or creating active social networks to sustain such transformations once they begin. Initiatives such as the Daily Mile have demonstrated success in increasing levels of moderate PA and physical fitness and decreasing body composition (Chesham et al., 2018), illustrating the benefits of mandatory PA opportunities. As always, however, it is about ensuring that sufficient PA takes place during these opportunities and ensuring positive relationships with PA are forged during the process, something that could be facilitated by challenging inactivity or resistance through a practice lens.

8.3.3 Combatting Male Influence

As illustrated throughout the results chapters, the presence, behaviour and even anticipation of certain behaviours from boys had a significant influence over the ways in which girls were active, if they were active at all. Within the youth club, boys

frequently dominated spaces such as the pool table and AstroTurf court, and crucially, these were the spaces in which the club's PA offer was usually delivered. During fieldwork, many of the girls verbalised their fears of getting hurt or being excluded from activities. Girls were also publicly evaluated and critiqued for musical choices and pool performances to the point that some would avoid them altogether.

Male domination was not reserved solely for the youth club. Elsewhere, research participants noted how boys would exclude them from mixed-sex activities and criticise their performance when they were included. Additionally, boys appeared to influence mixed PE lessons with teachers prioritising male-dominated activities. The common result was female exclusion, whether physically by males not including them, or by girls inhibiting participation to avoid injury, criticism or ostracism.

The concept of exclusionary practice has been used in a plethora of studies to illustrate how certain groups have been underrepresented or ostracised from certain activities. For example, Claringbould, Knoppers and Elling (2004) explored gender and ethnicity within sports journalism owing to the overrepresentation of white males in broadcasting and subsequent exclusion of women and ethnic minorities. Bridges (2019) meanwhile studied exclusionary practices within masculinity studies, owing to the disproportionate power and status within the field afforded to a small group of white men and categorisation of feminist scholarship in the field as a subgroup of masculinity studies. Additionally, McNeill, Friedman and Chavez (2016) examined exclusionary disciplinary practices, such as suspension and expulsion. A mainstay of disciplinary practices within public education, these are used to reduce undesirable or disruptive behaviours in students. It was identified that exclusionary disciplinary practices were administered too frequently for minor offences which disrupted students' development, in addition to being administered in a biased way towards African American students and individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, and those experiencing disadvantage, without supporting evidence that these groups misbehaved at higher rates (Render et al., 1986; Fenning and Rose, 2007; Fiore and Reynolds, 1996; Ruck and Wortley, 2002). Exclusionary practices are thus often utilised as a method to exclude minority groups and reinforce the dominance of others, with harmful effects on the ousted population.

The exclusionary behaviours were acts of symbolic violence. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence refers to the subordinating effects of hidden structures on people that reproduce and maintain social domination in covert ways, manifesting in social norms dictated by a dominant group (Colaguori, 2010). Critically, symbolic violence is generally not practiced as deliberate acts of dominance by hegemonic groups, but rather an unconscious reinforcement of the status quo that suits the dominant group. This violence usually is exercised with the victim's complicity (Bourdieu, 1998). For example, symbolic violence might present itself within class or gender relations, where all parties agree with middle and upper classes being more intelligent or cultured and males being stronger compared to the lower classes and female counterparts (Southerton, 2011). For Bourdieu, the power of symbolic violence lays in its misrecognition from subordinate groups. It relies upon:

> *The set of fundamental, prereflexive assumptions that social agents engage in by mere fact of taking the world for granted, of accepting the world as it is, and of finding it natural because their mind is constructed according to cognitive structures that are issued out of the very structures of the world.*

> (1998, p.168)

Instances of symbolic violence were presented throughout Bourdieu's *La Domination Masculine* (1990) which examined 'the paradox of doxa': why the symbolic order of the world is generally respected, even by those most disadvantaged by it. Gender relations thus provided a fertile ground to explore this, given the widely accepted dominance of males and 'natural order' in what has historically been termed a man's world. Numerous studies have used the concept of symbolic violence to examine power relations, including a study by Beltrán-Carrillo et al. (2012) who explored the negative experiences of inactive male and female students in PE settings, drawing on notions of gendered performativity and symbolic violence to illustrate how those negative experiences resulted in inactivity. The term gendered performativity analyses how discursive production and practical reiteration can result in the emergence of multiple gendered identities. Here, gender is socially constructed and developed, with gendered discourses materialising onto and into bodies (Butler, 1990).

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Beltrán-Carrillo et al. (2012) found that rejection and exclusion of those with lower skill levels was commonplace, in both elite systems as well as, problematically, school sport. For inactive males, there were experiences of aggression and scolding from more dominant males in their teams/sports. Pupils of both sexes had been harassed or treated with contempt in PE by other students, and perhaps most worryingly, symbolic violence had been institutionalised to such an extent that PE teachers, 'under the guide of a pseudoegalitarian approach demanded levels of physical performance that were realistically only obtainable by skilful pupils' (p.17). PE teachers were thus judging pupils' performances against the benchmark of the most skilful individuals in the class, threatening lower grades for students who did not meet that standard, in addition to exhibiting favouritism within the classes. It was argued that less able students were experiencing symbolic violence by being institutionally forced to be judged by a performative criterion which overtly favoured high ability and reinforced a gender performativity culture where only the most skilful (usually boys) could succeed, which both excluded and encouraged self-exclusion from those less able (Beltrán-Carrillo et al., 2012).

Whilst conducted in a school setting using a mixed sex sample, the aforementioned findings support the results of this research, that skilled males performed exclusionary practices that were at times legitimised by leaders, thereby ostracising females. Both this research and Beltrán-Carrillo et al.'s (2012) study highlight how these hegemonic and exclusionary behaviours were accepted as normalised practice by the boys performing them, teachers leading the sessions and those suffering at the hands of the behaviour (male or female). During fieldwork, when queried on whether the boys could limit their aggressive behaviour within PA sessions, Amelia stated *'I think it's just in their nature to be like it'* (Interview, 12/11/2019). The findings suggest that all parties accepted this behaviour as the natural order, reinforcing a gendered habitus which favoured hegemonic male practice. This is highly problematic when, by accepting the natural order, individuals are continually participating in it, reconstructing the habitus and further legitimising the subordination of girls.

Years of continual reinforcement has meant tackling male domination is no easy process. However, the three elements model provides a useful framework for identifying points to intervene. Specifically, this research would advocate for more

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meaning and competency-based work surrounding gender relations for males as well as females. This could educate both sexes on why such dominant behaviour is not appropriate in neutral PA spaces, as well as enhance competency surrounding decreasing that behaviour in males, voicing concerns and dealing with criticism for both sexes. Within the youth club, attendees worked with leaders to co-produce a code of conduct, with leaders attempting to challenge any discriminatory behaviour they witnessed surrounding gender or otherwise. The leaders were conscious not to segregate sexes unnecessarily, not wishing to hold girls-only competitions unless there was a strong desire or need to since they wanted to encourage inclusivity.

Within the youth club, there was time and capacity to spend on educational opportunities which might not be afforded within the gymnastics and C25K club, particularly for the former where there would likely be pressure from parents for their financial investments. However, these educational opportunities are not sufficiently tackled in school nor generally provided elsewhere, meaning wherever there is opportunity to provide them, they could be highly worthwhile in teaching lifelong lessons in appropriate behaviour. Given that sport and PA is such a fertile arena for dominant, hegemonic masculine practices to flourish, providing occasional workshops or learning opportunities which challenge existing practice constellations and rework meanings and competencies in response to enhanced education is a key recommendation from this project. These workshops could be utilised for both young people *and* parents in terms of transforming their understanding of the value of holistic PA beyond the physical benefits.

8.4 Practice-Based Solutions

8.4.1 Utilising Anchors of Practice

Fieldwork illustrated that in many instances, PA was not a powerful enough anchor of practice *alone* to get inactive girls sufficiently active. As discussed earlier, those who were more readily anchored by PA or sport were generally the girls who had supportive families and positive early experiences in PA, something well supported in the literature (Thompson, Humbert and Mirwald, 2003; Lounassalo et al., 2019; Strandbu, Bakken and Stefansen, 2019). For them, exercise had become an embedded practice

in their lives that they were happy to order the rest of their lives around. For the more inactive or semi-active girls, however, this was not the case despite many of the 'sufficient conditions' (Coalter, 2013) required to be active, such as having choice over the activities and clothing worn, being satisfied. Observations and interviews revealed that daily practice for these groups was more readily anchored by activities such as socialising, posting on social media, or wearing desirable clothing, with PA participation often fitting around these governing activities.

Importantly, it is possible to transform the existing nexuses of practice for inactive populations. Lottie, who was once heavily resistant to PA, had transformed her behaviour over the course of 18 months to attending the gym five days per week. Rachel highlighted Lottie's increasing age and value on health and well-being as drivers of this change, in addition to Lottie's friends regularly meeting up to exercise together. This is a prime example of recrafting, substituting, and changing how practices interlock (Spurling et al., 2013). Socialising with friends was a key anchor that would be performed no matter what and could be done in a variety of different ways. The girls had shifted PA practice to incorporate a social dimension, substituted sedentary social time for active social time, and utilised a different infrastructure and institution (the gym) to allow the separate activities of socialising and exercising to become bundled, something that may not have been permitted in a PE setting for example.

Similarly, success for incorporating technology into PA to enhance engagement and enjoyment was prevalent throughout fieldwork and has been supported by Rogers (2017), Bird et al. (2019) and Mouatt et al. (2020). The above example along with countless others throughout the thesis, illustrate how favourable elements and anchors of practice observed within a population can be incorporated into pre-existing practices and bundles in varying ways to promote positive shifts in behaviour. There was general agreement between girls, club leaders and senior policymakers surrounding topics such as relaxing clothing standards, incorporating technology, taking photographs and affording more choice over activities, meaning incorporating these elements/practices was more possible. Naturally, the desire for some elements/practices and the ability to provide them varied across the different roles within the research sample, meaning diplomacy was required at times.

For example, the wish to take photographs was stronger among the girls, as well as more readily allowed in the more informal C25K and youth club settings compared to the gymnastics setting who had to comply with British Gymnastics' policy. Shifting practice to incorporate photography as part of the gymnastics offer would thus require a conversation between all invested parties to determine an appropriate outcome. Additionally, there was generally strong agreement between girls, club leaders and senior policymakers surrounding relaxing kit standards, providing clothing was safe for the activity and in the case of gymnastics, revealing enough to see joint flexibility and thus judge performance. There was an increasing emphasis however, likely in part due to the Whyte Review into abuse in gymnastics (Whyte, 2022) and an increasing emphasis on engaging minority ethnic groups gymnastics (British Gymnastics, 2021), to consider the appropriateness of stipulating such revealing clothing for adolescent women. So, whilst relaxing kit standards was a somewhat straightforward solution, parties had to negotiate the degree to which they were relaxed.

Utilising favourable elements and anchors therefore to recraft, substitute, transform and shift practice is a viable solution to transforming behaviour and ultimately dispositions. A key consideration of this approach however, revealed during fieldwork, is the need to balance the addition of favourable elements/anchors with the subtraction from PA that is at risk of occurring. Examples of this phenomenon included the permission of smartphones and photographs in C25K sessions which, for many of the girls, subtracted from the PA that they were supposed to be doing. This is a significant issue when youth programmes such as these are continually invested in, in part because of their capacity to raise PA levels for a target population. The purpose here is not to be overly critical on those clubs. This research revealed just how difficult it can be to get disadvantaged girls active (Garn et al., 2013; Kinsman et al., 2015; Owen et al., 2017). Additionally, the clubs were engaging the girls in some, if not sufficient PA, which is preferable to nothing at all and in the case of the youth club, leaders were exposing young people to other positive lifestyle behaviours such as healthy eating and building positive relationships, meaning there was a limited capacity for increasing PA. It is still important, however, to highlight where improvements can and should be made to ensure opportunities to increase PA levels are maximised.

Of the three field settings, the gymnastics club was most successful at balancing meeting the girls' needs (such as incorporating technology, providing social time) whilst also ensuring they were meeting the aims of the session (refining gymnastics skills, learning routines). This was likely in part due to the club retaining a traditional sport and performance structure alongside their more informal PA provision, meaning stricter forms of leadership were not uncommon and since the majority of the TeamGym group had grown up participating in gymnastics, they were familiar with adhering to rules. So, whilst the club occasionally allowed smartphones or socialising, they did so at appropriate times and were equally capable of concluding the activities when they began to distract from the PA itself. Given the informal nature of the C25K and youth club, and attendance via participants' own free will, it was more difficult to do this.

A key recommendation from this research therefore is to consider how shifts in practice can be monitored and controlled to avoid unintended outcomes; in this case facilitative elements becoming anchors to such a degree that they subtract from the target practice. Stricter forms of leadership were one way to combat this, illustrated by the gymnastics club as well as Grace, a guest leader at one C25K session. Grace also successfully negotiated PA participation, 'bribing' the group with the promise of handstands after they had run. Additional solutions might include time-chunking PA sessions, so that time is allotted for socialising or smartphone use alongside exercise. Time-chunking refers to 'allocating temporal blocks to specific tasks' (Gaskin and Skousen, 2016, p.4). For example, participants could be granted 10 minutes towards the end of a session for smartphone use, or water breaks and equipment changes could double up as five-minute social breaks. Dedicating times for these activities would mean participants could understand when is an appropriate time to perform them and might be more inclined to stay on task (be active) when expected to be. Once again, employing the three elements model to develop meaning and competency surrounding the purpose of participating in a PA session (to be sufficiently active) and understand there is a time and place for those facilitative anchors could be a valuable intervention.

8.4.2 Adopting a Person-Centred Approach

Recent years have seen a shift towards 'person centredness' as part of a global move to humanise and centralise individuals within services, particularly healthcare (Ward et al., 2018). This has resulted in a robust philosophical and theoretical underpinning of the concept, along with an increasingly significant footprint in policy and practice (van Dulmen et al., 2017; Phelan et al., 2020). The term describes an approach to service delivery which places the beliefs, values and wider context of service users' lives at the centre of decision making (Phelan et al., 2020), crediting people as the best experts on their own lives. The approach is recognised as a core competency within the healthcare workforce (World Health Organisation, 2005; Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018) and has been linked to increased staff well-being and job satisfaction (van der Meer et al., 2018), improved standards in quality and safety of service, enhanced quality of life and higher satisfaction with care (Rathert et al., 2013; Teeling et al., 2020).

Given its success within the field of healthcare, the logic has subsequently evolved into other areas of delivery and research, including social work (Murphy, Duggan and Joseph, 2012), coaching (Joseph, 2014) educational engagement (Korhonen, Linnanmäki and Aunio, 2013) and assessment cultures (Skidmore, Hsu and Fuller, 2018). Of importance to this research is the adoption of person-centred approaches within the field of PA, such as to map PA intervention approaches (Eldredge-Bartholomew, Markham and Kok, 2016), treat diabetes (Kime, Pringle, Rivett and Robinson, 2018) and understand students with low motivation for PE (Franco, Coterón, Huéscar and Moreno-Murcia, 2020).

The girls did not explicitly reference person-centred approaches but did allude to them when discussing the degree of choice they wished to have over activities and input they were willing to provide for leaders when given the opportunity. The degree of consultation that took place with young people within each field setting illustrated that community leaders were committed to using the approach to understand experiences and tailor practice appropriately to increase engagement. The example of the gymnast who wanted to wear a hoody while training and Susan's navigation of the situation, eventually conceding that the hoody was acceptable was a prime example of

considering the perspective of the individual and putting their needs before frequently arbitrary rules or traditions.

As highlighted in the earlier *Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders* chapter, StreetGames were at least in part responsible for the uptake of the approach by each community club. They were key to shifting practice since they addressed all three practice elements: they provided monetary resource and tools to use the approach, training to enhance skills and competency for club leaders, and education and meaning work surrounding why the approach was valuable and appropriate for working with young people. Naturally, it was not always possible to meet the demands of the young people. In some cases, elemental conflicts in finance, logistics and health and safety had to take priority. Additionally, adopting a person-centred approach was understandably more difficult where clubs were stretched for staffing, time and financial resource, along with the contradiction in maintaining an approach where personal choice is paramount but dissuading people from making negative lifestyle decisions.

Interviews revealed that policymakers were also committed to advocating for person-centred approaches. Ioan from Sport Wales discussed how the organisation were transforming their measures of success away from statistical outcomes towards understanding processes and journeys, thereby relieving funding pressures and allowing clubs the capacity to experiment with their engagement methods without fearing they would fail to meet reporting requirements. Similarly, StreetGames' 5 Rights and emphasis on pre-pre-engagement heavily characterised a person-centred perspective. There was strong alignment therefore between all three levels of participation in this research in the value of using a person-centred approach to explore PA behaviour, making it a key recommendation of this project. Importantly, there is also a strong degree of congruence between utilising person-centred and practice-based approaches.

One of the key strengths of practice theory is its ability to deindividualise subjects from an issue such as physical inactivity (Rinkinen and Smits, 2016), whilst also ensuring they are very much connected to the solution (Hopkins et al., 2020). Importantly, decentring the subject does not have to mean completely detaching individuals from

the line of enquiry. As we know, they represent the unique crossing point of a vast array of practices (Reckwitz, 2002). It makes sense therefore to engage them in exploring and understanding what draws individuals, and as a consequence, populations (although this is a reciprocal relationship), to collectively carry specific practices and bundles across space and time. Similarly, the purpose of adopting a person-centred approach is to engage the individual and their specific needs and experiences in the chosen solution/intervention (Phelan et al., 2020). Both approaches can therefore necessitate a 1:1 co-productive approach (or 1:2, 1:3, but always individually tailored).

The *Walking and Talking* study, whilst inherently practice-based, also characterised a heavily person-centred approach, given the degree of 1:1 engagement with Natalie. She co-produced a walking target with the researcher and consistently problem-solved over a number of weeks, reporting elemental agreements and conflicts and actively participating in identifying methods to shift practice. Whilst decentred from the problem, therefore, individuals can be involved in a practice line of enquiry and offer much to say in terms of understanding and shifting practice. The key is to ensure analysis remains around the topic of practice and does not stumble into the territory of analysing actors' personalities or cognitive thoughts (Shove, 2017). Adopting a person-centred approach through a practice lens is thus a viable option for shifting practice on a micro, everyday scale and can provide valuable learning on collective practice within specific populations which could be scaled up and used in a number of ways, some of which will be discussed in the upcoming *Limitations and Future Research Directions* section.

8.4.3 Multi-Practice Facilities

Fieldwork revealed that in many cases, girls did not feel they had (safe) access to materials, spaces and opportunities to try various sports and physical activities, negatively influencing their perceived competency and the meanings they attributed to PA. At the time of the research, there was an emerging trend of PA libraries for certain populations. Lucy discussed her experience with a 'boot recycling station' while the gymnastics club offered an equipment library with a variety of sport and PA materials available to the local community on a lending basis. Similarly, within the

researcher's own employment, equipment libraries and 'Healthy and Active at Home' packs containing sports equipment and healthy food packages were delivered to families residing in disadvantaged communities with the intention of increasing access (Sport Cardiff, 2022). These instances addressed a material need for families and individuals who did not have the financial resource for certain pieces of equipment or clothing, meaning they were effectively barred from playing certain sports and forms of PA. Whilst we might not expect total behaviour transformation as a result of this, the provision of these items facilitated an elemental conflict by making a previously impossible material possible. Thus, there was an increased possibility for competency and positive meanings to develop through increased opportunity to craft them.

In addition to the importance of materials, the findings from this research along with supporting literature (Shove, Watson and Spurling, 2015; Hult and Bradley, 2017; Lamond and Everett, 2019) illustrate the significance of space and infrastructure on facilitating certain practices whilst inhibiting others; the gendered arena of the youth club AstroTurf court being a prime example of inhibiting female PA participation. Simon discussed how StreetGames were considering alternative investment approaches, particularly in the area of capital investment of space. The organisation was considering how certain individuals were not comfortable in leisure centres and needed more informal spaces in the community to try PA, along with how material additions to PA settings, such as shutters in swimming pools, could accommodate certain populations who were not able to participate in the settings as they originally stood.

Alongside the need for more casual PA spaces where individuals have the opportunity to try activities in an informal way, we could also consider how PA practices are bundled for certain demographics and look to develop spaces which accommodate more than one practice. Earlier in the thesis, the recent opening of the Bike Hub in Cardiff was discussed owed to its forging of multiple practices in one multifunctional space. Once travelling, showering and changing practices are factored into a PA event, the duration frequently extends long beyond the exercise itself. The time poverty (Giurge, Whillans and West, 2020; Hyde, Greene and Darmstadt, 2020) associated with contemporary living, where people are expected to work full-time, socialise, retain tidy homes, fulfil childcare duties and so on frequently means people

do not have the capacity for PA or other life enriching behaviours/hobbies, not to mention the added difficulty in incorporating PA for those who have no desire to.

The investment in space Simon discussed earlier could thus consider how PA settings could incorporate other anchoring practices or locate PA opportunities in close proximity to settings which accommodate anchoring practices, such as near shopping centres or public transport stations to capture commuters. Following the conclusion of fieldwork, the gymnastics club transformed a space within the setting to create a café to much success for staff, parents and gymnasts alike. The club offered barista training for gymnasts, as well as loyalty rewards and incentives like free hot drinks for waiting parents. The addition of a waiting area with tables, electrical sockets, Wi-Fi and refreshments provided parents will a viable space to socialise or work whilst waiting for their children, and also a space for young people to socialise and do homework around gymnastics, two anchoring practices for that population.

When creating or enhancing PA spaces, organisations could thus look to identify practices which have successfully been bundled and carried with PA as an option to incorporate into the new infrastructure. Where choices have to be made by young people between seeing friends and exercising or finishing homework and exercising, these multi-practice facilities would allow both practices to co-occur in the same location, partly removing the competition for time and attention between the practices. The key, however, is to ensure that these spaces are equally as accessible for individuals looking for informal PA opportunities as they are for more performance-based practitioners who might spend more time at the settings. Monitoring and intervening in hegemonies of space colonisation therefore is paramount to ensure interventions such as these are addressing the needs of the groups who most need them, rather than the 'worried well' population (Gray, Dineen and Sidaway-Lee, 2020) who, in the case of sport and PA, are already meeting their PA recommendations and are not in need of intervention. Once again, a practice-based toolkit such as the three elements model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012) could facilitate this process.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The findings presented in this thesis highlight the complex relationship with PA presented by many young women residing in areas of social and economic disadvantage; that is facing the double jeopardy. Fieldwork and analysis highlighted that there are a number of factors, both on an individual and a systemic/institutional level that have a significant impact over whether young women are physically active, going some way to explain the disparity in participation levels between the population and their male and/or more affluent counterparts (StreetGames, 2017). The thesis also highlights where practice theory can offer novel insights and tools to intervene in patterns of inactivity and shift practice, complimenting and advancing existing literature and approaches to transform PA participation for this population.

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the main findings and implications from the research project which will be done through four sections. First, there will be a general concluding discussion surrounding how and why practice theory offers a viable alternative approach to exploring and transforming patterns of PA participation among young, disadvantaged women. Second, the aims and objectives of the research will be revisited in light of the empirical findings and critical discussions, describing how the aim and objectives were addressed within the research. Third, a bullet-point summary of the main research contributions will be provided, broken down into theoretical, policy-based and practice-based applications. Fourth, the limitations of the research process will be outlined, highlighting where the approach could be refined and developed in future. Fifth and finally, future research recommendations will be outlined, including a number of key messages as an output of the research to further develop this approach and knowledge area.

9.2 General Concluding Discussion

The knowledge acquired throughout this thesis highlights the numerous and complex issues faced by young women residing in areas of disadvantage in terms of participating in PA, frequently exacerbated by the intersectional nature of their characteristics. Wishing to complement existing literature and approaches rather than 'reinvent the wheel', this research employed a practice theoretical lens to shift the

object of analysis/intervention and reveal new insights. Where traditional behaviour change approaches focus on macro structures or rational, autonomous agents and their cognitive factors, practice theory seeks out the middle-ground between the two, attempting to understand and transform social practices which in turn shifts behaviour on the individual level as well as on the level of collective society.

Conducting observations and interviews through a practice lens was particularly useful in identifying elemental agreements and conflicts at the singular practice level, as well as the co-occurrence of bundled practices and subordination of PA practices when behaviour was anchored by other activities (outlined in chapter seven *Exploring Practice Constellations*). Of particular significance in mediating involvement in PA were factors such as socialising, technology (including monitoring and analysing practices, taking photographs and using social media), clothing and male judgement and exclusion. The aforementioned factors were consistent across field settings and commitment levels, albeit to different degrees.

For example, those who practiced PA more consistently and regularly met national PA recommendations (UK Government, 2019) often reported enhanced competency, increased access to (or competency using) materials and more positive understandings and meanings of factors such as dealing with male exclusion and making time for PA, allowing them to overcome such hurdles. On the contrary, those who were inactive or only partially committed lacked a harmonious relationship between the elements involved in PA as a practice. Most frequently, this appeared to be a lack of understanding as to what being physically active looked and felt like, as well as a lack of competency in performing this in an appropriate way. Their behaviour thus reinforced them as inactive/partially active individuals, as well as reinforced the double jeopardy phenomenon through collective misunderstanding and competency deficits.

Subsequently, interviews with club leaders and senior policymakers built upon the findings from chapter five, exploring the capacity and desire to implement the changes required by the girls. This was in a bid to effectively triangulate needs, desires and capacities across each level of engagement, from community participant to community provider, to senior policymaker. The aim, to identify agreements and conflicts and

thus areas for intervention. Overall, there was general agreement between the interviewees on the topics discussed and where there were disagreements, this was usually surrounding the extent of implementation rather than disagreement with the topic as a whole.

For example, across each level of engagement, there was an acknowledgement that technology was now a major anchor of young people's lives and was seeping into the PA sphere, with leaders realising it was wiser to use it as a tool rather than fight it altogether. So, whilst there was agreement that technology should be incorporated more in line with the girls' wishes and practice, the extent to which this could occur, and the nature of its incorporation differed across organisations. Where the youth club and C25K club could allow attendees to take photographs more freely for example, the gymnastics club could not, due to safeguarding issues. It was identified that more training and upskilling opportunities would be worthwhile for community providers, more flexible (but responsible) policies with an increased emphasis on the influence of technology and possibly more support for deliverers in terms of how to develop positive relationships between technology and PA without technology completely subordinating PA.

Senior policymakers were attuned to the increasing influence of technology, investing in digital employment roles, future gazing/projection work, digital infrastructure within organisations and training for both the organisations themselves as well as community providers. Where certain organisations noted difficulties in delivering digitally, shifting perceptions (so that leaders allowed technology rather than fought against it) or noted concerns for young people in the degree of their digital usage and subsequent effects on body image and so on, they highlighted elements to target for intervention. For example, providing materials and enhancing competency in delivering digitally or educating and transforming meanings so that leaders understood why it was beneficial to include technology.

Retaining a practice lens thus continually allowed the identification of the granular issues, the problematic elements or *practice links* within given activities across all levels of PA engagement and delivery, and subsequently the areas that needed to be reworked or renegotiated. Importantly, practice was most likely to shift when all parties

were on board and understood each other's needs and capacities. Coproduction and adopting person-centred approaches were thus key to designing sustainable shifts in practice since all invested parties had a voice, and where misalignments did occur, the parties could at least understand each other's perspectives and come to an agreeable solution. This research would thus advocate for combining coproductive and person-centred approaches with practice-based approaches, given the degree of congruence between them and value they offer in transforming behaviour.

The final study, in line with the aims of the research, attempted to understand and shift behaviour within a young woman residing in an area of disadvantage by piloting a practice-based intervention. Utilising findings from both aforementioned studies, the researcher acted as a *practice mentor*, coproducing a walking progamme with a young woman and evaluating her experience via a cyclical practice-based interviewing technique and based upon the three elements model. The objective was to consistently explore Natalie's progress over a number of weeks, identifying what worked as well as what did not work in order to challenge perceptions, address conflicts in elements/practice links and pilot novel practice formations, with the overall aim of incorporating walking as a more consistent everyday practice. Examples of steps taken included incorporating technology, walking with company versus walking alone (or with dogs), coping with changes in weather and researching wider PA opportunities. The value in practice theory for identifying favourable/unfavourable nexuses has been demonstrated, but it was the extended, cyclical and coproductive nature of this approach that was a key strength in unpicking Natalie's practice.

As outlined in chapter seven, *Walking and Talking,* Natalie's walking and thus PA levels did not increase in a manner consistent with the aims of the study. However, the true value of the study laid in piloting an alternative approach to shifting practice and whilst not successful in the latter, the study did highlight a viable intervention approach and the benefits of adopting it. Retaining a practice-analytical lens, the study once again highlighted the granular elemental and bundle-link conflicts that were occurring which resulted in inactivity, but this time with the capacity and resource to intervene. For example, Natalie repeatedly noted how influential social company was for her walking, stating she did not like to be alone with her thoughts. Relying on company for exercise, however, is unsustainable since she would inevitably

experience situations where it would become a choice between exercising alone or not exercising at all. Drawing on findings from the previous studies therefore, the practice mentor challenged Natalie to walk (providing she felt safe to do so) with her dogs or incorporate music/podcasts so she was not alone with her thoughts. Natalie trialled this with her dogs and found it to be a viable option for when her friends or mother were not available, thus enhancing competency and providing an opportunity for positive meanings surrounding the activity to develop.

The pilot also highlighted the persistence of the value-action gap (Blake, 1999), illustrated by Natalie saying she would walk more/for longer durations and try playing badminton with her friend but not doing so (with the exception of one 5km walk). Where Natalie was more resistant to shifting practice, this approach successfully highlighted the reasons behind it and provided practical solutions and points to intervene, whether in materials, meanings or competencies in a singular practice or practice bundle. The cyclical nature of the approach and space to continually challenge perceptions was vital for unpicking Natalie's everyday practice and understanding the ways in which PA could be factored in in a sustainable way, something that was facilitated by the rapport built between Natalie and the practice mentor over the course of the programme. Naturally, there were limitations to the approach which will be discussed in the following section. However, the findings illustrate the value in adopting a practice-based intervention technique which draws on person-centred and coproductive methods to shifts the object of change and analysis away from rational agents towards social practices in a bid to transform behaviour.

9.3 Revisiting the Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research was to critically examine the relationship between physical activity and young women from socially and economically disadvantaged areas through a practice theory lens, with a view to develop novel approaches to enhance community engagement in sport and PA and thereby influence contemporary sport policy. The research objectives created to address the aforementioned aim will be outlined below, followed by a brief discussion on how these were met (or not met) during the research process.

VI. To examine collective practices among disadvantaged girls with varying commitments to PA throughout community settings in the South Wales Valleys region.

VII. To examine practice, policy and provision in community settings and national governing bodies in order to identify alignments and conflicts in needs between girls, club leaders and policymakers.

VIII. To pilot a coproduced practice-based intervention to increase PA participation in the population of disadvantaged girls.

IX. To deploy sensitising concepts such as 'anchoring practices' and 'affective practice' as tools to assess how and why PA is ordered in practitioners' lives in a manner which reinforces the double jeopardy.

X. To critically analyse practice theory as a tool to enhance community sport and PA provision as well as its potential for influencing contemporary sport policy.

I. Study 1, *Exploring Practice Constellations,* allowed the researcher to observe and interrogate shared practice among disadvantaged girls with varying commitments to PA. Key practices which anchored behaviour and PA engagement included utilising technology, living life through the lens, getting dressed and navigating males. The study revealed a myriad of practice elements and bundles that could be drawn upon to create favourable opportunities to practice PA.

II. Study 2, *Triangulating Practice with Key Stakeholders,* provided an opportunity to trace practices, needs, capacities and desire for PA opportunities across the girls, community leaders and senior policymakers, revealing both alignments and minor conflicts and thus opportune areas for intervention (outlined in the *Discussion* chapter). One example is the desire and value in incorporating technology into PA sessions but doing so in a manner consistent with safeguarding policies and one that does not subtract from the level of PA targeted within sessions.

III. Study 3, *Walking and Talking,* provided an opportunity to pilot a practice-based intervention to increase PA engagement through walking. The

study was not successful in consistently increasing PA engagement and findings suggested that value-action gaps were still heavily present within Natalie's daily practice. However, this was a pilot study so further refinement was expected to be necessary and the study was still of significant value in providing an example of how to shift the unit of analysis towards practice in order to reveal novel insights into how to understand and transform PA engagement. So, whilst Natalie's behaviour did not change, the study makes a contribution to a growing body of literature surrounding using practice theory in the field of public health, furthering the lens as an alternative behaviour change approach.

IV.   Swidler's (2001) *anchoring practices* were of significant value in understanding how and why practices, including PA practices, were ordered in girls' everyday lives, revealing the governing activities and elements to bundle with PA in order to create favourable conditions. The use of Wetherell's (2015) *affective practice* revealed a unique dimension to activity that has not been used within the field of practice-based PA research previously. Affective atmospheres and generators were significant in mediating in PA involvement, particularly within certain settings and environments (such as the *dark and miserable* or *dodgy* places that Natalie avoided walking in), indicating an area for future empirical work.

V.   The findings and discussions outlined in this thesis illustrate that practice theory has much to offer the field of sport development and health promotion. The empirical findings offer practical tools and opportunities in which community providers can intervene with practice to promote favourable opportunities for disadvantaged girls, and whilst the in-depth approach could be argued as labour intensive and beyond the reach of strained providers, this thesis has offered practical solutions such as the training of young practice mentors and leaders to combat such an issue. With regards to policy, the practice method calls for a person-centred, coproductive approach (Health Education England, N.D.; Godfrey et al., 2018), something contemporary health policies are frequently advocating for. Additionally, where GAPPA has called for systems-based approaches to increase PA, Spotswood et al. (2021) highlights

how the flexibility of practice theory aligns suitably with whole systems approaches compared to ecologically framed approaches used previously. Importantly, this alternative perspective also accounts for the 'social, material and interrelational features of human activity' (Cohn, 2014, p.159) that occur in between structure and agency and the stages of behaviour change that frequently represent attempts to transform practice, in addition to reframing sociocultural issues as a result of collective practice rather than individual moral responsibilities, avoiding the harmful effects of neoliberal policymaking strategies and highlighting value-action gaps to challenge. Therefore, this research argues that practice theory has much to offer community sport and PA provision, as well as contemporary sport and health policy and with continued refinement, can be a valuable framework for understanding and shifting practice to address 'wicked problems' such as physical inactivity.

9.4 Research Contributions

A short bullet-point summary will now be provided which highlights the research's contribution to knowledge. More specifically, how the combined body of works contribute to the (i) theoretical literature, (ii) impact on policy, and (iii) applications to everyday practice, as well as some future directions for each point, some of which will be explored further in section 9.6.

<u>Theoretical Literature</u>

- **The three elements model in physical activity studies -** The first theoretical contribution from this research was the addition of applied work and empirical evidence to the growing body of literature using practice theory in the fields of public health and PA. More specifically, this research also builds upon the work of Spotswood et al. (2019) in utilising the three elements model in the field of PA, with the findings further legitimising the model as a viable tool for unpicking issues of PA engagement and identifying fertile areas in which practitioners can intervene.

- **Anchoring practices** – This concept was key throughout the research, with the findings highlighting the value in understanding not only that practices can be bundled, but how different practices are weighted in terms of importance in and thus have the power to govern an individual's participation in any other given practice. A concept such as this allows researchers and practitioners to account for the differing levels of power inhabited by a singular practice, and thus better understand how to use that anchor to promote desirable practices and relegate undesirable practices. This research thus advocates for the continued use of anchoring practices in future work alongside the three elements model, as well as potentially developing the concept further as discussed below.

- **Anchoring elements** - Where anchoring practices (Swidler, 2001) received significant attention as a sensitising concept and organising principle, the findings indicated that the concept could possibly be broken down further, into anchoring elements. For example, fieldwork indicated that smartphones were ever-present across a number of practices as a material resource. Whether girls were exercising, socialising, learning or communicating, smartphones frequently played part, indicating that they were an anchoring, material element of practice. Similarly, drawing on an example from earlier in the thesis where people from specific religions and swimming was discussed, it is likely that the meaning attributed to being part of the Islamic faith for example penetrates various practices for women, with that specific meaning element anchoring their daily activities in a significant way. A future research direction could thus be a further breakdown of anchoring practices into anchoring elements, allowing a more granular understanding of what generates (dis)engagement and how to address it.

- **Power and practice theory** – A further theoretical contribution of this research was the attempt to 'place power in practice theory' (Watson, 2016) via the use of Bourdieusian concepts. The three elements model has been critiqued for its conceptual absence of power and politics, since the coexistence of materials, meanings and competencies projected by the three elements does not account for the likely influence inequalities and power relations have over processes of change/stabilisation of practice. Concepts such as habitus, capital and

symbolic violence were thus useful heuristic devices to understand how practices such as PA and exercise were variably carried by different individuals, based on what practices were available to them within their field. A recommendation would therefore be to ensure power is of conceptual focus in future practice-based work, particularly when working with disadvantaged populations. This could be via the adoption of Bourdieusian theory or otherwise, but it is crucial that we avoid bracketing power off when it is fundamental in determining what practices are available to a given population.

- **Affect -** The fifth theoretical contribution was the use of affect as a sensitising concept to accompany the three elements framework. The concept provided an additional dimension to the model, highlighting how certain elements and practices were laden with affective properties which reinforced their carrying by practitioners and collective populations. Fieldwork revealed that affect had a powerful influence over how the girls engaged with PA and should be given conceptual focus in future research. The influence of both power and affect in this research was shown to be significant, and whilst the concepts could be loosely accounted for within the current three elements model via the conceptualisations of materials, meanings and competencies, a possible future research direction could be to consider whether the three elements model needs expanding in order to account for such fundamental drivers of practice.

Impact on Policy

- **Routes to facilitate policy interventions -** According to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), there are four routes through which practice theory could facilitate policy interventions. Policymakers can influence a) the range of elements in circulation, b) the ways in which practices relate to one another, c) the careers and trajectories of practices and those who carry them, and d) the circuits of reproduction. Along with community practitioners loosely utilising practice theory to gather insight and transform provision and engagement (discussed in below section), policymakers could use the principles of practice theory, including the routes above, to create/encourage practices and practice

bundles which more readily support active living. Examples of which based on the research findings will be outlined below.

- **Implementing the research findings -** The research has highlighted a number of elements, practices and practice bundles that could enhance engagement in PA if utilised appropriately. Examples of key elements which facilitated PA participation included kit and smartphones (materials), understanding what constituted meeting PA recommendations and coping with social judgement and male gaze (meanings and competencies). Common anchoring practices were socialising and using technology. Policymakers could consciously influence these elements and practices in order to promote engagement. For example, by providing more funding and institutional support for technological resources and infrastructure within clubs (WiFi, tracking technologies and so on), transforming safeguarding policies to reflect increasing technology use, transforming kit/clothing policies to be more inclusive of diverse needs/identities and encouraging social and informal brands of PA to be developed by clubs. Policymakers within governing organisations are usually at the forefront of deciding how resource is spent, whether that's organisational focus or educational, monetary, or social resource. Policymakers could thus account for the anchoring elements and practices within this research that were consistent across each case setting and consider how they can engineer the range of elements in circulation, the manner in which practices relate to one another, the careers and trajectories of practices and the circuits of reproduction, in order to promote PA participation.

- **Functional physical activity -** A key recommendation from this research which could influence public policy is to consider the importance of functional PA. Here, functional PA is used to refer to PA that is necessitated by participation in everyday activities. For example, Simon from StreetGames highlighted that during school holidays, young people became almost inactive despite have additional time with which to exercise. Similarly, when Natalie finished college for the summer, her daily step count decreased. It is likely that the main reason for this was the lack of functional PA in their lives. They did not have to travel to and from school and walk to lessons each day, and whilst for some this would present an opportunity to be more active, at a time where

sedentary leisure options are increasingly popular, many will not use these opportunities to participate in PA. Naturally, individuals should have autonomy over how they spend their leisure time and indeed how they travel in their daily lives, but it seems when PA is necessitated by certain daily activities, people have no choice but to be more active. In future, policymakers could thus consider how to build functional PA into the daily lives of adolescents (perhaps by evolving a version of the Daily Mile), as well as the wider population. Another example of which could be influencing infrastructure.

- **Active travel infrastructure -** Similarly to the above point, when local infrastructure renders motorised vehicles as unavailable, people often have no choice but to engage in active travel and therefore functional PA. Some participants discussed how they walked to and from school and spent social time with friends walking around their local towns. Due to being unable to drive (material inaccessibility, lack of competency, illegal practice), walking was often understood as the most attainable mode of transport, facilitated by being competent navigating their local area. Policymakers could thus consider the value in de-motorising areas and/or promoting active travel options, fostering a 'human infrastructure' to enhance population level PA participation. Success has been demonstrated in cities such as Amsterdam where materials, meanings and competencies align favourably for active travel practices and have been normalised over generations, creating a positive practice trajectory.

- **Health-enhancing, active spaces -** An additional point on local infrastructure, policymakers and local governments should consider the kinds of spaces and environments they are providing for young people. The location of the youth club promoted unhealthy eating practices owing to its position next to a number of fast-food establishments. Whilst cost will also impact food choices, it is likely that many opted to purchase fast-food because of its proximity to the youth club, allowing socialising to become bundled with eating unhealthy foods. It is an important consideration therefore, where town planners allow spaces targeted towards young people (schools, colleges, youth clubs) to locate themselves, or where unhealthy food chains are permitted to open. Where the likes of StreetGames and Sport Wales are supporting capital investment of space for community organisations, they could build criteria such as this into

their funding applications to promote health and well-being. Additionally, on the subject of space, these organisations could encourage more holistic PA and health-enhancing venues that have healthier options as well as open and informal PA opportunities. Success for this has been demonstrated by the gymnastics club, who have begun delivering open PA sessions with varying activities each week for young people in the community, not just club members, as well as the in-house café space where they have been training gymnasts as baristas and encouraging gymnasts and parents to socialise.

- **Person-centred approach -** A key finding and policy recommendation from this research is to continue to advocate for person-centred approaches within community PA provision, something shown to be occurring within the sector (and wider public sectors), particularly after Covid-19. Whilst this research has identified general trends in practice and favourable/unfavourable elements among young women, at the granular level, it has also identified how the same elements/practices can generate engagement or disengagement based on the individual. It has thus highlighted the need to give individuals an opportunity to voice their feelings and needs. An opportunity to provide input into how they want activities delivered so that they feel heard and can develop positive meanings and competencies in voicing their needs. On a practical level, policymakers should consider how they can provide educational opportunities and resources to support providers in adopting this approach, how they can promote this as a normalised practice within PA provision, creating a positive practice trajectory and growing its number of carriers. Addressing the double jeopardy and physical inactivity as a whole is a complex task, impacted by a myriad of issues, so engaging with individuals on a personal level will be key to unpicking their relationships with PA and understanding how to enhance them.

- **Changing measures of success -** This research highlighted the changes certain governing organisations, such as Sport Wales and StreetGames, are making in terms of how they demonstrate impact and success, along with how they are encouraging community organisations who rely on their funding to do so. This approach is more capable of revealing what works within their provision, as well as what needs changing to increase participation. It also aligns well with adopting a person-centred approach, allowing organisations to

voice the feedback and data they have collected and ensure it is utilised on a more systematic level. This research therefore advocates for the continued provision of policies which require qualitative, experience-based data on participation and engagement in PA along with the supporting statistics that have historically been used as markers of success.

<u>Applications to Practice</u>

- **Adopting the three elements model** – One of the principal reasons for adopting the three elements model in comparison to other conceptualisations of practice theory was due to its simplified framework, defining practice as the interrelations between materials, meanings and competencies. This research has highlighted the value in identifying the often granular, taken-for-granted elements of a given activity, as well as links between practices, which can be powerful enough to generate (dis)engagement for young people. Whilst there is no expectation for community practitioners to grapple with the complexities of practice theory as a theoretical vocabulary, it would likely be manageable for them to consider the impact of materials, meanings and competencies, and specifically how they link together, within their provision. It is recommended therefore, that practitioners adopt the framework, even if loosely, in order to identify both the favourable and problematic elements, practices and links between practices that constitute everyday activity for young people, in order to also identify the most fruitful areas for transformation and where to shift practice to increase PA participation.

- **Person-centred approach** – In order to successfully identify the appropriate elements, practices and practice bundles within provision to increase PA participation, it is vital to adopt an approach whereby the young person is of central focus. A consistent theme throughout Studies 1 and 3 was that young people desired the opportunity to have choice and input into the activities they were doing and felt valued when they did so. As stated above, often the problematic element of a given activity can be minute and overlooked. It is crucial therefore that the young person (or indeed any consumer) has consistent opportunities to provide feedback. It is possible that they will not

always take these opportunities in the first instance. However, some work to encourage their understanding of the importance of giving feedback, as well as competence in voicing their needs should encourage this, and indeed encourage them to take these skills into wider life. It is recommended therefore that community practitioners adopt a person-centred approach, whereby the needs and desires of the target population are placed on equal footing, if not prioritised above the traditions of a given sport/activity, the assumptions of the leaders, the constraints of the environment and so on. Additionally, whilst there will be instances where issues such as health and safety or the regulations of the activity must be prioritised above the desires of the young person, practitioners should explain the reasoning behind this to the young people so that there is an open dialogue where everyone's voice is heard.

- **Peer practice mentors** – One of the key barriers to adopting a person-centred approach, particularly in settings with a high volume of participants, is its resource-intensity. Often, clubs will not have the staff capacity nor time during sessions to ensure that every voice is heard, and every participant's needs are met. Where possible, it is recommended that clubs build these opportunities into their provision, such as monthly feedback sessions. Another option, however, that could fulfil a number of aims, would be to train young people as practice mentors who communicate with participants, problem-solve around their issues (with staff support) and give feedback to the club leaders. Drawing on the findings from Study 3, as well as the gymnastics club's approach for training young leaders, this would provide a workforce who are more familiar with the everyday practices of the target audience, might have a pre-existing rapport with which to tease out and challenge practice, and all the while, settings would be increasing the competency of those practice mentors and building transferable skills and positive meanings with regards to leadership and communication. Training the practice mentors might be resource-intensive at the outset, but would perhaps provide a more sustainable system for consulting participants long-term.

- **Utilise anchors of practice** – The research has highlighted a number of anchors of practice with regards to the daily activities of young women residing in disadvantaged areas. These include using technology, socialising, getting

dressed and navigating males. A key recommendation for community leaders therefore would be to unpick these anchors further within their specific audiences and utilise them to increase PA participation. For example, with regards to technology, practices such as monitoring daily steps and filming skills as a coaching aid were shown to enhance engagement, so leaders improving their competencies, transforming their meanings and providing material resources to do so could increase participation. Importantly, in other circumstances the aforementioned anchors could in fact decrease PA participation, such as when taking photographs or using social media distracted participants from PA. Leaders must therefore monitor unintended consequences and understand how to control anchors of practice to use them in a manner which facilitates PA participation rather than subtracts from it. In some cases, practitioners might have to transform their own negative perceptions with regards to these anchors, and appreciate that if used appropriately, they can enhance engagement. Consistent discussions with participants and personal reflection would likely facilitate this.

- **Changing measures of success** – In line with the above policy recommendation to continue transforming measures of success away from participation numbers, it is a key recommendation for community leaders to use evaluation techniques which seek more in-depth accounts of participants' experiences engaging with their provision. Fieldwork identified that despite strong numbers, participants were not always exercising in a manner which reflected the aims of the session and were unlikely to be meeting their PA recommendations. Community leaders thus should not rely on attendance numbers alone to signify successful provision and should create opportunities for more qualitative data to be collected surrounding needs, desires and areas for change/improvement. This could align well with adopting a person-centred approach since using a more experience-based evaluation approach should provide participants with more opportunities to voice their opinions. Whilst this might be a significant change from how organisations were previously demonstrating impact/success, and might be more resource-intensive, it will provide more detailed information on how to promote engagement, particularly from hard-to-reach groups.

9.5 Limitations of the Research

Along with the strengths of the research which have been outlined throughout the thesis, there were inevitably limitations to the approach which, with refinement, can be used to enhance future work. Firstly, there were two sampling issues. Field settings were selected on the basis that they were located within areas of significant disadvantage within the South Wales Valleys region (Welsh Government, 2019). Participants for the first study were thereby selected on the basis that they attended these clubs and likely resided in those areas. There is a risk therefore that certain participants within the sample were not disadvantaged in terms of socioeconomic status and were thus not true representations of the double jeopardy. Whilst discussions with club leaders confirmed that many participants within the sample were indeed disadvantaged, a more sophisticated measure of disadvantage may be called for in future.

The second issue surrounded the sampling size of the *Walking and Talking* study, whereby one individual participated. Whilst this was sufficient to achieve the objective of the study, that is an in-depth exploration of an individual's everyday practice to work through challenges on a 1:1 basis and shift behaviour, the initial aim was to recruit two to eight participants. Conducting the study shortly after a bout of Covid-19 lockdowns, however, with the novelty of reopening clubs and challenges of engaging young people more generally, uptake was poor. In retrospect, eight participants was likely to be too large and there was value in conducting the study with a small quantity but strong quality in the sense of an in-depth focus. Nonetheless, a slightly larger sample size might have revealed different challenges, thus providing further space to pilot the approach.

Secondly, a key area of learning from the research and one that is anticipated to be unpacked in a forthcoming academic journal article, was the collecting of informed consent from young people. This proved to be a difficult task with the initial plan, approved by the ethics board, to collect participant assent and parental consent for all club attendees for observations proving impossible. In the youth club alone, there was up to 70 young people attending per night and this was frequently a changing carousel of faces, meaning time was passing yet no assent/consent forms were returned.

Eventually, the researcher had to return to the ethics committee and request amendments to the application so that only the girls who were later interviewed required assent and parental consent for the observations. This had to be collected retrospectively (despite separate consent being collected for their subsequent interviews), meaning it relied on the good will and relationships sustained by the community leaders with the girls.

This highlights the pitfalls of designing an ethics application that is fit for panel approval but not reflective of interacting with disadvantaged young people in community settings in the real world. Whilst great empathy was shown by the ethics committee at this institution and a commitment to salvage the situation so that retrospective consent was possible and the findings could be utilised, something the researcher is incredibly grateful for, it highlights the increasing phenomenon of 'ethics creep' (Haggerty, 2004). Designed to minimise harm, there is an increasing body of literature suggesting that research ethics panels have instead began to maximise bureaucracy, sometimes at the expense of what are actually appropriate research approaches which would realistically cause very little harm. This was highlighted by the research team designing an application that was deemed desirable by the panel but was not fit for purpose within the research setting, causing a great deal of stress and turbulence during the project. The researcher takes full responsibility for this occurrence and is once again, indebted to the panel for their support with this matter. It is still an important commentary, however, that the lengths one is expected to go to to minimise harm in these applications and in practice is not always representative of the harm that is likely to occur (particularly in interviews surrounding PA), so perhaps a little more pragmatism is needed in places.

The third limitation, and one that exacerbated the ethical dilemma outlined above, was the impact of Covid-19. A global pandemic was naturally not anticipated during project planning and limited the researcher's capacity to conduct the second and third study in the manner in which they were originally planned. This was in addition to extending the project well beyond its anticipated finish date, creating significant implications for funding and final write-up which caused a great deal of stress during the project. The ever-changing circumstances meant that research plans were repeatedly altered to reflect the emerging nature of lockdowns and their subsequent effects, facilitated

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significantly by the global upskilling in videoconferencing (the method used for Study 2 and 3's interviews). Owing to the Microsoft Teams platform, the studies could still be conducted in a manner consistent with a practice-based approach. However, it is still important to highlight the significant impact the pandemic had on the project and field settings.

Finally, a more general critique of adopting practice theory and the three elements model specifically as a theoretical lens is the absence of power, highlighted by both Watson (2016) and Spotswood et al., (2019). Watson (2016) critiqued the three elements model on the basis that it has 'little to say about the means through which power operates' (p.172), and in fact, obscures how and why certain practices and practitioners are able to affect the conduct of practices and practitioners elsewhere. Spotswood et al. (2019) meanwhile illustrated the impact of power relations across nexuses of practice and how they impacted which practices were possible, highlighting the privileging of health and safety policies over PA participation within a primary school and questioning who had the legitimacy to impose a programme of change in terms of an intervention within the school.

Within this research, the model did not account for how power influenced the differing patterns of PA participation across field clubs. Although the gymnastics club homed more committed participants by nature of the club, these participants also reported more positive early experiences and familial support in being active, possibly facilitated by a more resource-friendly upbringing (forecasted on account of being able to consistently afford gymnastics membership and the materials required for participation). Conversely, in the youth club where greater inactivity was present, there were less reports of familial support and a more significant degree of disadvantage, exhibited by the local area and confirmed by reports from leaders.

It is partly for this reason that Bourdieu's concepts were incorporated into the research as additional heuristic devices. Power is central to much of Bourdieu's work, described as 'multifaceted and distributed, embedded in structures and relationships, and exercised in innumerable ways, sometimes visible, often unseen and irrecoverable' (Harvey et al., 2020, p.3; Bourdieu, 1996, 1999). For Bourdieu, the properties attributed to agents or institutions present themselves in combinations with different

probabilities (1990). Whilst the social world hones objectively established power structures in the form of concrete expressions of social inequality, subjective perceptions are also structured according to models of perception and evaluation which express symbolic power relations (Dreher, 2015). The notion of power and importantly, symbolic power, thus has great influence over the forms of capital that can be desired and accrued in a given population, the nature of a habitus and dispositions deemed acceptable within that population, and the exercise of symbolic violence with that group. The three elements model was thus not approached without a critical eye, and the addition of Bourdieusian concepts served to explore the operation of power within the fieldwork and was a useful heuristic device. Future work could examine power in practice through a Bourdieusian lens or continue Watson's (2016) efforts to 'place power in practice theory' through other means.

9.6 Future Research Recommendations

A number of key messages emerged from this research project which in turn provide areas for future empirical examination. Firstly, there is value in adopting practice theory as an alternative theoretical lens to both explore and intervene in physical inactivity among target groups such as those experiencing the double jeopardy. There are a myriad of avenues future research could explore when utilising practice theory and the three elements model in this field. Perhaps of most importance based on the findings of this research are: 1) how to shift meanings and competencies surrounding male domination and symbolic violence in mixed-sex settings; 2) how to incorporate technology into PA across participatory, provision and policy-based levels, as well as exploring differences in gender-based technology practices; 3) how to successfully utilise practice anchors and bundle harmonious practices without subordinating PA to such an extent that PA is not the governing activity (and thus PA recommendations are not reached); 4) explore multi-practice PA settings through a three elements lens; and 5) refine the practice mentor intervention technique outlined in *Walking and Talking*, utilising larger samples, for longer study durations and further challenging and disrupting instances of the value-action gap.

Consideration must also be given to how to scale this approach up. A task undertaken by Shove (2017) who illustrated how practice theory analyses tend to focus on end

consumers (ie. who is doing the showering, cooking, exercising) but are also capable of connecting larger systems such as producing, manufacturing, making and doing, thereby holding analytical value in disciplines such as environmental politics, resource economics, world trade and global energy demand. Whilst hugely beneficial for identifying granular conflicts in everyday practice, this was a time and resource-intensive strategy which, in this format, would likely only be possible on a small scale, within qualitative research studies and resource-rich clubs for example. The double jeopardy is a global phenomenon, however, and if there is value in utilising a practice-based approach, one must consider the steps that could be taken to make this a more accessible technique. Community settings gather their own insight, even in informal ways, so educating clubs on the value of the three elements framework so they can shift the topics (units of analysis) of their insight sessions rather than their methods as a whole is a viable starting point. This would ensure they understand which elements are in conflict/harmony and can identify points at which to intervene.

Providers could also look to the growing emergence of young leaders and peer mentors within sport and PA. Evidence has shown that programmes such as Girls on the Move which aimed to develop young female leaders have had a positive impact on individuals in developing leadership competencies and confidence, as well as communities in terms of contributions to the economy and fighting for social justice (Taylor, 2016). Where clubs may not have the time nor staff to dedicate to this type of intervention, organisations could look to develop young leader pathways where older participants take on roles of responsibility, such as gathering insight, in order to develop professional and personal skills alongside facilitating club provision. The gymnastics club were particularly effective at doing this, often recruiting TeamGym participants as coaches and young leaders, offering a range of benefits including a working wage, and successfully providing role models for their younger attendees in the process. Young leaders would likely have more capacity to consistently revisit challenges with individuals on a 1:1 basis and would perhaps have a greater grasp on shifting practice through their recent lived experience. Providing the framework is utilised in a simple and accessible form therefore, the recruitment of young leaders could be one of a number of options to combat limited resource in adopting this approach and would develop meanings and competencies on the job for the leaders

whilst they look to do the same for the younger participants. So, in a sense, young leaders could be trained as *practice mentors*.

Finally, one might consider how practice theory could be further developed. This research contributed to Spotswood et al.'s (2019) motion to bring the three elements model into the field of PA studies, in addition to making a small contribution to the body of literature emerging on affective practice (Wetherell, 2015), which could also be a worthwhile area for future empirical work. In terms of further development, one might question whether additional elements would be capable of advancing the three elements model and whether there is a need for them. For example, in this thesis factors such as the environment, infrastructure and power presented themselves as significant, possibly so significant that they deserve analytical focus rather than being analysed through the lens of materials/meanings/competencies. To be clear, this thesis does not have the answer to those questions. It is simply raising the question of whether future research might explore this.

Additionally, something the thesis does explicitly advocate for, despite not being an area tackled within this piece of research, is the merit of using practice theory within whole systems approaches, proposed by Spotswood et al. (2015, 2021). Where ecologically framed whole systems and whole school approaches have failed to grasp the complex arrangements that contextualise change (or attempts at change), practice theory acknowledges the synergy and interconnectedness between aspects of the physical and social environment required for transformation, in addition to the manner in which socio-cultural configurations and social actors interact. These approaches have also been critiqued for programme management emphasising adherence to inflexible implementation ideals rather than flexibly accounting for the 'dynamic unfolding of programmes in unique institutional contexts' (Spotswood et al., 2021, p.533). A practice account of a whole systems approach on the other hand is capable of recognising symptoms of transition, emerging from the way in which the 'enmeshed ecosystem of practices…have been disrupted, reconfigured or recrafted (Spotswood et al., 2021, p.527; Spurling et al., 2013). It is thus more capable of carefully watching, reflecting and intervening where necessary in a flexible way.

Importantly, the key lynchpin of whole systems approaches is in the collective effort required for understanding and transformation, with the process engaging a diverse range of invested stakeholders and indeed the individuals facing the issues. In this way, institutions are collectively responsible for driving change rather than placing blame at the hands of individual people as rational actors. This is also a key strength of practice theory in that practices are considered in collective and abstract ways, avoiding the temptation for political and meritocratic individualism that characterises many behaviour change approaches and magnifies social stigma through victim blaming (Spotswood et al., 2015, 2019). Both practice theory and whole systems approaches thus avoid reframing sociocultural issues as individual moral responsibilities and combat the trend in socially Darwinistic neoliberal policy-making strategies (and the symbolic violence associated with them) that have characterised much of contemporary UK policy and have been shown to disproportionately affect women, low-income populations and minority ethnic groups (Hopkins et al., 2020; Pearson, 2019; Mellish, Luzmore and Shahbaz, 2020). Exploring the implementation of whole systems approaches via a practice-based analysis is thus a worthwhile area of exploration, in addition to adopting person-centred and coproductive approaches with a practice lens.

9.7 Concluding Remarks

To conclude, the aim of this research was to critically examine the double jeopardy, that is the relationship between physical activity and young women from socially and economically disadvantaged areas through a practice theory lens, offering an alternative perspective to the myriad of approaches to increase PA in an increasingly sedentary world. The thesis has sought to provide a narrative of the researcher's journey, describing and critically evaluating their theoretical and methodological decisions during the research process to highlight where research aims and objectives were addressed, as well as areas for future refinement and work.

With hope, the substantial and far-ranging benefits of physical activity for both individuals and society as a whole have been outlined in this thesis, reinforcing the urgency of messages to increase participation and alleviate negative human conditions. As a person whose life has been anchored around being active, physical

activity has so much value to offer, and it is unfortunate to see so many groups detached from an activity that is so fundamental to our evolution as a species. To close the thesis and reiterate William Durant's point, as humans, '*we are what we repeatedly do'*. There is value, therefore, in exploring and fulfilling the promise of practice theory in combating the 'wicked problem' of physical inactivity.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Example Information Sheets

Study 1, Phase 1: Participant Information Sheet

<u>Participant Information Sheet.</u>

Reference Number: PGR-505

Title of the Project:

The Double Jeopardy of Practice: Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women from Economically Disadvantaged Areas.

<u>Why you and what is the study about?</u>

This project aims to understand the different relationships exhibited between physical activity and young women living in socially and economically disadvantaged areas of Wales. As a female aged between 13-17, living in the South Wales Valleys and participating in physical activity in some form, you qualify as part of the target population of this study.

<u>What will happen?</u>

As the researcher, I will attend the sessions you go to and take down notes about what you do and do not do in those sessions. To aid my memory, I will write notes in a diary, as well as record voice notes. This is to inform myself about the types of practices or behaviours that you like or do not like to perform during physical activity sessions. I will not play an active part in the sessions, so will not help coach or lead them. Rather, I might sit at the back or walk around and observe what is going on. Your usual coach/leader will always be present during the sessions. This may take place for up to two years, so hopefully you will get used to having me around after a little while.

Occasionally, I may ask for a conversation about the session and may ask to record it. It will be your choice whether you choose to take part in this or not, and there will be no repercussions if you do not want to. If I think it would be helpful to have a conversation with you, and you do want to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form on the day.

Do you have to take part?

No, you do not. If you decide you do not want to participate that is perfectly acceptable. Likewise, if you decide you do not want to participate anymore once the study has started, you can withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. Any observations about you will be removed from the study and not used.

What will we do with the data collected?

All the notes made will be kept either in a locked drawer or on a locked computer, only accessible to the researcher, to keep the observations confidential. The data collected will be stored indefinitely for future research. The data can only be used however if the purpose of the research is the same as in this study. If it is different then you will be asked again to give your consent. The observations will be written up as part of my PhD thesis. During the write up, any information about you, such as your name, where you live and so on will be disguised by using a different name. This is in order to protect your identity. There will also be opportunities for the findings of the study to be published. This means that you could help contribute to the growing research area, as well as help improve the way physical activity is provided for other young women like you. Again, no identifiable information about you will be shared if this were to happen.

Have you got any questions?

If you have any questions for me, or want any more information about the study, either you or your parent/guardian can get in contact with me via the details below:

Ellyse Hopkins
PhD Researcher
Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Phone: 07817269234
Email: ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk

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Study 1, Phase 1: Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

<u>**Parent/Guardian Information Sheet**</u>

Reference Number: PGR-505

Title of the Project:

The Double Jeopardy of Practice: Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women from Economically Disadvantaged Areas.

<u>**Background.**</u>

The researcher is studying for their PhD in the area of sport development at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The aim of the project is to examine the relationship between physical activity and young women residing in areas with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The reason your child has been identified as a suitable candidate to research is owed to them being female, between the ages of 13-17, residing in the South Wales Heads of the Valleys region and having some form of commitment to a physical activity programme (be it semi or fully committed).

In order to investigate this topic, a practice theory approach has been adopted. This simply means that the researcher will attend sessions and observe the practices your child performs, or perhaps does not perform, in a physical activity environment over a two-year period. This is in order to understand their relationship with physical activity via what they actually do, rather than what they say. The researcher will record field notes in a diary, as well as record voice notes via the use of a Dictaphone. No photographs or visual recordings will be taken of your child, and your child will not be interviewed about the topic at this stage. There will be opportunities for unstructured, informal discussions to take place between the researcher and your child regarding the sessions, and these might be recorded via a Dictaphone. However, these will only take place if your child agrees to participate and signs a consent form to do so. The

data collected will be used to build a picture of what the physical activity practices of this population are, in order to inform the next stage of the study, which will involve more in-depth research techniques, such as interviews. For your information, the next stage will not commence without your consent. If your child is chosen to participate, an information sheet for both you and your child will be issued, and a consent and assent form must be signed in order for it to begin.

It is with hope that the findings of this research will improve understanding of the lower levels of physical activity exhibited in young women residing in areas of social and economic disadvantage, and provide new ways to enhance community sport provision for that population. It will do this by providing a 'toolkit' of knowledge that can be utilised by sport development programmes and policy-makers to develop their provision of physical activity for these women. In this way, your child's participation in the study could have a real impact on contributing to positive change in your local community sports provision and sport development generally.

Your child's participation in the project.

The requirements of your child are simply to attend sessions as normal. A coach or leader will always be present, meaning your child will never be left alone with just the researcher during the sessions. The researcher has also been cleared to interact with children through an enhanced DBS check.

Are there any risks?

Although there are no anticipated ethical issues during this process, a number of ethical safeguards will be put in place which have been agreed by the Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences ethics committee.

1. Disclosure of sensitive personal information by the participants during sessions - should this occur, the seriousness of the information will be assessed by the supervisory team, and the relevant persons will be informed if necessary.
2. Data protection – all data collected will be stored either in a locked drawer or on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the research team, to ensure confidentiality. Upon publication, anonymity will be ensured via the use of pseudonyms. This means no identifiable information about your

child will be mentioned in the study. The data collected will be stored indefinitely for future research purposes. It can only be used however, if the future research is for the same purpose as what was stated in this information sheet. If the purpose is different from this study, then consent will be sought from you again.

3. Informed consent – participants will only be acknowledged in the field notes providing that the relevant consent forms have been signed by you the parent/guardian, and the assent forms have been signed by the participants themselves. Participants will be reminded that they are free to withdraw from the study at any point, without giving any reason. Should this happen during the study, any data collected on that participant will not be used and destroyed.

What happens to the results of the study?

As mentioned earlier, the findings of this study will inform proceeding phases of the project by pointing towards research techniques and questions which may yield the most useful information about the topic. When the project is finished, the findings of the study will be written up as part of a PhD thesis. There will also be potential for the findings to be published via academic journals. They will be checked beforehand however by the project's supervisory team, as well as being subject to scrutiny by the journal editors. Anonymity for participants will be ensured during these processes through the use of pseudonyms.

What happens next?

Accompanying this information sheet is another information sheet for your child. It is important that you discuss the information you have both received with your child to ensure that they are aware of what the study is about and that they are happy to participate. If you are both willing to continue, there are then two forms to complete. The first is a consent form that needs to be signed by you in order to give permission for your child to participate. The second is an assent form that needs to be signed by your child to show that they are willing to participate. After these are completed, they should be returned to the researcher.

Further information.

If you have any questions, or require any further information about the study, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the researcher, or their director of studies, via the details below:

Ellyse Hopkins
PhD Researcher
Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Phone: 07817269234
Email: ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Nicola Bolton
Director of Studies
Principal Lecturer
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Email: njbolton@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Study 2: Stakeholder Information Sheet

Cardiff Metropolitan University
School of Sport and Health Sciences.

Cyncoed Campus
Cyncoed Road
Cardiff
CF23 6XD
Tel: 02920 416155

(Stakeholder's Address)

Reference Number: PGR-3962

Dear (Stakeholder's Name)

I am writing to you to invite you to participate in a research study. I am currently studying for my PhD out of Cardiff Metropolitan University in the area of Sport Development. The research project is entitled 'The Double Jeopardy of Practice: Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women from Economically Disadvantaged Areas'. The project is currently under the supervision of Dr Nicola Bolton, Dr Nic Matthews and Dr David Brown, three scholars with vast experience in the field of empirical research, with Dr Bolton having particular experience in researching and advancing community sport provision.

The Research Project:
Research by StreetGames (2017) reported that just 25% of young women experiencing economic disadvantage were meeting national physical activity guidelines. Thus, the research project surrounds the lower levels of physical activity participation exhibited by individuals who are both female and experiencing economic disadvantage, hence the double jeopardy. Prior to this study, observations and interviews were conducted with this population over the course of one year in three community settings, located in the South Wales Heads of the Valleys region. The purpose, to develop an understanding of and advance the relationship between this cohort and their participation in physical activity. As a result of the research, many practical findings have emerged that could inform future action in addressing participation gaps amongst this population. The research team are thus looking for opportunities to share and evaluate findings with key physical activity stakeholders throughout the United Kingdom.

Your Participation in the Study:
You have been identified as a suitable candidate for the study based on your role as someone who organises or provides sport/physical activity throughout the UK. You also might have been identified owed to your commitment to engaging young women/disadvantaged groups in physical activity, specifically. This stage of research will surround gathering information on how your specific organisation has attempted to address participation gaps and the success you have had in doing so with young

people experiencing the double jeopardy. Your participation in the study will also provide an opportunity to share knowledge and insight from the project as a whole and aid in evaluating how the methods and findings associated with the research may translate into contemporary physical activity provision.

Your participation in the study would involve taking part in a semi-structured interview with myself, as the lead researcher, surrounding the content outlined above. Before commencing with the research, you will be asked to provide informed consent (please see attached). Owed to current COVID-19 restrictions, the interview would likely take place over a video conferencing platform, such as Microsoft Teams. If Welsh Government, Cardiff Metropolitan University and your independent organisation's restrictions were to ease, there may be scope to conduct the interview in-person, providing all guidelines and social distancing measures are complied with. The interview may take place at a time that is most suitable to your schedule, and if in-person, a location that is suitable to yourself providing it is a safe environment, free from loud noise/distraction.

Interviews will be audio recorded via Dictaphone and transcribed verbatim for analysis. As a research participant, you have a right to anonymity. If you choose to exercise this right, anonymity will be ensured as far as possible, via the use of pseudonyms for both yourself, your organisation and any persons/organisations referred to during the interview. Recordings and transcripts will be stored securely by the researcher for confidentiality. Information will be stored indefinitely for future purposes of meta-analysis, so long as re-analysis is for the same purpose that consent was originally given. If the purpose of data re-use changes, then consent must be sought from yourself again. After data analysis concludes, you will be given the opportunity to review the researcher's interpretation of the interview for accuracy and trustworthiness. You will have the opportunity to edit, clarify or withdraw comments where you are not satisfied. Finally, participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you will have the right to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. To do this, you will be asked to complete a withdrawal form (please see attached) and your data will not be used and may be destroyed.

Benefits to Participating:
We hope that this study will be hugely beneficial to both your organisation, as well as organisations throughout the UK who are working to address participation gaps in physical activity. Your contribution would provide a practitioner-based perspective to the empirical research conducted with young women experiencing economic disadvantage and thus further develop the findings to a level capable of influencing local and national policy and provision in physical activity. You would also be contributing towards advancing the research area of physical activity promotion and your anonymised data will form the basis of academic publications and presentations worldwide. Finally, and most importantly, your participation in the study will contribute to making positive change in creating more suitable and welcoming conditions for young women to increase their engagement in physical activity.

What Will Happen to the Data?
The information you provide will form part of the researcher's PhD thesis and any journal articles/presentations created as a result of the study. As explained earlier,

every effort will be made to safeguard anonymity by removing identifiers, using pseudonyms and modifying other identifying information.

Questions?

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk or my Director of Studies, Nicola at njbolton@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

Thank you.

For taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering participating.

Yours Sincerely,
Ellyse Hopkins
KESS2 Funded PhD Student
Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Cardiff, CF23 6XD

Study 3: Participant Information Sheet

Cardiff Metropolitan University

<u>**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**</u>

Reference Number: PGR-3962
Title of the Project: The 'Double Jeopardy of Practice': Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women in the South Wales Valleys Region.

An Invitation:
We would like to invite you to take part in the above named research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please therefore take time to read the following information carefully.

Purpose of the Study:
The aim of this study is to test a small-scale intervention which seeks to improve physical activity participation within a group of young women residing in the South Wales Valleys region. The study will involve participating in a walking programme over a six-week period. The study will begin on 20/05/2021 and last for approximately 4-6 weeks, allowing time either side of the walking sessions to introduce and evaluate the programme.

Why have You Been Invited to Participate?
You have been invited to participate because you are a female aged between 13-18 who lives in the South Wales Valleys region and regularly attend your local club. You might have also participated in a previous study, whereby you were interviewed by the researcher about your physical activity participation. You have been asked to participate alongside 1-7 other young women from both your club and others in the area.

Do You Have to Take Part?
No. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. Before the research begins, you and your parent/guardian will be asked to sign an assent/consent form. If you choose to participate, you will have the right to withdraw yourself and your personal information at any time. You do not have to provide any reason and will face no repercussions. To withdraw, you will be asked to sign a withdrawal form provided by the researcher. If you choose to disengage from the research without informing the researcher, the researcher will attempt to contact you up to three times before you are considered no longer a part of the study If you choose to withdraw after data analysis has concluded, your information will have been anonymised or disguised, meaning it will be difficult to remove. However, the

researcher will do their utmost to ensure that any identifiable information about you will be removed. The withdrawal form provided will include more information on this procedure.

What Will Taking Part Involve?
The purpose of the study is to help you get more physically active to the benefit your health. To achieve this, you will participate in a walking programme over a six-week period. Walking is an accessible activity that can be done from your doorstep in the local area and with little kit/equipment needed. If you agree to take part in the study, the researcher and you will agree a comfortable walking target to work towards. This target will be based on your own desire to walk, fitness levels and spare time during the day. We would ask you to carefully consider and discuss with your parent/guardian your own ability, fitness level and any injuries or illnesses that may impact your involvement before agreeing to participate. You will be encouraged to go for a walk as often as possible (in line with COVID-19 regulations), in order to increase your physical activity levels and meet your target by the end of the six weeks.

During your walks, you may take family members, friends or pets and make it a social occasion if you would like, providing that you comply with current COVID-19 guidelines. If you choose to walk alone, please ask permission from a parent/guardian, always inform a family member or friend where you are going and carry a mobile phone in case of emergencies. We would also encourage you to walk in familiar and well-lit areas for your own safety. Whilst walking, you are welcome to engage in other activities, such as listening to music/podcasts, taking photographs and so on. You are free to choose anything that you think will make your walk more enjoyable. Alongside walking, your participation in the study will require you to take part in weekly interviews with the researcher where you will discuss your feelings surrounding the walks. Interviews will take place online through Microsoft Teams (which the researcher will set up for you and is free of charge) due to COVID-19. This means that to participate, it is necessary for you to have access to a computer or smartphone. All sessions will be audio recorded and it will be your choice whether you turn your camera on. Interviews will last between 30 and 45 minutes. If you are feeling unwell or do not wish to carry on with an interview, you will be allowed to take a break or rearrange the interview for another time.

You will also be asked to fill out short diary entries during the study. An example of a diary entry will be attached to this sheet. This is to provide the researcher with information surrounding your daily walks. It should take no longer than 10 minutes per day to fill in - unless you feel the need to provide more information, in which case you are encouraged to do so. The diary entry will include numerical questions such as 'daily step count' alongside more detailed information on your feelings surrounding exercise on that day. During walks, we would encourage you to record your daily steps using your smartphone. If you do not have a built-in health application capable of doing this then the researcher can direct you to appropriate applications. Whilst we would ask you to complete a diary entry for each day that you are involved in the study, a minimum of two entries per week will be acceptable. You may write these on your smartphone/computer/tablet and submit to your Teams channel, or hand-write them and take a picture/convert to PDF and submit to the channel.

The researcher is hoping to provide you with guidance, company and support for becoming more physically active. Once the study finishes, you will be informed about the key findings and also pointed to people within the local community who may help you should you need any future information surrounding local exercise opportunities. You will also be invited to check our interpretation of your interview responses/diary entries to check that you have been represented accurately. The researcher will also be available to contact via email.

Are There Any Risks with Taking Part?
Although there are no anticipated risks to taking part in this research, a number of safeguards will be put in place to ensure the safety of yourself and your information.

1. All personal information will be stored securely by the researcher to ensure data is kept confidential. Information will be stored but will only be used again if the purpose of the research is the same as this study. If it is not then you will be asked to give your consent again.
2. Personal information will be anonymised or disguised when published, meaning the researcher will safeguard your anonymity as far as possible.
3. If any problematic personal information is disclosed by you to the researcher, the researcher must prioritise your health and safety. This means that even if you ask the researcher not to tell anyone, if you are in danger then the researcher has a responsibility and duty of care to report this information to aid your situation.

Are There Any Benefits to Taking Part?
We hope that this study will be hugely beneficial to you, especially as you move into early adulthood and begin to take responsibility for looking after your own health and physical activity. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have been in lockdown, learning, working and exercising from home. We hope that this programme will encourage you and your family/friends to get out and exercise in the local area, providing a break from being inside. Walking is a great way to maintain physical and mental health, promote well-being, appreciate nature and your local area, and can be a gateway to becoming more physically active. You will also be contributing towards advancing the research area of physical activity promotion and your anonymised data will form the basis of academic publications.

What Will Happen to the Data?
The information you provide will form part of the researcher's PhD thesis and any journal articles/presentations created as a result of the study. As explained earlier, every effort will be made to safeguard anonymity by removing identifiers, using pseudonyms and modifying other identifying information. Whilst we will try to ensure your identity is anonymised, given the nature of the research, it is difficult to guarantee that your identity will be completely protected.

Who is Involved in the Study?
The main researcher is Ellyse Hopkins, a PhD student from Cardiff Metropolitan University. Ellyse is funded by the KESS2 project and is supervised by Dr Nicola

Bolton, Dr Nic Matthews and Dr David Brown, all of whom are employed by Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Questions?

If you have any questions or require further information surrounding the study, please contact Ellyse on ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk or her director of studies, Nicola on njbolton@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

Thank you.

For taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering participating.

Study 3: Walking Recruitment Booklet for Participants

WALKING
INFORMATIONAL BOOKLET

A research study into increasing physical activity levels amongst young women in the South Wales Valleys region.

An Introduction to the Research

Hi. My name is Ellyse Hopkins and I am a PhD researcher at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Over the last three years, I have been researching the relationship between physical activity and young women living in the South Wales Valleys region.

To do this, my research team and I have conducted observations and interviews within three physical activity settings throughout the region. The purpose, to observe behaviours and explore attitudes towards physical activity among adolescent women.

It is now time to pilot a small-scale intervention which seeks to improve physical activity participation levels by supporting a group of adolescent women through a walking programme and evaluating its success. You are reading this booklet owed to meeting the recruitment criteria of the study and hence being someone who could make a valuable contribution to the project.

This booklet outlines the details of being involved in the study, including the expectations of your inclusion, guidance on the walking programme and the benefits of being involved both now and for the future. Please read over the information and consider whether you would like to contribute to a growing area of physical activity research.

The Importance of Physical Activity

Regularly engaging in physical activity is a fantastic way to contribute to physical, mental and social wellbeing.

The Benefits of Physical Activity Include:

- Improve muscular and cardiovascular fitness
- Reduce the risk of ill-health
- Help maintain a healthy body weight
- Contribute to happier moods
- Help manage stress and anxiety
- Improve confidence and self-esteem
- Help meet new people

Did You Know?

Young people up to the age of 18 should aim:
- To do 60 minutes of moderate physical activity per day across the week.
- To participate in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity to develop movement skills, muscles and bones.
- To specifically engage in aerobic and strength-based activities.

Moderate Aerobic Activity:

Brisk walking
Riding a bike
Hiking
Pushing a lawnmower
Rollerblading

Strength-based Activity:

Gymnastics
Football
Dance
Badminton
Rock climbing
Martial arts

Walking as a Form
of Physical Activity

Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier.

Brisk Walking

To achieve moderate activity, individuals should engage in brisk walking.
Brisk walking can help build stamina, burn calories and make your heart healthier.
A Brisk walk is around 3mph and is faster than a stroll.
You can tell if you are briskly walking if you can talk but not sing while moving.
Smartphone apps such as Active 10 are helpful for measuring walking speed.

Step Targets

Most people recommend getting 10,000 steps a day to be considered physically active.
This can be time-consuming and difficult to achieve, hence increasing levels of brisk walking for short bouts of time can also be useful in contributing to increased physical activity levels.
Some evidence even tells us that the benefits of walking with regard to decreasing mortality level off around 7,500 steps per day.
Importantly, the more physical activity we do, the better it is for our health. It is about fitting activity into our day where possible and maximising the benefits.

A Sustainable Activity...

Walking is also a sustainable activity and form of travel that reduces congestion, carbon dioxide emissions, contributes to less noise pollution and is a kinder and more resourceful use of green space.
It is also low-cost and encourages us to appreciate our natural surroundings and engage with nature.

The Walking Programme

The study programme will require you to:

- Work with me to agree an appropriate walking target to achieve by the end of the study. This will be based on your current walking pattern and fitness level, your leisure time availability and what you would like to achieve by the end of the study.
- Commit to increasing your time spent walking per day in order to meet your target in 4-6 weeks.
- Use a smartphone to record your daily walks, including steps made, distance covered and possibly the speed of your walk.

Tips for staying safe when walking:

Always inform a member of your family or friendship group when and where you are going.

Use a buddy system whereby you walk with a friend/family member for safety and to encourage social interaction.

Always carry a mobile phone in case of emergency.

Walk during daytime hours, in well-lit and well-known routes.

Consider wearing appropriate clothing and footwear.

Consider weather conditions before your walk.

Carry water and snacks in case of emergency.

And please comply with National and Local Covid-19 guidelines at all times when walking.

Make Walking as Enjoyable as Possible...

Tailor Your Walks:

We want to make participation in this project as enjoyable as possible for you to encourage satisfaction and lifelong participation in recreational walking and physical activity. For this reason, we encourage you to design your walks as you see fit!

Go wherever you would like (providing it is safe and complies with Covid-19 rules)! Experience nature, take photographs, listen to music, podcasts, walk with friends/family members, incorporate other physical activities! And importantly, we want to hear all about how you make the walks more enjoyable!

Don't be afraid to incorporate some technology...

Smartphone applications can be really useful in recording your walking routes, step counts, distance travelled and speed of walk!

There are a range of apps for you to try out, such as Strava, Active 10, Map My Run, AllTrails, Nike Run Club etc etc! Try them out and see what works for you – but importantly, make sure you record the key bits of information!

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The Research Bit:

To understand your thoughts and feelings surrounding the walking programme, I will need to collect data. This will be done in 2 ways:

1. Interviews

You will be required to take part in an interview once a week with myself which will last no longer than 45 minutes.

Interviews will likely take place online via Microsoft Teams, a free, secure platform that I will set up for you.

If Covid restrictions change, we might be able to do interviews in person at your local club.

Interviews will be audio recorded and it will be up to you whether you turn your camera on or off. If you are under 18 please ensure that doors are open so that your parent/guardian can monitor the interview throughout.

The nature of the questions will surround your experience with the walking programme, details of your walks that week and any wider feelings towards physical activity.

2. Diary Entries

You will be required to complete a minimum of two diary entries per week but we would kindly encourage you to record entries every day.

Diary entries should take no longer than 10 minutes per day to fill in.

Entries should include some numerical values, such as Steps Counted/Distance Travelled, as well as more detailed recordings of your thoughts/feelings. A template of questions will be provided to you.

Diary entries can be completed on paper, using smartphone apps, such as Notes or using a computer programme, such as Microsoft Word.

Importantly, we ask that diary entries be uploaded to your Microsoft Teams channel at the end of each week.

Finally, your diary entries are your space to use how you wish. We encourage creativity, so if you feel the need to draw, sketch or attach photographs of your walks then please do.

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Important Points:

Assent/Consent

Informed assent and consent from both yourself and your parent/guardian (if you are under the age of 18) must be collected by the research team before any walking/research commences. Should you be interested in taking part, information sheets describing the study and assent/consent forms will be sent out and will need to be returned as soon as possible.

Right to Withdraw

Participants will have the right to withdraw from the research at any point, without giving any reason and will not face any repercussions. To withdraw, you will be asked to complete a withdrawal form. This will also be sent out with the assent/consent forms.

Are there any risks to taking part?

A number of safeguards have been put in place to ensure your safety throughout the research. All of your personal information will be stored securely by the research team to ensure confidentiality. Identifiable or personal information will be disguised to ensure anonymity as far as possible. If you choose to withdraw once data analysis has already begun, it will be more difficult to remove your data from the data set. Every effort will be made however to ensure that identifiable information is removed.

Please note that additional information surrounding the above points will be provided in the information sheets dispensed.

Concluding Remarks

Thank you!

For taking the time to read this booklet and considering taking part. On behalf of the research team, we want to make this experience as enjoyable as possible for you, the participant, in the hope that you develop a positive relationship with recreational walking and physical activity throughout the remainder of your life. You will also be contributing to an important area of academic research, in physical activity promotion for adolescent females.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with myself or my Director of Studies, Dr Nicola Bolton, through the email addresses stated below.

Ellyse Hopkins
PhD Researcher
Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Phone: 07817269234
Email: ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Dr Nicola Bolton
Director of Studies/Principal Lecturer
Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Email: njbolton@cardiffmet.ac.uk

We look forward to working with you!

And Finally, Some Oustanding Welsh Walks to Try in the Future...

Pen Y Fan - The highest peak in Wales.

The Sugar Loaf - Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

Three Cliffs Bay, Gower

Appendix B

Example Assent/Consent Forms

Study 1, Phase 2: Participant Assent Form

PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

Reference Number: PGR-505

Participant Name:

Name of Researcher: Ellyse Olivia Hopkins

_____

Participant to complete this section: **Please tick each box.**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet about the study. I have had the chance to consider the information and ask questions if I needed to, and these questions have been answered in a way which I understand.

2. I understand that taking part in the study is my choice, and that I can stop taking part at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to take part in the study and for my interviews to be recorded.

4. I am happy for the information collected to be used for academic publications, so long as my identity is hidden.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Name of person taking consent   Date

_____

Signature of person taking consent

Study 2: Stakeholder Consent Form

STAKEHOLDER CONSENT FORM

Reference Number: PGR-3962
Stakeholder Name:
Title of Project: The Double Jeopardy of Practice: Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women in the South Wales Valleys Region.
Name of Researcher: Ellyse Hopkins

Stakeholder to complete this section:
Please Tick Each Box:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider 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 during the data collection period, without giving any reason.	
3. I understand that once data collection has been completed, I may request withdrawal of my data from the study at any time prior to completion of data analysis without giving any reason. (Date of data analysis completion = 01/09/2021)	
4. I understand that once data analysis has been completed, I have the right to be forgotten and can request removal of personal data recorded during this project. I further understand that beyond 01/09/2021 it will be necessary for the university to retain non-personal data for verification purposes until for a period of 10 years, concluding on 01/09/2031.	
5. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	
6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	

Signature of stakeholder:	Date:
Signature of person taking consent:	Date:

Any information you provide will be treated in accordance with data protection principles for the purposes specified within the Participant Information Sheet. Cardiff Metropolitan University will process your personal data in line with Article 6(1)(a) and Article 9(2)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 which specifies that your personal data can only be processed with your explicit consent. By signing this form and ticking the boxes above you are confirming that you have understood the reasons for obtaining your data and you are happy for the study to proceed. Please note that you have the right to withdraw consent at any point. Should you wish to invoke that right please contact: Ellyse Hopkins (ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk).

Study 3: Parent/Guardian Consent Form

![Cardiff Metropolitan University logo]

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Reference Number: PGR-3962
Child's Name:
Title of Project: The Double Jeopardy of Practice: Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women in the South Wales Valleys Region.
Name of Researcher:

Parent/Guardian to complete this section:
Please tick each box:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time during the data collection period, without giving any reason.	
3. I understand that once data collection has been completed, my child may request withdrawal of their data from the study at any time prior to completion of data analysis without giving any reason. (Date of data analysis completion = 01/09/2021)	
4. I understand that once data analysis has been completed, my child has the right to be forgotten and can request removal of personal data recorded during this project. I further understand that beyond 01/09/2021 it will be necessary for the university to retain non-personal data for verification purposes for a period of 10 years, concluding on 01/09/2031.	
5. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	
6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes from both diary entries and interview transcripts in publications.	
7. I agree for my child to take part in the above study.	

Signature of parent/guardian:	Date:
Signature of person taking consent:	Date:

Any information provided will be treated in accordance with data protection principles for the purposes specified within the Participant Information Sheet. Cardiff Metropolitan University will process personal data in line with Article 6(1)(a) and Article 9(2)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 which specifies that personal data can only be processed with explicit consent. By signing this form and ticking the boxes above you are confirming that you have understood the reasons for obtaining your child's data and you are happy for the study to proceed. Please note that your child has the right to withdraw consent at any point. Should they wish to invoke that right please contact: Ellyse Hopkins (ehopkins@cardiffmet.ac.uk).

Appendix C

Example Withdrawal Form

Study 3: Participant Withdrawal Form

Explanatory Notes for Research Study Participants:

Participation in a research study is voluntary and is based on a full understanding of what that participation will involve. Individuals who have consented to take part in a research study at Cardiff Met are fully entitled to withdraw their consent at any point, without prejudice. However, it should be noted that the timing of a request to withdraw from the project will have a bearing on the type of action the University is reasonably able to take to honour the request.

If you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the project whilst the researcher is in the process of collecting data, you can expect for any data collected from you to be withdrawn and not used in the data analysis phase or any publication of the outcomes of the project.

If you decide that you no longer wish to participate once the researcher has begun analysing the data, or when the data analysis has been completed, it becomes much more difficult to remove your data from the overall data set. However, you can expect every effort to be made to remove your data from the project and, as a minimum, any data from which you can be identified will be removed from the project. The Principal Investigator on the project will discuss with you which data will be removed and the reasons why any remaining data cannot be withdrawn from the project.

If you would like to exercise your right to be forgotten once the project has completed, all of your personal data from which you can be identified will be deleted from records held by the university in relation to the project.

If you would like to withdraw as a participant in a research project, please complete the form overleaf and return to the Principal Investigator.

PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL FORM

Reference Number: PGR-3962

Participant Name/Study ID Number:

Title of the Project: The 'Double Jeopardy of Practice': Changing Relationships Between Physical Activity and Young Women in the South Wales Valleys Region.

Name of Principal Investigator: Ellyse Hopkins

Participants to complete this section: **Please tick one**
of the following boxes:

1. I confirm that I wish to withdraw from the study before data collection has been completed and that none of my data will be included in the study.	
2. I confirm that I wish to withdraw all of my data from the study before data analysis has been completed and that none of my data will be included in the study.	
3. I confirm that although the results of the study have already been produced and cannot change, I wish to be forgotten and that all of my personal data is deleted from verification records maintained by the university about the study. I understand that this means that only those data identifying me will be deleted.	

Your name is required to verify that you have withdrawn your data from the study as specified above. In the case of (3) above, we will need to retain this form until: 01/09/2031

It may be necessary to share this information with internal examiners, external examiners, and/or journal editors for the purposes of verification of findings and tracing results of studies to the raw data used.

This form will be stored securely until 01/09/2031, when it will be destroyed, and will not be shared with anyone else.

Signature of Participant:	Date:
Signature of person who will ensure that the stated data have been deleted:	Date:

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Appendix D

Example Interview Guides

Study 1, Phase 2: Gymnastics Club Interview Guide

1. Hello and welcome. As you probably know, the purpose of this interview is to find a little bit more out about your relationship with physical activity. I would like to begin with you telling me a little bit about yourself, so could I please have your name, age and the name of the club you attend (this club).

2. Thank you. So next I would like to hear a little bit about your history with physical activity. Throughout your childhood, did you take part in much PA/sport? What did you do? If not, why do you think that was?

3. Okay great. So, if we focus on today, what types of physical activity are you currently participating in? How often do you exercise, train or compete? Do you walk to school?

4. And what would you say the main reasons are for your continued involvement in PA? What is keeping you here, in the gym, in your team etc?

5. If the participant is now coaching rather than participating, what are the reasons for this?

6. What are the favourable and unfavourable elements of coaching for you? Do these relate to when you were doing gymnastics in any way?

7. How does your behaviour and your actions differ when coaching compared to being a gymnast? How about what you wear? Do you dress up more? Wear more or less make-up?

8. Great to hear. So, I'm going to switch topics a little here. Can you tell me about a typical day in your life? From the moment you wake up, what is the sequence of events in your day, even down to the small details? (Attempting to uncover the anchoring practices of their day here, ie. how long do they spend on their phone, getting dressed etc).

9. Okay and what would you say the most important activities in your day are? What could you not go without? Perhaps you could rank a few in their order of importance.

10. How important would you say PA is to your typical day? What would you sacrifice from the above to take part in physical activity? Or coach?

11. If you are currently participating in less PA than you were before, then what do you do instead? How do you spend your spare evenings and weekends? Do you feel the need to channel any competitive energy?

12. Okay, thank you. Next, I would like to discuss the use of smartphones and technology within PA. Do you often use your phone when you are exercising? Or do you ever use a Fitbit, Apple watch or any other piece of technology?

13. What is your main reason for using these technologies? Firstly, in day-to-day life and secondly within PA?

14. I have noticed a lot of people capturing their exercise on their phones through photos and videos. If you do this, could you tell me what you do with those photos and videos? Use for analysis, social media etc, perhaps give example of how I use them.

15. Okay, great. And how does it make you feel to see yourself on screen like that? What is the main reason for taking the photos/videos in your case?

16. What makes a photo publishable on your social media? Is it to do with the skill you are performing? Or more about how the photo looks?

17. Okay, thank you for sharing. Sometimes I notice people in the TeamGym group looking as though they are holding themselves back. For example, you can see them pull out of big tumbles or not put maximum effort into their run ups. Is this something you relate to? Why do you think this takes place? What makes you hold yourself back?

18. If so, how do you feel when you perform this behaviour? How does your body feel? What does your mind think?

19. Are there certain circumstances that make you hold yourself back more? If so, why do you think this is?

20. How would you try and combat this as a coach?

21. Thank you for sharing that information. The next topic I would like to discuss is clothing. What do you usually wear to your sessions?

22. I notice the TeamGym kit is quite different to what the other squads wear, it is a bit more relaxed. How do you feel about this? Do you prefer dressing like this? If so, why?

23. Do you have to dress more traditionally for competitions? If so, how does this make you feel? Do you do anything differently when you are dressed in the traditional leotard? Does it alter your performance in any way?

24. Have you ever had an experience where your kit has affected you in other exercise settings? For example, it has made you more interested in playing, or perhaps it has turned you away. Could you tell me about this?

25. How does it feel to be in a different kit when coaching? Does it bring authority and power? How does that make you feel?

26. Great. So, in general, how does the VGA gym make you feel? In both your mind and body, how does it feel walking through the VGA doors? Motivated, nervous, excited etc?

27. That's very interesting, thank you. The final theme I am going to ask you about today is food and drink. Does being a gymnast affect what you eat and drink in any way?

28. What is the norm for eating and drinking here? Do people bring food and drink in? What types of food and drink do they bring?

29. Does VGA itself affect the way you eat/drink in any way? Are you offered anything or told to have certain things? How does this make you feel?

30. I have heard that often on Sunday's, you go to the shops and get lunch as a group. How do you think this activity affects the TeamGym group as a whole? Do you enjoy going? Why? What is it about this activity that is enjoyable?

31. So more generally, do you feel like food and drink plays any part in how or why you exercise?

32. Okay, brilliant. My final question is simply what could we do to make PA more attractive to you? What would make you want to participate more? You can list as many things as you want.

33. Lovely. Thank you for taking part. I will now turn off the recording device.

Study 2: Youth Club Leader Interview Guide

1. Thank you for attending today and participating in this research study. For the recording, could you please state your name and job role. And can you verbally confirm that you have read the information sheet and are happy to participate in the interview. Thanks. If at any point throughout the interview you need a break or need to stop, just let me know and we can do so. If you need any questions repeated just let me know. Great.

2. As a brief introduction, this interview will surround your own experience with engaging young women from disadvantaged areas in PA, as well as considering the experiences of the young women within your club, and the organisations that govern (youth club). I will be leaning on the concept of practice throughout, with particular interest in understanding practice to improve PA participation for this population.

3. Throughout the interview I will provide some ideas based on previous findings as to how to enhance the PA experience for this population. This is in no way prescriptive – you are in a far better position to tell me whether these ideas have legs. Part of the interview will be about problem solving around these ideas and finding ways to develop provision in your specific club. It is very much dependent on the resources and values that (youth club) have and whether the ideas align with yourselves and feel possible.

4. What have you found particularly difficult about engaging this population?
   - What seem to be the key players in diminishing their participation in your opinion? What have you experienced as 'reasons'?
   - What are the most difficult elements of disadvantage that affect PA participation at your club in your opinion?
   - How have you tried to address the issues and keep young women active at your club? Have you been successful?

5. What are the main objectives of (name) youth club?
   - Who defines them? Council, MVH, police, yourselves?

- Where does PA sit in your hierarchy of provision?
- Why does it sit there? Why are other areas more important?

6. As a youth club, we know it isn't necessarily your responsibility to provide PA. That being said, the club attracts huge numbers, with many choosing to come 5 nights a week for multiple hours per night.
   - This means that after school, most of the young people's spare time is taken up by being at youth club and they aren't doing other things – such as PA.
   - It is brilliant that they are choosing to come to the club instead of engaging in more negative activities.
   - But it might be important to provide consistent PA provision, in order to help them meet their daily PA target and improve their health. You do provide some PA sessions which is great.

7. What governs your PA provision at the club?
   - What is your current provision? Was football and abs and pads, maybe extra opportunities infrequently.
   - Does it depend on time, space, facilities, money, leaders? What are the most significant dependencies?
   - Is there more you wish to do but can't because of your situation? What could help? What do you need?

8. Within the theory I am leaning on, practice is made up of 3 elements; materials, meanings and competencies. Throughout the interview, I am going to specifically address these within our answers. Sometimes disengagement can be generated by the tiniest instance, so we will work to identify these.

9. As you know, I conducted observations and interviews within your establishment, and I would like to share some of the key findings and discuss. I am going to begin by discussing choice of activities.

- What determined the regular option of football and abs and pads at the club? Was it driven by the girls/boys/leaders? Is it successful/unsuccessful? Why?
- What reinforces its continuation? Ease, good numbers, limited facilities?
- Do you get much feedback from the girls on your PA provision? Do you actively seek the feedback? How?
- Sometimes they may say they want to do football – but actually don't take part much. How could you tackle this to make sure they do more exercise? Further engagement?

10. During interviews, across clubs, many young women wanted to experience more forms of PA. Especially ones they weren't experiencing elsewhere. Examples included netball, badminton and gym-based activities.
- Would there be scope to involve the women more in choosing the activities? Has this been done before? How did you engage them?
- There might be an assumption that the boys are the best at football, you only ever play football which is 'for the boys', so some girls don't bother getting involved. It seems as though that's how a lot of PA operates, and it needs to change in order to engage inactive girls.
- Would it be possible to rotate the activities on the Astroturf, or use other areas for PA? Eg. touch rugby, circuits, handball, netball, hockey could be played. Pitches nearby, walks around the area, local parks etc.

11. It could be important to figure out what is attractive about these activities to the girls and build on it. Eg. is it away from the boys, is it non-competitive? Have you had feedback on the positive/negative elements of PA for girls in the past?
- Anyone could play these games, boys or girls. Allowing the girls to choose the activity would just provide equal attention and opportunity across the sexes in designing PA opportunities.
- What would govern whether you could do this? Do you need resources, leaders and so on? Where could you find them? Online guides, council grants, engage with other clubs.
- Would you do it? Why not?

12. Additionally, many of the girls believed fun was the key element for making them want to do PA whilst a lack of fun drove them away.

- Football sessions are a free for all kick about. Some boys and girls might enjoy this but for others it was a little rough and not something they wanted to do. The contact, competitive side and criticism as a result specifically drove some away.
- You've had great success with activities like water balloon fights, frisbee etc which have promoted fun over structured sport. Could there be more room to incorporate these informal activities?
- Eg. using games to get kids running about for an hour? It doesn't always have to be competitive games – you could look more towards teamwork games or drills that work on skills. And even then, you do not need to choose highly skilled games to play. We want to attract those less inclined to exercise. Rugby netball, rounders, walking touch, etc.
- What could you provide? Would you be open to it?
- I am not saying there should be no structure or rules. Some lines to delineate from would be useful, but delivered in a relaxed, non-authoritarian manner and allowing sessions and games to evolve as the girls needs/desires develop.

13. You provide some excellent education opportunities at the club, surrounding issues like consent, drugs and alcohol awareness and so on. Have you ever considered educating on the importance of PA?

- If some kids have no family experience of PA in early years and then negative PE experience they could be lost and inactive for the rest of their lives.
- This is a major contribution to poor health, while increasing activity can improve health significantly.
- How have you educated on PA in the past?
- How have you helped develop their meaning around PA?

14. It could be really important to provide positive PA experiences, as like I said earlier, some people have only had negative. Some girls might not know what real PA feels like, the endorphins, feeling out of breath, the after-exercise ache.
    - Would (youth club) be comfortable exposing them to that? In order for them to learn? Many of the feelings are positively reinforcing and draw people back to exercise again.
    - A sit-down lesson might not be so effective, but a doing lesson where they experience this could help.
    - It could be beneficial to get girls comfortable being uncomfortable when exercising. Letting them know that that's what is supposed to happen and they will get fitter and healthier by persevering. This would promote meanings and competencies around exercise that they may be lacking in.

15. All of the above could improve the experience of PA, but we know getting girls to the activities isn't easy. Research suggests that the health benefits of PA aren't what draws young people in, which is why more doing sessions might need to be done. In this research, many of the girls did not seem to exercise for the sake of exercise. It was also to meet social needs. We need to harness these small, positive dimensions of exercise and promote them to pull girls into PA.
    - The youth club is a really social place. You have been super successful in allowing social skills to develop naturally here. Could you bring the social side into PA opportunities more for the girls? As it might be a pull for them?
    - How could you do this? Have you done it in the past?
    - Maybe bring a friend incentives, exercise groups or tournaments with mini socials afterwards, etc.
    - Could you bring some community role models in? Or use young leaders to deliver the activities? You and Casey seem to be great role models for exercise…
    - Would this be possible with current resources?

16. It seems especially tricky to engage the older girls in PA opportunities. Hopefully some of the recommendations in this research might help.

    - How have you engaged them in the past? What do they respond to?
    - Allowing more choice/power over activities could help, providing young leadership roles, promoting the social side for specific age groups.
    - A lot of the older girls in the research liked the idea of using the gym for PA but they often lacked knowledge and competency in using it. Do you think if a gym session was organised specifically aimed at older girls, they would try it?
    - Perhaps we could try and sort a free pass out for them to try it and make it a social occasion with something at the club afterwards?
    - As I said, there was a lack of competency around it. Perhaps they could have some lessons/education on how to use certain machines, what exercises to do to develop certain areas etc?
    - If a gym is not possible, maybe circuits or a bodyweight session on the astro could be possible?

17. Smartphones play a huge role in the young people's lives, often governing what they do and how they do it. Throughout most behaviours, phones were attached to the participants' hips. Although sometimes a distraction, they are a hub of activity and we could try and harness their potential more.

    - Monitoring steps/activities has been really popular. It has allowed them to set goals, monitor progress, compete with friends/themselves.
    - Could you use technology and smartphones more to engage girls in PA?
    - Perhaps identify workouts/guides/videos for what the girls want to do. Offer to take action shots of the exercise. Identify apps to use such as couch to 5k or Strava.
    - This could even be led by the girls – maybe create a girls PA group where they come with different ideas and try them as a group? This could be yoga, HIIT workouts inside the club or anything outside.
    - You created a sort of walking competition during Covid-19 – how did that go?
    - What were the successes/failures?

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- Who did it engage?

18. In all fieldwork clubs, boys had a really big influence over behaviour, especially exercise behaviour. It was probably the most pronounced here because of the level of mixed interaction.
    - I've seen you and the other leaders shutting youths down when they are acting inappropriately. Do you ever have to intervene or manage the boys' behaviour towards the girls? How do you find managing this?
    - Why do you think the boys act that way towards the girls?
    - What do you try and prioritise? What is the governing practice for you? Letting them sort it out between themselves, letting the girls develop their own voice? Does this always happen? Why do you prioritise what you do?

19. There were times when the boys were purposely excluding the girls from activities or making things difficult for them. This happened a lot around the pool tables and music systems where boys wouldn't share, or when they did let the girls take over, they would put them down, interfere with games and be a bit of a nuisance with name calling etc. Some girls talked about how this would put them off doing things.
    - These are tiny instances but when built up could have a real effect on the girls' behaviour in terms of going in on themselves.
    - If the girls meaningfully understand something as the boys domain – and fighting it only ends in hassle – they withdraw from the materials and their competency may decrease.
    - I know you have a booking policy on the tables. Is there anything else you do or could do to make it fairer for the girls?
    - During half term, I remember the table being flooded with older girls. Later that evening, they were nowhere near. They might have an understanding that the table is the boys' when the boys are in, which stops them playing as much.

20. This seemed to translate into the PA at the club. Some (not all) girls found the boys to be too forceful which stopped some playing. They found that boys never passed to them or included them. They described the name calling and criticism they had experienced from the boys and the outfits they avoided wearing in case males passed comment.

- Do you think some meaning work could be done around male behaviour? For both the boys and girls?
- Do you already do this as part of your education at the club?
- Perhaps we could do some work around being respectful to each other, not passing comment/criticism unnecessarily, maybe around the girls having the confidence to talk back to the boys and not take judgements to heart. The boys learning that they have no business commenting on the girls behaviour. Trying is just as important as succeeding and it's okay to fail. We could look at codes of conduct in PA and outside of it?
- Do you think this might be possible? This is likely a wider reflection of society – women are subordinated to men a lot of the time. I know changing that is too much of a task for one youth club but small challenges and changes could help the girls. Equal opportunities to choose exercises or show their skill in something they never get the chance to could also help.
- The girls really seemed to respond when the likes of you and Casey got involved in football/pool. You could see their effort growing because they could see you doing it. Allies and role models in that sense could be really useful.

21. I wondered if we could touch on kit slightly.

- In (youth club), the youths have a lot of freedom as to what to wear. They seem to like their branded clothing like all kids.
- I remember once, the young leaders got given hoodies and they all put them straight on. Elsewhere in other clubs, girls reported liking having branded club kit as it gave them a sense of identity and felt proud wearing it.
- Do you often give out branded stuff?

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- I am not sure whether it would be worn in the club. But if the club put on PA sessions perhaps they could be used for that? Specifically, they could be used as prizes for exercise. People seem to love freebies like water bottles, t-shirts etc. Perhaps if a young person did 5 exercise sessions or had the stats for 25km of walking/running/cycling they could get given a prize?
- It would be important to have individual, meaningful goals and not make it a competition between peers. They could develop and work towards goals at their own pace and the prize could be a positive reinforcement. People love free stash.

22. One of the last thing's I wanted to discuss is food. The club is surrounded by food options from the chip shop, Chinese, waffle shop and corner shop. I imagine fighting the junk food intake is a losing battle. How do you manage trying to promote healthier eating?
- Fit and Fed seems to have done a great job. On fit and fed nights, do you find youths take up the healthier options or still go and get junk food?
- You are doing a great job educating the youths on cooking healthier food with them. What demographics get involved? Do the girls? Older/younger?

23. It seems as though accessibility is the main thing driving them towards junk food. They are in the club 5 nights a week, all hours. The junk food is quick, cheap and readily available. Is it their only option?
- How often do you offer the healthier food? How does it work? Who cooks it/buys it etc.
- What stands in the way of (youth club) offering healthier food provision? What do you need to do it?

24. Maybe to promote healthier food, we could employ some of the PA strategies. Like making the cooking/eating a social practice, making 'fashionable' foods like smoothies/protein pancakes, things with avocado. It might sound silly but

there seems to be evidence of girls passively absorbing online trends – maybe we should harness the food trends too?

- If participating in fashionable practices that they see on Instagram etc governs their behaviour, then we could try and appeal to that and provide opportunities that align with it. Healthy food, action shots, popular exercises are key examples.

- Also, if they want food that they can carry around if they fancy a walk outside, we should provide this so that it is as amenable as the junk food.

- Maybe letting them decide the food options – and us making sure that it is health enhancing – could work.

25. It could be really important to gauge the girls feelings on any of the above. Some girls discussed how powerful their emotional reactions can be to certain activities.

- Understanding how the girls feelings and emotions react to different activities, weathers, tools, company etc is vital and could give good insight into whether an activity is working.

- Things like music, nature, visual progress promoted pride, wellbeing, nostalgia, happiness. Miserable days, tight clothing promoted discomfort and uneasiness. When delivering PA or making changes in provision, some focus on emotion could be helpful.

- How could we collect this? Social media, wordclouds, group discussions, suggestion boxes.

26. Throughout the interview we have talked about some really specific instances. What's arguably more important is the method we take to explore and identify them, and how we try to influence practice and evaluate it.

- Completely transforming behaviour is likely too difficult. But we could positively influence daily practices, encourage and help the girls foster healthier activities. Identify the positive and negative elements of activities and change them up – make them more positive. Find the governing forces and align with them, work around them.

- To do this requires some careful attention and engagement. Would (youth club) be open to creating more feedback opportunities? The more social/fun we can make these the better so it doesn't feel like a nagging task.

- What is important is that as we have established, sometimes the girls say things because they think that's what people want to hear or maybe it's the normal/fashionable thing to say. Actions do not always follow words. To go beyond this, we need to engage more. Have follow up questions, find out why they believe what they do, what drives it. What do they actually want? How can we offer it to them? Consistently go back to them and work on increasing PA, rather than offering a new activity and just stopping and trying something else if it doesn't work.

- It is a significant behaviour change for some to become active. They need all the support they can get.

27. We might also need to be careful about how we evaluate the success of the above ideas. What would you say your measures of success are in evaluating PA engagement? For girls specifically?

- Is it about getting them on the pitch? Numbers? The nature of PA they're doing?

- Getting inactive girls engaging in PA is a big task that has stumped organisations for years. It will not happen overnight and there needs to be consistent effort, engagement, opportunities for feedback etc.

- If numbers don't start out great – or they dwindle, it is important to keep at it. The activity provided may well not be the right one, but they might realise they want something else off the back of it. Keep identifying the positive and negative elements, the governing forces in what they do, and hopefully we can better provision.

- I know sacrificing a full pitch of boys for a small number of girls might not be desirable – but until the girls feel like they can be on the pitch and take up that time/space, they will likely avoid it. More equal opportunity could be really important.

- Would (youth club) commit to working in this way? This is a pilot, it may not work. But also it could work and it could improve conditions for the girls in a really important health enhancing area.

28. Thank you for taking part. Is there anything you would like to comment further on or any questions you would like to ask?

Study 3: Natalie's Week 3 Interview Guide

1. Hi. How are you doing? As always, if you need any questions repeated, if you need a break or don't feel well, just let me know. Ready to begin?

2. Okay so how has your week been? What physical activities have you participated in this week? How many days have you been active?
    *   How did it compare to your busy week last week?
    *   Any PA not just walking. Gym?
    *   What did you do in college? How was it?
    *   Were you active on the weekend?
    *   Explore other activities.

3. Similar to last week, before we go into the walking, could I ask some follow-up questions about other areas?

4. During Covid-19, lots of PA settings shut down. How active were you throughout?
    *   Less than before? Why?
    *   What stopped you? You had more time, you maybe had more incentive to get outside. If it was a lack of resources, could you have substituted anything in for them? Could you have learned any competencies?
    *   Did you feel competent doing other activities? Did something stop you running/cycling/doing home workouts? What was it? What did you need to be more active?

5. How did inactivity make you feel? Lethargic, lazy, guilty? Happy to not do gym? Were those feelings powerful enough to get you moving?
    *   What sorts of activities were you doing? What made these possible?
    *   Why did walking work for you if you were walking?

6. If you were to go a period without PA settings again, what would you do differently? What did you learn?

7. You mentioned that a lot of your steps come from college practicals, but on days without them you struggle to meet your step target. Do you think there is room in education to be more active? Walking/standing lessons, a daily mile etc. Are these attractive to you?
    *   Would you like to see more PA provision in daily education/work/life? If not, why not?
    *   What is attractive and not attractive?
    *   Interrogate the elements.

8. You are active and sporty. This is backed up by your gym, walking and college activity. But you mentioned last week that sometimes you stand on the side and don't get involved.

- What causes this? If the boys are too competitive or forceful, would you consider matching them? Why not? Why not try?
- Is it something else causing you to step back? What? Femininity, judgement etc.
- How do you feel when you step back and don't get involved?
- Do you think there is too much emphasis on those forms of sport in college? Would you like to see less competitive options? Like what?
- If they are more skilful, do you get opportunities to be better than them? Do the college do mixed gymnastics? Or any other sports you are good at?
- If not - Do you think that is fair? What do you think dictates the sports you do? Is it balanced for the girls? Would you consider feeding this back to the college?

9. Okay let's move onto this week's walking. Have you worked towards your target this week? How have you done so?
    - How many walks? What was your step count/distance for each day?
    - How many days?
    - If not, why not?

10. How have you felt generally about your walks this week? Last week you said that you were really active and busy but felt good because of it. How about this week?
    - Feeling good/bad? Feeling stressed/calm? Guilty?
    - How has walking contributed to your daily mood/feelings?
    - It's okay to say if walking has not been good. That is just as valuable to know, and we will do what we can to improve conditions if this is the case.

11. Could you tell me about your walks this week?
    - Where and when were they? Did you do anything differently?
    - What were the enjoyable parts?
    - What were the not so enjoyable parts? Why?
    - Interrogate these via 3 elements and affective properties. Eg. did lack of competency affect enjoyment?
    - Did meaning of a certain part of the walk affect opinion on it? For example, 'dodgy area', nature etc. What materials helped the walk? What do you wish there were more/less of? Did Strava etc make you feel more comfortable walking?
    - How was your mood and behaviour affected by walking?
    - Spend a while here.

12. Last week's weather seemed to be quite influential. How did the weather/daylight affect this week's walk?
    - Are you becoming more comfortable being out in different weathers?
    - If the weather was particularly bad on a day, how would you still make sure you're active? What could you do?
    - How do you think you'll manage in winter when weather is poorer, nights are darker? How will you maintain activity levels?

13. Did anything get in the way of walking this week?
    - Did you have a lot of homework? Felt tired? No one to walk with? How did you manage this?
    - Did you change any of your behaviours/schedule to make sure you walked? What did you change?

14. What kind of activities did you do on your walks this week? Were they successful?
    - Music, podcasts, talking, photos, tracking. Opportunity for education, catch up on news, listen to something funny, publish photos on social media.
    - Shall we try some next week?

15. You've mentioned that seeing pretty places and animals, feeling a community buzz and reconnecting with places from your childhood have been positive during your walking.
    - How do these make you feel? How does it contribute to wellbeing?
    - Do you miss these on days you don't experience them? Is this powerful enough to get you outside?

16. Is there anything in your local area that could be better for your walking?
    - Enough streetlamps, enough police patrolling, enough pavements, zebra crossings, green space.
    - What could be better?
    - Is there anything you wish you were more competent in to help your walking?

17. Are there any materials that you wish you had to improve your walking experience?
    - Shoes, kit, raincoat, Fitbit – heart rate monitor etc. Headphones, dog, anything?
    - What makes you want them?
    - Could you get them?

18. So last week you were hitting 7000 steps each day. The distance of your walks was 1.1/1.2 miles and the speed was just below moderate. This means that you were excellent in hitting steps for this project but your walking was unlikely to qualify as physical activity.
    - I don't want to undermine your achievements because reaching those levels is fantastic. The days where you did gym or were active in college were great and you were absolutely active then and complimented it with walking. But perhaps on a day where you weren't as involved in exercise, your walks were unlikely to lead you to meeting PA target of the day.
    - Remember 60 minutes of moderate per day up to age 19.
    - On days like this, would you consider increasing speed or distance to be considered active? Shall we try it this week?

19. Would you prefer to walk faster or longer?
    - For moderate PA, we would be looking at 10,000-11,700 steps per day.
    - Moderate pace = 2.5-3.5 mph

- Brisk = 3.5-4mph. Do you need this in km per hour? I will put them on the Teams page.
- Would you commit to aiming for this on the days where you don't do any other activity?
- Remember, even if you break the walks up so 15 minutes of faster walking a few times a day would be beneficial.
- If this is too much, we can look at changing it next week. But for this week can we try?

20. I want to end this week by discussing any other PA opportunities that are attractive to you.
   - If you could do anything, what would you like to do?
   - What have you seen on tv/social media etc that you'd like to try? Sport or activity?
   - What is attractive about it to you?
   - What is stopping you trying it? Is it really stopping you? Could we work around it?
   - Is there anything you tried before and would like to try again? Maybe in different circumstances?
   - Could we go away and do some research on opportunities and discuss next week?
   - Cycling, fitness classes, racket sports, batting sports, ball sports, weightlifting.

Appendix E

Walking and Talking Participant Submissions

Example Strava Record:
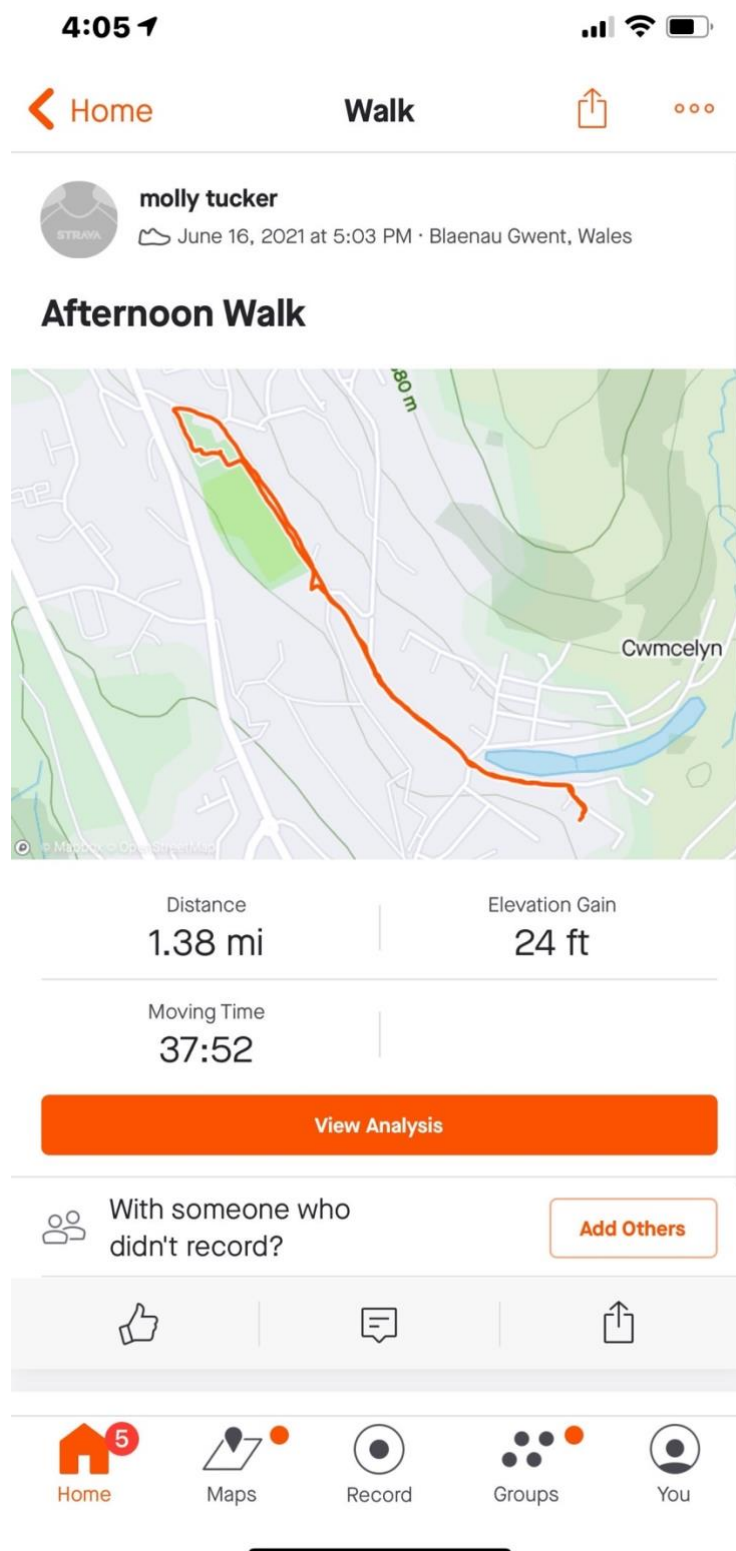
Example Diary Entry:

Wednesday 23rd June

Today I walked around 1.5 miles and was out for 40 minutes. I went with two friends to a park about 20 minutes away from home. The park has two large feilds with a small park. There were lots of people with their families within the area as the weather was quite warm. On this walk I enjoyed spending time with friends that I don't see very often. I didn't enjoy the traveling aspect as it was hot in the car. I think this walk improved my mood as it allowed me to catch up with friends.

Example Photo Upload:

Natalie's Walking Record:

WALKING STATS RECORD

DATE:	NUMBER OF STEPS:	DISTANCE WALKED (FOCUSED WALK):	SPEED OF WALK (FOCUSED WALK; MPH):	ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES (INCLUDE DESCRIPTION, eg. TITLE, DURATION, INTENSITY):
28/5/21	2163	No walk today	No walk today	
29/5/21				Work
30/5/21				Work, gymnastics
31/5/21	8264			
1/6/21	10958			Gymnastic
2/6/21	2168			
3/6/21	5216			
4/6/21	7625			
5/6/21				Work
6/6/21				Work, Gymnastics
7/6/21	7363			
8/6/21	7509	1.01 miles	2.2mph	Gymnastics
9/6/21	8946			
10/6/21	10243	1.20 miles	2.1mph	
11/6/21	6028			
12/6/21				Work
13/6/21				Work, gymnastics
14/6/21	5533			
16/6/21	12494	1.1 miles	2mph	
17/6/21	10437			Gymnastics
18/6/21	7424			
19/6/21	4741			
20/6/21				Work
21/6/21	5899			
22/6/21	6134			Gymnastics
23/6/21	10372	1.5 miles	2.3mph	
24/6/21	2307			
25/6/21	1118			
26/6/21				Work

27/6/21				Work, gymnastics
28/6/21	3563			
29/6/21	2400			Gymnastics
30/6/21	8208			
1/7/21	2821	0.76 miles	1.9mph	
2/7/21	1922			
3/7/21				Work
4/7/21				Work, gymnastics
5/7/21	9548			
6/7/21	3275			Gymnastics
7/7/21	3722			
8/7/21	1648			
9/7/21	4316			
10/7/21				Work
11/7/21				Work, gymnastics
12/7/21	8263	3.1 miles	2.2mph	
13/7/21	7293			Gymnastics
14/7/21	6283			
15/7/21	6293			
16/7/21	2837			
17/7/21				Work
18/7/21				Work, gymnastics
19/7/21	10386			
20/7/21	8237			Gymnastics
21/7/21	7366			
22/7/21	3747			
23/7/21	3847			
24/7/21				Work