

**Preventing and reducing loneliness and
social isolation: A realist evaluation of the
Foundation of Light's Extra Time Hub
programme**

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PhD

2023

**Preventing and reducing loneliness and
social isolation: A realist evaluation of the
Foundation of Light's Extra Time Hub
programme**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty of
Health and Life Sciences

November 2023

Abstract

This thesis explores the role that community sport for development (CSfD) may play in preventing and reducing loneliness and social isolation. Society's awareness of loneliness and social isolation has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic and associated government lockdowns and restrictions which had a disproportionate effect on older people. To contribute to this area of inquiry, a realist evaluation of the Foundation of Light's (FoL) Extra Time Hub (ETH) programme in Sunderland was conducted. The FoL is the official charity of Sunderland Association Football Club (SAFC) and is classed as a football foundation. The realist evaluation utilised a number of different research methods including: observations, World Café, photovoice, focus group, and realist interviews. The novel application of the World Café and photovoice methods within the realist evaluation demonstrates the originality of the approach this thesis has taken. The thesis has three main findings: 1) the badge is not enough- it is not enough for football foundations to solely depend on their link with a professional football club; 2) CSfD has the potential to prevent, but not reduce loneliness and social isolation; and 3) relationships within CSfD matter- members of staff involved in CSfD are considered to be relational community practitioners, and this thesis explores the implications that this shift away from the role of the traditional sports coach has on the emotion management of practitioners. The research of this thesis matters because it is a timely investigation into how CSfD may be able to help prevent loneliness and social isolation in a post-pandemic world.

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List of abbreviations

ABCD- Asset based community development

ALS- Active Lives Survey

APS- Active People Survey

BoL- Beacon of Light

CMMO- Context- Mechanism (resource)- Mechanism (reasoning)- Outcome

CMO- Context- Mechanism- Outcome

CSD- Community sport development

CSfD- Community sport for development

DS- Delivery staff

EFL Trust- English Football League Trust

ETH- Extra Time Hub

FoL- Foundation of Light

IPT- Initial Programme Theory

MRT- Middle Range Theory

PP- Programme participant

PT- Programme Theory

RCTs- Randomised Controlled Trials

SAFC- Sunderland Association Football Club

SD- Sport(s) development

SDP- Sport for development and peace

SfD- Sport for development

SFHM- Sport-for-health model

SROI- Social return on investment

S4D- Sport-for-development framework

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Sonia Dalkin, Angela Bate, and Paul Potrac, for their help and guidance throughout my research. They have helped me to grow and develop as an academic. Thank you also to Rory Magrath who has been my mentor as part of the Football Collective mentoring programme. I am also thankful to Andrew Fields and Kevin Harris who have encouraged me to pursue my career in academia, providing support and showing interest throughout.

This was a collaborative project with the Foundation of Light and I am thankful to the staff at the Beacon of Light. Particular thanks to Jamie Wright and Liz Barton-Jones who were my main points of contact throughout the research. I would also like to thank those who participated in the research- the Extra Time Hubbers, and FoL staff.

In January 2020 I started this thesis as a single man new to the North East. As I submit this thesis, I am now a married man. Thank you to my wife, Darling Lucy, who has been with me through the ups and downs of the last two years.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank The Lord in providing me with this opportunity and for sustaining me throughout the last four years. I thank Him that I am saved by His grace alone and that I cannot earn or unearn my salvation through this work. I have and continue to be encouraged by these words from CityAlight:

*I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed...
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

To God be the glory.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas, and contributions from the work of others. The work was done in collaboration with Foundation of Light, Sunderland.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted through the Researcher's submission to Northumbria University's Ethics Online System on 15/03/2021 (reference number: 23816). Subsequent amendments were approved on 10/12/2021 and 11/01/2023.

I declare that the word count of this thesis is 78,452 words.

Name: Andrew Bailey

Date: 28th November 2023

Chapter 1- Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to evaluate the impact that football foundations may have in preventing and reducing loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people. The thesis furthers knowledge in several key areas, namely: 1) the unique opportunity that football foundations hold to engage with harder to reach groups; 2) the potential role that community sport for development (CSfD) in tackling loneliness and social isolation; and 3) the importance of relationships within CSfD and the emotion management experiences of CSfD practitioners.

Awareness of loneliness and social isolation increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, with attention placed on older people who were isolating, shielding, and social distancing (Anna Rosa & Lagacé, 2022; Armitage & Nellums, 2020; S. J. Richardson et al., 2020; Webb, 2021; C. Y. K. Williams et al., 2021). Within the UK, post-pandemic, the public finances continue to be stretched, with public services at risk of funding cuts and therefore the role of charitable organisations such as football foundations is becoming increasingly important. Thus, this novel research is timely in identifying how and why football foundations may be able to play a part in tackling the social issues of loneliness and social isolation. Using the Foundation of Light's (FoL) Extra Time Hub (ETH) programme as a case study, this thesis seeks to identify and highlight how CSfD may be used to achieve broader non-sport specific outcomes and improve lives. Chapter 2 introduces CSfD, highlighting how CSfD is defined and understood within this thesis. Chapter 3 reviews the literature in regard to how CSfD has traditionally been evaluated. Chapter 4 highlights the potential role that CSfD has to tackle loneliness and social isolation drawing reference to existing literature.

Chapters 5 and 6 outline the methodological approach and study design of the thesis, taking the reader through the philosophical foundations of realism, through to the design of the realist evaluation. Chapter 7 outlines the Initial Programme Theories (IPTs) which were then tested and refined. The results of the testing and refinement are broken down into chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 for each refined Programme Theory (PT). After which a summary chapter (Chapter 14) bringing the findings together is provided, before concluding with the discussion (Chapter 15) which includes recommendations and highlights the contribution to knowledge of this thesis. Before conceptualising CSfD, the research question, aim, and objectives of the thesis are outlined.

Research question, aim and objectives

The research question for this thesis is:

How can football foundations contribute to reducing and preventing loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people?

To answer this research question, the aim of this thesis is to evaluate the impact that football foundations may have in preventing and reducing loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people. Specifically, this is achieved by investigating how, why, and for whom, and to what the FoL's ETH programme 'works'.

To achieve this aim, this study will work towards several objectives:

1. Conceptualise what is meant by CSfD as a potential tool for social change (Chapter 2).

2. Review existing literature which highlights the need for more robust evidence within the field of CSfD (Chapter 3).
3. Through reviewing existing literature, establishing the emergence of CSfD as a potential tool to achieve social change and why there is a need for a more robust evidence base within the field (Chapters 2 and 3)
4. Review existing literature to highlight the issue of loneliness and the potential CSfD may have on reducing and preventing loneliness (Chapter 4).
5. By conducting a realist evaluation of the FoL's Extra Time Hub programme (see Chapter 6 for evaluation design), investigate the unique role that CSfD, specifically football foundations, may play in producing wider social outcomes, answering questions of: how?, why?, for whom?, and in what context?
6. Through use of substantive theory, understand further the transferability of the findings from the realist evaluation.
7. To contribute to ongoing scholarly work, contributing to the understanding of what the 'power of sport' is and how it may be used to reduce and prevent loneliness and social isolation.
8. To discuss the implications of this thesis for CSfD and its contribution to knowledge.

To begin with, attention is turned to conceptualising CSfD. Following this, literature review chapters of evaluation approaches to CSfD, and the potential of CSfD to tackling loneliness and social isolation are provided.

Chapter 2- Conceptualising community sport for development

Introduction to chapter

This chapter introduces the concept of CSfD, providing the reader with a clear understanding of how CSfD is defined and understood within this thesis. Firstly, the chapter outlines different approaches and understandings of development. After this CSfD is conceptualised, including delineating the concept from other similar terms used within the literature. The chapter then discusses the socio-political context of CSfD in the United Kingdom. Finally, an overview of research into the role of practitioners involved in the delivery of CSfD is presented.

Understanding development

Given its abstraction and malleability across different policy areas, it should come as no surprise that many definitions of development abound. Indeed, it has been suggested that it is impossible to pin down a neat definition of the term (Girginov, 2008). Hartmann and Kwauk (2011, p. 286) have argued that given “the multiplicity and ambiguity around conceptions of development presents one of the most important initial challenges for understanding and theorizing [sic] the sport and development field”. The political nature of CSfD will be discussed later in the chapter. However, for now, it is worth briefly considering development using the four different perspectives that Girginov (2008), building on the work of Thomas (2000), outlines: neoliberalism, interventionism, structuralism, and people-centred development.

Within the neoliberal school of thought, development is seen to be an “immanent process within capitalism” (Girginov, 2008, p. 6), with individual entrepreneurs being the key agents at play and embracing the free market with minimal government

intervention. Whilst subscribing to capitalism, interventionism also acknowledges the structural inequalities and exploitation that come about because of capitalism and focuses on removing these barriers and faults of capitalism (Thomas, 2000). To resolve these inequalities the interventionism perspective of development suggests combining market and state (Thomas, 2000). Rather than being the sole actor, the state is joined by other agents of delivery such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). An example of this in the UK was the New Labour government's (1997-2010) 'third way' approach to public services (Atkins, 2010; Dickinson, 2014; Leach, 2009; A. Massey & Pype, 2005).

The structuralist view of development does not subscribe to capitalism, rather it seeks to transform society through collective action via the state. Structuralists view history through the lens of political and economic struggles between social groups. Social change is guided by the state in an effort to deliver equal development for all (Girginov, 2008). And finally, the people-centred development approach views development as a process of individual and group empowerment, with individuals and social movements acting as the agents of change. This perspective has increased in prominence recently in the UK, due to the concept of 'The Big Society' by the Coalition government (2010-2015) which was developed to reduce the burden of the state (Parnell, Millward, & Spracklen, 2015; Parnell, Spracklen, & Millward, 2017) and hand responsibility to local communities through asset-based community development (ABCD) (Bates & Hylton, 2021; L. Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016).

Depending on the ideology and agendas of governing parties, the UK Government has had a history holding all these perspectives of development, particularly interventionism (New Labour, 1997-2010), structuralism (general overarching Labour approach), and people-centred development (Conservative led governments from

2010 to the present day). Thus, views on development have an impact on the policies of development. Within these perspectives of what development is, there are several models and approaches to realising development. Within CSfD, the prominent approach is the deficit model of development, whereby practitioners and evaluators identify, and fix perceived problems for disadvantaged communities (Coalter, 2007, 2013a; Schulenkorf & Spaaij, 2015). Coakley (2002, pp. 16-17) referred to this approach as “the social control and deficit reduction dream”, which is more applicable for low income and minority communities. Coakley (2002) suggested that sport interventions from a deficit model of development are typically used to ‘fix’ character and lifestyle defects, whilst simultaneously maintaining control over individuals and communities. Sport for development and peace (SDP) programmes delivered by the global north to the global south are particularly prone to reasserting and maintaining control over a developing country (K. R. Anderson, Knee, & Mowatt, 2021; Clarke & Norman, 2021; Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2020). However, even in the global north and the UK, control over a more deprived community taking part in a CSfD programme can still be exerted by those delivering the programme. Indeed, previous studies have viewed global north CSfD programmes through a Foucauldian lens (for example- Adams & Harris, 2014; Pigginn, Jackson, & Lewis, 2009; Reid, 2009; Rich et al., 2022).

An alternative and more novel model of development within the CSfD literature is ABCD, in which “communities design programmes around their own strengths and (tangible as well as intangible) resources” (Schulenkorf & Spaaij, 2015, p. 75). Coakley (2002) argued that this approach is more applicable for communities of middle and upper classes, whereby individuals and communities are able to use their privileged positions in regards to money, skills, and access to build on existing strengths. Coakley (2002, pp. 16-17) refers to this as “the social opportunity and

privilege-promotion dream”. ABCD can be traced to the people-centred development perspective, given the emphasis on building on the pre-existing resources of individuals and communities. Indeed, in the UK, since the Coalition government’s (made up of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) ‘Big Society’ agenda and the reduction of central government funding (Parnell et al., 2017), there has been an increase in ABCD within sport (Bates & Hylton, 2021; L. Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016). The community sport development compass provided by Bates and Hylton (2021) (see Figure 1) helps to provide a map of different approaches to development; top-down or bottom-up, and asset-based or needs-based. Now that an understanding of development has been gained it is now time to assess the different conceptualisations of sport development and how CSfD has emerged.

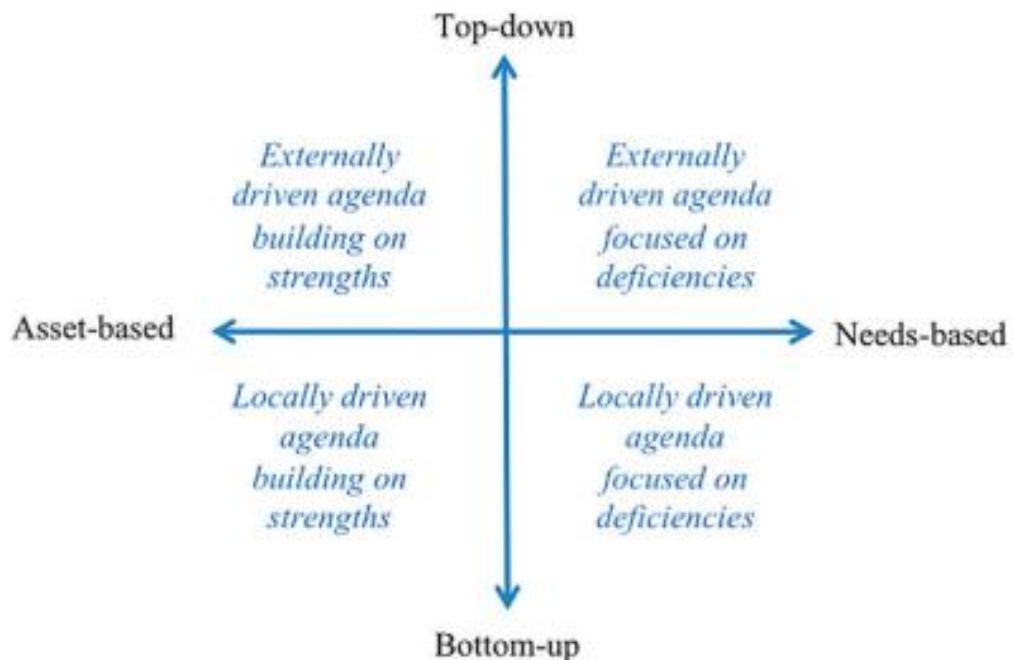


Figure 1- The community sport development compass (Bates & Hylton, 2021, p. 135)

Conceptualising community sport for development

Within the literature there are several different iterations and understandings of sport development (De Bock et al., 2022; Hylton, 2013). Policy makers and organisations delivering sport are prone to test the elasticity of the meanings and conflating different iterations (Houlihan, 2010a; Anne Thompson, Bloyce, & Mackintosh, 2021; Tinaz & Knott, 2021). This makes defining and distinguishing CSfD a challenging and evolving task (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Hylton, 2013; Mackintosh, 2021). Despite this, some broad distinctions of these terms can be made as outlined by Table 1. These are now discussed in further detail.

Table 1-Iterations and variations of sport development

Label	Overview	Example citations
Sport(s) development (SD)	Historically focused on ‘sport for sport’s sake’ objectives, however over time has incorporated more ‘sport for good’ tendencies. Thus, has developed into a contested area in terms of objectives, practices, and practitioners (Collins, 2010b; Houlihan, 2010a).	(Bailey & Harris, 2021; Bloyce, Smith, Mead, & Morris, 2008; Collins, 2010a, 2010b; Hallmann & Petry, 2013; Houlihan, 2010a, 2011; Houlihan & White, 2002; Jakar, Razin, & Rosen, 2021; Mackintosh, 2021; Mackintosh, Darko, Rutherford, & Wilkins, 2015; Müller-Schoell, 2018; Rich et al., 2022; S. Robson, Simpson, Tucker, & Leach, 2013; K. Rowe, Shilbury, Ferkins, & Hinckson, 2013, 2016; N. F. Rowe, 2015; Tshube, Kasale, & Manatsha, 2022).
Sport for development (SfD)	“Goes beyond traditional forms of sport development... sport is a conduit to achieving wider development outcomes” (Schulenkorf, 2017, p. 243).	(Hoekman, Schulenkorf, & Welty Peachey, 2019; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011; H. Morgan & Parker, 2022; Raw, Sherry, & Schulenkorf, 2022; Rossi & Jeanes, 2018; Schulenkorf, 2017; Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016; Van der Veken, Harris, Delheye, Lauwerier, & Willems, 2022; Welty Peachey, Schulenkorf, & Hill, 2019; Whitley et al., 2019).
Sport for development and peace (SDP)	Originated from the Olympic movement, utilised across a broad spectrum of global issues, with particular focus on peace-building within and between nations (Svensson & Cohen, 2020; Welty Peachey, Cohen, Shin, & Fusaro, 2018).	(Brake & Misener, 2020; Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, & Hayhurst, 2018; Giulianotti, Hognestad, & Spaaij, 2016; Svensson, Andersson, Mahoney, & Ha, 2020; Svensson & Cohen, 2020; Svensson & Hambrick, 2019; Welty Peachey, Cohen, et al., 2018).
Community sport(s) development (CSD)	In encouraging ‘sport for all’, seeks to challenge social inequalities by reducing barriers to participation (Hylton & Totten, 2013).	(Bates & Hylton, 2021; Dowling, Mackintosh, Lee, & Allen, 2021; Hylton & Totten, 2013; Mackintosh, 2014; Morrison & Misener, 2022; Theeboom, Haudenhuyse, & De Knop, 2010).

Sport(s) development

Sport(s) development (SD) is considered the umbrella term for any sport related programme, whether focusing on development of sport, or development through sport (Coalter, 2007; Tinaz & Knott, 2021). As a result, the area of SD is contested in terms of objectives, practices, and practitioners. For example, in the UK the primary debate is how much emphasis (and therefore funding) should be given to the development of sport, and development through sport (Collins, 2010b; Dowling, 2021; Grix & Carmichael, 2012; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). Development of sport is understood as the “activities designed both to excel in performance and increase in participation” (Tinaz & Knott, 2021, p. 2). On the other hand, development through sport “focuses on the role sport can play in enhancing the well-being of individuals, communities and societies” (Tinaz & Knott, 2021, p. 2). In the UK, whilst there have been fluctuations in terms of emphasis on development of and development through sport, since 2015 there has been a steady increased in emphasis placed on development through sport, as the government has recognised the potential sport can have in wider societal outcomes (Dowling, 2021; Dowling et al., 2021; HM Government, 2015; Sport England, 2016). It is development through sport that is of concern for this thesis, and it is now important to differentiate SfD, SDP, and CSD in developing an understanding of what CSfD is.

Sport for development

SfD can be considered as the overarching label for when sport is used for social change. SfD has been defined as:

The use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the

disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution. (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311)

In other words, SfD is where sport is used to achieve wider societal, non-sport related outcomes (Schulenkorf, 2017). Under the label of SfD, sport and physical activity have been used as a means to achieve (or at least claim) social change and outcomes beyond sport which include: reducing crime (Dandurand & Heidt, 2023; Nichols, 2007; A. Smith & Waddington, 2004) and anti-social behaviour (Crisp, 2021; Sandford, Duncombe, & Armour, 2008), improving health and reducing health inequalities (Schulenkorf & Siefken, 2019), improving education (Burnett, 2015; Moustakas, 2020; Sandford, Armour, & Warmington, 2006; Sherry & Schulenkorf, 2016), social inclusion (Van der Veken, Lauwerier, & Willems, 2020b), and increasing social capital (Adams, Harris, & Lindsey, 2018; Nicholson & Hoye, 2008; Putnam, 2001). Both SDP and CSD programmes seek to elicit these outcomes. Indeed, this literature review suggests that given the distinctiveness in focus and approach, SfD can be divided into SDP and CSD.

Sport for development and peace

SDP, which originated from the Olympic movement post-World War One (Burnett, 2001), is utilised across a broad spectrum of global issues with particular focus on peace-building within and between nations (Svensson & Cohen, 2020; Welty Peachey, Cohen, et al., 2018). For example, Furukawa (2022) through a study in South Sudan, suggested that SDP has the potential to support diverse populations in conflict affected countries, reduce gender disparities in sport, and challenge traditional social norms. Within the literature, SDP has a greater emphasis on international global south development initiatives (Al Khalifa & Collison, 2022; Furukawa, 2022; Giulianotti, 2004; Giulianotti, Collison, & Darnell, 2021; Giulianotti, Collison, & Hognestad,

2022; Giulianotti et al., 2016; Hasselgård, 2015; Herasimovich & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2021; McSweeney, Kikulis, Thibault, Hayhurst, & van Ingen, 2019; Mwaanga, 2013; Mwaanga & Banda, 2014). Given this plethora of examples of SDP operating across the global south, there has emerged a critique of imposing global north values onto the global south through development initiatives (K. R. Anderson et al., 2021; Clarke & Norman, 2021; Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2020). However, it is not just the global south which faces social challenges which can potentially be addressed through SfD (Welty Peachey, Lyras, Borland, & Cohen, 2013). Indeed, CSD has greater scope to include development through sport programmes within the global north.

Community sport for development

CSD is often conflated with SfD; this chapter recognises the overlap and therefore a new term is proposed- community sport for development (CSfD)- to recognise and embrace this overlap. Whilst SDP is largely focused on peacebuilding, CSD has a wide variety of focuses (listed in the above paragraph regarding SfD). CSD encourages the ‘sport for all’ philosophy in addressing social inequalities and reducing barriers to sports participation (Dowling et al., 2021; Hylton & Totten, 2013). Thus, CSD has two main objectives- to reduce social inequalities, and to reduce barriers to participate in sport programmes seeking to reduce social inequalities. SfD, SDP, and CDS have had a significant influence on this chapter’s conceptualisation of CSfD. Figure 2 below demonstrates the logical flow of concepts from the overall policy area of sports development. CSfD embraces the overlap between SfD as a broad concept and CSD in reducing barriers to participate in SfD initiatives in order to reduce social inequalities. This perspective is taken because the work of the FoL takes place in the global north, meaning SDP is less relevant. Moreover, the objectives of the FoL and the ETH programme better align with the broad objectives of CSfD.

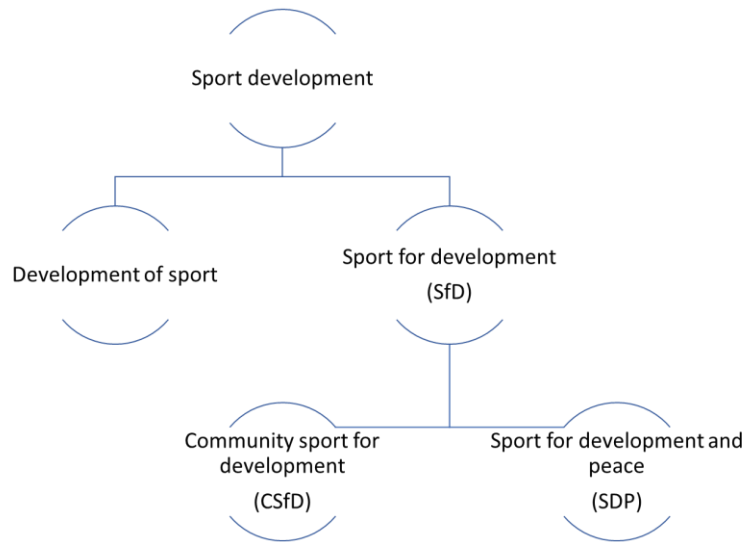


Figure 2- Distinguishing community sport for development

A contemporary example of a CSfD programme is Premier League Kicks which “[uses] the power of football and the value of sport volunteering to support hard-to-reach young people aged 12 to 19 in the most deprived local authorities” (K. Richardson & Fletcher, 2018, p. 83). Richardson and Fletcher’s study suggested that football holds the ability to ‘hook’ hard to reach young people. Building on this idea of a ‘hook’ the English Football League Trust (EFL Trust) have recognised that an association with a football club can act as a hook to encourage individuals to attend the ETH programme (Bradley, 2022). Indeed, the ETH programme which is the focus of this thesis is an example of a CSfD programme and will be detailed in Chapter 4. The following section outlines the socio-political context of CSfD in the UK.

The socio-political context of CSfD

Sport policy and CSfD in the UK is politicised and has seen various changes in focus and emphasis over the years, notably the balance between development of sport (sport

for sport's sake) and development through sport (sport for good) (Collins, 2010b; C. Devine, 2013; Green, 2009; Kennett, 2014). Whilst the UK government has consistently involved itself with sport (McMaster & Bairner, 2012), it has been claimed that it was not until the early 1960's, with the publication of the Wolfenden Report, that the UK government began to consider sport as a discrete policy area (Chaney, 2015; Grix, 2010; R. Holt & Mason, 2000; Houlihan, 1991; Jefferys, 2016; Mackintosh, 2021; McMaster & Bairner, 2012). Since the publication of the Wolfenden Report in 1960, the UK government has had a track record of overseeing and enabling sport for good and what can be classed as CSfD initiatives. This section outlines some of the key socio-political developments of sport policy in the UK.

During the 1970's the 'Sport for All' campaign was launched (C. Devine, 2013; Jefferys, 2012), which was located as part of the wider remit of the welfare state (Houlihan & White, 2002). During this period, the Sports Council (now known as Sport England) became under increasing pressure to give greater weight to its welfare responsibilities (Houlihan & White, 2002), demonstrating how sport was becoming associated with the potential to assist with wider government welfare provision (Bloyce & Smith, 2010). Programmes resembling what this thesis understands as CSfD were deployed by the government in an effort to resolve the urban riots of the 1980's, notably the Action Sport Programme which sought to counter social problems in deprived areas (Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Platts, 2018). Indeed, Platts (2018) has argued that the urban riots and the subsequent Action Sport Programmes resulted in the first set of dedicated sport development programmes within a community setting. Moreover, 'Football in the Community' schemes were proposed as interventions to combat the effect of football hooliganism (Anagnostopoulos, 2013; McGuire, 2008; Watson, 2000). Taking over from Margaret

Thatcher in 1990, John Major's government did little to promote and advance the sport for good agenda at the time, choosing to focus on school sport and sport for sport's sake (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). However, the National Lottery, which was established during this time, has proven to have a continuing effect on CSfD (Henry, 2001). Indeed, many CSfD delivery organisations, including the FoL, are dependent on National Lottery money today (Bloyce et al., 2008; Henry, 2001; Jedlicka, Harris, & Reiche, 2020; Szatkowski, 2022; Zamorano & Bonet, 2022).

The New Labour government (1997-2010) initially returned to the sport for all agenda, before switching focus to sport for sport's sake as the London 2012 Olympics approached. The first sport policy published by the New Labour government was aptly named *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000). Young people were maintained as a priority group; interviews with Green (2007) revealed how government decided that Physical Education and sport could be used to deliver their wider agenda, particularly around developing citizenship, creativity, and curiosity. However, come 2008, New Labour demonstrated a sizable shift away from sport for good towards sport for sport's sake (Collins, 2010b; C. Devine, 2013; Green, 2009; Kennett, 2014). As a result of this shift 'sport' and 'physical activity' were distinguished as ontologically different (C. Devine, 2013), leading to physical activity becoming the responsibility for the Department of Health, rather than Sport England; with Sport England focusing solely on sport with emphasis on sport for sport's sake development (Collins, 2010b). This shift was attributed to the successful bid for the 2012 Olympics (C. Devine, 2013).

Another theme of New Labour's time in office was increased importance of evidence-based policy making (D. Lee & Gilmore, 2012; O'Brien, 2012; Rycroft-Malone, 2006; Sanderson, 2002; Simmons, 2015) and the area of sport was no exception (Coalter, 2007; Green, 2009). The philosophy of evidenced-based policy making was "what

matters is what works” (Cabinet Office, 1999, p. 40; Rycroft-Malone, 2006). The intention of evidenced-based policy making was to diminish the effect that ideologically driven politics can have on policy, instead embracing approaches that were proven to work (Rycroft-Malone, 2006). However, despite the increase in the importance of evidence-based policy many subjective forces continue to have an effect on policy making (Simmons, 2015). Indeed, CSfD is a prime example of how the evidence-based approach has actually perpetuated the lack of evidence discourse within the field, given the dependence on technocratic quantitative-based evidence (K. Harris & Adams, 2016). As a result of evidence-based policy becoming the gold standard for policy makers, value for money and outcome evaluation developed as key measures for organisations to demonstrate (Coalter, 2007). This has led to evaluations of CSfD typically framing sport and its influence on wider societal outcomes as positive and as a given (Coalter, 2007). However, as Coalter has noted, the power of sport is ‘not proven’, at best, and this will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Given the government’s emphasis on ‘what works’ during the 2000’s, football in the community schemes and football foundations were identified by the government as partners for delivering a range of public policy objectives around: health, education, community cohesion, regeneration, and crime reduction (Breitbarth & Harris, 2008; Mellor, 2008; Pendry, 2000). As a result, football foundations, such as the FoL, became key partners in delivering the government’s social agenda using the medium of football to inspire and improve lives (T. Bingham & Walters, 2013; Breitbarth & Harris, 2008; Jenkins & James, 2013; McGuire, 2008). The call from the government for football to become a partner in delivering upon the social agenda offered professional football clubs the chance to integrate the public agenda with their own ambitions through self-enlightened corporate social responsibility (Breitbarth &

Harris, 2008). The question remains as to whether football as an activity elicits outcomes, or whether football is the site at which outcomes can be obtained. This is a question that this thesis attempts to answer.

The Coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (2010-2015), in part due to ideology, and in part due to the identified response to the financial crisis of 2008, led a shift from 'Big Government' to 'Big Society' (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). The spending review of October 2010 led to a 33% funding cut for Sport England (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). Despite this, funding for elite athletes in the build up to the London 2012 Olympics was protected (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013), demonstrating the importance placed on elite sport at this time (C. Devine, 2013). Moreover, the role of local authorities for delivering CSfD was reduced, with the responsibility of welfare services transferred from public bodies to the voluntary and private sectors (Alcock, 2010). This contributed to the further growth of the offer provided by football foundations (Kenyon, Mason, & Rookwood, 2018; Kiernan & Porter, 2014; Pringle et al., 2016).

After the Conservatives won an outright majority in 2015, a new sport strategy was published- *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* (HM Government, 2015). This remained the most recent government sports strategy up until September 2023, perhaps demonstrating how sport has not received much attention in the years that have followed since. Three priority areas are evident from the strategy- greater boldness in harnessing the power of sport for social good; elite success; and the integrity of sport. In redefining what success looks like in sport, the strategy document outlined five main desired outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development, and economic development (HM Government, 2015). All these outcomes can be linked to CSfD. Chapman (2018) notes

that the changes in focus of government sports strategy has provided both opportunities and threats to the sport sector. On the one hand, opportunities for the sport sector to grow by contributing more to health and social outcomes and receive funding to do so. However, on the other hand, given the openness to diversify partners for achieving the aims of the strategy (HM Government, 2015), a threat has developed to traditional sport structures and organisations. As a result, football foundations will deliver programmes seeking outcomes including: inclusion and community cohesion, education, physical and mental health, and crime reduction (Anagnostopoulos, 2013; Mellor, 2008; Tacon, 2007; Walters & Panton, 2014). Thus, in the time since 2015, increasing attention is being placed on sport's potential to improve physical and mental health (Dowling, 2021; Dowling et al., 2021). This section has outlined the changing socio-political context that CSfD has developed within. As a result of these changes, practitioners are required to adapt and build their skill set. The final part of this chapter considers the impact of this on practitioners, as well as why it is important that practitioners adapt.

The role of the practitioner

Practitioners have an important role to play in the delivery of CSfD programmes (Coalter, 2013b; K. Harris, 2018; Anne Thompson et al., 2021). Despite the important role of the practitioner, there is currently limited literature exploring the significance of the role and how individual practitioners can contribute to participants achieving the desired social outcomes of a programme (Crisp & Brackley, 2023; Jeanes, Rossi, Magee, & Lucas, 2019; Super, Verkooijen, & Koelen, 2018). The literature which currently exists is more aligned to the role of the sports coach. This thesis differentiates the CSfD practitioner and the sports coach, with both being considered as a type of

sports professional, as outlined in Figure 3- Different types of sport professional below. However, even within these terms difference abound in the expectations and requirements. Sports coaches have traditionally been understood as individuals whose goal it is to improve the performance of an athlete or group of athletes (Short & Short, 2005). As Figure 3 demonstrates, this can be in the setting of elite sport, or grassroots sport, which both carry different expectations. As the socio-political context of sport policy in the UK has developed and CSfD has emerged, the emergence of CSfD practitioners has occurred.

Given the changing socio-political context there has been a shift away from traditional grassroots sport coaching towards CSfD within sport development. Away from sports coaches, there is even less existing literature analysing the practice of CSfD practitioners. This is despite the role of the CSfD practitioner and his/her relationships with participants being deemed of high importance (Coalter, 2013b). Focus has been on practitioners working with young people (Jeanes et al., 2019; W. G. Taylor & McEwan, 2012). Van der Veken et al. (2022) and Jeanes et al. (2019) highlight that for practitioners working within a CSfD programme, they operate within a grey zone between sport and social work, and that practitioners are influential in whether CSfD goals are achieved. Despite the more social role, in the examples that are available the practitioners are commonly referred to as sports coaches. However, the findings of Crisp (2020) suggest that that it is not traditional coaching practice that leads to success for CSfD programmes, rather it is the interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, and the charisma of those delivering.

Different types of sports professional

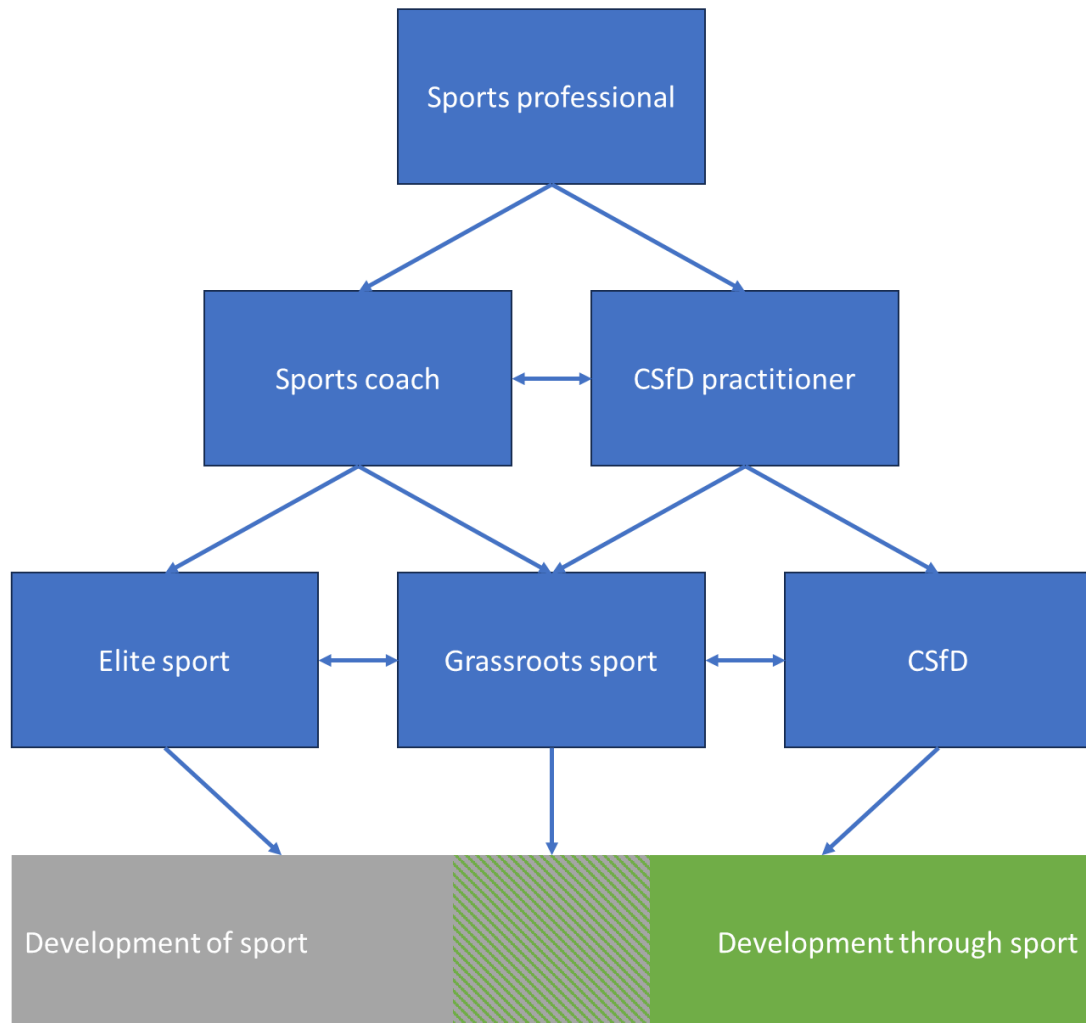


Figure 3- Different types of sport professional

Even those who are understood as traditional sport coaches may now have greater responsibility beyond improving an athlete's performance levels. Potrac and Jones (2009) have previously referred to this as the micro-politics of sport coaching. Crisp and Brackley (2023) argue that coaches require different skills for performance outcomes, compared to social policy outcomes. Schools et al. (2020, p. 489) refer to transformational coaching, rooted in transformational leadership theory, suggesting that this occurs when a coach is seeking to develop a participant beyond the sport in

question, in other words development through sport. However, it has been suggested that within the UK coach education context there has been a greater emphasis on how to enable maximum performance of athletes, whilst ignoring the skills required to meet social policy outcomes within sport (Crisp & Brackley, 2023). The findings of their study of the Brighton & Hove Albion Foundation suggest that formal coaching qualifications inadequately prepare coaches for CSfD programmes (Crisp & Brackley, 2023). Furthermore, there remains a limited knowledge base on how coaches can “create optimal social conditions for life skill development and transferability” (Super et al., 2018, p. 173). Therefore, Van der Veken et al. (2022) argue that practitioners working within the CSfD space should be provided with a ‘back pack’ of tools to contribute towards the personal and social development experienced by participants of a programme.

Sport coaches will often manipulate other people’s impressions of them in order to “generate the necessary professional support, space, and time to carry out their programs and agendas” (Potrac & Jones, 2009, p. 224). Potrac and colleagues (Avner, Hall, & Potrac, 2023; Chesterfield, Potrac, & Jones, 2010; Ives, Nelson, Gale, Potrac, & Johnston, 2021; R. Jones, 2014; Potrac, Ives, Gale, Nelson, & Morgan, 2021) have underpinned their work in this area with Erving Goffman’s (1959) impression management, suggesting that sports coaches are performing on a stage to the individuals that they are coaching. Cronin and Armour (2015) have undertaken a similar approach suggesting that coaches deliver a performance in front of an audience. As a result, coaches and practitioners will seek to perform in a way that they believe is expected by their audience, manipulating the impressions others hold of them (Potrac & Jones, 2009). In other words, as the socio-political context changes, so does the approach of coaches and practitioners. Thus, taking a micro-political

perspective, a sports professional's practice is influenced by his/her desire to fulfil the perceived expectations of the stakeholders involved, and as a result the professional will attempt to create an image which is congruent to the expectations in order to further his/her professional coaching interests (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). Given the important role CSfD practitioners may have within a programme, yet with limited literature and knowledge regarding the role of the CSfD practitioner, this thesis seeks to contribute new knowledge in highlighting the importance of the relationship between practitioner and participant, along with the internal emotions that are experienced by a practitioner.

Chapter summary

This chapter conceptualises what is meant by CSfD. Firstly, the chapter outlined the political and fluid nature of how development is understood. CSfD has been developed from CDS and SfD. CSfD as understood by this thesis seeks to address social inequalities and reduce the barriers for sports participation. An overview of the socio-political context of CSfD is provided, highlighting how sport for good has emerged as an important area, and how football foundations such as the FoL have established themselves as organisations delivering CSfD. The final part of the chapter highlights the limited existing research on the impact that the socio-political context has had on sports practitioners. Most of this literature focuses on the traditional sports coach, providing this thesis the opportunity to contribute to much needed research on the role of the CSfD practitioner. Building on this chapter, the next chapter outlines the approaches taken when evaluating CSfD.

Chapter 3- Evaluating community sport for development

Introduction to chapter

The previous chapter established what this thesis understands to be CSfD- an area of development which seeks to address social inequalities and reduce the barrier of sports participation. This chapter expands on this further by reviewing literature relevant to CSfD. This is achieved firstly by outlining major theoretical approaches that are relevant for CSfD, and secondly reviewing how CSfD has typically been evaluated in the past. In doing so, this chapter highlights prominent approaches to evaluation within the CSfD field.

Theorising community sport for development

There are several different theoretical approaches towards SfD, that are relevant to the novel positioning of CSfD from the previous chapter. Indeed, a review carried out by Welty Peachey et al. (2019) identified five primary SfD theoretical/conceptual approaches: ‘ripple effect’ (Sugden, 2010); ‘sport-for-development framework’ (S4D) (Schulenkorf, 2012); ‘sport-for-health model’ (Schulenkorf & Siefken, 2019); ‘sport-for-development theory’ (SFDT) (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011); and ‘programme theory’ (Coalter, 2013b). Each one of these will now be discussed in relation to the understanding of CSfD outlined in the previous chapter.

Ripple effect

The ripple effect model, as proposed by Sugden (2010), draws on critical left-realism and bottom-up activism to influence positive change and peacebuilding within society through sport. Critical left-realism first emerged from the field of criminology whereby scholars were disillusioned with conventional theories that emanated from

the political right (Sugden, 2010). For example, critical left realists argue that capitalism (a right-wing ideology) is a significant reason for crime. Similarly, within sport, McDonald (2002) argued that scholars should use their work to identify and act upon injustices given that it is not possible for scholars to hold ‘value neutrality’ during the research process. This is consistent with Bourdieu’s (1992, p. 51) claim that: “social science necessarily takes sides in political struggles”. This then leads to bottom-up activism, whereby individuals through SfD programmes can develop individual agency.

Returning to the ripple effect theory itself, like when a stone is dropped into water, the ripple effect model suggests that the impact of a SfD programme is most clearly felt and more easily measured where the programme takes place (micro level). Whereas the macro impacts of a programme are harder to realise and measure. For example, in their study of SfD in the South Pacific, Sherry, Schlenker, Seal, Nicholson, and Hoye (2017) demonstrated the difficulty in a programme causing ripples at a macro level. Using the Pacific Netball Partnership as a case study Sherry et al. (2017) argued that whilst the programme was successful in providing more opportunities for women to participate in netball, this micro change, was unable to influence macro change in empowering women away from netball. Sherry et al. (2017, p. 314) concluded by acknowledging that:

SfD [sic] programs [sic] are able to play an important role in instigating structural change; however, they can only be impactful (i.e., rippled out) if implemented against the background of an environment conducive to, and supportive of, positive change and development.

In addition, Burnett (2014) demonstrated how the positive impacts of a programme, such as improved fitness levels and school attendance, are much stronger at the micro level, with some ripple effect evident towards community based values. However, the

ripple effect model is susceptible to overclaiming the impact of sport-based programmes. Despite the linearity of the framework suggesting that sport can lead to macro level change across society, Darnell and Hayhurst (2011, p. 188) have argued that: “sport does not, and most likely cannot, usurp the socio-political relations and challenges of international development organization, policy and implementation”. W. V. Massey, Whitley, Blom, and Gerstein (2015) have suggested that for a sport programme to have a holistic impact at a macro level, then a deliberate effort needs to be made to link local level action to societal level action, rather than assuming that an individual behaviour change will transfer into other areas of life and society.

Sport-for-development framework

The S4D framework as proposed by Schulenkorf (2012) is a holistic yet flexible framework which seeks to inform sport and event planning. The framework is based on community participation, social development, and sport event management. S4D highlights the importance of culturally and contextually informed change agents in order to maximise the social benefits of a particular event. The framework proposes that a change agent’s influence reduces over time, with local communities themselves needing to increase their roles and responsibilities in promoting and sustaining development (Schulenkorf, 2012). Engagement with Schulenkorf’s framework remains limited. Indeed, in their review of how theories have been used within sport, Welty Peachey et al. (2019) identified just three articles which have used the S4D framework. Reis, Vieira, and Sousa-Mast (2016) focused on the Vilas Olímpicas do Rio de Janeiro programme in Brazil, highlighting the importance of community development during all stages of an SDP programme. Their findings suggested that the role of community involvement and support is crucial for the success of a S4D programme. Svensson and Levine (2017), through the lens of the capability approach

(A. Sen, 1999) highlighted the importance of a participant-centred approach during design, implementation, and evaluation of SDP programmes. Furthermore, Svensson and Levine (2017) suggested that the capability approach allows for researchers to consider what development and peace mean in specific contexts, shifting away from a standardised framework. Finally, Schulenkorf and Siefken (2019) referred to the S4D in combination with the SFDT in establishing the sport-for-health model. This sport-for health model will be further discussed below.

Sport-for-health model

The SFHM focuses on managing healthy lifestyles (Schulenkorf & Siefken, 2019). The model is designed to complement rather than challenge existing theories and frameworks. Indeed, the model builds on SFDT (see below) and the S4D framework, incorporating a greater focus on health promotion (Schulenkorf & Siefken, 2019). The SFHM has five aspects for the makeup of a holistic healthy lifestyle programme- socio-cultural context, health promotion, sport management, policy (external and internal), and sustainability. Linked to the SFHM, Sørensen, Pedersen, and Sander (2022) explored a potential nexus of health promotion, sport, and wellbeing. In doing so they proposed a ‘synergy sweet spot’, whereby each silo can come together to transform public health. This approach highlights the potential health enhancing aspects to be incorporated into SfD programmes. The SFHM is the most recent theoretical approach, and therefore examples of its application remain limited.

Sport-for-development theory

Lyras and Welty Peachey’s (2011) SFDT is the most common theoretical approach within the literature. SFDT was developed out of the Doves Olympic Movement Project and underpinned by grounded theory (Lyras, 2012a, 2012b). SFDT suggests that sport combined with cultural enrichment can facilitate personal development and

social change through the application of an interdisciplinary framework (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The SFDT has five key components when evaluating SfD programmes: impacts assessment, organisational, sport, educational, and cultural enrichment. Given that sport forms only one fifth of the so called ‘sport-for-development theory’ this demonstrates the significance the framework puts on the interdisciplinary approach in creating new knowledge within CSfD.

SFDT suggests that macro, meso, and micro levels of change should be evaluated when assessing the impact of a programme (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The organisational component refers to how changes can be defined and facilitated, utilising organisational change theory. Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) suggested that SfD scholars need to understand the contexts of where change is desired. This will then influence whether a sport-plus or plus-sport approach is taken (Coalter, 2007; Coalter & Taylor, 2010; Levermore & Beacom, 2009). Sport-plus is understood as where “traditional sport development objectives of increased participation and the development of sporting skills are emphasized [sic]” (Coalter, 2007, p. 71). Whereas plus-sport is described as an approach “in which social, educational and health programmes are given primacy; and sport, especially its ability to bring together a large number of young people, is part of a much broader and more complex set of processes” (Coalter, 2007, p. 71). Coalter (2007) highlights that programmes and indeed organisations sit on a continuum between sport-plus and plus-sport, and that differences are not always easy to identify. However, where a programme sits will have implications for the definition of outcomes and success, which will ultimately impact on how a programme is delivered. Broader development outcomes are more likely to occur when a plus-sport approach is taken (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011), acknowledging the complimentary role sport can play alongside education and cultural

enrichment for producing outcomes. For example, Adam Cohen and Ballouli (2018) focused on the cultural enrichment component of the SFDT exploring how the interaction of music and sport may lead to educating and improving the lives of inner-city youth.

The third component of SFDT is the sport/physical activity component which acknowledges that sport has multiple positive and negative effects across the macro, meso, and micro levels of society. The cognitive component of the SFDT is underpinned by social cognitive theory, flow theory, and problem-based learning, and suggests that sport “when used within an educational framework, can become a powerful tool for achieving educational objectives and promoting moral and proactive citizens” (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 317). Finally, the cultural enrichment component was developed from literature on Olympism and global citizenship education, suggesting that sport programmes embracing Pierre de Coubertin’s original Olympic ideals to promote social change can achieve their objectives with cultural enrichment opportunities.

Using the SFDT coupled with social leverage theory (Chalip, 2006), Welty Peachey et al. (2013) provided an empirical assessment of the impact of a sport programme aimed at homeless people. One of their key conclusions was that standalone Sfd programmes need to be tied into other community resources to help facilitate long term engagement and impact (Welty Peachey et al., 2013). This is consistent with Coalter (2007) and Spaaij (2009b) who have argued that any transformational capacity that Sfd may hold can only be manifested when programmes incorporate non-sport related activities. Indeed, this is a key acknowledgement of SFDT that a sport-based programme needs to embrace non-sport elements to elicit the desired outcomes (Welty Peachey et al., 2013). From a more sport-plus orientation, Welty Peachey, Cunningham, Lyras,

Cohen, and Bruening (2015) used SFDT to help understand the impact of the World Scholar-Athlete Games on prejudice reduction. Results suggested that a team-based sport environment coupled with social opportunities can help reduce prejudice. Supporting SFDT, athletes in the programme highlighted sport and non-sport activities in contributing to change.

More recently and against the trend of previous work, LeCrom, Martin, Dwyer, and Greenhalgh (2019), addressed both sport-plus and plus-sport programme types in the same study. Whilst it is common for researchers to consider all five components of SFDT, following Adam Cohen and Ballouli (2018) who focused on the cultural enrichment component, LeCrom et al. (2019) limit their analysis to three of the components: organisation, sport, and education. Their results suggest that these components impact on each other directly and therefore do not exist in isolation from each other. For example, a sport-plus programme will depend on the sport component more than the education component, whereas a plus-sport programme will depend more on the education component (LeCrom et al., 2019). In summary, SFDT asserts that sport is only one component of a programme that seeks to influence individual and societal change. Rather than viewing sport as the exclusive mechanism for change, the framework demonstrates the contribution of sport combined with other mechanisms.

Programme theory approach

The ‘programme theory’ approach as outlined by Coalter (2007, 2013b) is based on the realist evaluation approach outlined by Pawson and Tilley (1997). Despite also being referred to as ‘theory of change’ (Coalter, Theeboom, & Truyens, 2020), the programme theory approach should not be conflated with theory of change (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Kabongo, Mukumbang, Delobelle, & Nicol, 2020; Rolfe, 2019).

The difference between theory of change and realist evaluation will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. The programme theory approach seeks to unpack the ‘black box’ of a programme by describing the mechanisms and theoretical underpinnings of a programme (Coalter, 2013b). Programme theories are sequences of “presumed causes/actions/processes and effects” (C. H. Weiss, 1997a cited in Coalter, 2013, p. 607). The approach contends that sport may be used as a site for social outcomes, but is not the cause of social outcomes (Coakley, 2004; Coalter, 2013b). Coalter (2013b) demonstrates that the programme theory approach can be used for sport-plus and plus-sport programmes.

Undertaking a programme theory approach does not mean that a study is a realist evaluation (N. Bolton, Martin, Grace, & Harris, 2018; Hills, Gómez Velásquez, & Walker, 2018; J. Marshall, Kelly, & Niven, 2019; Weed, 2014). For example, J. Marshall et al. (2019) used a programme theory approach, underpinned by grounded theory to demonstrate how physical activity in the form of surfing can lead to mental health outcomes. That being said, a large amount of scholarly work applying the programme theory approach in SfD has been used in combination with realist evaluation (Welty Peachey et al., 2019). Indeed, since their 2019 article, there have been a number of articles which have sought to use the programme theory approach through utilising the realist approach (Lauwerier, Van Poel, Van der Veken, Van Roy, & Willems, 2020; Redgate, Potrac, Boocock, & Dalkin, 2020; Verkooijen, Super, Mulderij, de Jager, & Wagemakers, 2020). These examples of realist persuasion have developed the programme theory approach within SfD. It could be said that a *realist* programme theory approach has begun to emerge within the SfD field. Given the relative paucity of programme theory approach within SfD there is an opportunity to apply, develop, and extend the approach within SfD (Welty Peachey et al., 2019).

Indeed, it is a realist informed programme theory approach which this thesis applies and builds upon (see Chapter 5 for further details).

Summary of approaches

The approaches discussed above share four key themes. Firstly, the approaches recognise the importance of combining non-sport related activities with sport activities. Indeed, the sport activities are not sufficient themselves to lead to social change. Secondly, that there is a need to link Sfd agendas and programmes with broader development policies and agendas in order to achieve longer term outcomes and have a sustainable impact. Thirdly, due to the many situations CSfd operates in, it is impossible to build an overall theory applicable for every situation. And finally, the theories discussed above do not link specific sports to targeted outcomes (Welty Peachey et al., 2019). Focus now turns the second part of this chapter which explores how CSfd is evaluated within the UK.

Evaluating the impact of CSfd

Chapter 2 highlighted the political nature of CSfd. Given that sport and physical activity has developed into what many consider a public good (funded directly or indirectly by government) it has become increasingly more important for organisations to be able to prove the value and worth of their work (Chouinard, 2013; Dowling et al., 2021). Moreover, in order to maintain funding, organisations delivering CSfd are required to demonstrate their relevance to the communities they service (Dowling et al., 2021). Organisations and individuals have been making claims of the power to change the world since ancient times (Kay, 2012). However, whilst the volume of evidence claiming to support the notion of the ‘power of sport’ has increased since the

turn of the millennium, this evidence has been critiqued as being overly positive, and misleading. This section will first look at the outcome-based approaches which have traditionally been used, and then move to a discussion around theory-based approaches to evaluation within CSfD.

Outcome-based approaches to evaluation

CSfD is viewed as an “economy of remedies to deep-rooted and wide-ranging problems” (Coalter, 2021, p. 575). However, like other policy areas, CSfD is made up of ill-defined programmes and hard to follow outcomes (Coalter, 2021; Pawson & Tilley, 2004). As a result, the evidence of CSfD is limited and has typically been outcome driven. As the name suggests, outcome-based evaluation focusses on the outcomes of a programme and whether the programme has been successful or unsuccessful (Munro & Bloor, 2010). Sport England’s approach to evaluation has been dominated by outcome-based evaluation.

Active People Survey and Active Lives Survey

Sport England’s Active People Survey (APS) and its successor the Active Lives Survey (ALS), are outcome-based in seeking to identify who participates in sport and physical activity, and in what sports/physical activities they do so (N. F. Rowe, 2009). The APS did not track participants across the duration of the survey and therefore was not longitudinal (Widdop, King, Parnell, Cutts, & Millward, 2018). No effort was made to understand the impact that this may have, or what leads certain demographics to participate in sport. However, the APS has been useful for studies seeking to identify trends of sport (non)participation. For example, in their study of inequalities in cycling, using APS data, Goodman and Aldred (2018) highlighted inequalities in relation to gender, age, disability, and ethnicity. Regarding the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics, Kokolakis, Lera-López, and Ramchandani (2019) used APS data to

highlight significant differences between socio-economic groups, however no explanation for these differences was given. Another surface level analysis using the APS data is a study that explored trends towards individual participation in sport (S. Harris, Nichols, & Taylor, 2017). Again, the study can use the APS data to outline participation, but it cannot provide a causal explanation of why participation occurs; it merely outlines the outcome data, without any understanding of the process. However, the APS data has been used to compliment other data sources. For example, Kokolakis, Pappous, and Meadows (2015) used APS data in conjunction with primary data collected from local leisure centres to assess the impact of a free swimming programme. In their study, APS data was used during the early stages of the research to help provide some national analysis regarding swimming participation, after which local primary quantitative data was used to analyse the impact of the local swimming programme.

In 2015, the APS was replaced by the ALS (Sport England, 2016), which collects data through web survey forms and paper questionnaires rather than telephone questionnaires (Brainard, Cooke, Lane, & Salter, 2020). The main distinction was that Sport England sought to better understand the impact of sport for individuals against four out of the five outcomes identified in the UK Government's *Sporting Future* (HM Government, 2015) strategy document of: mental wellbeing, individual development, social development, and community development (Sport England, 2016). However, like the APS, there appears to be a lack of causal understanding of how sport can lead to these outcomes.

Social return on investment

More recently, social return on investment (SROI) has emerged as a new approach to try to better evaluate the impact of sport. SROI seeks to convert the social impact of

sport into a financial figure (L. E. Davies, Taylor, Ramchandani, & Christy, 2019). To do this, SROI financially values the non-market benefits of sport (L. E. Davies, Taylor, Ramchandani, & Christy, 2021). There has been limited research on the financial value of outcomes which sport may generate for society (L. E. Davies et al., 2019). Few academic articles have reported SROI for CSfD; however, the approach has gained some traction within the CSfD field. Indeed, Sport England have incorporated SROI into their impact framework, suggesting that for every £1 spent on sport and physical activity, almost £4 is generated in return (Sport England, 2020). Oshimi, Yamaguchi, Fukuhara, and Tagami (2022), from a corporate social responsibility perspective, conducted a SROI to calculate the social impact of a community soccer programme delivered by a professional Japanese soccer team. In doing so they revealed that the community soccer programme had a SROI ratio of 5.3 US Dollars. This means that for every US Dollar invested into the community soccer programme, social benefit worth 5.3 US Dollars was generated. In a similar study, the results from Lombardo, Mazzocchetti, Rapallo, Tayser, and Cincotti (2019) suggested that the SROI from community work carried out by an Italian second division football club revealed that for every euro invested, about 3 Euros of social value is created. Returning to the UK, Larissa Davies and colleagues have been leading the way for SROI to be adopted within CSfD. In the first example of SROI being used to value the sports sector at a national level, L. E. Davies et al. (2019) suggested that for every £1 invested in sport, £1.91 of social benefit was generated. In a more localised study, L. E. Davies et al. (2021) measured the value of sport across 12 community sport and leisure facilities in Sheffield, finding that for every £1 spent a SROI of between £1.20 and £3.42 was generated. As a result of the SROI ratios generated, SROI can help policy makers make cost effective decisions when deciding how to address social issues across different

policy areas (L. E. Davies et al., 2019). For example, knowing the economic value of CSfD investment can help policy makers make informed investment decisions which may influence other policy areas such as health care. For instance, there is a plethora of evidence to suggest that regular exercise can help to prevent health conditions such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease (Kriska et al., 2020; Malm, Jakobsson, & Isaksson, 2019; Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006).

However, SROI has its limitations, which like other outcome-based evaluation includes a lack of causal understanding. Moreover, SROI lacks a differentiation between different types of participants in terms of frequency, duration, and intensity of participation (L. E. Davies et al., 2019). This means that a binary consideration is made as to whether to include an individual or not and therefore there is no nuance and appreciation of different levels and types of participation. King (2014) identified several challenges and limitations for SROI. These included the requirement to collect primary data, which given the limited resources of CSfD can be scarce. Secondly, there are difficulties in comparing and transferring SROI due to the uniqueness of CSfD programmes. Thirdly, the political nature of SROI means that decisions are not always made based on the data, rather political interests are often considered.

The problem with 'the power of sport' outcome-based evaluation

The outcome-based monitoring and evaluation measures described above do not consider the mechanisms which lead to the outcomes, meaning that the measures lack explanatory power (Munro & Bloor, 2010). This preference for outcome evaluation of CSfD has led to CSfD being treated as a 'black box' with little consideration of mechanisms that may produce outcomes (Coalter, 2007; Moreau et al., 2018; Spaaij & Schailée, 2020). This has led to the assumption that the 'power of sport' can achieve ill-defined outcomes. These outcomes have been categorised as: physical health,

mental health and wellbeing, education and lifelong learning, active citizenship, crime reduction, and anti-social behaviour (Eigenschenk et al., 2019). Similarly, P. Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson, and Tayleur (2015) have previously summarised the impacts of sport into five areas: health, crime, education, social capital, and subjective wellbeing. Evidence regarding physical health related outcomes are the strongest areas, helped by these outcomes being more scientifically quantified compared to the social categories of outcomes which are more subjective in nature (Eigenschenk et al., 2019; K. Griffiths et al., 2023; P. Taylor et al., 2015). Thus, more evaluation research is needed of programmes seeking to improve mental health, education, citizenship, along with programmes seeking to reduce crime.

There is a plethora of literature critiquing the lack of rigorous, longitudinal, and meaningful evidence proving the power of sport (Adams & Harris, 2014; Coalter, 2007, 2010a, 2017; Henry, 2016; Houlihan, 2010b; G. J. Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, & Smith, 2017; Kay, 2009; Levermore, 2011; K. Simpson, 2013; Weed, 2014). According to Tacon (2007), both practitioners and policymakers work on the assumption that sport is a social good, without engaging in in any form of critically informed analysis. Welty Peachey, Musser, Shin, and Cohen (2018) in their study of the motives of SDP practitioners highlighted that the practitioners who are motivated by their love of sport and belief in the ‘power of sport’ are more prone to overstating the impact sport can have. Coalter (2010a) has argued that practitioners should be considered as partners alongside researchers and funders who believe in the ‘power of sport’. K. Harris and Adams (2016) have argued that the role of the practitioner is underprivileged compared to policy makers and funders, which results in practitioners adopting a less critical attitude towards evidence. Furthermore, CSfD organisations and individual practitioners often have limited resources and capacity to demonstrate

the impact of CSfD (Dowling et al., 2021; K. Misener, Harman, & Doherty, 2013). As such, organisations and practitioners will prioritise surviving in the field by providing what policy makers and funders want, rather than seeking to understand the field through more robust evidence (K. Simpson, 2013). This results in a gap between the commonly communicated anecdotal evidence and the missing comprehensive evaluations with long term impact. Fundamentally, the central issue presented by the literature is that it is not known whether sport actually works in its quest to achieve wider social outcomes (Kay, 2012). Meanwhile, outcomes which may be generated from CSfD programmes are assumed to have come about because of the ‘power of sport’.

Alongside exaggerating the claims of sport, a significant portion of the literature evidencing the impact of sport is framed positively (Coalter, 2007; Lindsey & Bacon, 2016). With an increase in emphasis on evidence-based policy making and accountability, CSfD organisations and practitioners are under pressure to report positive outcomes associated with their work (K. Harris & Adams, 2016). However, authors such as Coalter (2010b), Kennett (2014), and Spaaij (2009a) have argued that alongside positive outcomes, sport has the potential to elicit negative outcomes including violence and drug abuse. An explanation for the positive framing of CSfD is the political nature of evaluation; given the increased importance of evidence-based policy making, and funding based on participation figures, it is no surprise that organisations and practitioners delivering CSfD provide what is needed and nothing more. Moreover, when funding is being provided with the belief that sport has the power to have a positive impact, it would be a brave organisation or practitioner who provided evidence contradicting this (K. Harris & Adams, 2016; Lindsey & Jeanes, 2023). Indeed, it is in the interests of those relying on funding for delivering

programmes to collect evidence which adds to the argument for the value of sport. As a result, the field of CSfD has been “defined by its claims as opposed to its results” (Harris, 2018, p. 796).

In the past, Coalter (2007) has argued that the evidence gained from evaluating the perceived benefits for sport, leads at best to a ‘not proven’ verdict for the impact of sport. As a result, CSfD organisations have been called to think more analytically and less emotionally about sport and its potential (Coalter, 2007). Therefore, there is a need to establish the link between participation in sport and the outcomes which are claimed to come about (Coalter, 2010a; K. Griffiths et al., 2023; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Kay, 2012). Whilst some progress has been made with process-based and specifically theory-based approaches to CSfD (S. Chen, 2023), based on Coalter’s more recent work (2021), it appears that he continues to be unsatisfied with the evidence based for sport. Theory-based process-led approaches have received increased attention within the field of CSfD (Daniels, Bell, & Horrocks, 2018), and this is where attention now turns.

Unpacking the black box: theory-based approaches to CSfD

Theory-based approaches to evaluating CSfD provide the opportunity to unpack the ‘black box’ and approach the messiness of programmes, contributing towards a better understanding how sport may contribute to wider outcomes (Daniels et al., 2018; G. J. Jones et al., 2017; Lauwerier, Van der Veken, & Willems, 2023). “Unlike outcome-based evaluations, theory-orientated evaluations value the causality of changes” (S. Chen, 2023, p. 68). Theory-based approaches to evaluation hold the assumption that “understanding the theory underlying a program approach is necessary to understand whether, and how, it works” (De Silva et al., 2014, p. 2). Two prominent theory-based approaches are theory of change and realist evaluation (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007).

According to Blamey and Mackenzie (2007), both approaches have emerged to fill the deficit within programme evaluation. Both theory of change and realist evaluation have been used within the area of CSfD and will be discussed in turn.

Theory of change

Theory of change represents one branch of theory-based evaluation (N. Bolton et al., 2018; C. H. Weiss, 1997b) and is considered a policy-based approach to evaluation (Houlihan, 2010b). Theory of change has been defined as: “an approach which describes how a programme brings about specific long-term outcomes through a logical sequence of intermediate outcomes” (Breuer, Lee, De Silva, & Lund, 2016, p. 2). Theory of change highlights the link between activities and outcomes (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007), which helps to open the black box between inputs and outcomes (N. Bolton, 2023; Dickinson, 2008). This provides the opportunity for an evaluation to not just answer whether outcomes of a programme or policy have been achieved or not, but also how the outcomes were achieved (N. Bolton, 2023). This is usually achieved through using logic models to articulate how a programme is intended to operate (De Silva et al., 2014). Logic models offer a visual representation of the theory of change, with the aim of articulating the connections between the programme components (N. Bolton, 2023; Frumkin, 2006; C. H. Weiss, 1995). This can help organisations engage with stakeholders such as funders, sponsors, practitioners, and evaluators (N. Bolton, 2023). The theory of change and accompanying logic model are developed alongside each other and complement each other (N. Bolton, 2023). However, stakeholders such as practitioners, evaluators, and policymakers can focus too heavily on the linear progression of the logic model (Baffsky, Kemp, & Bunde-Birouste, 2021). Indeed, logic models have been critiqued for a tendency to be simplistic and can fail to take into account any unintended consequences which occur

outside of the theory of change (N. Bolton, 2023). Moreover, through the simple and linear form, logic models may conceal some of the explanatory power (Breuer et al., 2016) and fail to explain the causal links between inputs, activities, and outcomes (De Silva et al., 2014). Thus, N. Bolton (2023) warns against overemphasising the focus on the logic model.

Despite the potential the theory of change approach has to unpack the black box of CSfD programmes, it has not gained much traction within the sport and physical activity sector (N. Bolton et al., 2018). Reflecting on their use of theory of change for the ‘Calls to Action’ programme seeking to increase sports participation among hard to reach groups, N. Bolton et al. (2018) experienced several advantages and limitations to using the approach. Strengths of using the theory of change approach included: being able to articulate the intended outcomes in a simple manner; the opportunity to take account of stakeholder perspectives; along with unpacking the black box in which objectives are achieved. These advantages helped to establish an effective framework for stakeholders including staff and participants. However, disadvantages of using the theory of change approach included: the possibility of oversimplifying complex issues which may not respond to an overarching framework; overlooking unintended outcomes; and that the approach may privilege some stakeholder views over others (N. Bolton et al., 2018). H. Morgan, Parker, Meek, and Cryer (2020) provide an overview of a theory of change seeking to increase personal development for young people in the criminal justice system. The theory of change stated that initial engagement was essential to develop interpersonal relationships. These interpersonal relationships would then be the platform for participants of the programme to experience individual development (H. Morgan et al., 2020).

Given that the theory of change approach is methods neutral (Breuer et al., 2016) it does not prescribe a specific evaluation method. Theory of change is not an evaluation approach per se. Rather, it helps provide the foundation and direction for an evaluation of a programme. Indeed, during an evaluation, it is the effectiveness and workings of the theory of change which is under investigation. Testing of a programme's effectiveness is based on anticipated thresholds, timescales, and outcomes (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; De Silva et al., 2014). Several studies have used realist evaluation to test theories of change (Bell & Daniels, 2018; Lauwerier et al., 2023). For example, in evaluating the theory of change for a programme seeking to improve health outcomes for at risk youth, Lauwerier et al. (2023) used a realist-informed approach, demonstrating the potential of combining theory of change with realist evaluation. In another example, Bell and Daniels (2018) used realist evaluation to evaluate the theory of change for the legacy of the 2016 BMX World SuperCross held in Manchester. Furthermore, Rolfe (2019) and Kabongo et al. (2020) have combined theory of change with realist evaluation. Both these studies highlight the value potential value in combining theory of change with realist evaluation. However, earlier studies have highlighted the difficulties in combining the approaches (Judge, 2000). Attention now turns to realist evaluation and examples within the literature of how realist evaluation has been mobilised within CSfD.

Realist evaluation

Realist evaluation is often used interchangeably with theory of change, however differs in a number of ways (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007). Whilst theory of change seeks to hypothesise links between activities and outcomes, realist evaluation seeks to hypothesise the causal links between the context, mechanisms and outcomes of a programme (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007). Theory of change is an approach for

outlining how a programme is expected to work, whereas realist evaluation is a method of evaluation and tests whether PTs work in the expected manner (Kabongo et al., 2020; Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Realist evaluation seeks to uncover the psychological and motivational responses to resources that a programme provides which may lead to behaviour change (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). In other words, unpacking the ‘black box’ of a programme. This is achieved by taking substantive theories to the middle-range to transfer theories to specific contexts (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Thus, realist evaluation works on the assumption that programmes operate within a social system which is active and may be changed through individual responses to programme resources (S. Chen, 2018). The methodological considerations for realist evaluation will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. For now, attention is placed on how realist evaluation has been used as an evaluation method within CSfD.

Several authors have called for the application of realist evaluation within the field of CSfD in order better understand what it is about sport which may lead to wider societal outcomes (S. Chen, 2018; Coalter, 2007; K. Harris & Adams, 2016; Sugden, 2010). The realist evaluations which have taken place within CSfD have demonstrated that sport is not the magic bullet that it has been assumed to be. Indeed, using Coalter’s (2007) typology of sport-plus and plus-sport, along with the SFDT (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011), it can be seen that sport is only one aspect of CSfD programmes. For example, Tolson and Schofield (2012) carried out a realist evaluation to evaluate the benefits of football related reminiscence for those with dementia. One of the key findings of this evaluation was the “anticipation of pleasure in tandem with a sense of continuity appeared to be important mechanisms triggering optimal benefit” (Tolson & Schofield, 2012, p. 63). Rather than football being the key ingredient of the programme, it was what football provided that was the key ingredient- a sense of

continuity within a group setting. Sport was found to be *a* tool, rather than *the* solution. Like sport, other cultural experiences can provide similar experiences, such as taking part in group singing (Pearce, Launay, Machin, & Dunbar, 2016). This being said, realist evaluation is not seeking to dismiss the claims of the power of sport. Rather it is seeking to establish a more clearly defined evidence base for narrower claims, rather than trying to promote sport as the answer to all of society's problems.

Girginov (2016) along with S. Chen and Henry (2016) have used realist evaluation to evaluate the legacy impact that the London 2012 Olympics had on inspiring people to take part in sport. Girginov (2016) suggested that the Inspire project failed to make a meaningful contribution towards inspiring a new generation of people to take part in sport. Chen and Henry acknowledged that what works for one group of individuals may work differently for another group, with their findings suggesting that different groups had different levels of commitment which would lead to different levels of participation for a Workplace Challenge Programme. Indeed, their findings suggested that the programme would have the lowest impact for those were previously inactive. This is similar to findings from Lauwerier et al. (2020) who highlighted through a realist evaluation that sport coach interventions do not always work for everyone, citing the differences among people and the contexts that they are embedded in. Moreover, Redgate et al. (2020) revealed how coach development programmes have potential to be more than simply a site for transfer of knowledge. Rather, the PTs highlighted that coach education programmes can help to develop a more cohesive workforce and contribute to changing the way in which coach development is viewed. These findings can be used by programme providers to improve the design of programmes, recognising the broader and deep outcomes that a programme may have.

Realist evaluations regarding CSfD to date have highlighted that the sporting activity of a programme does not in itself lead to the positive outcomes that programmes hope to achieve. Rather, these desired outcomes are achieved through the processes and opportunities that taking part in the activities provide. For example, Van der Veken, Lauwerier, and Willems (2020a) highlight that the health promoting effect of a CSfD programme for vulnerable population groups results from experiential learning among peers and incremental responsibility taking. Nanninga and Glebbeek (2011) in their evaluation of the social benefits of young people's playing fields identified six mechanisms: reducing boredom, reducing uncontrolled leisure time, influence of role models, character building, substitution, and reduce negative labelling. These mechanisms highlighted how access to playing fields can lead to positive change for young people, moving beyond a surface level understanding that playing fields are simply a positive resource for young people. Tolson and Schofield (2012) in evaluating a football reminiscence programme for men with dementia highlighted that the anticipation of attending the sessions was an important mechanism in triggering positive outcomes. Furthermore, Coalter (2013b) has raised the importance of relationships when it comes to outcomes being achieved or not. Coalter argues that rather than the sporting activities, it is the relationships between leaders and participants- encompassing respect, trust, and reciprocity- which lead to attitude and behaviour change.

In summary, realist evaluations on and within CSfD acknowledge that a programme will lead to different mechanism and outcomes for individuals. Furthermore, the realist evaluations of CSfD also highlight the importance of cognitive mechanisms, and not the activities per se (Coalter et al., 2020; Van der Veken et al., 2020a), moving away from the commonly held assumptions of the unique power of sport itself. Realist

evaluation continues to be an underutilised approach when evaluating CSfD (S. Chen, 2018; K. Harris, 2018; L. Ryan, Harris, & Henderson, 2023) and therefore to further understand how, why, for whom, and in what context CSfD can lead to positive outcomes, further realist evaluations carried out within CSfD are encouraged.

Chapter summary

The previous chapter conceptualised what CSfD is. This current chapter has built on this by highlighting relevant theoretical approaches for studying CSfD before looking at approaches to evaluating CSfD. Each theoretical approach is useful for this thesis, however the SFDT and programme theory approaches are the predominant approaches which informs this thesis. The second part of the chapter highlights the problems of outcome-based approaches to evaluation within CSfD which has contributed to a weak evidence base for the impact of CSfD. Theory-driven approaches such as realist evaluation hold great promise for understanding the role sport can play in achieving wider societal outcomes. However, realist evaluation is yet to gain a strong standing within the CSfD literature. Practitioners are regularly subject to funders, who typically want to be able to see an instant impact. As a result, this perpetuates the lack of evidence discourse within the field (Adams & Harris, 2014). Thus, it falls to academics to try to fill this gap and unpack the ‘black box’ of CSfD programmes. Indeed, the aim of this thesis is to unpack the ‘black box’ of the FoL’s ETH programme, a CSfD programme seeking to reduce and prevent loneliness. Chapters 5 and 6 outline the research approach and how the realist evaluation for this thesis was carried out. Before then, attention turns to loneliness as a social issue and what strategies have been used to reduce and prevent loneliness, highlighting the role CSfD may play.

Chapter 4- CSfD's potential to address loneliness and social isolation

Introduction to chapter

Within the UK, CSfD has been identified as having the potential to contribute towards outcomes related to physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development, and economic development (HM Government, 2015). The extent of one's loneliness and social isolation has been linked to one's mental and physical health (Manoli, McCarthy, & Ramsey, 2022). The aim of this chapter is to position CSfD's potential for tackling loneliness and social isolation, specifically for older people. To begin with, the chapter highlights the differences between loneliness and social isolation and how they have developed as emerging issues. After this the chapter explores strategies used to reduce and prevent loneliness, with a focus on how CSfD may be an effective strategy. The chapter concludes with an overview of the FoL's ETH programme, which seeks to prevent and reduce loneliness for older adults.

Loneliness and social isolation as emerging issues

Loneliness and social isolation have become ever-increasing issues within society (Day et al., 2021) and "play a significant role in the health and wellbeing of older adults" (Hwang, Wang, Siever, Medico, & Jones, 2019, p. 736). The COVID-19 pandemic and government policies of social distancing, isolation, and shielding, have increased awareness and attention towards loneliness and social isolation (Day et al., 2021; Hong et al., 2022; Irvine et al., 2022; Newman-Norlund et al., 2022; Tomaz et al., 2021). Whilst loneliness and social isolation are often conflated, they are two different concepts. Loneliness is a social construct that can happen even in the

presence of others- a feeling of not being part of a community (Hauge & Kirkevold, 2012). Whereas, social isolation is when someone is on their own- an individual may be alone, but not feel lonely (Holwerda et al., 2014). Thus, loneliness is considered as a subjective experience, whilst social isolation is a more objective state (Gardiner, Geldenhuys, & Gott, 2018; D. Morgan et al., 2021). Loneliness is not bad per se, whereas social isolation always has negative consequences. The objective state of social isolation can lead to the subjective experience of loneliness; however, loneliness can also occur even when not socially isolated.

Most of the consequences associated with loneliness are negative and include: increased risk of: mortality (Litwin & Shiovitz-Ezra, 2006; Lyyra & Heikkinen, 2006), depression (John T. Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018), and physiological decline (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2007). Moreover, individuals may become distressed to be labelled as lonely (Rosedale, 2007). Whilst these may be considered negative consequences of loneliness, they can also be considered as factors contributing to negative experiences of loneliness. For example, older people's loneliness and social isolation may come about as a result of deteriorating physical health, death of spouses, increased likelihood of living alone, and having fewer confiding relationships (Victor & Bowling, 2012). However, some positive effects of loneliness have been identified which include loneliness being considered as: restful, creative and harmonious (Dahlberg, 2007), and providing an individual with a sense of freedom and opportunity (Graneheim & Lundman, 2010).

On the other hand, social isolation only provides negative consequences to an individual with quality of life decreasing during periods of social isolation (Newman-Norlund et al., 2022). Social isolation is the lack of contact from other people (Victor, Scrambler, & Bond, 2009; Wenger & Burholt, 2004) and can lead to a reduction in the

health-related quality of life of an individual. Specific consequences of social isolation include a reduction in physical and mental health (Leigh-Hunt et al., 2017). Older people are particularly at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation (Donaldson & Watson, 1996; Hauge & Kirkevold, 2012; Hoang et al., 2022; Tomaz et al., 2021; Victor & Bowling, 2012). There are several factors which contribute to older people being more vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation including poor health and mobility (Hawton et al., 2011), low digital literacy (Gatto & Tak, 2008), and loss of relationships (Hwang et al., 2019). Given the impact that loneliness and social isolation have on individuals and society, it is unsurprising that an increasing number of programmes have been deployed over recent years seeking to reduce and prevent loneliness and social isolation. The next section looks at the potential that CSfD may have for helping to address loneliness and social isolation.

The power of sport to tackle loneliness and social isolation?

A wide range of strategies are used to tackle the issues of loneliness and social isolation, including CSfD. Programmes and studies, whilst acknowledging the difference between loneliness and social isolation, typically conflate the two when it comes to describing the programmes in question, with a greater emphasis on loneliness. In their review, Gardiner et al. (2018, p. 150) identified the following types of loneliness intervention: “social facilitation interventions, psychological therapies, health and social care provision, animal interventions, befriending interventions, and leisure/skill development”. CSfD programmes seeking to tackle loneliness and social isolation can be considered as leisure/skill development and social facilitation interventions. These types of interventions are not mutually exclusive and as will be discussed below often overlap. Indeed, group-based leisure can provide skill

development and social facilitation. What follows is a review of loneliness and social isolation programmes which can be placed under the umbrella of CSfD initiatives. This umbrella is not perfect- several programmes cited use the label ‘physical activity’ rather than ‘sport’. Moreover, some studies adopt a more general approach to leisure activities. However, for all the programmes cited, a plus-sport philosophy (Coalter, 2007) is evident even though in most cases this is not referenced or acknowledged by the programmes in question.

Sport as a leisure activity has been identified as having the potential to tackle loneliness for older adults. Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, and Payne (2013a) identified 13 different psychological and social outcomes of participating in sport for older adults including: social functioning, subjective wellbeing, belonging, and sense of community. These outcomes may be achieved through several mechanisms. Firstly, sport provides individuals with the opportunity to develop social networks (Choi et al., 2022) and be provided with a sense of community (Lyons & Dionigi, 2007). Furthermore, participating in sporting leisure activities can provide older adults with opportunities for social interaction and enjoyment (Lyons & Dionigi, 2007). In their study of older women’s participation in softball, Choi et al. (2022) identified three interrelated themes highlighting how sport helps to prevent loneliness- the desire for friendship and social connections is a motive to participate; the approach to playing facilitated social connections; and through participation, participants developed a social network.

Thoits (2011) identified seven key mechanisms by which social relationships and support may influence mental health: social influence/social comparison, social control, role-based purpose and meaning, self-esteem, sense of control, belonging and companionship, and perceived support availability. Using these mechanisms as well

as building on the sport for health model provided by Eime et al. (2013a), Eather, Wade, Pankowiak, and Eime (2023) have proposed a mental health through sport conceptual model. This model focuses on the mental health effects that participation in sport can bring. Specifically relevant for this literature review are the mechanisms of social support, and belonging and companionship which can come from participation in sport and may result in a reduction in loneliness and social isolation experienced by individuals. Programmes encouraging participation of older adults may start off which physiological outcomes, however, as Cedergren, King, Wagner, and Wegley (2007) highlighted, sport programmes for older adults are likely to bring about social health benefits among participants.

Despite loneliness being subjective (Gardiner et al., 2018; D. Morgan et al., 2021), studies evaluating the impact of group based CSfD programmes to tackle loneliness have been dominated by RCT quantitative based studies (Eime et al., 2013a). However, this is consistent with loneliness programmes in general (Kharicha et al., 2017; Poscia et al., 2018). This suggests that despite the label of loneliness being used, current research focusses more on social isolation as understood by the definitions provided at the beginning of this chapter. In their meta-analysis of quantitative studies, Sivaramakrishnan et al. (2021) found that participation in sport, whether in team or individual sports can provide a social network for ageing adults. This has been confirmed by the recent systematic review carried out by Eather et al. (2023). Ottesen, Jeppesen, and Krusturp (2010) argued that team sport has a significant advantage over individual sports regarding the development of social outcomes due to interacting with teammates. In their integrative review, Andersen, Ottesen, and Thing (2019) identified positive social, psychological, and psychosocial health outcomes associated with team sport participation in adults. These sports, such as pickleball, provide

individuals with the opportunity for individuals to maintain and develop new social connections (Casper, Bocarro, & Lothary, 2021). This is consistent with the findings of McAuley et al. (2000) who found that the social relationships developed through group interventions led to increases in life satisfaction and reductions in loneliness. Several other studies highlight the role participating in team sports can have on reducing and preventing loneliness and social isolation (Andersen et al., 2019; Brooke Kirby & Ann Kluge, 2013; Choi et al., 2022; A. M. Holt, Howat, & Helman, 2009). Whilst these studies show the programmes are successful, they do not explain how or why the programmes work.

There are some examples of qualitative, social interpretivist studies exploring the impact CSfD can have on loneliness and social isolation, which contribute towards a better understanding of how and why outcomes occur. For instance, in evaluating the impact of ‘Chose to Move’, a health promoting intervention that supports older adults increase their physical activity and social connectedness, the findings of Franke, Sims-Gould, Nettlefold, Ottoni, and McKay (2021) supported the view that choice-based group interventions are effective for tackling loneliness for older adults, enabling a sense of individual agency for participation. Moreover, Brady et al. (2020), in their study of a fitness programme for older adults, found that membership of the programme directly decreased social isolation, and indirectly decreased loneliness. In these examples, sport and physical activity is the tool used to achieve the reduction in loneliness and social isolation. However, sport as a tool is not the only tool that can lead to these outcomes. For example, other shared activities which encourage socialisation have been argued to reduce loneliness, including gardening and social clubs (Cohen-Mansfield & Perach, 2015; Hoang et al., 2022). Glover (2018, p. 27) noted that “ultimately people need a purpose to come together socially”. This may be

achieved through the medium of sport, but also through the other mediums such as gardening and social clubs. Thus, more work needs to be done in developing a firmer evidence base outlining the specific unique impact (if any) CSfD may have on reducing and preventing loneliness compared to other social facilitation-based programmes.

Programmes which seek to prevent or reduce loneliness have a weak evidence base (Kharicha et al., 2017). This is true of CSfD programmes, whereby there is insufficient evidence about the psychological and social outcomes of participating in sport for older adults, with a greater focus placed on the physiological outcomes (A. C. H. Kim, Park, Kim, & Fontes-Comber, 2020). The literature which has been reviewed suggests that there is a link between physical activity and loneliness, however, the literature does not explain why this link exists. Indeed, several authors have highlighted the bi-directional relationship between physical activity and loneliness on the one hand, but on the other hand highlighted the lack of understanding of the causality of this relationship (Eime et al., 2013a; Pels & Kleinert, 2016). Often the focus of programmes and evaluations is the physiological outcomes of participants, however it is important for programme planners and evaluators not to ignore the potential social benefits of a sport programme for older people (Cedergren et al., 2007). It can therefore be stated that CSfD has the potential to reduce or prevent loneliness amongst older adults (Emerson & Mirda, 2021), but currently there is a weak evidence base to support this.

The Extra Time Hub- a CSfD programme aiming to tackle loneliness and social isolation

The Extra Time Hub (ETH) is a CSfD programme delivered by the Foundation of Light (FoL) in Sunderland. The FoL's ETH is part of a wider network of ETHs delivered by other football foundations across the country, initially funded by the EFL Trust. The ETH began as a three-year pilot with an emphasis on providing opportunities of social connection for older people (Bradley, 2022). The FoL have continued to deliver the ETH despite the end the of the pilot period and of EFL Trust funding. Indeed, one of the goals of the programme was to make the ETH sustainable and move away from a central EFL Trust funding model (Bradley, 2022). The approach to loneliness adopted by the ETH has characteristics of the cognitive and interactionist theoretical approaches to loneliness:

Loneliness is a complex subjective experience. There is not one solution. It can mean different things to different people... We are committed to helping people to build social connections because of the physical, emotional and cognitive benefits. (EFL Trust, 2022, p. 8)

The cognitive approach, linked to attribution theory, suggests that loneliness occurs when an individual perceives a discrepancy between their desired and achieved levels of social contact (Motta, 2021; Nazzal, Cruz, & Neto, 2018; Peplau, Miceli, & Morasch, 1982; Perlman & Peplau, 1982; Singh & Kiran, 2013). This cognitive approach to loneliness has been adopted the UK Government in their strategy for tackling loneliness (HM Government, 2018). The interactionist approach divides loneliness into emotional and social dimensions (DiTommaso & Spinner, 1997; Fierloos et al., 2021; Oudman, van Dam, & Postma, 2018; R. Weiss, 1973; Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022). Emotional loneliness is “a condition arising out of the loss or absence of a close emotional attachment” (Wolfers et al., 2022, p. 355), whilst social loneliness is “a condition arising out of the absence of ‘an engaging social network’”

(Wolfers et al., 2022, p. 355). The quotation from the EFL Trust above demonstrates a combined approach of cognitive and interactionist in the way that the EFL Trust understands loneliness, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of loneliness.

The intervention strategies used by the ETH are: social facilitation, befriending, and leisure/skill development. Moreover, the ETH programme demonstrates evidence of the three characteristics identified by Gardiner et al. (2018) which can help lead to a positive impact- adaptability, community development approach, and productive engagement. Whilst the EFL Trust provided a logic model of the ETH (EFL Trust, n.d.), the FoL do not have a specific logic model for the ETH in Sunderland. However, the FoL identified several outcomes of the ETH which relate to preventing and reducing loneliness- improved belonging to the community, improved mental wellbeing, and reduced loneliness and social isolation. To achieve these outcomes, the FoL's ETH provides several sessions for the older population of Sunderland to engage with each week, taking place at the Beacon of Light (BoL) building. These activities include group-based sport/physical activity with the aim of promoting social connectedness amongst members of the ETH. As discussed in the previous section, sport and physical activity are sites which provide the opportunity for individuals to develop social relationships.

A unique component of the ETH compared to other local provision in Sunderland is the link to Sunderland Association Football Club (SAFC). Professional football clubs such as SAFC play an important role in the local geographical community (Cashmore & Dixon, 2016) and have been a site for common identity embodying collective symbols and identifications (A. Brown, Crabbe, & Mellor, 2008). Indeed, policymakers and practitioners have recognised the potential benefits that football may

have as a vehicle for improving people's lives (Dixon, Belshaw, Johnson, & Flynn, 2019). Dixon et al. (2019) and A. Brown et al. (2008) highlighted the significance of social identity for encouraging individuals to engage with CSfD delivered by football foundations.

However, the extent to which football as a vehicle for positive change has been refuted. For example, in evaluating 'It's a Goal Project', a programme using football to facilitate therapeutic work, Spandler, Roy, and McKeown (2014) concluded that there is nothing therapeutic about football, rather they suggested that football may be an effective means to engage men in activities. Indeed, Sanders, Heys, Ravenscroft, and Burdsey (2014) argued that the popularity of football encourages individuals to attend a programme. This is supported by the EFL Trust itself, with the following quote coming from an EFL Trust Business Development Manager:

Football and sport obviously isn't [sic] the whole answer to health improvement, but we certainly feel that we can play a significant part and we have a particular strength with regards to being able to engage with all areas of our communities. The use of our stadia and professional players as inspiring venues and positive role models is a further strength with regards to helping us achieve health improvements. (Martin et al., 2016, p. 177)

Furthermore, in their study of health programmes delivered by Everton in the Community, Curran, Bingham, Richardson, and Parnell (2014) identified the brand of Everton Football Club as a key resource used to attract or 'hook' individuals to the programmes.

More research needs to be conducted to assess whether football foundations have an impact on individual lives, or whether football foundations merely act as the site for social change. Whilst the FoL believed that they were making a positive difference to participants of the ETH, they did not have the evidence for this. As a result, there was an opportunity to conduct a realist evaluation of the ETH programme in Sunderland.

The aim of the realist evaluation was to further understand what the power of football is and whether it actually exists (Pringle et al., 2016). Chapter 5 details the methodology and Chapter 6 outlines the specific methods used to complete a realist evaluation, focusing on the ETH's potential to prevent and reduce loneliness.

Chapter summary

Loneliness and social isolation have received greater attention as a social issue since COVID-19. It has been highlighted that CSfD, particularly through group-based activities has the potential to prevent and reduce loneliness. However, currently there remain a lack of research to provide the evidence to prove or disprove the power of sport for tackling loneliness and social isolation. To contribute to the growth of this evidence base, this thesis has carried out a realist evaluation of the FoL's ETH programme. The next chapter outlines the research methodology of this thesis, after which Chapter 6 will detail the evaluation design.

Chapter 5- Methodology

Introduction to chapter

This chapter outlines the methodological perspective taken for this thesis. The chapter presents an overview of the key philosophical paradigms used in the social sciences, including the paradigmatic approach used for this thesis of scientific realism. From scientific realism, realist evaluation has emerged. The second part of the chapter outlines realist evaluation as an approach to research. The aim of this chapter is not to position realism and realist evaluation as superior approaches to research. Rather, the aim of this chapter is to highlight the differences between research approaches and to justify the approach taken for this thesis.

Paradigmatic foundations: the philosophy of scientific realism

The aim of this section is to justify why scientific realism was chosen as the research paradigm for this thesis (Carter & Little, 2007; C. Robson & McCartan, 2016). A paradigm has been defined as “a cluster of beliefs... [of] what should be studied, how research should be done, [and] how results should be interpreted” (Bryman, 1988, p. 4). In other words, a paradigm is the chosen framework for which research takes place (Hammond & Wellington, 2020). Disciplines such as the social sciences, whereby no single paradigm has emerged as pre-eminent, and as a result have competing paradigms are referred to as pre-paradigmatic (Bryman, 2016). Given the differing paradigms within the social sciences, paradigm ‘wars’ between the ontological and epistemological positions of research and researchers are common (Gomm, 2009).

The building blocks of research

Grix (2002) identifies building blocks of research- ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods, and sources (see Figure 4- The building blocks of research (Grix, 2002, p. 180)). The positions taken by a researcher to these terms will affect which research paradigm is held. Moreover, as Grix demonstrates, each building block is sequential in effecting subsequent building blocks. Grix (2019) has argued that it is important to have a clear understanding of these concepts to: a) understand the interrelationship of key components of research, b) avoid confusion when discussing theoretical debates, and c) defend a research position whilst recognising others. It is therefore argued that it is important for research projects to have a clearly defined and justified paradigmatic approach (Sefotho, 2015). These terms will now be briefly defined, highlighting the role that they play in the research process. After which specific paradigmatic approaches will be described, highlighting the different building blocks used.

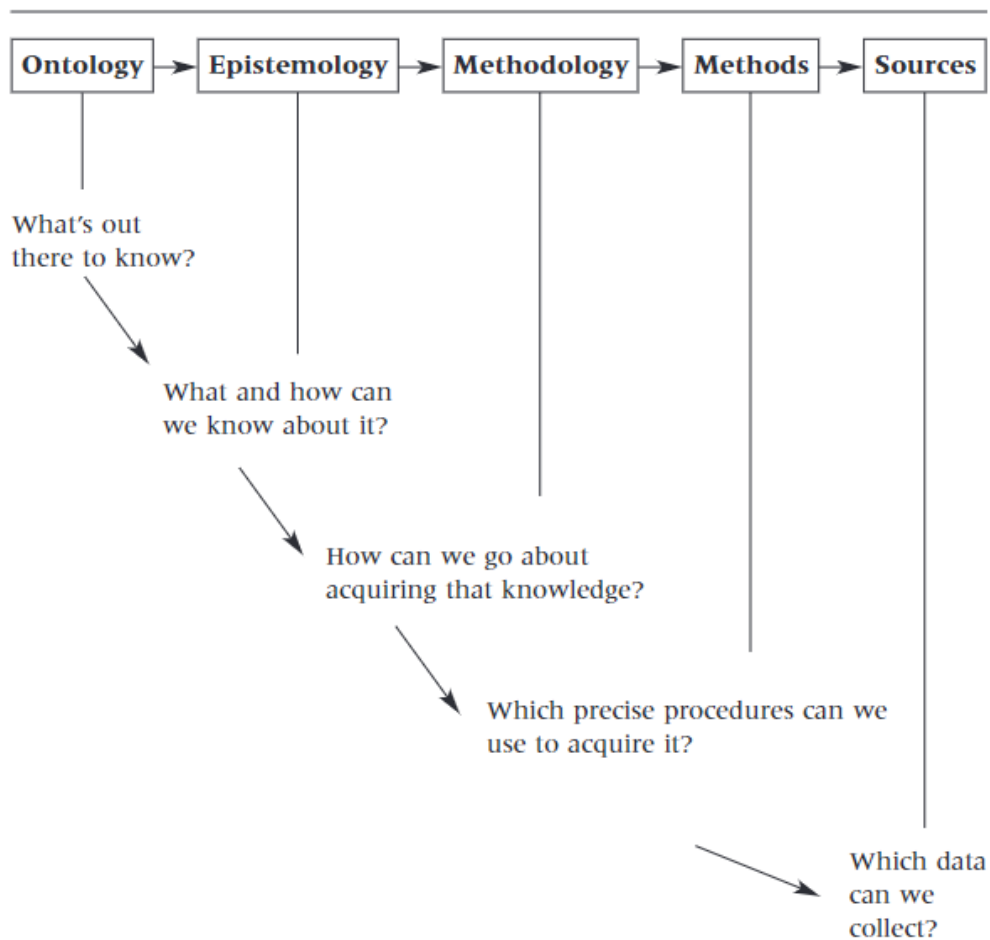


Figure 4- The building blocks of research (Grix, 2002, p. 180)

Ontology and epistemology are the foundations for research (Grix, 2019; Hammond & Wellington, 2020) and any research approach is determined by ontological and epistemological beliefs (Johnston, 2014). Within research philosophy there is disagreement as to whether ontology should precede or follow epistemology and the characteristics of each concept. This thesis follows the approach outlined by Grix (2002; 2019) in ontology preceding epistemology. Ontology concerns “what is out there to know about” (Grix, 2002, p. 175). Ontological assumptions focus on what constitutes social reality (Blaikie & Priest, 2018). This is how humans construct meaning of the reality of the world. This is context dependent- one person’s understanding of the same event, may be different to someone else’s. Moreover, the

same event that happens in one setting, may be interpreted differently in another setting. Closely linked to ontology is epistemology (Hammond & Wellington, 2020). Epistemology concerns how the researcher can go beneath the surface of the water and gain a better understanding of what and how can be known about it (Grix, 2002). Methodology refers to the strategy of going about acquiring knowledge, which is followed by methods whereby the precise procedures used to acquire the knowledge is outlined (Grix, 2002). Finally, sources concerns identifying which data can be collected (Grix, 2002). These building blocks will be discussed in terms of how they differ between prominent philosophical positions within the social sciences.

Positivism

Positivism is the paradigm that has historically dominated the social sciences (Bryman, 2016; Grix, 2019). Proponents of positivism argue that social reality is a singular and stable reality which is based on enduring patterns of order (B. M. Grant & Giddings, 2002). As a result of this objectivity, positivists hold the ontological position that scientific research is independent of human values (Fazlıoğulları, 2012; Weber, 2004). Positivism asserts its credibility by arguing that every scientist looking at the same part of reality sees the same thing (C. Robson & McCartan, 2016). Epistemologically, from a positivist perspective, knowledge must be verified through observation and experimentation. Research from the positivist paradigm is more concerned with facts of the natural world, rather than values of the social world (Guba, 1990; J. A. Hughes & Sharrock, 1997), and explanation rather than understanding (Grix, 2019). This is because positivists consider beliefs to be unverifiable (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Methodologically, classical positivist approaches use deductive reasoning in order to test a pre-established hypothesis (Hammond & Wellington, 2013;

Veal & Darcy, 2014). Deductive reasoning is “the development of an idea, or hypothesis, from existing theory which can then be tested through the collection of data” (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 36). Thus, deduction may be useful when a research topic has a substantial amount of existing theory (Bryman, 2016; Gratton & Jones, 2010). Given the objective assumptions and quantitative nature of positivism, Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) are seen as the gold standard when it comes to producing evidence (B. M. Grant & Giddings, 2002). Within RCTs, context becomes “an annoyance to be minimised, obliterated or overcome” (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021, p. 2). Indeed, as its name suggests, RCTs attempt to control context.

Positivism is not without its critiques. For instance, positivists would assume that the CSfD environment remains stable across different times and contexts (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Moreover, undertaking a positivist approach does not allow the researcher to use experience and knowledge to influence the findings. Indeed, the positivist paradigm aims to remove any potential influence from the researcher. In response to the critiques of positivism, post-positivism has come about. Post-positivism shares many of the common values of positivism, such as the assumption of a singular reality, however, unlike positivism, accepts the use of qualitative methods of inquiry. Furthermore, post-positivists accept the influences of a researcher’s experience and knowledge (C. Robson & McCartan, 2016). Whilst positivism and post-positivism share the realist ontological position that reality is mind-independent, positivism tends towards empirical realism, whilst post-positivism tends towards critical realism (Grix, 2019). The positivist approach is well suited to exploring aspects of sport that are more aligned with the natural sciences such as anatomy and physiology, interpretivism offers an alternative when investigating sport as a social phenomenon (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Interpretivism will now be discussed.

Interpretivism

The development of the interpretivist paradigm can be considered to be in part as a response to the overdominance of positivism (Grix, 2019). In contrast to positivism and post-positivism, interpretivism is based on an anti-foundationalist ontology in that it holds the view that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it (Furlong & Marsh, 2010; Grix, 2019). As a result, proponents of the interpretivist approach argue that the social world is different from that of the natural world (Bryman, 2016). Epistemologically, interpretivists claim that the role of the social scientist is to understand the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2016). Indeed, interpretivists are concerned with subjectivity, understanding, agency, and the way people construct their social worlds (Denscombe, 2010). This subjectivity is not measured quantitatively, rather interpretivists argue that social phenomena is complex and requires qualitative measurement through words and statements and other non-numerical measures (Gratton & Jones, 2010). As a result of this subjectivity, interpretivists argue that objective or value free analysis is impossible (Grix, 2019). Therefore, “in methodology, interpretivists are more likely to undertake smaller-scale casing” (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 90), generally using an inductive approach and qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Veal & Darcy, 2014). In contrast to deduction, inductive reasoning is where “theory is the outcome of research which involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observations” (Bryman, 2016, p. 21). Given the traditional status of positivist research, interpretivist research has in the past faced barriers when compared against positivist criteria and as a result it has been more challenging to publish research in high ranking journals (B. M. Grant & Giddings, 2002; B. Smith & Brown, 2011). This has been down to the commonly held view that the ‘gold standard’ for producing knowledge is

based on quantitative designs (Sparkes, 2013). That being said, interpretivist research within sport is becoming more prominent (Duffy, Fernandez, & Sène-Harper, 2021) .

Like positivism, interpretivism is open to critique, with several critiques presented against the approach. The strengths of interpretivism can also be used as its weaknesses. For instance, interpretivists acknowledge that every social scientist is different and brings with them different experiences, values, and experiences, which may contribute to many different interpretations or different realities (C. Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, this can lead to disagreements of what reality actually is, or whether one reality is superior over another. Furthermore, there is no set criteria for considering standards of quality, rigour, or validity (Duffy et al., 2021). Thus, it is impossible to accept a researcher's findings as 'the truth' and it is therefore hard to evaluate which 'truths' are worthy of acceptance. However, interpretivists would argue that their approach focusses on shared understandings, and at the same time not disregarding objective facts. Furthermore, quality and rigour measures are in place for interpretive research which include: a clear research question supported by a conceptual framework, and appropriate research methods than minimise researcher bias, in addition to researcher reflexivity (Johnson, Adkins, & Chauvin, 2020; Malterud, 2001). Another criticism levied against interpretivist researchers is because their research is dependent on the researcher, this opens interpretivist research as being labelled political rather than scientific (B. Smith & Brown, 2011). A third paradigmatic approach to have emerged is post-structuralism.

Post-structuralism

Post-structuralism, also known as constructivism (Fox, 2016), represents a paradigmatic shift away from the epistemological and ontological assumptions of positivism and interpretivism (Avner, Jones, & Denison, 2014). Post-structuralism

developed as a result of a reaction against a perceived deterministic approach of structuralism (Hall, 2020). Whilst structuralism argues that “social processes can only be understood by their relation to overarching social systems or structures” (Hall, 2020, p. 238), post-structuralists argue that “social processes cannot be understood by locating them in a larger system but are better seen in relation to the discourses that construct knowledge about these processes” (Hall, 2020, p. 234). Reality and truth is formed through power relations (Avner et al., 2014). Indeed, post-structuralism has developed from the work of Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1980). Foucault viewed power as inseparable from the production of knowledge. As a result, post-structuralists seek to contextualise knowledge within power relations (Avner et al., 2014).

Ontologically, the post-structuralism approach suggests that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being created by social actors” (Bryman et al 2023). From a post-structuralist perspective, knowledge is not seen as fixed because of the differing versions of social reality which are presented by researchers. Indeed, unlike positivist, post-structuralist researchers deny that it is possible to obtain truth objectivity. Rather, knowledge is viewed as being contextual, leading to multiple and subjective truths (Avner et al., 2014). However, this does not mean that post-structuralists deny the existence of a material reality, rather they deny the existence of a singular objective truth (Avner et al., 2014). Epistemologically, post-structuralists recognise that research is influenced by the social experiences of different actors (Avner et al., 2014). The way these actors frame the world is through fluid power relations. Indeed, Foucault viewed power as “relational, fluid, and inseparable from the production of knowledge/truth/reality” (Avner et al., 2014, p. 44). However, whilst power might be fluid, it is not free in the sense that it is regulated and proceed through

discourses of everyday practices (Markula & Silk, 2011). These practices provide both the possibilities and limits of understanding for a post-structuralist.

Markula and Silk (2011) (cited in Avner et al., 2014) have previously identified three purposes of post-structuralist research. Firstly, to understand discourses which shape understandings of the social world and individual practices. Secondly to critique the resulting problematic effects from dominant discourses. And thirdly, to develop theory-driven pragmatic interventions in order to develop more ethical practices. Given that post-structuralists do not believe in a single objective reality, they are unlikely to use quantitative methods such as surveys which are more common within positivist approaches. Furthermore, whilst post-structuralists will use qualitative methods such as interviews, there is a difference in the way post-structuralists use these methods to gain knowledge (Avner et al., 2014). For example, in post-structuralist interviews the job of the interviewer is to understand the experiences of the interviewee in a given context. This is achieved typically through a discourse analysis, highlighting how individuals perceive themselves and their experiences within a sociological setting (Francis, 2000).

There are several limitations which have been highlighted of the post-structuralist paradigmatic approach to research. One critique is that as a result of its emphasis on power, the approach is still too deterministic (Markula & Silk, 2011). Moreover, the approach rarely considers questions of how and why (Caldwell, 2007). It is these questions of how and why in which the paradigm of realism may hold the key.

Realism

An alternative approach to positivism, interpretivism, and post-structuralism is the paradigm of realism. Realism sits between positivism and interpretivism (Grix, 2019), and is considered to have developed from the post-positivist paradigm (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Indeed, like researchers of the positivist paradigm, realists argue that there is an independent reality from human understanding (C. Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, realism is distinguishable from post-positivism in several ways. Realists have attempted to combine the ‘how’ linked to positivism, with the ‘why’, which is linked to interpretivism (Grix, 2019). That being said, realism should not be viewed as a pragmatic bridge, or best of both worlds between positivism and interpretivism. Rather realism should be viewed as an alternative paradigmatic foundation which succeeds in rejecting artificial dichotomies of the other paradigms (Julnes & Mark, 1998).

Two main strands of realism have developed- critical realism and scientific realism. Critical realism was developed initially through the work of Bhaskar (1975, 1979). From critical realism, scientific realism was developed. It is from scientific realism that realist evaluation emerged (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Whilst critical realism focuses on the philosophical debates around how we can obtain a better understanding of reality, scientific realism is the application of the philosophical principles to scientific design and move towards a better understanding of reality in practice (Jagosh, 2020b). Within scientific realism falsifiability exists, however, critical realists do not necessarily concern themselves with the testability of claims. However, critical realism and scientific realism are just two of several iterations of realism (Gomm, 2009; Grix, 2019; C. Robson & McCartan, 2016; Wiltshire, 2018). Indeed, Pawson (2013, p. 14) describes realist inquiry as “a broad and welcoming church” (see also

Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012, p. 177). Nevertheless, scientific realism and critical realism tend to dominate (or form the two main denominations, building on Pawson's metaphor) in the realism field. With such a broad range of labels and understandings of what realism is, the reality is that the approach taken by this thesis is informed by several different positions of realism. Whilst underpinned by scientific realism, elements of other types of realism, particularly critical realism, may be evident to the reader. No apologies are given for this; however, it is hoped that this section on realism, leaves the reader in no doubt about the paradigmatic approach taken and the reasons why.

Ontologically, realists acknowledge that social reality exists independent of human knowledge and that human knowledge is fallible (Bhaskar, 1979). This is referred to as 'ontological depth' which acknowledges that generative mechanisms are complex and not always directly observable (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Ontological depth (also referred to as ontological reality and depth ontology) requires researchers to "penetrate beneath the surface of observable inputs and outputs of a program [sic]," in order to uncover generative forces which may not be recognisable (Downward & Mearman, 2007; Jagosh, 2020b; Kerr, 2003; Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 216). Realists argue that this results in a richer layer of explanation (Kerr, 2003), leading to a better understanding of the mind-independent reality. Ontological depth is stratified into three levels: the empirical, the actual, and the real (Bhaskar, 1975; Fletcher, 2017; Jagosh, 2020b; Wiltshire, 2018). Building on Bhaskar (1975), Fletcher (2017) followed by Jagosh (2019) refer to this using an iceberg metaphor. The iceberg metaphor (see Figure 5- Iceberg metaphor for levels of reality (Fletcher, 2017, p. 183)) helps readers and researchers understand the relationship between ontological depth and the key realist concept of mechanisms. Mechanisms are the unobservable

processes that take place within the domain of the real. Whilst unobservable, realists contend that mechanisms can be inferred. As Jagosh (2019, p. 363) explains: “the ice below the surface of the water represents activated mechanisms that produce reality at the empirical (i.e., observable) level”. In other words, mechanisms are activated in a way which typically alludes human observation and knowledge, which produces outcomes which can be more easily observed. The realist approach seeks to gain a better understanding of what happens underneath the water surface. Realists seek to understand how the mechanisms involved operate and trigger the observable outcomes whilst acknowledging that a true and correct understanding of reality may not be possible.

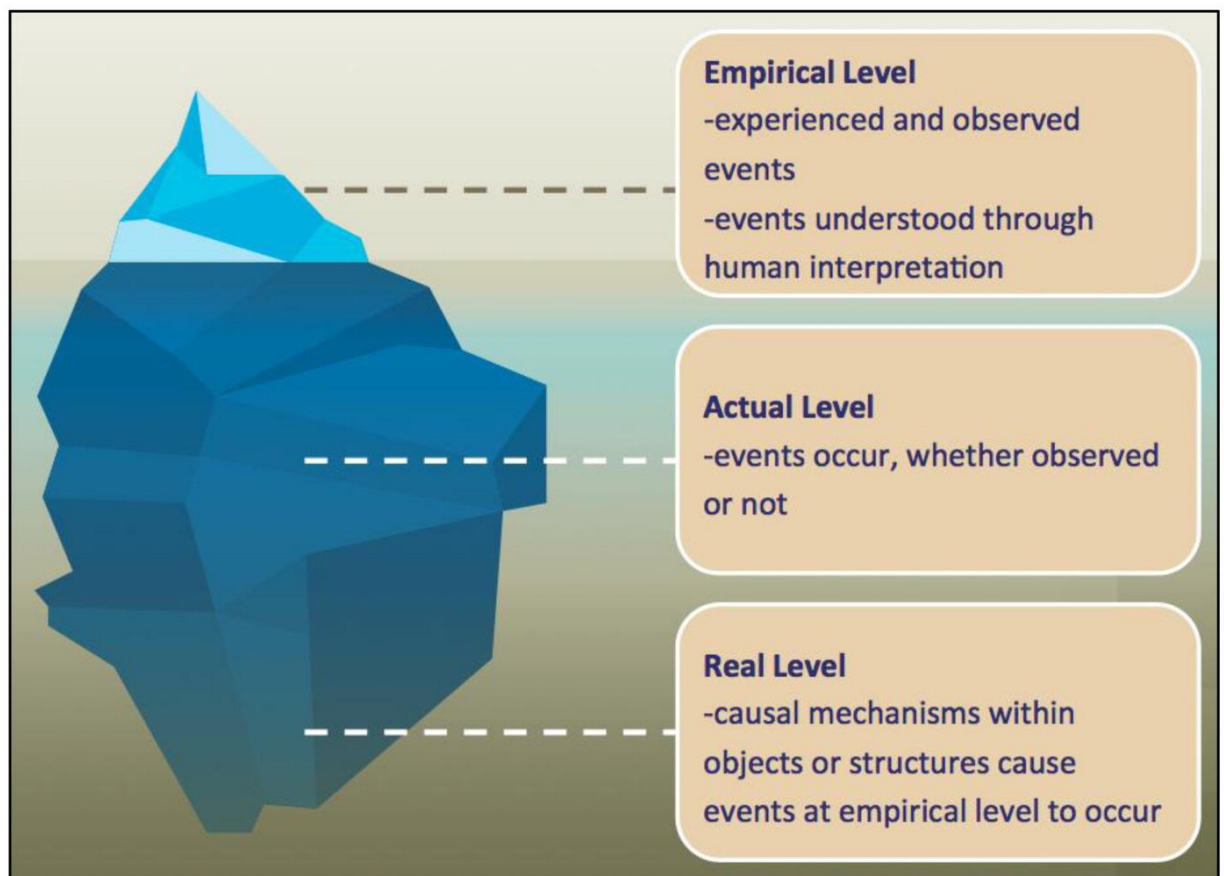


Figure 5- Iceberg metaphor for levels of reality (Fletcher, 2017, p. 183)

The morphogenetic approach, proposed by Archer (1995) developed from Bhaskar's work (Lindsey & Wiltshire, 2022) can help identify the generative mechanisms that cause changes in the social world (Lusted, 2018). The main premise of the morphogenetic argument is that structure precedes social interaction, which then leads to structural elaboration, as a result social interaction is structurally conditioned but not structurally determined (Archer, 1995). In other words, context matters, but so does an individual's reasoning. This reasoning may have been conditioned by structural and cultural conditions; however, it is not structurally or culturally determined. This is because individuals have the ability to think, deliberate, believe and love, for example. (Archer, 2003). Whilst structure possesses none of these abilities, it can constrain and enable in a way that individuals cannot (Lindsey & Wiltshire, 2022)

Epistemologically, the realist paradigm acknowledges that what can be known is not definite. Realists acknowledge that "all scientific data is hedged with uncertainty, a point which is at the root of Popperian philosophy of science" (Pawson, 2013, p. 9). As a result, whilst much of reality is observable, human knowledge will never be fully complete. This concept is known as falsification. Falsification highlights the problem of induction "because no matter how many positive instances of a generalisation are observed, it is still possible that the next instance will falsify it" (Ladyman, 2002, p. 69). Indeed, the central tenant to falsification is that "although no theory can be confirmed empirically as absolutely and universally true, a theory can be falsified if one of its hypotheses can be demonstrated as false" (Hyslop-Margison, 2010, p. 823). Thus, only one negative instance is needed to falsify a theory. For example, it is not possible to prove that all swans are white, given that one would have to observe every swan in the world as well as predicting that all swans in the future would be white.

Moreover, a sighting of just one black swan would immediately reject the hypothesis of ‘all swans are white’ (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Indeed, critical realism argues that “social phenomena pre-exist our experiences of them” and that researchers and the research methods deployed are fallible (Wiltshire, 2018, p. 534). Furthermore, realists acknowledge that humans are unable to perceive everything within reality. An example provided by Jagosh (2020a) illustrates this point- a rose opening in a human hand is beyond the human’s level of perception because the ongoing change is so subtle that the human does not notice the change until it has significantly opened. On a human level we can observe the change, but not the change taking place. However, humans have developed the tools to address deficiencies in human perceptual capabilities such as slow-motion cameras to see the change over time. As a result of embracing the importance of falsification, realists move away from inductive reasoning, instead applying retroductive reasoning.

As a result of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of realism, the process of retroduction plays a central role in the methodology of realists (Blaikie, 2004; Jagosh, 2020b; McEwan et al., 2023; The RAMESES II Project, 2017). The retroductive approach combines both inductive and deductive logic, alongside insights or hunches and is “underpinned by a belief that an understanding of causation cannot be achieved using only observable evidence” (Gilmore, McAuliffe, Power, & Vallières, 2019; The RAMESES II Project, 2017, p. 1). Indeed, retroduction is closely associated with abductive (hunch-driven) theorising (Jagosh, 2020b). Retroduction is underpinned by the belief that an understanding of causation cannot be achieved by only using observable evidence; rather retroductive theorising requires common sense, intelligence, expertise and informed imagination to build and test theories which underpin causal processes (McEwan et al., 2023; The RAMESES II Project, 2017).

The process of retroduction can be viewed as a combination of deduction and induction (Miller, 2003). A retroductive approach acknowledges that in reality the research process is a messy process, (Miller, 2003).

Like positivism, interpretivism and post-structuralism, there are several critiques which have been made against realism. One criticism of realism is that the approach with its emphasis on retroduction and abduction allows for a situation where “different scientists with different theories will observe different things when confronted with the ‘same’ evidence.” (Wainwright, 1997, p. 1266). However, realists in response to this would say that reality exists independently of a researcher’s understanding of reality and also acknowledge that the fallibility of human knowledge (Haigh, Harris, & Haigh, 2012). Another critique of the realist paradigm is that given the emphasis on context, there is limited potential of generalisability of findings across different settings, compared to positivism (Haigh et al., 2012). However, realists would argue that their focus is on transferability through using Middle Range Theories (MRTs) (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010; Bonell, Ponsford, Meiksin, & Melendez-Torres, 2023).

Bonell et al. (2023, p. 148) define MRT as:

Theory about the general mechanisms... which generate outcomes that [are] analytically generalisable enough to span different contexts, interventions or outcomes, but specific enough to be salient in a given application.

Thus, realists will seek to develop MRTs which may be transferred and work in similar but different ways in different contexts (Pawson, 2017).

Paradigmatic positioning of thesis

Realism was the paradigmatic approach taken for this thesis. By adopting a realist position, this thesis recognises that there is a mind-independent reality. Humans can gain a closer approximation of this reality; however, approximations will always be

fallible. This is consistent with my own personal perspective on life- that there is an absolute truth, but as humans we will never fully understand and know what this truth is. Realism is a relatively novel paradigmatic approach within the fields of CSfD and loneliness. Therefore, given the need for deeper insight into how CSfD programmes may work, realism provides the opportunity to develop ontological depth in understanding how and why CSfD may be effective. Furthermore, as noted in the previous chapter, evidence for loneliness interventions is dominated by positivist and interpretivist approaches. Thus, realism provides the opportunity to deepen the understandings of how loneliness interventions may work. However, given the limited existing research underpinned by realism for CSfD and loneliness/social isolation, the paradigmatic positioning of this thesis represents a leap of faith. Realism allows for specific findings to be transferred via MRTs for use in other settings. This will assist in making the findings of this thesis transferable for other settings within and beyond CSfD. From realism comes the approach of realist evaluation which attention is now turned to.

Realist evaluation

From the paradigm of realism comes realist evaluation. As an approach to evaluation, realist evaluation stems from the research paradigm of scientific realism and was first conceptualised by Pawson and Tilley (1997). Realist evaluation allows for the researcher to explore underneath the surface of an intervention, policy, or service (called programmes by realist evaluators), developing an understanding of how and why particular strategies of a programme work or not. Realist evaluation is a relatively novel approach within CSfD. Whilst examples of realist evaluation within CSfD are limited (though increasing in number), realist evaluation has a place in CSfD (Coalter,

2007), evidenced by a growing desire to shift away from simple, quantitative, and technocratic data within the field (Adams & Harris, 2014; Coalter, 2010a; Kay, 2009). Given that realist evaluation is method neutral (S. Chen & Henry, 2016), this allows the researcher to evidence and triangulate findings using a variety of data collection methods such as, participant statistics, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, documentary analysis and existing literature. Specific methods used as part of realist evaluations of CSfD tend to be dominated by qualitative methods, particularly interviews which is consistent with realist evaluations in general (Renmans & Castellano Pleguezuelo, 2023). This should be no surprise given the problems of the evidence base for CSfD outlined above. Indeed, realist evaluation is seen by scholars as a potential way to move the evidence base of CSfD away from a dependency on quantitative evidence.

Recent examples of realist evaluation taking place in CSfD include in areas of: employability (Coalter et al., 2020), health promotion (Van der Veken et al., 2020a), social inclusion (Van der Veken et al., 2020b), and coach development (Redgate et al., 2020). Given the increasing pressurised funding environment of the UK economy recovering from the financial crisis of 2008 and ‘austerity politics’ (Coote, 2011; Kenyon et al., 2018; Parnell, Millward, et al., 2015; Parnell et al., 2017; Rossi & Jeanes, 2018; C. M. Walker & Hayton, 2018; Widdop et al., 2018) and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic (Langley, 2021), it is becoming even more important for CSfD organisations and programmes to justify the funding they receive. This can be achieved by developing a deeper level of understanding of how sport programmes can be used as tools to improve lives and how these outcomes are achieved (or not). As a result, a more nuanced understanding may be achieved, adding to the evidence base that commissioners use to make more informed decisions. This thesis, by evaluating

the impact of the power of football through undertaking a realist evaluation of the FoL's ETH programme, has sought to go some way to achieving a more robust understanding and evidence base for the potential power of sport. Whilst the empirical data used for the thesis is localised data from Sunderland, applying substantive theories the findings of this thesis provide a platform for testing at a national level and across other localities.

Programme Theories

Key to realist evaluations are PTs. Whilst PTs are not exclusive to realist evaluations, *realist* PTs explain how and why a programme works (or not), uncovering the mechanisms 'firing' within a programme (Pawson, 2006). The key components of realist PTs are: context- the conditions or backdrop that a programme operates in (Jagosh et al., 2015; Pawson, 2013), mechanism- the participant response to resources provided by a programme (Dalkin, Greenhalgh, Jones, Cunningham, & Lhussier, 2015) and outcome- the subsequent changes in short-term and long-term behaviour (Chen, Henry, & Ko, 2014). These components do not operate in isolation from each other. Rather, it is the relationship between a context and a mechanism that leads to an outcome (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Each of these components will now be described in detail.

Contexts

Contexts are the conditions or the backdrop that a programme operates in (De Weger et al., 2020; Jagosh et al., 2015; Pawson, 2013). This includes the conditions created because of the programme itself. Within realist evaluation, context has traditionally been defined as "the prior set of social rules, norms, values and interrelationships...which sets limits on the efficacy of program [sic] mechanisms" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 70). Even within realist evaluation, there are a number of

ways in which context has been categorised and understood (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021) with several of these categorisations discussed in the following paragraph. Despite this and the centrality of context within realist evaluation, a large proportion of realist research papers fail to define context; for instance, only 45% of the papers sampled by Greenhalgh and Manzano (2021) did so. Furthermore, Sheaff et al. (2021) have argued that many papers that do acknowledge context simply treat context as a “dumping ground” (p. 185) for everything which does not fit in as a mechanism or an outcome. Given the relationship between context and mechanisms, it is important that a deep understanding of the context that a programme is operating in is achieved. Indeed, an understanding of context should not be limited to tangible surroundings, but also as a system of interactions within the environment that a programme is operating in by the stakeholders of the programme (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). Unlike positivist approaches which view context as an annoyance to be overcome or minimised, the realist approach embraces ever-changing contexts (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021).

Pawson’s comment that context can mean “absolutely bloody everything [sic]” (cited in Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021, p. 592) demonstrates the wide-ranging scope and dynamic nature of context. To assist with this broad understanding of context, some categorisation is useful. Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) suggested four dimensions of context: political, social, organisational, and individual. Contexts have also been categorised as: “material, psychological, organisational, economic, technical, cultural” (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021, p. 9). In addition, it has been argued that contexts are multi-layered at a micro, meso, and macro level, interacting with each other and enabling or constraining an intervention (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Pawson, 2016). Pawson (2013) classifies contexts (which he refers to as the four I’s’) as: Individuals,

Interpersonal relationships, Institutional settings, and Infrastructure which includes cultural, economic, and social aspects. These contextual layers are intertwined with each other (Pawson, 2013). Whilst there may be a number of relevant contexts to a programme intervention, there is usually one particular context, typically at a more micro level, that an intervention depends on (Pawson, 2016). It is therefore important for the realist evaluator to understand how the different levels of context interact with each other, rather than merely describe each layer (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). It is also important to realise that contexts can change over time; indeed, an outcome of a programme can become a new context for the continuation of a programme/intervention, referred to as ‘ripple-effect’ (Jagosh et al., 2015). For a realist evaluation to be able to identify and categorise different contexts, it is vital that the researchers have a good understanding of the different categories of context and how they manifest themselves within the specific programme. For clarity and focus, the ‘four I’s’ provided by Pawson (2013) were used as a starting point for better understanding context for this research. Thus, a more detailed explanation of Pawson’s categorisation of contextual layers is provided below.

The individual layer of context is defined as “the characteristics and capacities of the various stakeholders in the programme” (Pawson, 2013, p. 37). Whilst this layer claims to focus on the individual, it does have the tendency to categorise individuals into different groups leading to the danger of generalisation. Thus, realist evaluators need to get the balance right between over generalisation and trying to be too specific for each individual. A well-designed programme should have a clearly defined target population, which can then assist in identifying the key individual contexts for the target population. For example, the ETH programme is aimed at individuals over the age of 55. These individuals may be more prone to feeling lonely because of

retirement, bereavement, digital poverty, and reduced mobility (Hawton et al., 2011; Hwang et al., 2019).

Interpersonal relations focus on the stakeholder relationships to the programme (Pawson, 2013). The way in which different stakeholders respond to the programme can differ (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007). For example, the context of a long-term partnership between two organisations co-delivering a programme will be different to a programme whereby the two organisations are working together for the first time. Moreover, the status of the relationship will affect the context: a funder-deliverer relationship is a different context to a joint delivery model. In addition, participants of a programme will have their own opinions and perspectives on the stakeholders involved. As a result of changes of funding and funders, the ETH has operated within different contexts over time.

Pawson (2013) provides three aspects to institutional settings regarding a programme—rules, norms, and customs. Here the shift from micro to meso level context takes place. Within a local community there will be established (but usually unwritten) rules, norms, and customs. Within Sunderland, for example, an unwritten rule would be not to wear a Newcastle United football shirt as there is a long history of rivalry between the two football clubs. Moreover, given the significance of SAFC in Sunderland, the history attached to football in the city, members of the Sunderland community expect the football club to provide support to the community (whether that be through the club itself or through the FoL). This institutional context could then lead to Newcastle United fans not engaging with the FoL programmes due to either not wanting to be associated with Sunderland, or not feeling as if they would be welcomed if their identity as a Newcastle United fan was revealed.

The final aspect of Pawson's contextual layers is infrastructure, which refers to "the wider social, economic and cultural settings of the programme" (Pawson, 2013, p. 37). This can include both meso and macro level aspects. It is here that it can be seen how macro, national context and policy can have an impact on local social, economic, and cultural settings of a programme. For example, when the United Kingdom goes into a national recession, this is a national context, but it also affects the local context of Sunderland, perhaps in higher unemployment and a reduction in the local council budget for support programmes. Thus, it can be seen here how a macro context can affect local provision of support programmes. Regarding this research project, the FoL received government funding to help try to tackle loneliness through the ETH during the COVID-19 lockdowns. However, given that Sunderland is the 23rd most income-deprived local authority in England (Office for National Statistics, 2021), and two out of five individuals experience digital exclusion in the North East (Office for National Statistics, 2019; Roscoe & Johns, 2021), it was important that the FoL used the money to best suit the local social, economic and cultural settings of the community of Sunderland. For instance, FoL staff would provide technological support and guidance to participants where permitted, and also provide tablets and laptops to those who needed them.

To conclude this section on contexts and as the section on mechanisms begins, it is important to highlight that from a realist PT point of view, a context is only a context if it leads to a mechanism being activated (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Pawson, 2016). Indeed, mechanisms will only occur if certain contextual circumstances are present (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Therefore, whilst for the purpose of this chapter, contexts and mechanisms are split up, it is important to reiterate mechanism are very much dependent on the contexts in play.

Mechanisms

Mechanisms are context sensitive and therefore have the potential to produce different outcomes in different contexts (Wong, Greenhalgh, Westhorp, Buckingham, & Pawson, 2013). Mechanisms are perhaps the most misunderstood area of realist evaluation (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010; Westhorp, 2018; Willis et al., 2016). Mechanisms are however central to understanding realist evaluations and help to better explain what happens in the ‘black box’ of a programme (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010). Mechanisms play such a pivotal role in a realist evaluation as they help to capture the complex social order that is taking place within/as part of an intervention (M. Williams, 2018). Westhorp (2018) encourages a deeper understanding of mechanisms than the basic description of different mechanisms firing in different contexts, arguing that in order to achieve “true realist explanation, it is necessary to explain ‘why’” (p. 1). Jagosh et al. (2015, p. 3) define a mechanism as: “the intended or unintended resources created by an intervention and the response to those resources (cognitive, emotional, motivational etc) by participants”. Astbury and Leeuw (2010, p. 368) highlight that “mechanisms are usually hidden... sensitive to variations in context... [and] generate outcomes”. Building on the work of Pawson and Tilley (1997), Dalkin et al. (2015), emphasise that mechanisms are made up of two separate but interlinked entities which when combined make up a mechanism- resources and reasoning. Mechanisms are hidden, made up of a tangible resource and then a reasoning which is unobservable but can be inferred (Dalkin et al., 2015; Westhorp, 2018; Wong et al., 2013).

A resource can be described as “the component introduced in a context” (Dalkin et al., 2015, p. 4). Resources are not to be confused with the intervention itself. Rather, resources are what the intervention offers. Realists acknowledge that programmes and

associated resources are not found in a social vacuum, and therefore the reasoning to a particular resource is dependent on the context in which it occurs in. Reasoning is understood as how an individual or group of individuals respond to a resource (Dalkin et al., 2015). This then leads to a resulting outcome. Building on Pawson and Tilley's (1997) on/off metaphorical explanation of mechanisms 'firing', Dalkin et al. (2015) offer the metaphor of a dimmer switch allowing for "continuums of activation" (p. 5). M. Williams (2018) suggests thinking of mechanisms both ontologically and epistemologically. On an ontological level, mechanisms are the actual existing mechanisms of nature (such as society); and on an epistemological level, mechanisms are explanations to account for outcomes that we observe. It is the aim of the realist researcher to match both approaches as closely as possible, whilst acknowledging that the epistemological understanding is made up on what we know, or think we know, and thus fallible. Williams summarises this by stating: "our mechanisms are models or approximations of 'real' mechanisms" (M. Williams, 2018, p. 38).

Unlike, resources and the outcome, mechanisms are not observable. This is because mechanisms operate at different levels of reality compared to outcomes (Westhorp, 2018). However, mechanisms can be inferred from observable data (Wong et al., 2013). This is where returning to the iceberg metaphor previously mentioned is helpful; to attempt to understand and identify the actual and real level of reality, it is simply not possible to do so by solely referring to the empirical. Realist researchers need to deploy methods that go some way to seeing through the murky ocean and gaining some understanding of what is going on with the iceberg below sea level. Whilst disaggregated, both the resource and the reasoning are essential for a mechanism to fire in a particular context (Dalkin et al., 2015). In other words, a

resource is required for a response which produces a mechanism within a particular context.

In addition to being hidden, mechanisms are sensitive to the context that they operate in, and this has an impact on what outcomes may be generated. Pawson and Tilley (1997) provide an example regarding gunpowder to help explain the link between context, mechanism, and outcome. Gunpowder has the potential to combust (outcome A), but only if a spark (resource) is deployed in a dry environment (context A). If the environment was damp and wet (context B), then the gunpowder would not combust (outcome B). Some mechanisms can fire instantaneously in a given context, however, it may also take years or generations for a mechanism to operate (Westhorp, 2018). This is certainly a challenge for a realist researcher evaluating a programme. For example, a yearlong intervention, may not produce the desired outcome until well after the evaluation has been completed. It is important that researchers, funders, and other stakeholders involved in the evaluation process are aware of this and respond accordingly (Pawson, 2013). Moreover, the outcome of a programme can then become the context for the programme moving forward, leading to a ripple-effect (Jagosh et al., 2015). In summary, mechanisms are hidden, context sensitive, and generate outcomes.

Outcomes

Given that outcomes are often observable, it could be argued that they are the easiest to understand (Dalkin et al., 2015). On another level, one may argue that given the focus realist evaluation places on answering the how and the why, then outcomes are the least important aspect of a programme when conducting a realist evaluation. This viewpoint can be dangerous and should be readjusted to recognise that the premise of realist evaluation is that observing solely the outcomes is not sufficient (Linsley,

Howard, & Owen, 2015). Outcomes are distinct from outputs. Outputs summarise direct and immediate result of inputs and activities and are more easily quantifiable, whereas outcomes describe the subsequent changes in short-term and long-term behaviour (S. Chen, Henry, & Ko, 2014). It is imperative for researchers to be able to define and distinguish outcomes from the other elements of realist PTs. Outcomes can be intended or unintended, short term or long term, positive or negative. It is also important for realist evaluators to have a sense of the deadweight effect- of whether the outcomes would have come about regardless of whether the programme was in operation. Moreover, outcomes can have a ripple effect in influencing future contexts (Jagosh et al., 2015). For example, an outcome of a particular PT, may become the context of another PT. For example, an outcome of improved confidence may then lead to the context of improved confidence as part of a PT that seeks to encourage participants to share some of the challenges that they are facing. Without the outcome of improved confidence from the first PT, the context (of having sufficient confidence levels) required to achieve the intended outcome of the second PT would not be in place.

Realist Programme Theory heuristics

Several heuristics have been used to outline realist PTs. The most established heuristic is the Context-Mechanism-Outcome configuration (CMO), first outlined by Pawson and Tilley (1997). The CMO heuristic continues to be used in many realist informed studies (examples include- Holmén, Adawi, & Holmberg, 2021; Marja, Wink, Koelen, & Wagemakers, 2023; Tennant et al., 2020). However, Connelly (2001) suggested that the CMO heuristic required expansion and elaboration for it to effectively deal with the complexities it seeks to illuminate on. Moreover, Pawson (2013) himself has argued that programmes do not come packaged in existing context, mechanisms, and

outcomes. Whilst it took a while from Connelly's initial call for expansion and elaboration to take place, there is now a collection of iterations and modifications to Pawson and Tilley's initial CMO heuristic (De Weger et al., 2020). For example the Intervention-Context-Actor-Mechanism-Outcome configuration (ICAMO) proposed by Mukumbang, Marchal, Van Belle, and van Wyk (2018), whilst Willis et al. (2016) utilise a 'intervention-context-mechanism-outcome configuration' (ICMO). Moreover, De Weger et al. (2020) use a 'strategy-context-mechanism-outcome' (SCMO) configuration. Jagosh et al. (2015) combined Pawson and Tilley's CMO configuration with the 'ripple effect', whereby a better understanding of the stages of change due to an intervention can be developed. The ripple effect outlines how the outcomes of one PT can inform or transform the context for PTs, focusing on the longer term and ontologically deeper effects of an intervention (Jagosh et al., 2015). Dalkin et al. (2015) building on the work of Pawson and Tilley, develop the CMO configuration by explicating disaggregating mechanisms into resources and reasoning, proposing a revised formula of:

$$M(\text{Resources}) + C \rightarrow M(\text{Reasoning}) = O$$

Dalkin et al. Dalkin et al. (2015, p. 4) also provide a visual representation of this (see Figure 6-Disaggregation of a mechanism (Dalkin et al., 2015, p. 4)). Bailey and Harris (2021) applied this approach to realist PTs. In an effort to make the heuristic more accessible for non-academics and non-realists they presented the configuration as follows:

$$\text{Context} + \text{Mechanism (Resource)} + \text{Mechanism (Reasoning)} = \text{Outcome (CMMO)}.$$

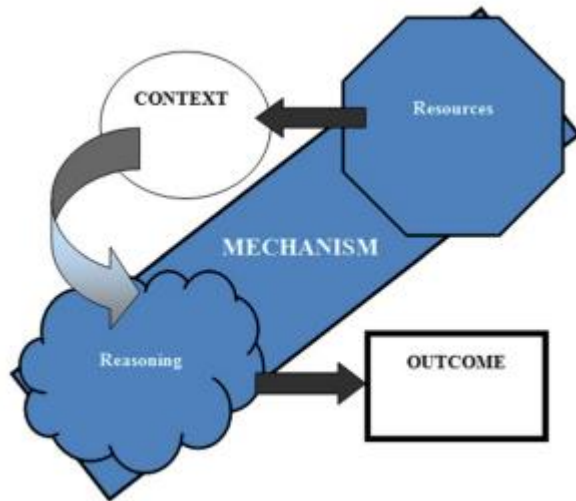


Figure 6-Disaggregation of a mechanism (Dalkin et al., 2015, p. 4)

Choosing the right configuration is important since it will influence how realist PTs are expressed, and how data is collected, analysed, and used to refine PTs (De Weger et al., 2020). Wong (2022) has argued that it does not matter which configuration is used, rather (and most importantly) whether clarity is achieved through the use of the chosen configuration. De Weger et al. (2020) have recommended that realist evaluators should be transparent about the choice of configuration used. The configuration put forward by Dalkin et al. (2015) implicitly underpins the PTs of this thesis. This is for several reasons: 1) the natural linkage from Pawson and Tilley's (1997) seminal CMO work; 2) previous use of this heuristic (Bailey & Harris, 2021); 3) this approach has been used previously in research related to CSfD (Bailey & Harris, 2021; Oatley & Harris, 2021; Redgate et al., 2020; L. Ryan et al., 2023). This does not mean that all other contributions and developments to Pawson and Tilley's CMO configuration were ignored. Rather, there was much to be taken by the different configurations outlined above, and indeed each configuration acted as a helpful guide whilst developing the PTs, even if the configuration in structuring and presenting the

PTs was different. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the original Pawson and Tilley (1997) CMO configuration was designed to be a guide. It is important that researchers do not lose sight of the interconnectedness between the context, mechanisms, and outcomes through the disaggregation that all the above configurations lead to in varying degrees (Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012). Thus, researchers should use their initiative, experience, and knowledge of the programme to know how best to present the PTs.

Strengths and limitations of realist evaluation

Like any research approach there are several strengths and limitations to using the realist evaluation approach. Throughout the research project it was important to be aware of these. Naturally the strengths helped justify the approach taken, whilst identifying the limitations meant that these could be mitigated and acknowledged through the project. In their recent commentary of realist evaluation within sport research, Haudenhuyse and Debognies (2022) identify three main problems with realist evaluation. Firstly, Haudenhuyse and Debognies (2022, p. 370) argued that realists have a “pragmatic preoccupation in finding ‘what works [sic]’”, rooted in positivism. As K. Harris and Henderson (2023) have highlighted, answering the question ‘what works?’ does not require a realist approach. Contrary to the assertion made by Haudenhuyse and Debognies, one of the strengths of realist evaluation for evaluating the impact of sport is that it builds on the question of ‘what’ and helps to explain the questions of ‘for whom and why’. Understanding this causation through mechanisms is a central component of realist evaluation (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010) and has been one of the justifications for applying realist principles to evaluation within sport (Coalter, 2007; L. Ryan et al., 2023).

Secondly, Haudenhuyse and Debognies (2022) argue that realist evaluations are overly technocratic and disempowering, limiting the opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the evaluation. It needs to be acknowledged that realist evaluation often comes with unfamiliar jargon to programme stakeholders (Bailey & Harris, 2021; K. Harris, 2018, 2020b). However, this can and should be mitigated by using language familiar with those outside of academia (Bailey, 2023). For example, reasoning can be translated to response/change. In terms of disempowering stakeholders, this can and has been addressed by the participatory and collaborative approaches towards evaluation used by realist evaluators. For example participatory approaches of photovoice (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020; Polzella, Kleve, Black, Palermo, & McCartan, 2022) and diaries (Lefroy et al., 2017; Rees et al., 2022; Wilkinson et al., 2021) have been used in realist inquiries. Moreover, there is no reason why collaboration cannot take place when conducting a realist evaluation. Indeed, this research project is testament to how realist evaluation can be used as part of a partnership between a university and charitable organisation. Thus, rather than subjugating and disempowering stakeholders, realist evaluation is compatible with participatory and collaborative approaches, and are encouraged (K. Harris, 2020b; Jagosh et al., 2012).

The final main argument made by Haudenhuyse and Debognies (2022, p. 370) is the “(blind) belief” towards accepting realist evaluation. Contrary to this claim, those undertaking realist evaluations are encouraged to do so in a critical way (K. Harris & Henderson, 2023). Realist evaluation is method neutral and allows a range of mixed methods as part of realist inquiry (S. Chen & Henry, 2016). It is down to the researcher to decide which methods are suitable for the line of realist inquiry in uncovering the contexts, generative mechanisms, and outcomes of a programme. Moreover, there are

examples of evaluators embedding realist approaches alongside other evaluation approaches. For example, combining the realist approach with: economic evaluation (Brown et al 2020), and Q methodology (K. Harris, Henderson, & Wink, 2019).

Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the key philosophical paradigms used in the social sciences, identifying realism as the paradigmatic foundation for this thesis. From realism, realist evaluation has emerged as a novel approach to evaluation and offers potential to develop a stronger evidence base for CSfD. Realist evaluation is method neutral and through PTs seeks to understand how, why, in what context and for whom a programme works. The CMMO configuration, developed from Pawson and Tilley (1997) shall be used to assist in developing the PTs for this thesis. The next chapter outlines how realist evaluation was used for evaluating the FoL's ETH programme.

Chapter 6- Evaluation design

Introduction to chapter

This chapter outlines how the realist evaluation of the ETH was designed and carried out. Building on approaches outlined by Manzano (2016), Mukumbang, Van Belle, Marchal, and Van Wyk (2016) and Gilmore et al. (2019), a realist evaluation was conducted with three stages: 1) theory gleaning, 2) theory testing, and 3) theory refining. Whilst these are initially presented as three discrete stages, as will become clear in the reporting of the methods used, in practice there was overlap (Francis-Auton et al., 2022; Wong, 2015). A retroductive approach was taken across all three phases of the research. For retroduction to occur it was important to have multiple data sources (The RAMESES II Project, 2017) which included delivery staff members and participants of the ETH.

Stage 1- Theory gleaning

The initial stage of a realist evaluation is to develop IPTs (Jonsson, Carson, Goicolea, & Hurtig, 2022; Mukumbang, Marchal, Sara Van, & Brian van, 2018; L. P. Spencer et al., 2022; Westhorp, 2014; Wong et al., 2016). By creating IPTs, ideas, expectations, and assumptions that underlie the workings of the ETH were developed (Jonsson, Carson, et al., 2022). The aim of establishing IPTs was to describe how and why the ETH may work and for whom (Jonsson, Gotfredsen, & Goicolea, 2022; Mukumbang, Marchal, Sara Van, et al., 2018). In order to develop a realist IPT, it is imperative that the IPT addresses context, mechanism, and outcome (Wong et al., 2016).

Shearn, Allmark, Piercy, and Hirst (2017) have identified four strategies which can be used individually or in combination to develop IPTs. Firstly, using MRTs which are

used to inform the current or comparable programmes. Secondly, using MRTs which are purposively selected by the evaluator, but have not been referenced in the programme literature. Thirdly, extracting theories from interventions on similar topics which have been reported in existing literature. And fourthly, extracting theories from stakeholders via interviews, documentation of programme, and from the evaluator who is embedded in the programme. Shearn et al. (2017) highlight that being dependent exclusively on data drawn from literature or stakeholders can lead to problems. Indeed, Pawson (2013) noted the importance of multiple ‘gathering points’ when developing IPTs.

IPTs can be developed using data gathered through methods including observations, interviews, and document and literature reviews (Downey, Brown, Jayne, & Randell, 2022; Mukumbang, Marchal, Van Belle, & van Wyk, 2019; Wong et al., 2016). These methods during the IPT development stage help to provide inspiration for how a programme, such as the ETH, may work (Pawson, 1996). Moreover, these methods have been identified as methods which enable the development of realist IPTs. That is, IPTs that are seeking to uncover the causal process through identifying contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes (Wong et al., 2016). The IPTs for the ETH programme were developed from: observations of the ETH, interviews with delivery staff, a World Café with participants, along with documentary analysis of the ETH and reviewing existing literature. One of the challenges faced when developing the IPTs was the identification of and the overabundance of possible theories. Pawson (2013) has proposed four strategies for the evaluator to deploy to exit this ‘swamp’. Of help for the development of IPTs for the ETH was the strategy of engaging in a continuous processes of hypothesis selection and hypothesis shredding (Pawson, 2013). This led to 18 IPTs initially being developed. Based on duplication and relevancy to the

research question, the original 18 were shredded to 9 IPTs for theory testing. This process of selection and shredding when developing the IPTs was aided by abductive reasoning (Francis-Auton et al., 2022; Jagosh, 2020b; Jagosh et al., 2014; Jonsson, Carson, et al., 2022; Tyler et al., 2019). The 9 IPTs helped guide the testing stage of the evaluation (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010; Downey et al., 2022; Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Gilmore et al., 2019; Mukumbang, Marchal, Sara Van, et al., 2018; L. P. Spencer et al., 2022).

Stage 2- Theory testing

After the IPTs were established, the next stage was to plan how these IPTs would be tested. The aim of this testing stage is to confirm, refute and revise the IPTs (Jagosh et al., 2014; Jonsson, Gotfredsen, et al., 2022), and in the process make the IPTs more realist in nature (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Wong et al., 2016). During this stage, the data gathered was used iteratively in order to test and further develop the IPTs (Wong et al., 2016). This stage of theory testing included “to-ing and fro-ing between abstract theories and data, retroductively, in order to enable the development of best-fit explanatory programme theories” (Dalkin et al., 2019, p. 769).

The choice of methods for testing IPTs should be theory-driven and purposely selected as the most appropriate tools to test the IPTs (Manzano, 2016). Realists recognise that different data sources can provide useful insights into the IPTs under consideration (Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012). IPTs should be tested using both substantive theory and empirical data (Dalkin et al., 2019). Qualitative data is useful for understanding mechanisms, whilst quantitative data can be better placed to help to chart outcomes (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Whilst primary data collection during this

stage was qualitative in nature, secondary data from national data outlining the impact of the ETH (Sport Industry Research Centre, 2022) provided some quantitative data. The national data provided insight into ETHs from a national level, as well as local insights from the FoL's ETH programme.

The methods used to test the IPTs were interviews with participants of the ETH (n= 12) and further literature synthesis, including using data provided by the EFL Trust regarding the ETH (Sport Industry Research Centre, 2022). In addition to these traditional methods, realist researchers have been encouraged to using more novel methods when conducting evaluations (Renmans & Castellano Pleguezuelo, 2023). Following on from the novel approach of the World Café in the theory gleaning stage, during the testing stage photovoice methodology was used. Whilst photovoice has already been used within realist inquiry, there are limited examples of studies within the literature (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020; Polzella et al., 2022). Furthermore, informal observations through being embedded in the ETH and conversations with participants continued to take place.

Stage 3- Theory refining

The final stage of theory refining took place after the IPTs were tested and further developed (Mukumbang, Marchal, Sara Van, et al., 2018; Nurjono et al., 2018; Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Wong et al., 2016). The aim of this stage is to refine the tested IPTs (Cooper et al., 2021). The deployment of methods used to refine the PTs at this stage are typically more theory-driven, focused, and granular, compared to the theory gleaning and theory testing stages (Wong et al., 2016). For this stage of the realist evaluation, theory consolidation interviews with delivery staff (n= 13), and a focus

group with ETH participants took place. Whilst the theory refining stage marks the end of a realist evaluation, the refined PT are always partial and imperfect (Pawson, 2013).

Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the Northumbria University Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee (reference number: 23816). Initial ethical approval was provided on 15/03/2021 with subsequent amendments approved during the research (10/12/2021 and 11/01/2023). All individuals who partook in interviews, World Café, photovoice, and focus groups were provided with a participant information briefing sheet specific to the method being used (Appendix 1- Example participant information briefing sheet (photovoice)) and were required to sign an informed consent form (Appendix 2- Example informed consent form (World Café)). For the observations during Stage 1, participants were made aware at the start of each session that observations were being made by the researcher.

A multi-method evaluation

As well as being method neutral, it is recommended that realist evaluations include different data sources and methods as part of an evaluation (Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012; Renmans & Castellano Pleguezuelo, 2023). Indeed, in their review of methods used for realist evaluations Renmans and Castellano Pleguezuelo (2023) identified 65% of studies combined different methods. “Methods are the techniques used to conduct the collection and analysis of data” (Salmons, 2021, p. 42). Methods used to collect data for the evaluation of the ETH included: observations, World Café,

documentary analysis and existing literature, national data, realist interviews, photovoice, and focus group. Table 2 outlines the primary data collection methods used. As the research progressed through each stage, specific data sources and methods were adapted to test, refine and/or refute the PTs. Each of these methods used is discussed below, providing justification for the use of method, along with how each method was used for this study.

Table 2- Primary data collection framework

Stage	Method	Participant type(s)	n=
Stage 1- Theory gleaning	Observations	N/A	12
	World Café	ETH participants	25
	Interviews	ETH delivery staff	4
Stage 2- Theory testing	Interviews	ETH participants	12
	Photovoice	ETH participants	7
Stage 3- Theory refining	Interviews	ETH delivery staff	5
		FoL delivery staff	8
	Focus group	ETH participants	1

Observations

Unstructured observations (n= 12) of the ETH took place during March and April 2021. Observations provided the opportunity to better understand how the ETH operates and to start to test possible theories elicited from the literature (Cooper et al., 2021). As Bryman (2016) has noted, unstructured observation is more appropriate during the initial stages of research. This is due to the researcher not knowing what

variables and categories to develop which are required for structured observations. Researchers approach unstructured observations with some general ideas of what might be useful to observe, but not of what will be specifically observed. In this evaluation, general ideas had been elicited from the literature. Unstructured observations allow for emphasis to be placed the importance of context (McKechnie, 2008). Thus, unstructured observation lent itself well to the theory gleaning stage of the realist evaluation. Indeed, at this stage of the research the emphasis was on accumulating knowledge and understanding about how the ETH programme operated (Mukumbang, Marchal, Sara Van, et al., 2018). Observations are a popular method for realist evaluations, with 55% of studies identified by Renmans and Castellano Pleguezuelo (2023) using the method. Moreover, unstructured observations have been used as part of realist informed studies (Mbokota, Myres, & Stout-Rostron, 2022; G. Ryan & Sfar-Gandoura, 2018). There were several considerations to make when conducting the observations including the role of the researcher and field notes (Mulhall, 2003) which will now be discussed.

The role of the researcher within a set of observations is important because the way the researcher interacts (or not) with participants can have significant implications for the data that is collected (M. Smith, 2010). Mulhall (2003) directs researchers considering their role as observers to the typology of research roles provided by Gold (1958)- the ‘complete observer’, the ‘complete participant’, and the ‘participant as observer’. For the observations, the role of the observer developed from initially a ‘complete observer’ to ‘participant as observer’. This was because of the expectations and encouragements of the participants for the researcher to join in with them (particularly with the seated chair exercises). This helped to develop bonds with the participants, contributing to participants being more willing to open up later in the

evaluation process. As the ‘participant as observer’ role was developed and interaction with participants increased, the observations become more elicited. Unlike extant observations, elicited observations allowed for the opportunity to ask questions, follow up and probe (Salmons, 2021).

It was important that the technique used to record data helped to ensure the reporting of accurate descriptions (Smith, 2010). It is then the job of the realist evaluator to move from the observable descriptions to the domain of the real to provide causal insight (Handley, Bunn, Lynch, & Goodman, 2020). The observations carried out were used to guide interview schedules during Stage 1 to help move further towards the level of the real. Given that the observations were unstructured, there was no observation schedule to use when observing the sessions. Rather, observations of the interactions between staff and participants, along with throwaway comments were observed and noted down (Downey et al., 2022). Moreover, what the researcher considers as important and interesting to write will be affected by the researcher’s professional and personal views (Mulhall, 2003). This led to the abductive notion of hunches and ideas developing from examining the evidence available at this time (Jagosh et al., 2014). During the early observations when the role of a ‘complete observer’ was undertaken, notes were made as and when something noteworthy happened that may warrant further consideration or investigation. As the observations progressed and the researcher became more of an ‘observer as participant’ it was more difficult to make notes immediately, therefore notes were consolidated after the session. Following each session observed, the handwritten notes were consolidated and typed up onto the password protected university system (see Appendix 3- Example observation field notes). The original handwritten notes were stored securely and destroyed when no longer needed. The field note data was analysed through NVivo software, providing

an audited account of how the field notes have developed from personal accounts for the researcher, into data which can be understood and interpreted by others (Mulhall, 2003). This analysis was ongoing, following a pattern of: data collection, analysis, more focused data collection (J. P. Spradley, 1980).

World Café

A World Café took place in November 2021 with (n= 25) ETH programme participants. The World Café method is a flexible format for hosting large group dialogue (The World Café Community Foundation, n.d.) and helped to glean initial insight into the experiences of programme participants when developing the IPTs. One of the unique strengths of the World Café method is the ability to scale up and cross pollinate ideas and knowledge between smaller groups (Löhr, Weinhardt, & Sieber, 2020). This enabled participants of the ETH programme to be able to share their collective knowledge, experiences, and impact of the ETH. Another advantage that stems from this is that the World Café approach is able to capture a much larger sample whilst reducing the resources and timescales that would be required if using focus groups (Löhr et al., 2020; Ritch & Brennan, 2010). This is achieved through enabling small groups to engage in evolving rounds of dialogues, whilst also remaining part of a single large, connected conversation (Löhr et al., 2020). Whilst focus groups have been used as part of realist studies, the World Café is a novel approach for realist evaluations given that no realist studies were found within the literature which used the method. Thus, the World Café was both a novel and pragmatic method choice during the theory gleaning stage.

The World Café method works on the premise that the best ideas and solutions emerge from more informal settings (Sheridan, Adams-Eaton, Trimble, Renton, & Bertotti, 2010). The World Café approach is adaptable, and whilst J. Brown and Isaacs (2005)

provide idealistic examples and integrated principles (see Table 3) of how to develop the most effective World Cafés, in order for this World Café to be successful, it was important to be pragmatic in setting the parameters (Prewitt, 2011). For example, whilst Brown and Isaacs encourage a minimum of 90 minutes, to meet the needs of the participants, the World Café in this instance was 75 minutes. This was because of the time available to work with the participants. Given the limited time available, it was important that the right questions were asked, in ways which could be understood by the participants and elicit appropriate responses. Questions asked during the World Café were based on the early stages of developing the IPTs. Since a World Café typically has capacity for three to five questions to be explored (J. Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Weitzenegger, 2010) and given the broadness and number of potential IPTs at this stage (Pawson, 2006), it was not practical to ask specific questions for each IPT. Therefore, questions were designed to elucidate some of the general aspects of the ETH programme pre, during, and post the COVID-19 related lockdowns. The questions were designed to uncover how and why participants attended the online/in person sessions and their experiences of lockdown life and loneliness. The aim of these questions was to help identify possible contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes that may be in play for the ETH.

Table 3- Brown and Isaacs (2005) integrated principles of a World Café

Principle
Set the context
Create hospitable space
Explore the questions that matter
Encourage everyone's contribution
Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions
Harvest and share collective discoveries

The World Café took place in a classroom at the Beacon of Light (see Appendix 4-World Café plan), which at the time was used as the main meeting space for the ETH. This meant that the participants were familiar with the environment already (Fouché & Light, 2011). This familiarity also helped in managing any COVID-19 concerns which at the time of the café in November 2021 were still relatively high nationally (Institute For Government, 2021). However, the aim was to make the environment feel special and different for the World Café (J. Brown & Isaacs, 2005). Furthermore, it was important to create a safe space for participants to feel comfortable in sharing their thoughts and feelings openly (Wright-Bevans, Walker, & Vosper, 2020). Within the main room itself, music played as participants entered the room and refreshments were available for participants to help themselves to throughout the session. This helped create a friendly, comfortable, and positive atmosphere (Fouché & Light, 2011; Silva & Guenther, 2018). Around the room were various pieces of flipchart paper on the

wall, which participants could use to make notes and drawings as appropriate. Microenvironments of each table contained flipchart paper, flipchart pens, writing pens and sticky notes (see Appendix 5- World Café room layout). These resources helped individuals partake in the café in different ways depending on their preferences. Indeed, one of the World Café principles is to encourage everyone's contribution (J. Brown & Isaacs, 2005). Providing different opportunities for participants to contribute to the World Café enhanced the participatory nature of the World Café (Löhr et al., 2020; Yang, Labbé, Sakakibara, Vissers, & Bird, 2022) which helped enable individual and collective insights into how the ETH may work.

As a method, one of the strengths is that the World Café allows for 'cross-pollination' of ideas, through rotations, which bring different people together to discuss a topic during each round (Löhr et al., 2020). Iteratively moving people around during the World Café helped to increase the variability and discussions on certain perspectives. For this World Café, to help connect individuals and ideas iteratively, a multiple threads of inquiry pattern was used (J. Brown & Isaacs, 2005). This was where each table had a different question/theme to discuss, after which members of the table would disperse to different tables with different questions/themes. One table host would remain at the previous table to help transfer knowledge with the next set of individuals. At the next rotation, the first table host would move, with a new table host appointed. At the end of the World Café photographs were taken of all the group discussion and wall flip charts. Participants were also asked to complete a short questionnaire (see Appendix 6- World Café participant questionnaire) which enabled participants to share their involvement in the ETH, along with what enabled/prevented them from engaging with the ETH. The questionnaire also provided participants the opportunity to state whether they would be happy to take part in future interviews. The

data generated at the World Café assisted with identifying possible contexts that the ETH operates in, along with developing programme knowledge and assisting with identifying suitable substantive theories to help develop the IPTs.

Documentary analysis and existing literature

Documentary analysis relating to the ETH and existing academic literature were used to help develop IPTs. Documents related to the planning and delivery of the ETH outlined the aims, objectives, rationale, and programme architecture of the ETH. This helped to “identify the underlying assumptions regarding how the [ETH was] expected to work to achieve [the] intended outcomes” (Nurjono et al., 2018, p. 4). It was important that any implicit theories that were present in this documentation regarding how the ETH was expected to work were developed into realist IPTs. Moreover, a national evaluation of the ETHs in operation across England was commissioned by the EFL Trust to Sheffield Hallam University (Sport Industry Research Centre, 2022). This document provided some useful quantitative longitudinal data, however the evaluation and data suffered from the impacts of the COVID-19 related disruption during 2021 and 2022. Moreover, the evaluation was not focussed on the impact the ETH had on loneliness or social isolation, which was the focus of this realist evaluation.

IPTs were also developed based on existing academic literature. Within the academic literature, the aim was to review possible appropriate substantive theories which could be used to underpin the IPTs. Substantive theory is an established theory “within a particular discipline that describe[s] the process of reasoning or causation of actions” (Fick & Muhajarine, 2019, p. 553). Fick and Muhajarine (2019) highlight that it is difficult to develop IPTs using substantive theories initially. Thus, data from other methods used during the theory gleaning stage helped to provide direction and clues

to which substantive theories would increase the explanatory depth of the IPTs of the ETH (Gilmore et al., 2016). In other words, abductive reasoning based on data from different sources, along with hunches for best possible explanations helped to drive the searches to identify substantive theories which had potential to be incorporated into the realist PTs of the ETH (Jagosh et al., 2014). These substantive theories provided further depth to the IPTs to be tested in the evaluation. Furthermore, substantive theory was used during the theory testing stage, as more understanding was developed regarding the specifics of the PTs in operation at the ETH. Thus, literature was continually reviewed during the testing stage to better understand the IPT being tested, ready for refinement.

Realist interviews

Following the realist interview process outlined by Manzano (2016), realist interviews (n= 29) were conducted across all three stages of the realist evaluation. Purposive sampling was used to identify and invite participants based on what they may contribute to testing and refining the IPTs (Proctor, Leeder, & Mattick, 2020). Realist interviews were conducted with three groups of stakeholders- ETH participants, ETH delivery staff, and FoL delivery staff not involved in the ETH. At times the different stages of interview overlapped. For example, when interviewing members of staff involved with the ETH, the IPTs regarding impact on participants were being refined, whilst during the same interview the IPTs relating to staff impression management were being tested. The length of interviews ranged between 50-90 minutes. The audio of each interview was recorded using a recording device and transcribed verbatim, after which the transcript was shared with the interviewee to check for accuracy. The transcripts were uploaded to NVivo and coded to develop, test, and refine the PTs.

Pawson (1996) and Mukumbang et al. (2019) have suggested that traditional constructivist semi-structured interviews may not be the best way to test realist IPTs as they limit the scope to work in the domain of the real. Instead, they propose use of the realist interview, which creates “a situation in which the theoretical postulates/conceptual structures under investigation are open for inspection in a way that allows the respondent to make an informed and critical account of them” (Pawson, 1996, p. 313). Realist interviews have been referred to as “how and why conversations” K. Harris (2022). They provide the opportunity for joint sensemaking which takes the form of a teacher-learner cycle (Manzano, 2016; Pawson, 1996) whereby the IPT is implicitly taught in an accessible way (Bailey & Harris, 2021) to the interviewee, who then responds by teaching the interviewer about parts of the theory which were previously unknown to the researcher. As Manzano (2016, pp. 344-345) has noted:

Theories are placed before the interviewee for them to comment on with a view to providing refinement. The subject matter of the interview is the researcher’s theory and interviewees are there to confirm, falsify and, basically, refine the theory.

Thus, the roles of teacher and learner become interchangeable (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). To achieve this, realist interviews tend to be semi-structured which enables flexibility throughout the interview (Manzano, 2016; K. O’Rourke, Abdulghani, Yelland, Newton, & Shafiei, 2022). However, Mukumbang et al. (2019) have argued that realist interviewing within realist evaluation is underutilised, with greater focus placed on the semi-structure nature of the interviews, rather than the theory-driven and teacher-learner cycle aspects. Given that realist interviews are theory-driven, whereby the interviewer teaches the theory, there is a danger that interviewee will simply agree with what it presented by the interviewer (Mukumbang et al., 2019). This was mitigated by emphasising to interview participants that they were encouraged to

disagree with what was being said at any point. Using Manzano's language, three different types of realist interviews were conducted: theory gleaning, theory refinement and theory consolidation (Manzano, 2016). These different realist interview types and how they were used for realist evaluation will now be outlined.

Theory gleaning interviews

For Stage 1, theory gleaning interviews (Manzano, 2016) with FoL delivery staff (n= 4) were conducted in April 2021 using Microsoft Teams. These interviews were exploratory in nature, and more akin to constructivist semi-structured interviews, as opposed to the interviews during Stage 2 and Stage 3 which were more theory-driven (Manzano, 2016; Proctor et al., 2020). Manzano (2016) suggests that it is better to interview practitioners rather than service users of the programme at this stage. This is because practitioners typically have expertise and knowledge of how a programme is designed to work (Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012), and therefore are likely to be able to help the evaluator identify first order theories. Questions within theory gleaning interviews were exploratory with the aim of ascertaining how the ETH works for whom and in what circumstances (Manzano, 2016). These theory gleaning interviews helped to identify possible MRTs to help explain how the ETH may work during the initial theorising of programme theories.

Undertaking realist theory gleaning interviews which were semi-structured in nature allowed the interview schedule to be adapted in preparation for each interview and during each interview (Gomm, 2009). This was helpful because it meant that interview schedules (see Appendix 7- Example theory gleaning interview schedule) could be adapted for each member of delivery staff depending on their area of expertise and knowledge (Mukumbang, Marchal, Sara Van, et al., 2018; Nurjono et al., 2018; Proctor et al., 2020). Furthermore, this allowed for more focus to be placed on theories

which developed throughout these interviews. Each interview began with general questions about the interviewee's role and experience of the programme, followed by their views of how and why the programme worked (or not) (Seidman, 2012). Given that some observations had taken place before the interviews started, interview schedules were also based on initial observation data.

Theory refinement interviews

During the Stage 2, realist theory refinement interviews, as understood by Manzano (2016) were carried out with participants of the ETH programme (n= 12). Theory refinement interviews are a common way of testing IPTs (Dalkin et al., 2019; F. Davies, Wood, Bullock, Wallace, & Edwards, 2020; Jonsson, Gotfredsen, et al., 2022; Manzano, 2016; L. P. Spencer et al., 2022). For participants of the ETH programme, prior to the theory refinement interview, n= 7 participants took part in the photovoice method which is discussed in the next section. Theory refinement interviews, during the testing stage involved questions that were more specific to the IPTs developed in the theory gleaning stage. Assisted with greater knowledge of the programme and with the IPTs to hand, evaluators can ask participants specific, theory-driven questions, seeking for causal insight that may confirm or challenge the IPTs under investigation. Interview schedules were developed from the IPTs under investigation (Proctor et al., 2020; L. P. Spencer et al., 2022). Appendix 8- Example theory refinement interview schedule is an example of an interview schedule used. The interview schedules were designed around the interviewee's awareness, experiences, and reasoning of the programme under investigation (Dalkin et al., 2015; Francis-Auton et al., 2022; Manzano, 2016). As data collection progressed, the interviews become more focused in the nuance of the IPTs under investigation. As such the interview schedule was

under regular review and development based on the iterative data analysis of the interviews.

Theory consolidation interviews

As part of Stage 3, realist theory consolidation interviews (Manzano, 2016) took place with members of staff involved with the ETH programme (n= 5). During these interviews staff were presented with the tested PTs in the form of ‘if...then...because’ statements, and diagrams where diagrams had been developed for the PTs for comment (see Appendix 9- Example theory consolidation interview schedule). As per the teacher-learner cycle (Manzano, 2016; Pawson, 1996), staff members were first taught the tested PT, before having the opportunity to confirm or refute the PT. These interviews in conjunction with the participant focus group (see below) helped to refine and consolidate the final set of PTs. Furthermore, to refine the PTs focusing on impression management and identification leading to participation, (n= 8) interviews were completed with FoL delivery staff outside of ETH delivery, which has helped with the transferability of findings (see Appendix 10- Generic staff interview schedule).

Photovoice

To complement the realist interviews, some ETH participants (n= 7) took part in photovoice. Photovoice as a method allows individuals to identify, present and enhance their experiences through the use of photographs (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice, whilst not used widely as part of realist research, has been used by Mukumbang and van Wyk (2020) and Polzella et al. (2022). Moreover, photovoice has previously been used in research of tackling loneliness within football foundations (K. Harris, 2020a). Whilst specifics of how photovoice is completed vary from study to study, the basis of photovoice is the integration of photography, accompanied by

interviews or focus groups (Wagner, Ellingson, & Kunkel, 2016). Wang (1999) outlined procedures that the photovoice method involves (see Table 4), which have been applied by numerous photovoice studies (see for example, Exner-Cortens, Sitter, Van Bavel, & Wright, 2022; Graham, Scott, Tinc, & Hirabayashi, 2022; Roxas & Gabriel, 2022; E. L. Spradley, LeBlanc, Olson Beal, Burrow, & Cross, 2022) and were applied to this study’s application of the method.

Table 4- Wang’s (1999) photovoice procedures

Procedure
Select and recruit a target audience of policy makers or community leaders
Recruit a group of photovoice participants
Introduce the photovoice methodology to participants and facilitate a group discussion
Obtain informed consent
Pose an initial theme for taking pictures
Distribute cameras to participants and review how to use them
Provide time for participants to take pictures
Meet to discuss photographs
Plan with participants a format to share photographs and stories with policymakers or community leaders

Mukumbang and van Wyk (2020) highlight several reasons as to how photovoice can be used in realist inquiry. Firstly, they note that “the emancipatory potential of the

[p]hotovoice methodology aligns with that of critical realist epistemology as they privilege participants' (co-investigators') knowledge generation and learning to better understand" (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020, p. 1). Thus, photovoice was a means to engage with participants in a participatory way (Wang & Pies, 2004). Secondly, the photographs and the verbal interpretations of the images from participants can provide rich and deep understanding of the mechanisms at play in a participant's life. As a result of this, the photographs give researchers a different perspective of the reality being investigated, which can help provide a platform to move from the empirical to the real. This helps develop ontological depth within the stratified realities (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020). Within their study, photographs were used "to challenge, validate and/or enhance... initial programme theory" (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020, p. 5). Wagner et al. (2016) have argued that photovoice helps the researcher understand the social world through those experiencing it. Thus helping the researcher move towards the real domain of reality. Indeed, the method of photovoice can elicit different layers of meaning helping to provide insight into realist causation; emotions, memories, and ideas (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020). Further advantages of using photovoice for this research were that it a) allowed participants who may struggle to communicate verbally to take part in the research, and b) it allowed the researcher to perceive the world through the lens of the participants (Wang & Burris, 1997).

For this realist study, one of the main challenges with the photovoice method was incorporating the theory-driven approach. Photographs helped to involve the participants and provide an insight into participant experiences prior to the interviews. This is consistent with the participatory nature of photovoice as a method (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020). However, for this study it was a challenge to develop

theory-driven photo-triggers. Reasons for this include: the lack of examples and guidance of incorporating photovoice in realist study; the parameters of the photovoice for this study; and the stage at which the photograph period took place. Despite these challenges, the photovoice method had value in two main areas for this study. Firstly, the photographs helped to confirm/refute/identify meaningful contexts. The photographs provided an insight into the lives of participants during and outside of the ETH. Indeed, one of the main aims of using the photovoice method was to get a better insight into the lives of ETH participants. Secondly, the photographs provided a starting point for each realist interview. During the realist interviews, the photographs acted as a bridge between the researcher and the participant, which helped delve deeper into the domain of the real and test the CMMOs of the IPTs.

Wang (1999) suggests a sample of seven to ten participants is an ideal size in terms of practical ease and to help facilitate in-depth discussion. Given that at the time the number of regular ETH attendees was ($n=27$), this suggestion from Wang (1999) was feasible. All participants who attended the ETH on 16th March and 23rd March 2022 were provided with verbal information regarding the photovoice, through the form of speaking to the whole group in between activities and speaking to individuals on a one-one basis during the physical activities. This was referred to as a 'photo project'. Furthermore, one of the FoL members of staff shared a message on the ETH WhatsApp chat which ensured that ETH members who were not in attendance on the above dates, could register their interest if they wished to. During this recruitment stage it was made clear that to be involved in the photovoice, participants needed access to a camera phone, which the researcher could not provide, and have the ability to send WhatsApp messages to the researcher (to share the photos). It was stressed that there would be different opportunities in the future for those who did not fit these criteria. In total $n=$

7 participants partook in the photovoice. On 30th March 2022 a final briefing was provided to those who had signed up to take part. This briefing included the ‘photo triggers’ (see below) for the participants to take photographs of. The photo-triggers along with guidance and examples formed part of a A5 aid-memoire (see Appendix 11- Photovoice guidance sheet that participants were able to keep on their person during the period of taking photographs. This was also shared electronically so it could be accessed by participants when taking the photographs. The aid-memoire also included information on how to send the photographs and the photo-triggers that participants should focus on. The photo-triggers provided to participants were based on some of the IPTs which had been developed. It was not possible to test every IPT through the photovoice, therefore decisions were made as to which IPTs may be better suited to the photovoice. Table 5 below outlines the photo triggers used and which IPTs they related to.

Table 5- Photo triggers given to participants

IPT	Photo-triggers	Examples used
Role stability and preserving sense of identity	What causes you to feel lonely, and what do you do when you feel lonely.	Watch TV.
Simple and complex friendships	If you meet friends during the week, what do you do.	Go for a drink at a pub.
General continuity	Important aspects of your weekly routine.	Turning off laptop at the end of working week.

Identification	Items/places/symbols that you identify with.	University badge.
Uniting past, present and future	Impact of the Extra Time Hub programme.	Cooking new recipe learned at ETH.

Photovoice participants were provided with 14 days (30th March- 14th April 2022) to take their photographs and submit via a private individual chat with the researcher on WhatsApp. WhatsApp was deemed the best choice due to the security and practicality it offered. Given that there was an existing ETH WhatsApp group chat, the photovoice participants were already familiar with how to use WhatsApp, therefore limited technical training and guidance was required. Moreover, WhatsApp’s end-to-end encryption provided added security whereby only the sender and the recipient can access a sent message (WhatsApp, 2022). Finally, it was a simple process to transfer photos from WhatsApp onto the university network, and then delete from WhatsApp afterwards. The 14-day photography period was set for two main reasons. Firstly, it helped with the timely process of analysing the photographs ready for the subsequent interviews with participants. Secondly, to maintain a true reflection of participants experiences it was decided not to allow the photography period to take place during the Easter weekend, where participants may have followed different routines and generate experiences which would not be the norm for them, thus distorting the data. Based on the photo-triggers, participants submitted photographs, some with captions and notes to which specific trigger the photograph related to. These notes and captions were processed as part of the data and helped to contextualise the photographs.

To help focus the interviews, prior to each interview, the researcher identified a selection of possibly more relevant photographs from the full sample the participant

provided (see Appendix 12- Example of photovoice data (PP13)). The selected photographs were then used in conjunction with theory-driven questions to test the IPTs. During the interview, all the photographs that the participants had submitted were accessible, which reduced the possibility of the researcher adversely influencing the representation of the collection as a whole (Creighton et al., 2018). The interviews helped to elicit insight and meaning into the significance of the photographs, along with additional realist informed questions. For the photovoice method, typically the transcripts of the interview is the main source of data used, rather than the photographs themselves (Catalani & Minkler, 2010). Indeed, within published photovoice articles, written narratives are more visible than the participant-produced photographs (Han & Oliffe, 2016). Thus, in addition to the photographs, the audio of each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim, before being coded against the IPTs. It is important to highlight that the interviews themselves were realist interviews, supported by the data elicited from the photovoice.

As recommended by Wagner et al. (2016), when conducting photovoice, it was important to realise that the unexpected will occur, however this can be mitigated by shifting the focus and adapting to the situation. Wagner et al. (2016) provided three examples of adaptation and even one case where the photovoice was stopped due to a lack of useable data. For the realist evaluation of the ETH, due to the nature of the photographs received and the emphasis on realist inquiry, on reflection the photovoice realist interviews were akin to realist interviews with photographs to draw reference to. The researcher responded to the need for focusing on the theory-driven aspect of the interview when the photographs were not proving useful for theory testing.

Focus group

A focus group with ETH participants (n= 6) took place to contribute to the refining of the PTs during Stage 3. Simply put, a focus group is a form of interview but with several people (Bryman, 2016). However, focus groups are much more than simply group interviews. Indeed, the sum of parts is greater than the individual parts themselves. Focus groups are a suitable method for realist studies (Barbour, 2018), and add value to realist evaluations because they provide ‘group reasoning’ (Breen, 2006; Manzano, 2022; Ochieng, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). A realist focus group aims to develop a classroom-like environment, whereby the teacher-learner cycle of the individual realist interview is extended to a teacher-classroom cycle approach (Manzano, 2022). Like individual realist interviews, the researcher teaches the PTs to participants and the participants get the opportunity to teach the PT back to the evaluator. However, unlike individual interviews, the focus group allows for agreements, disputation, and disagreements between participants to develop, which helps to provide causal explanation (Manzano, 2022), particularly regarding the realist question ‘for whom?’.

Cyr (2016) outlines three guidelines to follow when planning to use the focus group method: a) clearly stating the main purpose, b) specify the unit of analysis used in the data collection process, and c) the need to prepare a focus group interview schedule. For this realist evaluation, the main purpose of the focus group was, through participant group reasoning, to assist with refining of the PTs which had been developed during the first two stages of the evaluation. To maintain the realist nature of the focus group, it was important for causality to be at the centre of discussions (Manzano, 2022). The focus group interview schedule was based on PTs that had

developed during the testing stage of the evaluation, with emphasis on confirming, refining, or refuting the casual pathways to outcomes of the PTs.

The focus group carried out with ETH participants took place within a naturally occurring setting- immediately after an ETH session at the BoL. Naturally occurring settings are considered as “places where people would gather whether or not a focus group was taking place” (Sally Brown, 2015, pp. 86-87). Sally Brown (2015) has argued that completing focus groups within naturally occurring settings help participants feel comfortable and secure, enabling complex data to emerge. As recommended by Manzano (2022) and McParland and Flowers (2012), a week in advance of the focus group, participants were provided with a print out (see Appendix 13- Focus group pre-reading) of the PTs which would be discussed during the focus group. This gave the participants the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the PTs which would be discussed at the focus group. Furthermore, there was space for participants to make notes prior and during the focus group. These sheets were collected at the end of the focus group; however, it transpired that due to a lack of handwritten notes made by the participants, these did not contribute any tangible data.

90 minutes was available to conduct the focus group, which was completed in 75 minutes on the day. In addition to room availability, a key concern was the length of time participant attention and comfort would last (McParland & Flowers, 2012), particularly given that they had just had their two hour ETH session. Participants were encouraged to bring their own lunch, and tea and coffee provision was provided in the room for participants to help themselves to. Each PT was presented in the form of accessible statements, in the format of: “when this happens... in this context... it leads to this feeling/change... which results in this outcome”. These statements were presented on flipchart paper and colour coded according to context, resource,

reasoning, and outcome, following the approach used by Sarah Brown (2019). These flipcharts were stuck to the wall around the room. During the discussions for each PT, notes were made on the flipcharts as deemed appropriate. The questions prepared in advance were asked to the participants. These questions helped to provide discussion between participants and revealed different experiences or reasoning between participants. Whilst participants were in dialogue with each other, notes were made on the flipchart paper. Moreover, follow up questions were asked to further develop causal understanding.

However, focus groups are not without challenges to overcome. For instance, organising a date, time, and location which enables an adequate number of participants to attend is important (McParland & Flowers, 2012). Indeed, having initially aimed for three focus groups, only one focus group took place. This was because fewer than hoped for ETH participants expressed an interest and agreed to take part. Another challenge was managing the interactions of the group to keep the focus group focussed on the PTs, without closing down conversations which may have led to casual insight. Having a prepared theory-driven interview schedule assisted with this. Finally, at times it was a challenge to transcribe all the conversations which at times were happening simultaneously as participants talked over each other. A consequence of this was that it may have led to a loss of helpful data (McParland & Flowers, 2012). This was mitigated by using the flipcharts during the focus group to note down significant comments made by participants. The audio of the focus group was transcribed verbatim and sent to participants for review.

Data analysis

The job of realist data analysis is to develop the IPTs in light of the testing and refinement data. This was an ongoing iterative process using retroductive (Gilmore et al., 2019) and abductive reasoning (Jagosh, 2020b). Abductive reasoning was used during the first stage of developing the IPTs, after which more retroductive reasoning was used during the testing and refining stages. Most of the data analysed was qualitative data in the form of interview and focus group transcripts. These transcripts were imported into NVivo and coded against the IPTs identified during the theory gleaning stage. NVivo has been identified as an appropriate piece of software to enable realist analysis (Dalkin, Forster, Hodgson, Lhussier, & Carr, 2021; Gilmore et al., 2019). NVivo was well suited to engaging with different data sources throughout the iterative data analysis process (Dalkin et al., 2021). Each IPT was allocated a node, with child nodes underneath for each part of the PT- context, mechanism resource, mechanism reasoning, and outcome. Moreover, memos were linked to the IPT node to keep an audit record of thinking and progress during testing and refining. Following guidance from Jagosh (2022) and Dalkin et al. (2021), the first stage of coding did not seek to code individual units of the PTs. Taking, context, mechanism resource, mechanism reasoning, and outcome separately to begin with may have led to disjointed themes. Therefore, initial coding was conducted on a IPT basis (Dalkin et al., 2021). After which, the codes to each IPT were then coded according to the CMMO configurations which had been developed/were developing. Each method of data collection was initially coded separately so a trail of where each piece of data used could be maintained. As data analysis took place, new contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes emerged for some PTs, which helped to develop the PTs further. Moreover, PTs were merged where similarities existed and where casual insight dictated.

Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the three stages of the realist evaluation of the ETH programme. Whilst the stages have been presented as discreet stages, the reality was that the stages overlapped. Multiple methods were used throughout the stages which have been outlined. Data analysis was completed on NVivo. The following chapters outline the findings of the realist evaluation. The next chapter details the IPTs which were selected for testing and refinement. The subsequent chapters outline the findings of the refined PTs. In the forthcoming chapters, delivery staff are referred to as DSx and programme participants are referred to as PPx.

Chapter 7- Developing initial programme theories

Introduction to chapter

A total of 18 IPTs for the ETH were developed. These IPTs were developed from data collected from the World Café, theory gleaning interviews, documentary analysis, and substantive theory. Given the lack of depth of the empirical primary data collected at this stage, the IPTs were heavily influenced by substantive theory. Many of these substantive theories are not mutually exclusive and it is good realist practice to consider a wide range of substantive theory (Dalkin et al., 2019; Fick & Muhajarine, 2019; Shearn et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2016). The social identity approach has been identified as an overarching dominant theory for the IPTs as a whole. Practically and pragmatically, it is not possible or appropriate to outline all 18 IPTs in the thesis. Rather, this chapter details the 9 IPTs (A-I) which emerged as the most relevant to the research question. Appendix 15- IPT development mapping outlines the process of ‘shredding’ (Pawson, 2013) and narrowing down from the 18 IPTs to the 9 IPTs which are discussed in this chapter. The chapters which follow this chapter outline how the IPTs were tested and refined. Before detailing the IPTs, this chapter first outlines the social identity approach as the overarching theoretical framework.

Social identity approach- an overarching theoretical framework

The overarching theory for the IPTs is the social identity approach. The social identity approach is made up of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorisation theory (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009). Unique to the FoL’s ETH compared to other loneliness programmes in the local area is the connection to SAFC. In light of this connection, the social identity theory helps explain how and why an individual may relate to and

have a sense of belonging towards programmes delivered by the FoL. Therefore, social identity theory holds potential in moving from the empirical level towards the real level in explaining how and why individuals hold a sense of belonging towards a group. The theory suggests that “the self is formed based on one’s association with particular groups” (Osborne & Coombs, 2013, p. 675). Social identity focuses on the permeability of group boundaries, and the stability and legitimacy of an ingroup’s provision in relation to other groups (Tajfel 1979, Haslam et al 2009). The theory provides a basis for how individuals perceive and interact within and across groups and communities. Proponents of social identity theory regard a group “as a collective of similar persons all of whom identify with each other, see themselves and each other in similar ways, and hold similar views, all in contrast to members of outgroups” (Stets & Burke, 2000, pp. 227-228). This differs from an identity theory perspective, whereby the group is seen as “a set of interrelated individuals, each of who performs unique but integrated activities, sees things from his or her own perspective, and negotiates the terms of interaction” (Stets & Burke, 2000, pp. 227-228). Simply put, social identity theory focuses on who one is, whereas identity theory focuses on what one does (Thoits & Virshup, 1997).

Social identity theory can be combined with self-categorisation theory to form the social identity approach (Haslam et al., 2009). Self-categorisation theory argues that people want to be seen in different ways depending on the group they are in at the time (Jetten et al., 2017). These fluid and differing perceptions come together as a whole to make up the identity of a person (ETH, SAFC matches, and church for example). Within the social identity approach, identity can be understood in varying ways. For instance, Stets and Burke (2000) propose three levels of identity with examples in brackets: superordinate level (human), intermediate level (American), and subordinate

level (Southerner). This is consistent with the view that people can hold multiple identities and be a part of many communities (Blackshaw, 2010). Self-categorisation theory argues that individuals will behave and act differently within the two groups.

The social identity approach, made up of social identity theory and self-categorisation theory provides a useful theoretical foundation for the realist evaluation of the ETH. The approach helps to begin the explanation as to how, why, some individuals attend the ETH, focussing on their sense of identity and belonging. Focus now turns to the 9 IPTs which were developed during the theory gleaning stage.

IPT A- A sense of belonging

IPT A- A sense of belonging

If the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC, such as the club badge and uniform (resource), then individuals within the geographical community of Sunderland (context) may engage with programmes delivered by FoL, such as the ETH. This is because participants may attach meaning to the symbols associated with SAFC in similar or differing ways, resulting in feeling as if they belong to the ETH community (reasoning). Therefore, through participation of programmes such as the ETH, participants may experience a strengthening of their social identity (outcome).

This IPT is underpinned by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Furthermore, key to this IPT is the significance of community. Blackshaw (2008) identifies several theories of community used when studying football in England including Anthony Cohen's symbolic construction of communities, along with Benedict Anderson's imagined communities (1991), and

Zygmunt Bauman's liquid modern community (Bauman, 2000, 2001). Upon reviewing these theories, it was deemed that social identity theory and Cohen's symbolic construction of communities were more relevant and useful for explaining this IPT. Anderson's imagined communities and Bauman's liquid modernity are much more macro, whereas social identity theory and Cohen's work enables micro investigation therefore helping to drill down on the specifics of the ETH.

Given the symbolism that is associated with football clubs which contributes to identities (Blackshaw, 2008; A. Brown et al., 2008; Anthony Cohen, 1985; Torchia, 2020), Anthony Cohen's *Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985) provides a basis for exploring how participants may identify with the FoL. Anthony Cohen (1985) argued that everything is symbolic in the way individuals give meaning to things such as the boundaries which define communities. Indeed, regardless of whether these are structural boundaries or not, given the symbolic nature of community, "the reality of community lies in its members' perception" (Anthony Cohen, 1985, p. 118). A central feature of Cohen's theory is that the sharing of a symbol is not automatically the same as sharing the meaning (Anthony Cohen, 1985). This means that a symbol of a community can bring people together for differing reasons. In the case of FoL and ETH, during the World Café, participants highlighted a number of symbols and motivations they could identify with which has prompted a response or reason to engage with the programme. These included: association to SAFC, identifying FoL as a community organisation, the social nature of ETH, and the opportunity for physical activity. Moreover, FoL staff identified the symbols of the SAFC badge and colours (red and white) that they believe influence participant engagement:

I think some of the audiences will come to it because it is the Foundation of Light badge or because it's the associated with, the crest for example although it's not the SAFC logo, our logo is different to

SAFC, they will see that and recognise it as something that brings enjoyment 9 times out of 10. (DS2)

Further examples from FoL staff included: “If you put anything on a plate in front of them that is dressed up as red and white football, I think they would have enjoyed it” (DS3); and DS4 stated: “I think for me the badge helps”. The task for testing (Stage 2) and refining (Stage 3) was to uncover which specific symbols consciously or unconsciously used by the FoL (resources) lead to participants (in particular contexts) identifying and belonging to the ETH community (reasoning). In turn, this mechanism may lead to observable and evidencable outcomes revolving around the benefits of community.

However, in his critique of Cohen’s theory of symbolic construction of community within football, Blackshaw (2008) highlights that the boundary marking process is less a shared sense of reality, but more an imaginary social construction. Blackshaw went further to say that “the major obstacle with following Cohen’s line of argument is that it would appear that every kind of social relation is potentially and actually a community” (p. 329). Blackshaw concluded that Cohen’s approach assumes that if person A has something in common with person B, then they automatically become a community. Therefore, it is important during this evaluation that these critiques are kept in mind to ensure that applying the work of Cohen adds value.

Delanty (2018) conceptualises identity as: localities, identity, communities of action, and transnational developments. The idea of belonging and sharing unites these diverse conceptions of identity (Delanty, 2018). A football club, such as SAFC, and affiliated charity of the FoL, can view communities according to all four of these definitions of community. Firstly, locality; clubs were formed in local geographical communities, with those living local to the club supporting the club (R. Holt, 1990,

1996; T. Mason, 1988). This local football remains today, however, as will be seen below, football clubs are now not limited to a discrete geographical community. Secondly, identity; throughout its history; football has provided opportunity for the expression of common identity, such as wearing the same colours and singing the same songs at a match (A. Brown et al., 2008). Next, communities of action can be seen through the community foundations that football clubs have established. And finally, transnational technological developments; football clubs are no longer confined to their local geographical communities. Rather, through developments of technology, including satellite television and social media, clubs can engage with supporter groups all over the world. Whilst the emphasis on a club's community and fan base has shifted from the geographical localities towards global fan communities, football clubs continue to embody many of the collective symbols, identifications and processes of connectivity which have long been associated with the notion of 'community' (A. Brown et al., 2008). Moreover, as has been discussed in relation to Cohen's symbolic construction of community, different fan communities may identify with the same symbols in different ways.

Haslam, Jetten, and Haslam (2019) have stated that the extent to which a social identity is shared between individuals is the key mechanism influencing group behaviour. Indeed, Turner (1982) argued that without a shared social identity, group behaviour is impossible. For example, members of a choir share a social identity of finding singing enjoyable which allows them to sing together (Haslam et al., 2019). In a similar way, through the observations and World Café, it became clear that a large proportion of ETH participants have a love of SAFC, which may make it easy for them to participate in the ETH together. Anthony Cohen (1985) suggests that individuals can have

different meanings attached to the group which can then lead to sharing the same identity. This will be discussed further below.

Levine, Prosser, Evans, and Reicher (2005) and Neville, Novelli, Drury, and Reicher (2022) have highlighted the influence of social identity within a football context for individuals within ingroups and those outside of the ingroups, demonstrating how ingroups, social identities and boundaries can be fluid. For example, in their study, Levine et al. (2005) found that Manchester United fans have at least two different identities which will affect the level of support they provide other individuals. Identity one- Manchester United fans would not help a struggling individual wearing a Liverpool top, because they shared conflicting social identities within a football context. Identity two- when participants considered themselves more inclusively as football fans the Manchester United fans helped a struggling individual wearing a Liverpool top, because they shared the social identity of football fans. This can be linked to the previously discussed conceptualisation of different levels of identity outlined by Stets and Burke (2000). Indeed, it can be seen how in the study by Levine et al. (2005) that the Manchester United fans have a subordinate identity in their following of Manchester United, and an intermediate identity as football followers. And it could be suggested that they have a superordinate identity as people who follow sport.

The ETH appears to provide a community for participants to be a part of and feel safe (resource). DS2 highlighted that one of the aims of the ETH is to provide a “safe space to not feel judged [in which] they feel that they belong”. To develop a sense of belonging, individuals need to identify similarities to the community they wish to belong to (Bauman, 2000). Blackshaw (2010) highlighted that identity and belonging are two different key concepts when exploring community. Both Blackshaw (2010)

and (Bauman, 2008) argue that belonging follows identity. Therefore, for communities to manifest, individuals need to identify that they share similar characteristics with each other, which can be compared against other communities- 'the others'. SAFC as a football club has the potential to provide individuals with a collective identity which may lead to a sense of belonging. If this is the case, then given the resources of SAFC symbols used by the ETH, individuals may feel a sense of belonging towards the ETH community because of the association with SAFC (reasoning). Some evidence of this was elicited at the World Café, for example: "Came 1st [sic] because to do with SAFC".

It has been established that a sense of community can lead to increased levels of social identity and belonging (Kristiansen, Skille, & Hanstad, 2014; Kristiansen, Skirstad, Parent, & Waddington, 2015). Indeed, as has been previously mentioned, identity is required before belonging can take place (Bauman, 2008; Blackshaw, 2010). As Jetten et al. (2017, p. 797) note: "social identities define who we are, provide us with meaning, purpose, and belonging, they provide us with important psychological ground on which to stand". Groups can provide meaning and belonging which enhances the self-esteem and sense of worth (Haslam et al., 2009). Thus, as community helps develop social identity, community can help an individual to deal with challenges and threats in a more stable manner (Jetten et al., 2017). Shared social identity and belonging has the potential to create connections and transform the social experience, which may lead to improved wellbeing (Reicher, 2019). A positive social experience, which may include social support, is more likely to occur within the boundaries of a social identity and ingroup (Haslam et al., 2019). Anthony Cohen (1985) in his symbolic construction of identity argues that these boundaries are relational rather than absolute- they mark a particular community in relation to other communities. This can be seen in the football shirt study (Levine et al., 2005)

mentioned above. Thus, the IPT hypothesises that only individuals who are affiliated to SAFC in some way will engage with the ETH. This does not mean that only those who follow SAFC will engage, rather, the IPT suggests that those who live in the geographical community of Sunderland may also have an affiliation to SAFC by way of it being the local football club in the community.

For this IPT, whilst the main focus is on community as the outcome, it needs to be acknowledged that community also acts as a context, particularly from a locality perspective (Tönnies, 1974). Indeed, this is consistent with the realist approach which acknowledges that fluidity within the CMMO heuristic (Herens, Wagemakers, Vaandrager, van Ophem, & Koelen, 2017). Therefore, the ETH programme should be viewed as developing feelings of community for some participants, and as strengthening feelings of community for other participants. By this taking place, community outcomes may be generated on an individual and collective level. Thus, community is a social construct of people coming together with similar identities. Social identity theory helps to explain how this may take place.

IPT B- Social support

IPT B- social support

If in the geographical context of Sunderland (context), the FoL use their association with SAFC (resource) to bring participants together through the ETH, then this may lead to participants having access to better social support through the ETH community (outcome). This is because of their shared interest of SAFC and their current stage of life (context) there is homophily between the participants (reasoning).

Higher levels of social support are associated with reduced loneliness and improved wellbeing (Y. Chen & Feeley, 2014; Dahal, Kahana, Bhatta, & Ermoshkina, 2021; K. Sen, Prybutok, Prybutok, & Senn, 2022; Standridge, Dunlap, & Hamilton, 2020; Tomaz et al., 2021). A positive social experience which may include social support, is more likely to occur within the boundaries of a social identity and ingroup (Haslam et al., 2019). Indeed, individuals with larger social networks are considered to have greater access to social resources including instrumental and socioemotional support (Cornwell, Schumm, Laumann, & Graber, 2009). Thus, social support is considered as multi-dimensional (Requena, 2013). Social support “eliminates or reduces effects of stressful experiences by promoting less threatening interpretations of adverse events and effective coping strategies” (S. Cohen, 2004, p. 677).

Sources of social support for older adults include spouse/partner, children, family, and friends (Y. Chen & Feeley, 2014). However, it has been suggested that during old age “individuals experience fundamental changes in the structure of both their families and their broader social network” (Cornwell, Schumm, Laumann, Kim, & Kim, 2014; Requena, 2013; Waite & Das, 2010, p. 90). A spouse/partner is deemed the strongest source of support, however as people get older the likelihood of having a spouse/partner decreases (Waite & Das, 2010).

Community organisations or programmes such as the ETH have the opportunity to encourage social engagement and provide individuals with a sense of belonging (resource) with those who share similar backgrounds (homophily). In the case of the ETH this may include interest in SAFC, and interest and knowledge the local areas (context). This homophily (reasoning) may help to develop social support between participants (MacKean & Abbott-Chapman, 2012) (outcome). This can lead to reduction in feelings of loneliness and isolation (Winstead, Yost, Cotten, Berkowsky,

& Anderson, 2014). Social identity theory helps to explain how this sense of belonging and togetherness may be developed at the ETH.

IPT C- A desire to maintain social continuity

IPT C- A desire to maintain social continuity

If the FoL provide multiple ETH sessions each week this may provide an opportunity for participants to establish a weekly routine (resource). This is because as the risk of discontinuity in later life increases due to changes in social context (context), participants have a desire to maintain continuity during later life (reasoning). Therefore, in an effort to positively adapt to a social routine in later life, individuals may attend the ETH (outcome).

As individuals get older later life brings risks of discontinuity (Atchley, 1989; Bergland & Slettebø, 2018; Lim & Song, 2019; Östman, Ung, & Falk, 2015). The conceptual framework provided by Östman et al. (2015) regarding individuals with chronic heart failure suggests that individuals experience discontinuity through: an alienated body, disrupted time, and the threatened self. These are common experiences for people not just with heart failure, but as they age and enter the later stages of their lives (Atchley, 1989; Breheny & Griffiths, 2017). Of relevance for the context for this IPT is the threatened self (the alienated body will be discussed in IPT D in relation to physical activity continuity). The threatened self describes how changes in social and family contexts can create a loss of self in relation to identity. For example, older people are more vulnerable to widowhood which can lead to changes in their daily lives and a loss of identities (Bergland & Slettebø, 2018; Utz, Carr, Nesse, & Wortman, 2002). 40% of participants from the World Café indicated that they lived alone, and

participants highlighted that it was important for them to maintain some routine, however this becomes more difficult to do as they get older. Moreover, older individuals may have less energy to maintain the level and diversity of socialisation that they were previously able to maintain (Östman et al., 2015).

There are several different ageing theories which help explain the behaviours and motives of older adults. These theories include: activity theory (Havighurst, 1963), socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1987, 1992), theory of selective optimisation (Hocking & Meltzer, 2016; Liechty & Genoe, 2013), disengagement theory (Cumming & Henry, 1961), innovation theory (Nimrod & Kleiber, 2007), and continuity theory (Agahi, Ahacic, & Parker, 2006; Atchley, 1989; Bergland & Slettebø, 2018; Breheny & Griffiths, 2017; Causey-Upton, 2015; Hocking & Meltzer, 2016). N. S. Cohen (2014) links activity theory (Havighurst, 1963) with continuity theory (Atchley, 1989) arguing that the key similarity between the two theories is the maintenance of activities through ageing. However, the key distinction between the two theories is that activity theory stipulates a higher level of activity as individuals get older to maintain wellbeing, whereas continuity theory is focused on maintaining the same level and type of activity (N. S. Cohen, 2014). Another theory which can be synthesised with activity and continuity is innovation theory (Nimrod & Kleiber, 2007). A more recent theory of ageing, innovation theory proposes that as adults enter later life, they adopt new leisure activities in order to broaden their life experiences and develop a greater sense of meaning, leading to improved wellbeing (Nimrod & Kleiber, 2007). Given the importance that the ETH places on routine, the most appropriate theory for exploration during the theory gleaning stage was continuity theory. Furthermore, continuity theory is different to most other theories of adult development in that the theory was constructed from studies involving middle-aged

and older adults, whereas most other adult development theories are extensions of child development theories (Atchley, 1999b).

Continuity theory posits that:

In making adaptive choices, middle-aged and older adults attempt to preserve and maintain existing internal and external structures and that they prefer to accomplish this objective by using continuity (i.e., applying familiar strategies in familiar arenas of life). (Atchley, 1989, p. 183)

Choices are made to adapt to constantly changing circumstances (Atchley, 1999b), such as becoming less mobile and other life events including retirement and widowhood. Discontinuity resulting from these events can cause the erosion of a person's core identity (Atchley, 1989; Lim & Song, 2019; Östman et al., 2015). Lim and Song (2019) have identified how continuity has been explored in the elderly during different life transitions including: retirement (Ayalon, 2018; Nuttman-Shwartz, 2008; E. Walker & McNamara, 2013), widowhood (Utz et al., 2002), second couplehood (Koren, 2011), relocation (Ayalon, 2018; E. Walker & McNamara, 2013), and illness (Östman et al., 2015; Secrest & Zeller, 2003). Those living in the later stages of life will often have a desire to maintain and/or re-establish a sense of continuity. Individuals have a desire to maintain continuity in terms of their schedules and social activities. If discontinuity occurs in these areas, then this may lead to negative outcomes such as limited physical activity participation and a reduction in social contact. For example, participants of the ETH are mindful of the negative impact that staying at home and not sharing in social contact can have as noted in the World Café- "[The ETH] gets you out of the house and stops you feeling depressed and lonely". Therefore, individuals have the desire to maintain continuity during later life in an effort to maintain a sense of involvement in society, and to maintain the level of social contact one has been conditioned to requiring. With the desire to maintain

continuity during later life, individuals are searching for a “Reason to get up in the morning” (World Café data).

Through providing different sessions during the week, the ETH may be contributing towards a weekly routine for participants. Within the conceptual model provided by Lim and Song (2019) routine falls into the continuity category of searching for preference and familiarity. Searching for preference and familiarity involves keeping routines and retaining past-oriented environments. Indeed, the activities an individual engages with in earlier life, is a strong predictor of what they will engage with in later life (Agahi et al., 2006; Utz et al., 2002). To maintain this continuation and linkage of the past, individuals may need to adapt. This IPT suggests that the schedule of ETH activities each week (see Table 6 below) provides participants with the opportunity to adapt and develop a new weekly routine. The World Café highlighted the desire that participants hold to take part in new activities. For example, responding to the question of what they would do if the FoL did not exist, one participant noted- “Back to boredom if I wasn’t here” and went on to highlight the value of the different activities that the ETH provides.

Table 6- ETH weekly schedule

Day	Activity
Monday	Pilates; qigong
Tuesday	Seated chair exercise
Wednesday	Coffee morning- bingo, quiz, and sport/physical activities
Thursday	Table tennis; walking football

The ETH through the activities and opportunities for social contact (resource) may provide participants with a sense of continuity (reasoning) during the later stages of life. Older individuals are vulnerable to social discontinuity (context). The ETH provides group based physical activity, which may help participants develop and maintain social relationships to replace the relationships that they may have lost (Emerson & Mirda, 2021; Pels & Kleinert, 2016). In their study of interventions for older people experiencing loneliness, Kharicha et al. (2017) found that group based activities centred around shared interests are preferable for individuals who may be struggling with loneliness and a reduction in social relationships. This is supported by findings from other studies (Franke et al., 2021; Gyasi, Phillips, Asante, & Boateng, 2021; D. Taylor & Pringle, 2022; Van der Veken et al., 2020b). The ETH sessions provide participants the opportunity to partake in group activities such as bingo, quizzes, and physical activities. Thus, the ETH by providing group-based activities, provide individuals with opportunities to develop and maintain social relationships.

As a result of a desire to maintain social continuity from previous stages of life, individuals may adapt to their situation and abilities (Atchley, 1999a, 1999b; Hocking & Meltzer, 2016) which may include attending the ETH. It has been suggested that older adults will seek to replace lost social relationships with new ones (Cornwell, Goldman, & Laumann, 2020). This is evidence of adaptation. Cornwell et al. (2020, p. 786) also argue that: “different forms of social connectedness (e.g., personal network connectedness vs community involvement) do not seem to be interchangeable as sources of “compensation””. This demonstrates one of the limitations of adaptation in that it can only be effective to a certain extent. For example, it would be naïve and unrealistic for the social relationships developed because of attending the ETH to replace the relationship one had with a deceased spouse.

Participants who attend the ETH (outcome) can be said to be adapting to their situation in their effort to reduce the effects of discontinuity (reasoning). Individuals may identify the ETH as an opportunity to develop new social relationships to replace relationships which are no longer present. During the World Café, participants identified the making of new friendships as one of the benefits of attending the ETH. Indeed, the ETH provides participants with: “A place to meet new friends and engage in good discussions and activities”. Furthermore, one participant noted that the ETH has “Enlarged my circle of friends”. And one comment highlighted the impact of attending the ETH: “Stops you feeling depressed and lonely”. Thus, the ETH has the potential to help to maintain social continuity for participants, despite the discontinuity caused by events which older individuals are more vulnerable to. The next IPT explores continuity from a physical perspective.

IPT D- Physical continuity

IPT D- Physical continuity

If the ETH provides the opportunity to take part in suitable physical activities (resource) based on the physical capabilities of participants (context), then participants may identify which activities they are confident taking part in (reasoning). This may lead to participants being able to connect their past, present, and future, which may result in happier lives during the later stages of life (outcome).

This IPT is also underpinned by continuity theory, looking at continuity from a physical perspective. During the ageing process, individuals with a desire for a sense of physical continuity will seek to maintain their physical activities (Atchley, 1989).

However, due to reduced physical capabilities (Agahi et al., 2006; Cozijnsen, Stevens, & Van Tilburg, 2013; Kleiber & Genoe, 2012; Nimrod & Hutchinson, 2010; Östman et al., 2015), individuals may not be able to complete activities that they were once able to (Atchley, 1999a). Indeed, at the ETH there is a wide spectrum of physical mobility abilities from the participants (context). Mobility problems associated with older age (arthritis for example) mean that some participants are not as physically able as they once were. Data from the World Café suggested that some participants were not taking part in physical exercise prior to participating in the ETH. Östman et al. (2015) identified that individuals with health conditions may experience an alienated body due to their decreasing physical capabilities as they age. Indeed, those with physical limitations and reduced mobility are less likely to be able to continue participating in sport and physical activities in the way they used to (Agahi et al., 2006; Cozijnsen et al., 2013; Kleiber & Genoe, 2012; Liechty & Genoe, 2013; Nimrod & Hutchinson, 2010). Therefore, adaptation needs to take place to maintain a sense of physical continuity (Atchley, 1999a, 1999b; Hocking & Meltzer, 2016).

Adaptation can manifest in two main ways- gradual routine adaption, or mobilising coping skills and resources to deal with crises (Atchley, 1999a). Gradual routine adaption can be considered as proactive and preventative, whereas deploying coping skills is a more reactive and cure-based strategy. Key resources which can help aid adaptation include: income, good health, high physical function, and adequate social support (Atchley, 1999a). Individuals have varying levels of control over these resources (Bergland & Slettebø, 2018). Adaptation is also dependent on changing social and political environments. Individuals over their life course are conditioned to learn how to cope in particular environments, so when a change in environment takes place individuals are likely to resist, prompting a distressing response (Atchley, 1989).

However, individuals also have the ability and motivation to adjust and adapt their activities rather than changing them, or allowing them to be changed (Agahi et al., 2006). Indeed, Atchley (1999a) suggests that the key ingredient for continuity is the desire of an individual to maintain continuity. If an individual has no desire for continuity then this may lead to disengagement, resulting in the likelihood of negative wellbeing (Atchley, 1999a; Causey-Upton, 2015).

It has been suggested that as people age it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain physical activity levels (Warner et al., 2014). Self-efficacy is an important factor for the extent to which individuals take part in physical activity (Takemura, Cheung, Fong, & Lin, 2022; Warner, Schüz, Knittle, Ziegelmann, & Wurm, 2011) and has been shown to be a determinant in addition to a consequence of physical activity (McAuley et al., 2005; Neumann et al., 2021; Zamani Sani et al., 2016). Self-efficacy can be understood as a “cognitive mechanism that mediates between self-appraisal information and an individual’s subsequent thoughts, emotions, motivations, and behaviors [sic]” (Samson & Solmon, 2011, p. 71). According to the concept of self-efficacy, “people will be more likely to engage in behaviors [sic] that they believe they can successfully perform and avoid behaviors [sic] in which they feel that they will be unsuccessful” (Samson & Solmon, 2011). Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory proposes four main sources for the development of self-efficacy: mastery experience which is based on previous action; vicarious experience through observing social models; verbal persuasion; and physiological and affective states. Bandura suggested that mastery experience is the most powerful source of self-efficacy. Findings from Warner et al. (2014) supported the significance of mastery experience.

The ETH provides a variety of activities during the week which participants can take part in, which offer resources to participants. Moreover, during the main ‘hub’ session

on a Wednesday, participants have the opportunity to take part in several different sports and physical activities such as table tennis and indoor carpet bowls. The activities and sports provided are chosen to be physically appropriate for the participants of the ETH. With a wide provision of different sports and physical activities to take part in, it is left to participants to decide which activities to participate in. Participants can select activities which they are confident (required levels of self-efficacy) that they will be able to take part in safely (reasoning). Moreover, some of these activities are activities that participants would not take part in if it were not for the ETH: “Looking forward to future activities that I would not normally participate in” (World Café data).

As a result of the ETH providing a range of suitable activities (resource), participants are able to identify which activities they are confident to take part in (reasoning), based on their physical capabilities (context). This may lead to the outcome of feeling a unity in one’s past, present, and future self, resulting in happier lives, as noted at the World Café- “Happy. Enjoy especially exercise. Always have fun [and] a laugh”. This may be achieved by individuals developing autobiographical narrative continuity by reconciling the discontinuities of the past, present and future (Löckenhoff & Rutt, 2017). Indeed, a united sense of self across time is central to human beings (Gallagher, 2000; Northoff, 2017). When people perceive overlap between current and future selves, they are more likely to make life better for their future self (Hershfield & Bartels, 2012; Rutchick, Slepian, Reyes, Pleskus, & Hershfield, 2018).

IPT E- Social capital

IPT E- Social capital

If participants regularly attend the ETH then participants may develop their social capital through bonding (outcome). This is because as individuals participate together within the group boundaries of the ETH (resource), they develop relationships and exchange knowledge between each other that they may not otherwise do if they did not share membership of the same group (reasoning).

There are several prominent conceptualisations of social capital including conceptualisations provided by Putnam (democratic), Coleman (rational), and Bourdieu (critical) (Lewandowski, 2006). In addition, Widdop, Cutts, and Jarvie (2016) identify Lin's (1999) conceptualisation of social capital as worthy of further investigation and application. Within sport, it has been Putnam's democratic approach to social capital which has dominated analysis (Adams et al., 2018). Indeed, Putnam himself recognises the potential of sport, specifically team sport, on developing social capital (Putnam, 2001). However, there are some examples of other approaches being applied within sport, for example, Adams et al. (2018) apply the approach provided by James Coleman. Compatible with these approaches are three types of social capital identified by (Spaaij, 2012): bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding can be described as the more intimate and close ties between family, neighbours and close friends which helps an individual 'get by'. Bridging involves more distant and loose ties with friends and work colleagues. Finally, linking refers to relations with people from different social strata, which as a result provides a wider range of resources compared to bonding and bridging. Whilst the iterations of social capital mentioned above all have different understandings of social capital, they are underpinned by three common components- trust, social network, and participation (Ahn & Davis, 2020).

Widdop et al. (2016) have argued that more attention needs to be paid to exploring how social networks are formed within sport environments, and how this leads to social capital being generated. As a result, unlike most other studies investigating social capital within the context of sport, Widdop et al. (2016) used Lin's social network approach to social capital (Lin, 1999, 2001). Lin's social network approach to social capital was used for this IPT to better understand which and what sort of relationships are required to be developed for positive outcomes to accrue for an individual. Moreover, the social network approach to social capital is compatible with the social identity approach which is the overarching theory of the evaluation of the ETH.

Lin's social network approach to social capital suggests that individuals invest in social relations, expecting benefits in return (Lin, 1999). Social capital, according to Lin, has three main ingredients: "resources embedded in a social structure; accessibility to such social resources by individuals; and use or mobilization [sic] of such social resources by individuals in purposive actions" (Lin, 1999, p. 35). Lin outlined two types of outcomes of social capital- instrumental and expressive. Instrumental outcomes include wealth, power, and reputation. Whereas, expressive outcomes include physical and mental health, and life satisfaction.

Social network theory helps understand who interacts with whom and how (Harrison, Sciberras, & James, 2011), and identifies where relationships are present within a social structure. The theory focuses on the role of social relationships in exchange of information between individuals (Liu, Sidhu, Beacom, & Valente, 2017). Widdop et al. (2016) identify two concepts of network structure- diversity in the network, and types of ties. Diversity in network surrounds the homophily or heterophily of a group of individuals. A homophily approach argues that people like people who are similar

to themselves (such as a shared interest in SAFC), whereas heterophily highlights the differences between individuals. Homophily is a key mechanism for developing friendships and is discussed further in the next IPT. The second ingredient to the social network approach to social capital is accessibility- individuals need the ability to access social networks to benefit from them. The target population of the ETH may experience higher levels of social isolation due to reduced mobility and the death of spouse and friends. It is these individuals who are placed to benefit the most from the being part of an ingroup, however these individuals are also the ones who are less likely to be a part of an ingroup like the ETH.

The ETH may help to bring people together who have a shared interest in SAFC and are in similar situations. This then provides the opportunity for social capital to be exchanged at the ETH between participants. At this stage in a context was not identified for the IPT. Upon obtaining social capital through being part of an ingroup, this may lead to the mobilisation of several outcomes for an individual. Social capital can lead to social, financial, physical, and psychological outcomes (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008).

IPT F- Simple and complex friendships

IPT F- Simple and complex friendships

If the FoL provide opportunities for meaningful social contact between participants (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants who did not have existing friendships with fellow participants (context), may develop friendships (outcome). This is because the activities provide an opportunity for participants to develop generalised trust (reasoning) between each other which is important for developing friendships. However, if participants knew each other before attending the ETH (context 2), their simple friendships may develop into complex friendships (outcome 2) via the development of particularised trust (reasoning).

The World Café identified the importance of friendships to participants; this included meeting new people and developing existing friendships at the ETH. A number of participants knew each other from the Sunderland Senior Supporters Association, and others were familiar with each other from the online sessions which took place during the COVID-19 lockdowns when the ETH could not meet in person. Examples of comments from the World Café which reflect the formation of new friendships, and development of pre-existing friendships included: “Made some great friends”; “Friendships forming”; and “Continued friendships; made new friends”.

There are several different theoretical approaches to understanding friendship during later years of life (Blieszner, Ogletree, & Adams, 2019). These include: social network theory (Blieszner et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2017), social exchange theory (Roberto, 1989; Roberto & Scott, 1986), socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, &

Charles, 1999), and the convoy model of relationships (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987). Social network theory helps to understand how and why individuals develop relationships with each other. Regarding relationships, social network theory focuses on the structure of relationships, and seeks to understand opportunities and constraints for developing relationships during the life course (Blieszner et al., 2019). Combining the aforementioned theories of friendship, Blieszner et al. (2019) propose three fluid and bidirectional stages of friendship: formation, sustainment, and dissolution. This approach is consistent with the view that contextual shifts can influence friendship positively or negatively (Dominguez & Hall, 2020).

The bidirectional approach is also consistent with approaches to friendship put forward by Farmer and Kali (2018) and L. Spencer and Pahl (2006). In their economic framework of friendship, Farmer and Kali (2018) argue that friendship is unidirectional, with three stages of: no friendship, opportunistic friendship, and sustained friendship. Their main argument is that friendships are initially formed because both parties recognise the material gain and advantage they can get from the friendship. Over time a sustained friendship is developed which is not motivated by material gain, rather a friendship without the expectation of return. However, in critiquing this argument themselves, Farmer and Kali (2018) recognise the friendship paradox, whereby whilst sustained friendship does not involve keeping a balance sheet of support given and received within a friendship, a friendship will collapse if it becomes significantly and noticeably unbalanced. Thus, the view that friendships are fluid and bidirectional is a better approach. In their framework of friendship, L. Spencer and Pahl (2006) distinguish between simple and complex friendships (see Figure 7- Types of friendship (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006, p. 60)). Simple friendships are based on one main form of interaction and can be broken down into associates,

useful contacts, favour friends, or fun friends (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Whereas, complex friendships go beyond one form of interaction and “are multifaceted, based on different configurations of qualities and roles” (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006, p. 65). Complex friendships can be broken down into helpmates, comforters, confidants, and soulmates.

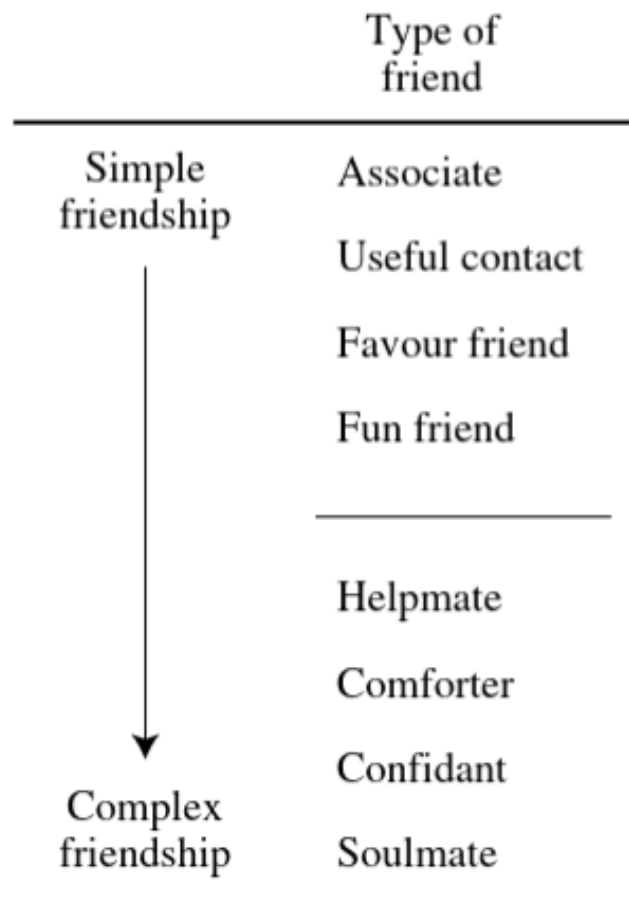


Figure 7- Types of friendship (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006, p. 60)

L. Spencer and Pahl (2006) further noted that progressive friendship trajectories are built gradually over time as individuals get to know each other, share experiences, and thus develop trust between each other. However, they also acknowledge that a friendship trajectory can remain fixed and can be variable in which the intimacy and

support comes and goes between individuals, with context being a significant factor here. In order for simple friendships to develop into complex friendships, individuals need to spend meaningful time with each other, sharing experiences and getting to know each other (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Thus, the key activities that the FoL provide are the sociable activities (bingo, quiz, sports hall activities) that bring individuals together (resource). However, these activities are not enough themselves to help develop friendships. Rather, as has been noted, friendships develop as a result of individuals getting to know each other (Farmer & Kali, 2018), finding out what they have in common (Lewis, 2012), and building up trust (Enslin & Hedge, 2019; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006).

Trust is a key mechanism for developing friendships (Enslin & Hedge, 2019; Fiske et al., 2007; Krenz, Persich, & Robinson, 2022). Pahl (2000) has argued:

It is not friendship per se that is important, but rather the trust, security, feelings of self-esteem and feelings of being loved for one's own sake that flow from it'. Knowing that 'significant others' like us, respect us and can provide practical support is likely to make for a happier life. (p. 148)

Trust is important as it influences behaviour, options and relationships (Farrahi & Zia, 2017). Trust is relational in nature and is a three way relationship between person A and person B, in context C (Nannestad, 2008). Within the academic literature, trust is viewed from several different disciplines and theoretical perspectives (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Nannestad, 2008). Sociological theories of trust include: voluntary social network theory, community theory, and societal theory (Delhey & Newton, 2003). All four of these theories have elements that are relevant for the evaluation of the ETH programme when considering friendship between participants. As Delhey and Newton (2003, p. 100) have noted, "these different theories are not mutually

exclusive or incompatible”. Societal theories suggest that “individuals participant in, contribute to, or benefit from a trusting culture” (Delhey & Newton, 2003, p. 96).

Trust can be distinguished between social or political trust (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Freitag & Bauer, 2016). According to Freitag and Bauer (2016) social trust can be further broken down into particularised trust with personally known contacts of an individual, and generalised trust with people beyond immediate familiarity. As S. H. Kim and Kim (2021) note, social trust is typically used interchangeably with generalised trust. Whilst social network theory can help illustrate the connections between individuals which may lead to trust, it does not answer the question of why people may or may not trust each other. It is suggested that because participants of the ETH probably fall into the category of people beyond immediate familiarity, at the ETH generalised trust is the type of trust generated (Freitag & Bauer, 2016). However, particularised trust may be present from participants who knew each other prior to attending the ETH. People who share similar beliefs, tend to have more trust with each other than people with vastly different beliefs (Farrahi & Zia, 2017). This is consistent with the homophily perspective which suggests that older people who have had similar experiences throughout life and thus have similar beliefs, may hold higher levels of trust between each other (Hong et al., 2022; Widdop et al., 2016). This is compared to a relationship with a person significantly younger than them who has different experiences and perceptions of the world. Whilst a heterophily perspective would argue that this is not relevant, this IPT assumes that homophily is important for participants to develop trust between each other.

As a result of the trust being developed through social interactions, friendships may be developed between participants of the ETH. It is likely that these friendships will be more akin to simple friendships, because participants indicated that they did not

socialise with fellow ETH participants outside of the ETH environment (unless there was pre-existing relationship before attending the ETH). Within the simple friendship category (see Figure 7- Types of friendship (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006, p. 60) above), it is suggested that the associate friendship label is most appropriate for the ETH. This is because the associate friendship relationship is tightly framed with individuals not meeting outside of the shared activity or context (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Whilst participants in the World Café made reference to the fun shared with friends at the ETH, in their typology Spencer and Pahl draw a key distinction between associates and fun friends: “unlike associates, [fun] friends socialize [sic] in a range of different ways and are not dependent on a single activity or context” (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006, p. 64). Spencer and Pahl go on to argue that the simple friendship type of associate can develop into the complex friendship types of helpmates, confidants, or soulmates.

Whilst it is argued that friendship is voluntary in nature and a product of personal agency (Fehr, 2008; L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006), friendship is also dependent and should be viewed in light of historical and cultural contexts (Pahl, 2000). Moreover, Enslin and Hedge (2019) argue that friendship is not a conscious choice, rather a relationship which develops over time. Allan (1989) noted that whilst friendship is a voluntary relationship, there are clear social and physical limitations on the opportunities and eligibility for friendship. The ETH provides individuals with regular opportunities for structured social contact each week (resource). Repeated social contact is required in order to build and develop relationships (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006). By attending the ETH, participants are provided with the opportunity to socialise with other participants regularly, which contributes to a build-up of trust (reasoning) enabling relationships to form and develop over time (outcome). However, given the bidirectional nature of friendships, friendships can also disappear as will be discussed in the next IPT.

IPT G- Dissolution of friendship

IPT G- Dissolution of friendship

If participants stop attending, (for reasons which may include family relations and ill health) the weekly ETH sessions (context), then the friendships made within the social boundary (resource) that the ETH hub provides may dissolve (outcome). This is because friendship is a bidirectional relationship (reasoning), which can only take place within social boundaries.

Given that the IPT F is suggesting that attendance at the ETH is imperative for the development and sustainment of friendships made at the ETH, it follows that by no longer attending the ETH, dissolution of friendships will occur. This dissolution is the focus for this IPT. Indeed, the final stage of the friendship stage model proposed by Blieszner et al. (2019) is dissolution. Changes in context such as family relations, ill health, and moving location (Dominguez & Hall, 2020) can lead to individuals no longer attending the ETH.

IPT H- Impression management

IPT H- Staff impression management

If in the context of the FoL organisational culture and reputation (context) staff want to be respected and admired by participants and colleagues as being good at their job (reasoning), then staff members may deploy ingratiation impression management tactics of favouring, agreeing, and complementing participants; and exemplification impression management tactics of appearing to be dedicated and displaying enthusiasm (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff participants, leading to an increased respect and admiration for staff members (outcome).

The final two IPTs relate to staff delivery of the ETH programme and are underpinned by dramaturgical approaches to practice, particularly Goffman's (1959) impression management. IPT H includes a significant portion of the substantive theory used for both IPTs, and therefore this section is longer compared to the section for IPT I.

Dramaturgy is based on the concept that social life is like a theatre- a performance in front of an audience (Scott, 2015). Indeed, the term dramaturgy comes from the theatre, referring to how theatre actors adapt and stage their performances to audiences (Shulman, 2017). Developed from a symbolic interactionist perspective (Shulman, 2017), there are three main features of the dramaturgical approach: identity is a process mediated by social interaction; identity is performative- worked at and done by individuals through interaction; and identity is pragmatic, tangibly expressed in performance (Scott, 2015). Through dramaturgical performances, actors are able to communicate meanings to their audiences (Shulman, 2017). Shulman (2017) identified two reasons for the importance of studying and understanding dramaturgical

approaches. Firstly, whilst an individual may identify in particular ways, the external recognition of these labels is vital. And secondly, impression management tactics attempt to exercise influence and power over audiences.

Dramaturgy developed as the 20th century progressed. Nicholas Evreinov (1927) introduced the theatrical instinct, with Kenneth Burke (1945) producing the dramaturgic pentad. According to Evreinov (1927) all society is theatre. Indeed, Thomas Hobbes (1651) argued that society is an allusion whereby everyone is playing a particular role and reminds his readers that the word “persona” in Latin signified the disguise and mask of a person. Tronstad (2002) argued that society depends on both the concept of life as theatre and as reality. Both concepts are required for real and fictional spaces to occur, with Tronstad arguing that Evreinov’s theatrical instinct (1927) “does not seem very far from the truth at all” (Tronstad, 2002, p. 223). Burke’s pentad suggests that a person’s motive for performance will be based on: the act, the scene, the agent, the agency, and the purpose of the performance (Burke, 1945). The agent as an actor implies an element of deception through the use of masks (R. Walker & Monin, 2001) in any given situation. Finally, Erving Goffman introduced the sociology of dramaturgy, notably through his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Given that Goffman has “developed the lion’s share of analytic concepts in dramaturgical sociology” (Shulman, 2017, p. 18), greater attention will be paid to impression management techniques that have developed from Goffman’s work. Furthermore, Goffman’s impression management has been used to describe how sports coaches interact with their athletes and audiences including fellow coaches, superiors, and parents (Chesterfield et al., 2010; Consterdine, Newton, & Piggin, 2013; R. Jones, 2014; H. W. Lee & Corsby, 2021; Partington & Cushion, 2012; Potrac et al., 2021).

Impression management describes the “efforts by an actor to create, maintain, protect, or otherwise alter an image held by a target audience” (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008, p. 1080). In his theory of impression management, Goffman (1959) argued that it is natural and important that individuals act in certain ways for certain audiences. This is because individuals usually are motivated to convey an impression which is in his/her interest for a given situation (Goffman, 1959; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b; Andrew Thompson, Potrac, & Jones, 2015). Goffman talked about one’s impression management in a similar way to an actor’s behaviour when on theatre stage. When an individual (the actor) appears in the presence of others (the audience), in a particular context (the theatre front stage) there will usually be a reason for that individual to convey a particular impression on others- this can be conscious and calculating, or calculating but unconscious (Goffman, 1959). Actors may engage in impression management for two reasons; firstly, to create or manage a certain audience impression, and secondly, to engage with behaviours consistent with their personality or self-concept (Crawford, Kacmar, & Harris, 2019). Moreover, individuals perform to influence the thoughts, feelings, and conduct of others. Individual actors have different motivations (E. E. Jones & Pittman, 1982; Long, 2017; McFarland, Hendricks, & Ward, 2022) and different abilities (Manley, Morgan, & Atkinson, 2016) for managing their impressions. The aim of the performer is to demonstrate through performance the expectations of the audience, referred to as emotion norms. Emotion norms are “cultural expectations for how people should feel in particular situations” (Charmaz, Harris, & Irvine, 2019, p. 127). For example, the FoL’s organisational culture has four emotion norms in the form of values (see Table 7 below). These norms are learned through ‘rule reminders’ whereby other people use verbal and/or non-verbal cues to inform an individual or the expected proper emotional conduct. These

rule reminders can occur through direct socialisation, whereby others explicitly communicate what the norms are, or via indirect socialisation, in which individuals infer how to act by observing others (Charmaz et al., 2019; Ives et al., 2021). Every member of staff learns the FoL values (see Table 7) through direct socialisation because of their induction process when joining the organisation. However, these organisational values are also learnt through indirect socialisation. For example, beyond an induction, new staff, if these values are indeed the emotion norms of the organisation, learn these norms through their interactions with pre-existing staff.

Table 7- FoL values- "Put the Foundation first"

Value	Definition
Be passionate	"Love what you do and love why you do it. The FoL is more than just a job."
Be inspiring	"Encourage and support those around you to grow, learn and develop."
Be innovative	"Don't be afraid to do things differently or to try things that have never been done."
Be professional	"Always promote and maintain the highest standards. Be the best and strive for excellence."

Goffman (1959) refers to areas of performance- the backstage and the frontstage. The backstage is where performers can be confident that no member of the audience will intrude and therefore performative masks can come off (Brandon-Lai, Armstrong, & Ferris, 2016; Goffman, 1959; Shulman, 2017). Goffman provides an example of a

hotel kitchen. Kitchen staff have a desire to keep the kitchen (the backstage) closed from customers, because the impression of the final product presented in the restaurant (the frontstage) would be different if the audience saw how it was prepared. For the FoL delivery staff, the backstage would be the FoL offices which is an area where participants are not permitted to be. To maintain desired impressions, actors need to remain in character when in the presence of the audience. This will usually be on the frontstage whereby audience members (ETH participants) are judging the performance of the actor (FoL delivery staff) (Goffman, 1959). DS4 said that his initial involvement in the ETH was “Quite nerve-wracking” because it was a different type of programme to what he traditionally delivered on. For DS4, it was important not to show this lack of confidence when delivering in front of participants.

The reasoning as to why delivery staff at the FoL deploy impression management tactics may be because they want to be seen as being good at their job by participants and colleagues at the FoL. This may be because staff believe that achieving this will lead to long term professional benefits such as promotion. Indeed, Goffman (1959) argued that individuals will behave in ways that they identify will provide them with benefit. Moreover, performances may be influenced by external pressure (Shulman, 2017) which may come about from the expectations of participants and other staff members. Delivery staff may use props and social masks with the aim of shaping audience perceptions and reactions in a positive light (Gardner & Martinko, 1988). Props can include the SAFC branded clothing worn by the FoL staff. Actors also have multiple masks to choose from depending on the situation (Goffman, 1959; Scott, 2015). Thus, it is important for actors to select the most appropriate impression management masks and strategies for each situation they are in (Goffman, 1959; Steinmetz, Sezer, & Sedikides, 2017). Indeed, masks are worn all the time and it is

difficult to know the ‘true’ self behind the characters that are played (Scott, 2015). Aside from props there are also several techniques and strategies delivery staff may use which will now be outlined.

To deliver successful performances, delivery staff may use a variety of techniques and strategies (resources). The taxonomy provided by E. E. Jones and Pittman (1982) is widely cited when referring to impression management techniques that can be used (see for example: Bolino & Turnley, 1999; C. Chen & Tang, 2022; Chiang & Chen, 2014; Crane & Crane, 2002; Crawford et al., 2019; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). The impression management techniques are: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation (Jones and Pittman 1982). The goal of these techniques is to augment or protect an actor’s power to influence and control the social environment that they are working in (E. E. Jones & Pittman, 1982). Of particular relevance for this IPT is ingratiation and exemplification.

Ingratiation is whereby actors seek favour in amongst trying to please people and increase the audience’s liking for the actor (Crawford et al., 2019). A performer is likely to use ingratiation as a tactic, despite knowing that the behaviour may not be entirely genuine. The performer does this because the importance and likelihood of obtaining a desired benefit is in their interest (E. E. Jones & Pittman, 1982). This can be achieved by doing favours, agreeing with, or complimenting the audience (Liden & Mitchell, 1988). As E. E. Jones and Pittman (1982, p. 235) note, “by definition the ingratiation seeks to achieve the *attribution of likeability*”. ETH participants at the World Café provided examples of staff ingratiation noting that staff were encouraging and remained in touch beyond what participants expected. Furthermore, DS2 highlighted that staff wanted to “Give more and... support people”.

Exemplification is the desire to be respected and admired, and in western society, the actor in question will typically present him/herself as honest, disciplined, charitable, and self-abnegating (E. E. Jones & Pittman, 1982). The exemplifier shares the desire to be respected and admired with the self-promoter, however the exemplifier focuses on projecting integrity and moral worthiness (E. E. Jones & Pittman, 1982). Long (2017) in an exemplification process model, identified three exemplifying attribution goals whereby actors seek to perform acts of dedication, morality, and generosity. Acts of dedication include showing support through willingness to tolerate less than ideal circumstances, along with acts of conscientiousness, as well as displaying enthusiasm to help improve circumstances (Long, 2017). From initial conversations and observations, it was apparent that FoL staff were demonstrating exemplification, notably by adjusting to lockdown life by delivering content online and providing remote support to participants, along with adjusting to a change in the sport development scene, post lockdown. Moral acts involve exemplifiers following the rules of the environment that they are working in, and not breaking them for their own self-interests. This may manifest by ensuring any relevant safeguarding and participants wellbeing concerns are handled appropriately despite the extra amount of work this may lead to for the staff member. Generous acts focus on staff members providing time, talent, or other resources in a way which goes above and beyond the expected level of effort. These individuals are known as ‘givers’ (A. M. Grant, 2013). This can be done for participants and/or colleagues (Long, 2017).

As a result of staff using ingratiation and exemplification impression management tactics, the outcome of this IPT is an improved personal quality between delivery staff and participants of the ETH. This in turn may lead to an enhanced reputation held of members of delivery staff by participants of the ETH and colleagues at the FoL

(Chiang & Chen, 2014). Indeed, theory gleaned from data suggests that delivery staff members and participants of the ETH enjoy a good personal interaction and that participants hold the members of staff highly, with comments from the World Café including: “Great staff”, “Staff all friendly, sense of humour, welcoming”, and “Nice staff”.

Whilst impression management tactics used successfully may lead to the desired outcomes sought by the actor (Crane and Crane 2002), impression management can also lead to negative outcomes. For performances to be effective, they need to be perceived as being authentic (Long, 2017). Individuals can identify and interpret their performances and impressions in many ways, but external recognition is vital for a performance to be successful (Shulman, 2017). Cooley’s (1902) looking glass self demonstrates how multiple audiences can have a different impression of an individual, who has a different impression still of himself. It is important then that actors come across sincere and genuine in their performances maintaining dramaturgical discipline. When actors attempt to come across as being trustworthy, warm, and competent, it is important that the audience perceives these characteristics in the actor. However, impression management is undermined if an audience suspects that the performance is not genuine (Nguyen, Seers, & Hartman, 2008; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). The success of an actor’s impression management depends on how the audience perceive and respond. Thus, Crawford et al. (2019) in agreement with the holistic philosophy of the process model provided by Long (2017), have argued that in order to provide a more accurate representation of impression management, the experiences of both the actor and the audience need to be taken into account. Their rationale is:

The reaction of the audience gives meaning to the actor’s behavior [sic]. Thus, actors and their audiences are mutually dependent upon one

another as meaning cannot occur unless both parties are present and involved.” (Crawford et al., 2019, p. 453)

However, this has not traditionally been the case, with focus being placed on the actor. This is despite Vazire and Carlson (2010) note that actor’s accuracy in estimating how audience members perceive them is limited.

Another possible negative outcome of impression management is emotional labour (Charmaz et al., 2019; Chiang & Chen, 2014; Hochschild, 1979; Sheane, 2012; Shulman, 2017). Whilst Goffman’s work focuses on actors managing their out impressions, it does not explore how actors may manage their inner feelings (Hochschild, 1979). Emotional labour may arise when the internal feelings of the staff are different from the emotions and performance that they are required to express to the participants (Lovelock & Wirz, 2011). This can lead to negative health consequences including stress, anxiety, nervousness, and burn out (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Hochschild’s emotion-management perspective focused attention on how actors try to feel. Techniques for managing emotions include cognitive, bodily, and expressive (Hochschild, 1979).

IPT I- Enhancing the reputation of the FoL

IPT I- Enhancing the reputation of the FoL

If FoL staff develop the expected level of personal interaction quality with participants through impression management techniques (resource), then this may lead to an increase in the reputation of the FoL (outcome). This is because the quality of personal interaction establishes and reinforces why the FoL is so important for participants (reasoning).

Staff may also utilise impression management tactics to develop the expected level of personal interaction quality with participants, which may lead to an increase in the reputation of the FoL. The IPT H focuses on the outcome for the member of staff, whilst this IPT focuses on the impact of impression management from an organisational perspective. The conceptual framework provided by Chiang and Chen (2014) suggests that when impression management techniques are used by staff members, this can have a positive impact on an organisation as a whole which may lead to an improved reputation for the FoL, resulting in sustained and increased participation.

Sustainable and regular participation is vital for maximising the opportunity for participant outcomes to occur (Girginov & Hills, 2008; Hayday, Pappous, & Koutrou, 2019; Perić, Đurkin, & Wise, 2016; Rich et al., 2022; Schulenkorf, 2012; Townsend, Moore, & Mahoney, 2002; Triantafyllidis & Darvin, 2021). This potential outcome suggests that by having a high level of personal interaction quality between staff and programme participants, programme participants are more likely to carry on attending. Evidence from the World Café suggested that participants do have a positive personal interaction quality with members of staff, including: “Great Staff!” and “Nice Staff”.

Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the 9 IPTs (A-I) which were taken forward for testing and refinement. From these 9 IPTs, 6 refined PTs emerged through testing and refinement. These PTs and the data pertaining to them will now be outlined in individual chapters, after which a summary chapter (Chapter 14) synthesises the individual PTs.

Chapter 8- (PT 1) Identification leading to initial participation

Introduction to programme theory

This PT was refined from IPT A. The final PT is underpinned by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and symbolic construction of identities (Anthony Cohen, 1985). The PT focuses on how identity can lead to participation in programmes delivered by the FoL. Whilst Stage 1 and Stage 2 explored this PT through the lens of the ETH, the refined PT is applicable and in future has scope to be tested across a range of programmes that the FoL deliver.

PT 1- Identification leading to initial participation

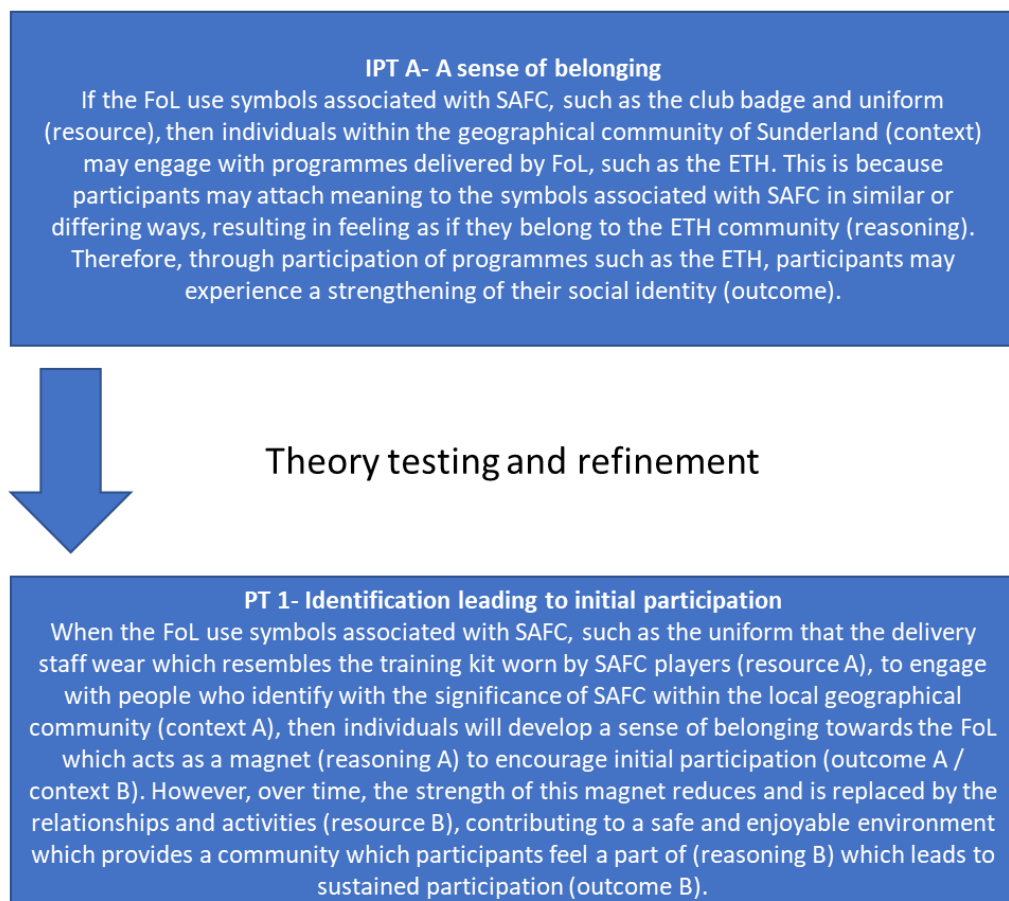


Figure 8- PT 1 development

Context- the significance of SAFC

The refined context for this PT is the significance of SAFC to individuals who live in and around the geographical area of Sunderland. The North-East is known for its football culture (Dixon et al., 2019) and historically professional football clubs have helped develop wider civic engagement and the sense of imagined communities (Hague & Mercer, 1998; R. Holt, 1986). Phelps (2005, p. 467) noted that “the significance of the football club in a city with so few symbols of local identity and pride should not be underestimated”. Indeed, Sunderland as a geographical community has seen significant symbols and associations of coal mining and shipbuilding be lost as a result of ports and mines being closed down in the 20th century (My Sunderland., n.d.). As a result, SAFC is arguably the last remaining longstanding significant symbol for the city.

Consistent with social identity theory and Cohen’s symbolic construction of community, it is not as simple to say that this PT only works for those who have an interest in SAFC or football. Indeed, the data collected for this PT provides evidence that even for those people who are not interested in SAFC or football some still attach importance to SAFC as their local football club. For example, PP2 stated that:

I follow them, if I catch sight of a league table somewhere I say oh where is Sunderland, just to catch up with where they are in the league. If I see the football results, I’ll just catch whether Sunderland won or not. So it’s, but I don’t go to games. I couldn’t tell you who the team members are or anything like that.

On the one hand the ETH contains a mix of individuals who are very passionate about SAFC, and on the other the ETH contains individuals who are not concerned with the fortunes of SAFC. In the words of Giulianotti (2002), the ETH is made up of followers who have a particular sense of identity and community towards SAFC (as is the case with PP2 quoted above); and supporters of SAFC who have “a long-term personal and

emotional investment in the club” (p. 33). Furthermore, during Stage 3 staff interviews, staff highlighted that the young people who participate in FoL programmes will wear a variety of different football tops of clubs other than SAFC, with no sense of loyalty to one particular club, which is evidence of the flaneur group identified by Giulianotti (2002).

However, for some participants of the focus group, the link to SAFC was not a contributing factor in attending the ETH. These individuals have a causal pathway which begins with the resources of the activities and social aspects of the hub. This was supported by delivery staff during the refinement stage who acknowledged that the magnet of the link to SAFC can attract but also repel potential participants depending on the context of the individuals involved. This will be further discussed in the reasoning section.

Resource- symbols associated with SAFC

The main resource that the FoL uses to encourage participation across programmes is the link to SAFC. As is discussed in the reasoning section below, these symbols associated with SAFC may provide a sense of identity and belonging to some participants. DS10 referred to the “Kudos” that comes with the FoL being associated with SAFC. Indeed, this can lead to participants conflating the FoL with SAFC. As DS10 went on to say:

[Participants may say] ‘ah but I go to the football club’- and perhaps they don’t use the words FoL or Beacon or anything like that, [rather]- ‘I’m studying at the football club’- I think that gives them a bit of kudos.

Many of the staff interviewed during Stage 3 referred to the importance of the uniform as a specific tangible resource which helps encourage individuals to engage. The FoL

uniform, which includes the SAFC badge, is very similar to the training kit used by SAFC players. DS14 reflected on the impact the uniform:

The uniform attracts people and they come. If I've been in remote places in Durham, in mining villages like Shildon, people come to you, and they just have a little chat with you. When I go to Stanley on a Friday to work at the Karbon Hub, they come and they approach, or someone will shout from the other side of the street. So yes, they recognise. Even if they are not Sunderland supporters, they tend to just shout over, not a lot of people but some people do. It definitely attracts people.

DS15 also commented on the impact it can have when at schools:

The only reason why that young lad or lass comes up and talks to me in the yard is because I've got a Sunderland kit on. The only reason. Whether they are Newcastle, whether they are Sunderland, whether they are whatever. Whether they're not interested in sport at all, they think that you're either a professional footballer or that you know someone that is.

However, some staff members are mindful that the FoL when seeking to engage with individuals may overly depend on the link with SAFC, and that more needs to be done to strengthen the brand of the FoL as an independent organisation. DS11 stated:

I think if we were to go to areas of South Tyneside and again some areas of Durham, the Sunderland badge has no power, that's where I think the FoL branding needs to be stronger.

Therefore, this PT asserts that the link between the FoL and SAFC is a significant resource, particularly through the branding and uniform. However, in certain contexts, the link to SAFC will have no or a negative impact in encouraging participation.

Reasoning- a sense of belonging

When the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC, this can have a positive or sometimes negative effect on encouraging individuals to engage with programmes delivered by the FoL. By identifying with and associating the symbols of SAFC with

that of the ETH, participants feel a sense of belonging towards the ETH community. Participants who took part in the photovoice (PP7, PP10, PP13, PP23) identified SAFC and the Stadium of Light as a symbol and place that they identify with (see examples below).



PP7- “A very important part of my life”



PP23- “Open at last”



PP13- no caption



PP10- “Items and symbols that I identify with”

Figure 9- Photovoice symbols and places

Within the interviews, these participants outlined the importance of these symbols associated with SAFC bringing about feelings of: pride- “I’m proud of Sunderland I am” (PP8), belonging- “It’s our badge” (PP13), and identity- “It’s something that as a

supporter you can hang your coat on” (PP23). These symbolic markers help create a sense of togetherness and belonging of people from different backgrounds in Sunderland (Tonts & Atherley, 2010). The strength and interpretation of the SAFC badge as a symbol varied between ETH participants, supporting Cohen’s (1985) symbolic construction of community, whereby symbols bring people together, regardless of whether the same meaning is held. For some participants the badge provides memories of being season ticket holders for most of their lives and being part of the ups and downs of SAFC (PP3, PP7, PP8, PP10, PP14). For others, such as PP2, PP15 and PP19, it is recognisable as simply the local football club for the city of Sunderland.

Furthermore, PP23 in the focus group highlighted that he decided to start attending the ETH because of the connection to SAFC, specifically that the former chairman of SAFC Bob Murray, founded and is the chairman of the FoL: “Because Bob Murray built the club, he also built the foundation. And for me the two go together”. In an earlier interview, PP23 also conflated the ETH with the Sunderland Senior Supporters Association. These three different communities (SAFC, ETH, and Senior Supporters) provide a sense of belonging to him as a SAFC supporter. Moreover, PP6, PP7, PP8, and PP14 agreed that the ETH’s association with SAFC helped them to feel like they belonged to the ETH amongst other SAFC supporters. For participants such as PP10, it was the link to SAFC that led to them exploring what programmes the FoL offered for them: “Well because of the football it made me look further into what was on offer around football and then that’s when I got into the hub”. Other participants during the focus group and earlier interviews also highlighted that it was the perceived link between SAFC and the FoL which led to their decision to start attending the ETH (for example, PP7 and PP13). Indeed, this perceived link leads to participants developing

a sense of belonging as they identify that they share something in common with other members- an interest in SAFC (DS12). This then provides a sense of belonging to individuals when attending the ETH. This was acknowledged by staff- “It gives everybody something to kind of support. It gives them something to have in common I would say. Brings people together. And it’s something that’s been happening for generations as well” (DS8).

This sense of belonging experienced by participants of the ETH would unlikely be experienced by the same participants if an equivalent group was being delivered by the local council or other local provider. Whilst PP7 would still attend a programme delivered by the local council, she revealed that she would not experience the same level of belonging compared to attending programmes delivered by the FoL. Staff (DS10, DS11) also recognise that some individuals believe the FoL is actually part of SAFC. Whilst this is not the case legally, this perception from individuals can encourage participation since the individual believes that they are participating with SAFC. DS13 explained the benefit that this conflation can have:

They don’t really see the differential between the foundation and the football club, because of the kit that we wear, so they are like, you’ll quite often hear them tell people- “oh yeah the football club’s ETH” rather than the FoL’s ETH. So that gets your foot in the door for a lot, but then it can put some people off because of the football connection.

Away from the ETH, staff of other programmes also recognise the potential for the link with SAFC to act as a magnet to encourage people to start attending programmes delivered by the FoL. For example- “Yes. I’ve been out and about on one promotional event, one careers fair, where people were drawn to the stand, I believe because of what we were wearing” (DS10). And DS11 commented: “So I know that if we go somewhere in Sunderland or areas of Durham, the badge gets us through the door,

because it's something really really close to people's hearts". When asked why SAFC is close to people's hearts, DS11 went on to explain:

I think it's almost like a religion to some people, it gives them meaning, it's something that they connect with, it's important, it's part of their lives. It's a hobby and they care about what happens to it.

However, the perceived conflation between the FoL and SAFC also has drawbacks, notably in the assumptions that the FoL is merely the community department of SAFC; and because the FoL is perceived to be SAFC, then this may turn people away who are not SAFC supporters (DS9). For example:

Sometimes it can be a little bit of a hinderance because they think that because we are part of the football then it means that we're going to be able to get players in and stuff like that. And so it kind of muddies the waters, we have to say to people yes we are part that, but the football club is a separate thing, we are just a charity. But it's very good for getting people through the door. (DS8)

Moreover, there is an assumption held by stakeholders that the FoL only delivers football programmes:

I think in terms of football club it is a large magnetic to bring them in. But like I've also said, people then assume that it's all to do with football. So yeah just reiterating to some people that it's not, it's just we wear the badge because we are that larger community and that larger family. (DS13)

Furthermore, for some participants (PP2, PP15) there is no emotional attachment to SAFC. Indeed, PP2 was forthright in saying that the ETH and its link to SAFC does not have an impact on his identity: "Because I'm a Sunderland boy whether or not I come to the hub or not, it doesn't help my identity. It doesn't strengthen my identity because my identity was already strong before".

However, for several participants, such as PP12 who despite being a SAFC supporter, the link to SAFC is not significant in deciding to attend the ETH. The significant factor for these participants for attending the ETH was what the programme offered-

activities and meeting people of a similar age and life stage: “So I don’t come here because it’s associated with the club... I come here because of the activities” (PP3). Some participants also stated that if the ETH was run by an alternative non-football related organisation they would still attend (PP2, PP3, PP19). For example, “I would have come here anyway if I had known about [it]... So I don’t come here because its associated with the club” (PP3). This consideration was apparent for the ETH, as evidenced by the following exchange from the focus group:

PP3- The football club made no difference. The only way we found out about it was through Jamie and during Covid when nothing was happening.

PP7- Oh that’s right.

PP3- And we had the online quiz. But that was nothing to do with the football club. And to be honest during the sessions I come here, the football club is rarely mentioned. From people organising it or anything like that.

Researcher- So it’s the activities and the people which perhaps encourage you to come along?

PP3- Yeah. I mean I’m a Sunderland supporter but that has not influenced my decision at all.

Due to not interviewing participants of other programmes, it is unclear whether the same theory applies to participants on different programmes. However, delivery staff interviewed during Stage 3 suggested that a child’s motive for attending FoL programmes is a mix of an interest in football and a family affiliation to SAFC. Therefore, this PT provides scope for further testing in the future across different programmes. However, as the outcome below makes clear, the magnetic pull of the association with SAFC, which attracts people to initially attend FoL programmes, loses its effect and strength over time. Instead, this is replaced by the activities and relationships with staff and fellow participants which encourages sustained participation.

Outcome- identification leading to initial participation

Even if, as indicated above, individuals attach different meanings to the SAFC badge (reasoning), the symbolism of the badge still brings individuals together to the ETH and other FoL programmes (outcome). The meanings held of the symbolic association between the FoL and SAFC have encouraged participants to attend the ETH: “Because it was linked to the Sunderland football club I decided I would come along and give it a go” (PP7). Indeed, PP6 disclosed that he would attend “Anything to do with Sunderland [AFC]”. Whilst many participants mentioned that they would not have initially attended the ETH if it was not for the perceived link with SAFC (PP6, PP8, PP10), over time the motivation to attend because of the link to SAFC gave way to the activities and people that are part of the ETH. For example, the link to SAFC was perceived to be the initial magnet to attract participants (PP14), but over time the importance of fellow participants increased (PP6, PP24):

At first there was an element of, oh we’re in the Beacon yeah great I’ll have a look in there and see what it’s like and whatever. But I think as you move on in time, the people are more important than the actual club element of it. (PP24)

Thus, this PT explains how the association with SAFC contributes towards individuals deciding to attend the ETH, however over time the motive for continued participation is that of what the ETH provides through the activities and socialisation. Figure 10-PT 1 ripple effect outlines this causal pathway for this. There is acknowledgement that this can work differently for different programmes delivered by the FoL (DS12). For example, young people who engage with the FoL wear a variety of football kits not just SAFC kits. However, for older generations there may still be that hesitancy to engage with the FoL if the individual identifies themselves as a supporter of a team

other than SAFC. Furthermore, the second outcome outlined by the diagram of sustained participation may be the first outcome for individuals who are not motivated by the link to SAFC, rather immediately they are attracted to attending programmes because of the activities and people involved.

The theory refinement process suggests that this theory may be applicable for other programmes beyond the ETH that the FoL deliver. For example, the quotes below are from staff members referring to other programmes away from the ETH that they are involved in:

So I'd say it is good, they can get people into the door, but we've found that the people more likely, well if they're more likely to stay it's because of us, it's not because there's a player there, it's because of the facility, and just kind of drawing links of them playing football here. (DS8)

Yeah I think that badge and that sense of belonging is a good hook. But it can't, it loses its hookability over time. And you replace that by other relationships. (DS10)

Whilst the reasoning of feeling a sense of belonging because of the link between the FoL and SAFC may act as a magnet to encourage some people to attend a programme delivered by the FoL, the association with SAFC does not sustain participation in the long term. Rather it is fellow participants, relationships with staff, and the activities which maintain sustained participation:

Yeah definitely. Because I think the kind of, the initial draw could be the badge, the club, where it's something everyone knows within the city, but then once they're in and they've got that little group together, I think it becomes its own mini-community in a way. And I think that's where a lot of the positive comes out of. (DS12)

Thus, this PT helps to explain how the “mini-community” of the ETH is developed. The subsequent PTs for the ETH outline what happens within the community of the ETH.

The refined programme theory

PT 1- Identification leading to initial participation:

When the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC, such as the uniform that the delivery staff wear which resembles the training kit worn by SAFC players (resource A), to engage with people who identify with the significance of SAFC within the local geographical community (context A), then individuals will develop a sense of belonging towards the FoL which acts as a magnet (reasoning A) to encourage initial participation (outcome A/ context B). However, over time, the strength of this magnet reduces and is replaced by the relationships and activities (resource B), contributing to a safe and enjoyable environment which provides a community which participants feel a part of (reasoning B) which leads to sustained participation (outcome B).

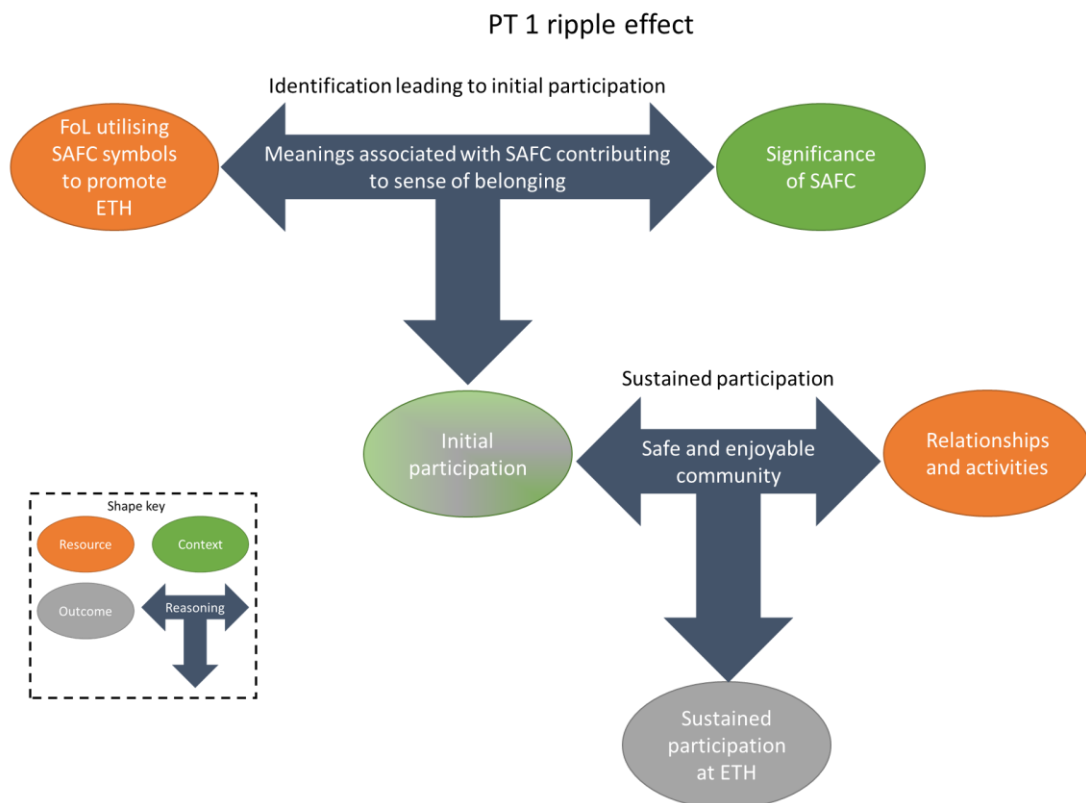


Figure 10- PT 1 ripple effect

Chapter 9- (PT 2) Remaining physically active in later life

Introduction to programme theory

This PT focuses on the effect that maintaining physical continuity can have on individuals during the later stages of life. Underpinned by continuity theory and IPT D, the PT helps to explain the positive psychological impact taking part in suitable physical activities can have on individuals.

PT 2- Remaining physically active in later life

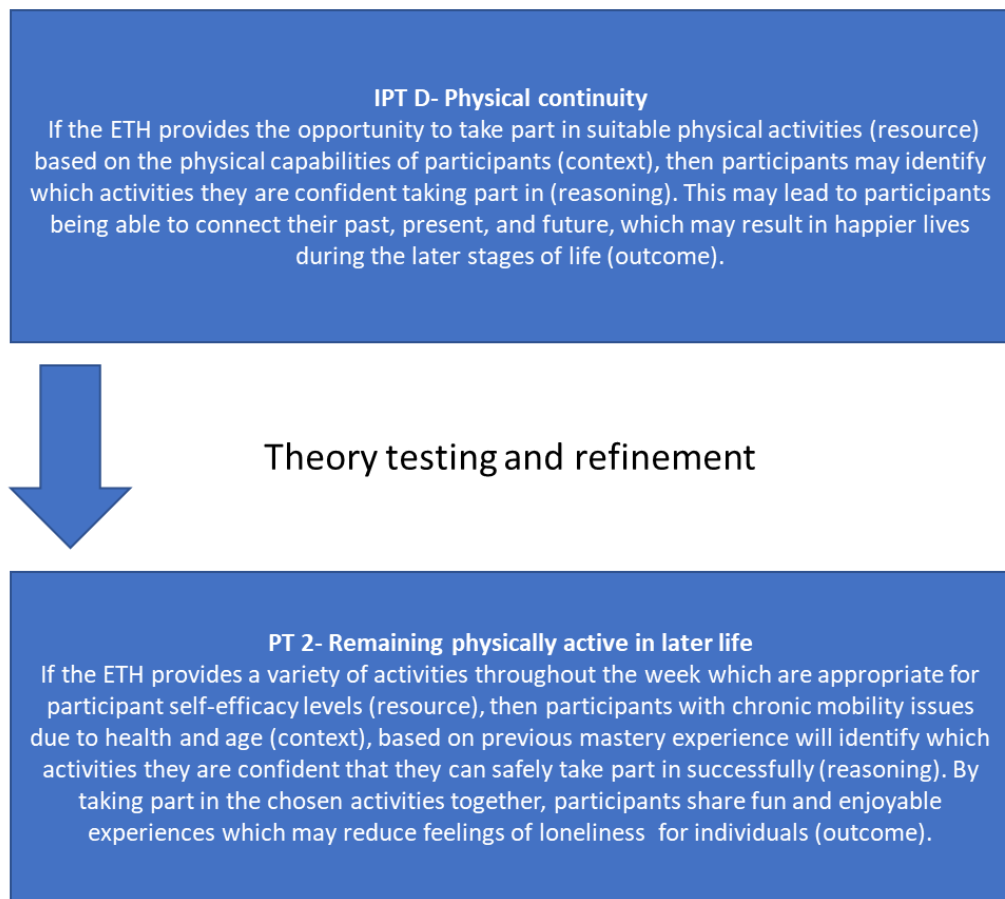


Figure 11- PT 2 development

Context- reduced physical capabilities due to age and health

The key context for this PT is the age and associated chronic health conditions of the participants. Nimrod and Shrira (2016) have proposed a ‘the paradox of leisure’, whereby as people age it becomes more important to be involved in leisure pursuits to maintain routine and purpose; however, as people age, they experience constraints limiting the accessibility and benefits of leisure. Whilst the ETH is advertised as an over-55’s programme, the average age of participants for the ETHs nationally is 71 with 77% of members over the age of 65 (Bradley, 2022). This is similar to the FoL’s ETH, with the average age of ETH participants at the FoL 73 years. Participants recognise that their age contributes to a reduction in their capacity to complete leisure activities, for example: “I think our age dictates that we’re not going to get that much better anyway. We’re not are we. We’re just trying to tread water” (PP13). As a result of their age, the participants who attend the ETH are typically less mobile and experience an increasing number of health problems which affects what activities they can take part in. This means that older people may have lower levels of self-efficacy when it comes to taking part in physical activities (Warner et al., 2014).

Participants who were interviewed disclosed health conditions explaining how these chronic conditions have varying degrees of impact on their day-to-day life and participation in physical activity (PP6, PP10, PP12, PP15, PP23). For example, PP10 mentioned that arthritis “Does slow me down a bit”. Indeed, many participants are “Not as mobile as they were” (DS6). As a result of the health conditions and general deterioration of the body’s ability to be used for physical activity that older people experience, older individuals are mindful of what they should and should not put their bodies through. This can lead to individuals no longer taking part in some activities.

For example, PP15 provided insight into the thought process of whether to take part in an activity or not:

Well I suppose you drop your level. I mean I found that I dropped Pilates and I dropped yoga. I dropped those at one point because I was finding it was a little bit harder to do... So you don't want to injure yourself so you don't want to keep it... I had sort of a leg injury, so I found that I had to drop them at the time and then because you drop you them you don't go back. You get to a level where you think- oh I can't manage that again. So probably that's why I dropped those things.

In addition, PP12 mentioned that "You've got to be careful" and PP23 commented that "Well I am always very conscious obviously... I think I take a sensible approach which I have to". Thus, participants have an awareness that they are getting older, slower, and less mobile. Therefore, as people age, self-efficacy levels toward taking part in physical activities will reduce (context). However, as discussed below, by providing a variety of activities that are appropriate for different levels of physical activity self-efficacy, this will lead to participants identifying suitable activities that they are confident that they can take part in successfully (reasoning).

Resource- variety of activities which are appropriate for the levels of self-efficacy of participants

IPT D identified four possible resources that may lead to an increase in self-efficacy for participants at the ETH- mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997). During the focus group, it emerged through that the activities provided by the ETH allow participants to draw a link between previous action and present action (mastery experience). In other words, participants can identify suitable activities at the ETH based on their

previous experiences in taking part in the same or similar activities and in turn unite their past, present, and future.

It is important that the ETH provides a variety of activities to choose from. This is because there is a range of physical abilities amongst participants (context). Activities include Pilates on Monday, seated chair exercises on Tuesday, along with table tennis and walking football on Thursday (see Table 6 in Chapter 7). These activities are in addition to the main hub session on a Wednesday where there is a selection of activities available for participants to take part in such as table tennis, indoor carpet bowls, table tennis, and dominoes for the less mobile. Both participants and delivery staff consider these activities suitable for the age and stage of the participants. For example, participants reflected:

They do bowls and all sorts of things like that. Now I must say, and I know it's down to Phil, it happens to be Phil that does the Tuesday morning sessions, and his workout suits me normally, and from an arthritic point of view it has helped me. I've gone to taking painkillers four times a day to twice a day. (PP6)

You've probably sussed out yourself in hub you've got a group of people with varying abilities or lack of abilities. I'd rather call it abilities or whatever it is. Some can do more than others but even the ones that are not able to do as much on the physical side they still enjoy being there which is good. (PP19)

Moreover, participants have the opportunity (and do) tell members of staff what activities they would like to be available to them:

I think [the activities] are very much tailored towards the audience, and they have a lot of say in terms of what we offer them. We are always checking and asking for their opinion and what they want...And the not so physical activities. We do try to encourage them to obviously get up more and be more physical, but happy for them to sit down and if they are there for the social side then they've got the dominoes, the bingo, and the quiz. (DS1)

This is an ongoing participant led process which was one of the ambitions of the ETH (DS2) and helps ensure that there is something that every participant can take part in

(DS6). Moreover, staff monitor which activities are not being utilised, such as the indoor carpet bowls, and replace them with more in demand activities such as pickleball and more table tennis tables (DS2).

The resource for this refined PT is the variety of activities which are appropriate for the levels of self-efficacy that older people hold. The ETH provides activities not just during the main Wednesday 'hub' session, but throughout the week with activities such as Pilates, walking football, and seated chair exercise. For those who have low physical capabilities, dominoes is played at the main hub session whilst the physical activities are taking place.

Reasoning- identification of suitable activities

Based on their physical capabilities (context), participants will take part in activities (resource) for which they have the required levels of self-efficacy for taking part in successfully (reasoning). This success is defined by the participants as having fun. Therefore, the aim for participants in participating in the activities is to have fun with fellow participants, as demonstrated by the following focus group exchange:

PP3- And we just want to have fun don't we.

PP7- Yeah. I think that's the biggest thing- whatever you do to have fun.

PP13- ... The game's not important really so long as you are having a laugh as you are going along.

...

PP13- As long as people have fun that's the main thing.

PP1- Yeah.

Researcher- And does that lead to a greater sense of achievement? When you leave after do you think- oh I had a really good time playing table tennis today?

PP13- I think so.

PP7- Yeah you go out happy.

Participants are not bothered about following the rules or learning the correct techniques, rather they want to have fun with each other. From observing the activities, it is apparent that participants are having fun when taking part, evidenced through lots of laughter. Furthermore, as is explored in PT 3, the activities provide the opportunity to socialise with other participants. The important aspect about the fun which participants are having is that they are having fun with other people in a social setting, thus preventing loneliness and social isolation, whilst also maintaining or reestablishing some physical activity.

With a wide range of activities provided by the ETH during the week, and during the main hub session on a Wednesday, participants have the freedom to choose which activities to take part in: “Personally I like to walk around and play football or table tennis or pickleball or whatever” (PP13). Furthermore, it was noted during the focus group that some people play dominoes each week because for some participants this is what they feel confident doing, as opposed to the more active activities such as table tennis.

Participants at the ETH have acknowledged that there is a thought process which takes place before deciding which activities to take part in. Participants of the ETH are conscious over their ability to be able to take part in physical activities. As a result of the aging process, participants become less mobile, and therefore, compared to earlier life find completing tasks and activities harder (context). For example, PP23 mentioned that he is “Always very conscious” and that he must take a “Sensible approach” when considering whether to get involved in a particular activity. Whilst not every activity may be suitable for every participant, every participant is able to take part in at least one activity ranging from table tennis and boxing to dominoes.

During the main hub, some participants, such as PP7 and PP13, enjoy having a go at every activity, whereas others like to take part in the same activity each week. This could be table tennis, or for the less mobile, dominoes. The choice of which activities to take part in will be dependent on individual physical capabilities (context) and the level of self-efficacy that one has in their ability to successfully take part (reasoning). This PT suggests that the level of self-efficacy is dependent on previous experience of the same or similar activities, which contributes to a level of mastery experience.

This PT suggests that an individual's previous mastery experience will contribute towards the required levels of self-efficacy to confidently take part in selected activities successfully. This is consistent with previous studies which suggest that mastery experience can contribute to higher levels of self-efficacy (Ashford, Edmunds, & French, 2010; McAuley et al., 2000; Warner et al., 2011). The activities of the ETH are adapted to meet the needs and the abilities of the participants who are older and have reduced physical capabilities (context). This helps to enable participant agency and helps to maintain continuity for participants which can lead to improved wellbeing and a more positive outlook during later life (Hershfield & Bartels, 2012; Rutchick et al., 2018). Indeed, there is a desire from participants not to waste away by sitting at home watching television all day. This attitude helps to provide a sense of purpose and a desire to develop a structure and routine amongst participants. This is consistent with previous studies which have highlighted the positive effect that physical activity can have in providing a sense of purpose to older individuals (Cornelia, Guy, Simon, & David, 2016; Costello, Kafchinski, Vrazel, & Sullivan, 2011; B. C. Grant, 2008). Thus, the motivation for taking part in suitable activities is to maintain a sense of purpose in life. This is achieved through participating in activities with fellow participants.

Outcome- sharing fun and enjoyable experiences

Similar to findings from G. S. Morgan, Willmott, Ben-Shlomo, Haase, and Campbell (2019) and Liechty, Genoe, and Marston (2017), whilst ETH participants are aware of the health benefits that may come about from taking part in the activities at the ETH, it is the social aspect- the fun and enjoyment together- that motivates participation.

The dialogue below from the focus group demonstrates this:

PP13- The game's not important really so long as you are having a laugh as you are going along.

PP2- The activity you are doing isn't really that important. Whether you're sitting playing dominoes, there's more talking than dominoes banging on the table.

PP1- And even with footy we will stop and have a chat about footy.

PP13- Oh yeah you stop, with all the games, you stop and have a little chat and then continue again.

PP7- Not because you are tired just because.

Researcher- You are having fun? And the social nature?

PP7- Yeah.

...

Researcher- Okay so the motives for taking part are mainly to have fun and to have physical exercise?

PP3- I think the fun is the more important bit.

PP7- Yeah I would say fun first.

PP3- Physical is just a by-product.

This is consistent with previous research which suggests that older individuals have a desire to be physically active in retirement (Liechty et al., 2017; Sperazza & Banerjee, 2010). Engaging in physical activity during later life can lead to benefits including social interaction, sense of pride, and improved or maintained health (Adamson & Parker, 2006; Liechty et al., 2017). Indeed, data from the ETH participants suggests that all three of these benefits are sought.

Engaging in physical activity during later life can lead to benefits of social interaction (Adamson & Parker, 2006; Liechty et al., 2017). The activities at the ETH help participants to maintain patterns of activity and social interaction (Barnett, Guell, & Ogilvie, 2012). The maintenance and continuity of activity and social interaction can lead to individuals being distracted from the challenges of later life, including loneliness and a lack of purpose in life. Furthermore, this PT, supporting previous studies (Brady et al., 2020; Casper et al., 2021; Emerson & Mirda, 2021; Franke et al., 2021; Pels & Kleinert, 2016; Shvedko, Thompson, Greig, & Whittaker, 2020; Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021), suggests that by taking part in suitable physical activities together, individuals not only leave the ETH with a sense of achievement, but also the time spent completing the activities reduces and prevents feelings of loneliness.

By taking part in suitable activities with other participants of the ETH, participation acts as a distraction for the challenges of later life, providing purpose and a sense of achievement. The shared fun experiences during the ETH acts as an enjoyable distraction from the challenges experienced due to older age (PP12, PP14): “And I think that is why people come. Some people come as two. Some people come on their own. And I think they need and they want, it’s obvious that they want a bit of fun for an hour or two” (PP12). Furthermore, during the focus group, participants referred to taking part in the sports and physical activities as a distraction to challenges of later life which may include feelings of loneliness. Moreover, when asked about the impact of the ETH being an escape, PP10 replied that she is able to “Just leave everything else behind for a couple of hours”, highlighting how taking part in the ETH activities helps to distract her from the challenges that she experiences.

Taking part in appropriate activities together provides participants with opportunities to develop companionship and friendship (see PT 3- Chapter 10). Participants commented on how taking part in the activities together provides the opportunity to chat and get to know each other in a fun and relaxed manner, thus preventing social isolation. If the activities were not appropriate for the self-efficacy of participants, then the joint participation would not happen. Previous literature (Cozijnsen et al., 2013; Liechty & Genoe, 2013; Lund & Engelsrud, 2008; Netz, Wu, Becker, & Tenenbaum, 2005) has highlighted how older people will use opportunities to take part in physical activities to increase their levels of social contact with others, thus preventing loneliness and social isolation. Indeed, an important part of PT is that the participants of the ETH complete the physical activities together which contributes to a sense of fun and enjoyment:

Oh we've had some good laughs we did ukulele and that was hilarious you know different things. I mean we always have a good laugh. Just playing table tennis and things, none of us can play, none of us are very good at anything really. (PP14)

When you're doing it you're enjoying it because, I mean, you will have seen the people are laughing and nobody's taking it really, really seriously and everybody's, so you're laughing. And to be honest laughing is good for you isn't it. And then when you come away I think yeah I've done something. (PP15)

The fun and enjoyment experienced through taking part in the activities together helps to prevent feelings of loneliness for participants. Indeed, as PP15 identifies, participants recognise that laughing is good for them. Laughing with fellow participants helps to prevent feelings of loneliness, and also by taking part together prevents social isolation.

As a result of taking part in the activities of the ETH, participants are able to maintain appropriate levels of physical mobility and have the opportunities to develop friendships. The data from participants (as outlined above) suggests that this leads to

an increase in mood and outlook on life. Observations of the ETH showed that participants enjoy taking part in the activities with lots of laughter and smiles during the activities- usually laughing at their lack of abilities. Participants attend the ETH confidently knowing that there will be activities suitable for them. If they deem an activity not to be suitable, they can choose to partake in a suitable alternative without any embarrassment.

Moreover, as PP15 alluded to, partaking in appropriate activities may lead to the outcome of a sense of achievement- “And then when you come away- I think yeah I’ve done something”. This sense of achievement may contribute to an improved mood:

Researcher- And does that lead to a greater sense of achievement?
When you leave after do you think- oh I had a really good time playing table tennis today?

PP13- I think so.

PP7- Yeah you go out happy.

PP13- I think we go out saying that we’ve had a good time being here.
Not just playing table tennis.

PP1- Not just because of table tennis yeah. More the social side.

This distraction from the challenges of later life is the outcome for this PT. Through participating in appropriate activities, participants can share fun and enjoyable experiences with each other. Whilst the PT highlights the physical continuity that participants are able to maintain, this is not the primary outcome or concern for participants. Rather it is the fun and enjoyment that they can share together which acts as a distraction from the challenges that participants experience as they get older.

Moreover, the effects extend beyond the actual ETH sessions. For example, PP10 mentioned that after attending the ETH main hub session she “Can’t wait to come the next week. It’s something to look forward to”. This suggests that participants

experience post-exercise euphoria (Telenius, Tangen, Eriksen, & Rokstad, 2022). Thus, this PT suggests that through taking part in activities which are suitable for the levels of self-efficacy of participants, participants are able to participate together and share fun experiences. These experiences provide a sense of euphoria and act as a distraction to the challenges experienced as a result of older age. Moreover, by participating together, participant feelings of loneliness will be reduced or prevented.

The refined programme theory

PT 2- Remaining physically active in later life

If the ETH provides a variety of activities throughout the week which are appropriate for participant self-efficacy levels (resource), then participants with chronic mobility issues due to health and age (context), based on previous mastery experience will identify which activities they are confident that they can safely take part in successfully (reasoning). By taking part in the chosen activities together, participants share fun and enjoyable experiences which may reduce feelings of loneliness for individuals (outcome).

Chapter 10- (PT 3) Fighting back against social discontinuity

Introduction to programme theory

The PT outlined in this chapter is based on IPT C, IPT F, and IPT G. The refined PT is underpinned by continuity theory (Atchley, 1989) and social network theory (Blieszner et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2017).

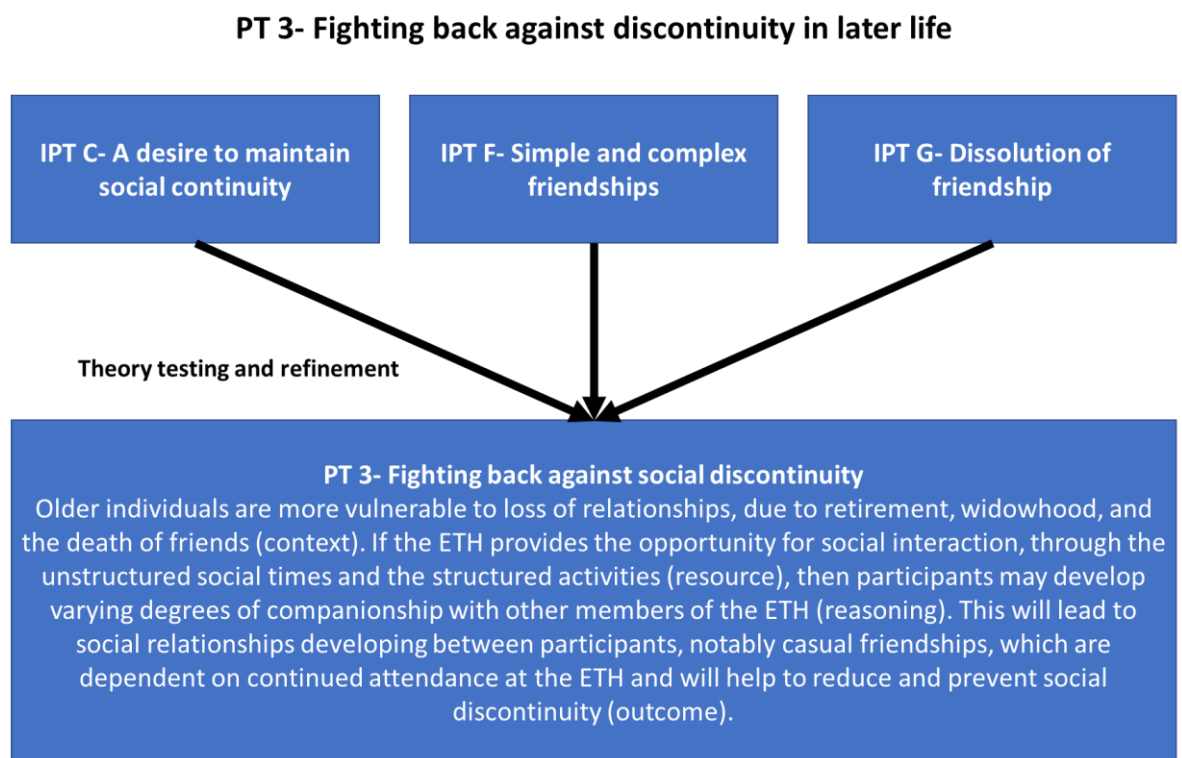


Figure 12- PT 3 development

Context- vulnerability to loss of relationships

Older people are more vulnerable to living alone and having less social interaction. This has been further compounded by the impact of COVID-19 related restrictions. This can lead to social isolation and feelings of loneliness. As a result, older people may have a desire to develop new relationships to replace relationships that they have lost. As individuals get older they typically experience changes in their social network

(Waite & Das, 2010) and impediments for social interaction (M. E. Hughes, Waite, Hawkey, & Cacioppo, 2004), with a general pattern of smaller social networks as one increases in age (Cornwell, Laumann, & Schumm, 2008). Changes in social network and interaction can be because of retirement, widowhood, passing away of friends, and deteriorating health (Ayalon, 2018; Nuttman-Shwartz, 2008; Östman et al., 2015; Secrest & Zeller, 2003; Utz et al., 2002; E. Walker & McNamara, 2013). As a result, older people's social networks and opportunities for companionship reduce over time. Because of declining social opportunities this can lead to feelings of loneliness (H. M. O'Rourke, Collins, & Sidani, 2018) as well as social isolation (Keyes et al., 2016). Indeed, friendship-based support networks for retired people are almost a third smaller than those of working people (Requena, 2013). Furthermore, with advancing age, involvement in social activities is more likely to decline (Chun, Heo, & Ryu, 2022). This vulnerability to a reduction in social relationships may lead to stronger feelings of loneliness along with social isolation.

Participants of the ETH have experienced discontinuity through the aforementioned life events. Particularly discontinuity in the amount of social contact with others due to not working and discontinuity in living alone due to the death of partner. 40% of participants from the World Café indicated that they lived alone. The impact of widowhood for participants includes wanting "To stay in the house on my own and feel sorry for myself" (PP14). Moreover, PP8 provided insight into what it was like as a widow in environments that are dominated by married couples: "But my friends still have their husbands, so I don't go out for meals and things like that. It's painful". As a result, PP8 tries to avoid groups which are largely made up of couples because being surrounded by couples highlights her status as a widow.

Nearly all the participants of the ETH are retired. Being retired after a lifetime of work can be challenging for individuals:

The problem that some people have as pensioners is that when they retire, they've been so absorbed with lifetime occupation that to suddenly when you 65th or 66th birthday or whatever it is now, it's just too sudden. (PP2)

I think it's just with being having so many years of working you have a routine at work, you get up in the morning and go to work... So to me life has been like a routine you know. And when that finishes you cannot sit there feeling a bit lost really. (PP19)

Therefore, for several participants of the ETH, there is a desire to develop new relationships to replace lost relationships as they have got older. Participants of the focus group highlighted that friendship making is a two-way process, believing that individuals attend the ETH to develop friendships: "You can only be friends with somebody who wants a friend... I think the attraction for new starters is the social side". Thus, equally important is the ability to make new relationships.

Also, during the focus group, participants revealed the impact that the COVID-19 related lockdowns had on their outlook on life, agreeing that they missed the routine of getting out and attending the ETH to spend time with other people, which contributed towards feelings of a lack of purpose in life:

PP13- When the Covid was on and we couldn't come here, some people were struggling with it... It [lockdown] wasn't a great time for anybody really.

...

PP1- And I struggled with Covid and there was [sic] the two of us you know so for people on their own.

...

PP3- I think it was tedious. Even when I used to go out for a walk, I used to go around the block but then you thought what's the point in going around the block you don't see anybody. The gardens all look the same so it became tedious.

...

PP1- I know two or three people that get up in the morning, sit and watch television, have lunch, watch the television, have tea, and go to bed. And that's the day. And you say to them get a hobby.

Thus, once lockdown restrictions began to lift and the ETH could again meet in person, individuals were longing for social contact and variety in their lives.

The participants interviewed can be described as proactive in terms of remaining cognitively and physically active and involved, demonstrating a general desire and ability to replace lost relationships. PP19 sums up the general mood of participants of the ETH: "You can either sit in the house all day and just deteriorate, or try and do something to keep yourself interested, active, and involved, which I've always hoped to do". Indeed, participants of the focus group highlighted the importance of having the desire and the ability to develop relationships. Individuals need both to develop relationships. PP14 highlighted the challenge of having both the desire and the ability to develop new relationships as a result of the discontinuity of becoming a widow:

Well I mean I was grieving, and I you know I just I didn't want to meet people really, I just wanted to stay in the house on my own and feel sorry for myself more or less- that's the truth of it.

Consistent with continuity theory, PP14 demonstrates how for some individuals it can be difficult to respond to the life changes and discontinuity that older age may bring.

Resource- opportunities for social interaction

The ETH provides structured social engagement (PP3, PP7, PP15, PP23) over time (PP2, PP3, PP10, PP12, PP15, PP23). Both are required for participants to maintain continuity in the relationships that they hold. Examples supporting this include: "Over a long period of time I guess. And spending a lot of time together. And seeing people in different situations as well I guess" (PP3); "Just doing stuff with them... Doing the

quiz even doing the bingo. Daft things like that” (PP7); and “Having regular meetings with them... Because it’s built up. It’s no good sort of one week you’re there and the next fortnight you’re away” (PP23). By participating together in the activities of the ETH, participants have the opportunity to develop social networks and interact with each other, which are key components for successful aging (Chun et al., 2022; Winstead et al., 2014). Consistent with findings from Standridge et al. (2020), the opportunity for social interaction encourages individuals to attend the ETH:

Well what we do here is in groups basically isn’t it. You’re not doing anything sort of solo... you’re mixing in with this group whether it’s sitting and having the quiz... or when you go to do any of the activities, you’re not doing anything on your own, you’re with somebody all the time, so that’s the company you’re getting. In the whole of the session, you’re not on your own, you’re with someone at one point, maybe different people over the couple of hour session, but you are with somebody. (PP15)

Indeed, one of the aims of the ETH is to provide older people more susceptible to loneliness the opportunity to be a part of a community (Bradley, 2022). This is achieved through the opportunity to participate in activities with fellow ETH participants.

The focus group suggested that the coffee and chat time is more effective at building relationships, compared to the other activities that the ETH provides. The opportunities for social interaction during the sport and physical activities were deemed to be less important for building relationships with fellow participants:

PP1- I think it’s the coffee and the chat beforehand that’s more than the activities.

PP23- We always seem to have ten minutes even in the chair exercise, we have ten minutes.

PP1- Yeah chatting about. (Focus group)

This does not mean that the activities beyond the coffee and chat are not important. Rather, the physical activities can help to reduce/prevent social isolation as

participants take part together, whereas the social coffee and chat time may be more effective from a loneliness point of view as participants are able to sustain more detailed conversation with each other. This does not mean that the physical activities do not contribute to a reduction in loneliness, indeed there was acknowledgement from participants that taking part in the physical activities also contributes to the development of relationships. Rather, this is acknowledgement that the social coffee chat time is more effective at achieving this.

During the focus group a distinction was made between the main ETH session on a Wednesday morning, and sport specific sessions also taking place at the BoL, highlighting the difference in motivation and purpose between the two:

PP2- On the next court, next door to us, the people playing netball are over there because they want a game of netball.

PP13- Well the same as the table tennis club.

PP2- The whistle blows up at the end and they just disappear.

Researcher- So for those who don't want friendship at all, they came just come over here and go to table tennis club and netball club?

PP1- Yeah.

PP2- Yeah.

PP1- Walking football.

PP2- The groups that concentrate on one particular activity.

...

Researcher- Whereas one of the key things about the ETH is the social interactions that you have with each other?

PP13- I think so yeah.

Therefore, what is unique about the ETH, compared to some of the other programmes that take place at the BoL is the opportunity for social interactions, which in turn will lead to participants who have a desire for social interaction.

Reasoning- sense of companionship

Despite the literature suggesting that trust is important for developing relationships (Enslin & Hedge, 2019; Fiske et al., 2007; Krenz et al., 2022; L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006), during the focus group it became clear that this was not the case for participants at the ETH. Furthermore, the refinement process identified that a sense of companionship is the reasoning within this refined PT. As a result of co-engaging and sharing common experiences with each other at the ETH, participants provide companionship to each other (reasoning). In their study exploring the importance of physical activity in retirement, Genoe, Liechty, and Marston (2022) found that retired people view physical activity as “more than just exercise” (p. 28) in that individuals choose leisure activities for the social benefits too. This is the case at the ETH, for example, PP8 stated: “So you’re chatting all the time and even when you’re knocking the ball onto someone else’s table. So there’s banter going on all the time”. Furthermore, PP19 mentioned:

The social side of it you’re meeting people in a similar or not too far distance from your own environment and your own situation. So in that sense yeah you don’t feel as alone as you would without them really.

This sense of companionship is a two-way process, dependent on both individuals involved, as highlighted by those present at the focus group:

PP13- ...It’s a two-way thing. It’s got to be a two-way thing...

Researcher- Why is it important that it is a two-way process?

PP13- Well you cannot just be. If you meet somebody for the first time and you speak to them, you’ve got to have some friendly response from them.

PP2- If they shut you out then that’s it.

PP13- That’s right.

PP23- I’m flogging a dead horse.

PP1- Yes.

Researcher- So to grow that relationship, it's a two-way thing?

PP13- A two-way thing.

PP23- Oh yeah.

Researcher- If it's only one person putting effort in, it won't get very far at all?

PP13- It doesn't work.

PP2- You can only be friends with somebody who wants a friend.

PP13- Yeah.

PP7- Yeah.

Moreover, data collected from all three stages of the evaluation demonstrates that participants develop stronger levels of companionship with some individuals and shallower levels of companionship with others. This is evidenced by participants often sitting at the same tables with the same people each week. This is something that members of delivery staff have noticed:

Like on a Wednesday when we go in you can kind of tell where everybody is going to sit. There's always a group, like you know which group is going to sit to the right. (DS1)

Furthermore, participants are also aware that they tend to sit with the same people each week (PP3, PP8, PP14). For example, PP8 said "I think you do automatically go towards a table that you always sit at". PP14 provided an explanation for sitting with the same individuals each week:

And we got on so well, we get on so well, well I think we do. So naturally when you come in you look for them and sit where they sit or they look for me and sit where I sit. And the new ones tend to like sit on different tables and things.

The reason for getting on "so well" is that participants who are at similar life stages, and share similar interests such as SAFC and life memories:

Well it's because the people who are my age have the same life memories, I mean you know, where were you when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon? Where were you when, can you remember that? Oh I can remember that yeah yeah. (PP2)

This homophily of interests results in participants feeling comfortable in each other's company which may then lead to the development of casual friendships (outcome).

Outcome- development of relationships

As a result of the opportunities for social interaction (resource) which enables the opportunity for companionship that ETH participants provide each other (reasoning), leading to the development of relationships (outcome), this may reduce the effects of social discontinuity which older people are more vulnerable to (context). There are several different relationship types which may be developed as a result of participants attending the ETH. During theory testing it was clear that the terminology of simple and complex friend (L. Spencer & Pahl, 2006) used in IPT F was not appropriate in generating understanding with staff and participants of the ETH. Indeed this terminology acted as a barrier in teaching the programme theories to the interviewees. Therefore, the refining stage sought to change the terminology, whilst trying to avoid changing the meanings that simple and complex friendships conveyed. Hays (1989) proposed the categories of casual and close friendships. Building on this typology, Oswald, Clark, and Kelly (2004) proposed an additional category of best friend. These labels were deemed to be more relevant and accessible to the participants of the ETH, compared to the terms used in the initial programme theories.

The most common form of relationship which the ETH provides the opportunity to develop is that of casual friend. Casual friendships depend on proximity and in order to maintain a casual friendship, individuals need to be interacting with each other on a regular basis (Oswald et al., 2004). Casual friends share similarities with the simple friendship conceptualisation provided by L. Spencer and Pahl (2006) in that casual

friends depend on one main form of interaction. For the participants of the ETH this is attending the ETH. This was discussed and agreed by participants at the focus group.

The data from this evaluation supports previous findings that “people are happier when they are with others compared to the times when they are alone” (Diener & Biswas-Dinener, 2008, p. 51). For example, participants when reflecting on the impact of the companionship and friendships from the ETH stated that it is uplifting (PP8, PP10). PP6 stated that: “Oh it’s joyous doing that. You’re like good mates and that, as if you’ve been mates for years but you’ve just met them and you get along fine”.

Furthermore, PP15 went into detail stating:

Because you’re out, you’re amongst people, and you’re not, you see I think a lot of loneliness and depression is because you’re sitting on your own, you’re thinking things and obviously the longer you sit and think about things the worse it is. But if you’re out amongst people like at the hub and things like that, your minds taken off yourself in a way isn’t it and you realise you come away and thought I might have come in this morning feeling a little bit iffy, but I’m going out of here feeling great because I’ve done what I’ve done here.

Further evidence comes from the photograph below (Figure 13- "Extra Time Hub gives me regular days in the week to look forward to") from the photovoice data, which shows laughter from a participant. When the participant was asked why the ETH makes her happy, she responded with: “It does because I’m quite a social person so it’s having chance to chat to different people about different topics really”.



Figure 13- "Extra Time Hub gives me regular days in the week to look forward to"

Another participant also stated that the ETH made them feel happy, because the fellow participants are “All very nice people”. These positive feelings are in comparison to negative feelings experienced when there is a lack of companionship which may lead to loneliness (J. T. Cacioppo et al., 2002; Thoits, 2011; Uchino, 2004). For example, when asked how does being lonely make them feel, she replied with “I think you feel very sad. I think you feel unloved”. This participant provided a photograph (Figure 14- “When lonely, phone a friend. Eat chocolates”) of what she does when she is exercising loneliness at home- she tries reaching out to people on the telephone, demonstrating a desire to be socially connected even when at home.



Figure 14- “When lonely, phone a friend. Eat chocolates”

Therefore, it is important for ETH participants to remain socially active and replace relationships that they may have lost because of retirement, widowhood, and the loss of elderly friends. For example, PP10 highlighted the importance of getting out to meet people, whilst PP23 commented that if the ETH were to stop, he would miss the companionship and sense of purpose provided to him on a Wednesday morning. PP23 also mentioned that the ETH provides him with a reason and motive to get up on a Wednesday morning. As a result of co-engaging and sharing common experiences with each other at the ETH, participants provide companionship to each other which in turn may lead to the development of casual friendships. Thus, participants are able

to maintain some social continuity in the number of social relationships they have, which may reduce feelings of loneliness.

The refined programme theory

PT 3- Fighting back against social discontinuity

Older individuals are more vulnerable to loss of relationships, due to retirement, widowhood, and the death of friends (context). If the ETH provides the opportunity for social interaction, through the unstructured social times and the structured activities (resource), then participants may develop varying degrees of companionship with other members of the ETH (reasoning). This will lead to social relationships developing between participants, notably casual friendships, which are dependent on continued attendance at the ETH and will help to reduce and prevent social discontinuity (outcome).

Chapter 11- (PT 4) Social capital

Introduction to programme theory

This PT developed from IPT E. The PT testing and refinement process was underpinned by social capital from a social network perspective (Lin, 1999).

PT 4- Social capital

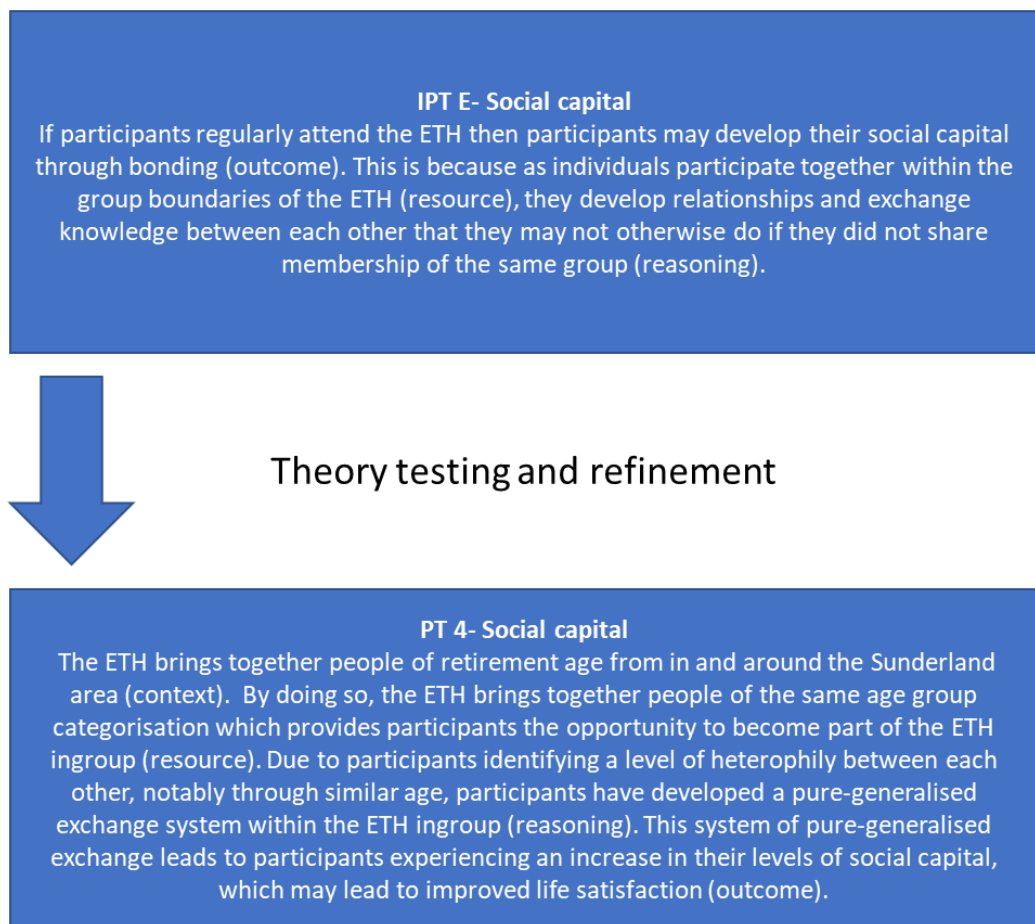


Figure 15- PT 4 development

Context- retirement age

The ETH brings together people from similar group categories, particularly the category of retirement (context). The ETH operates as a social group with boundaries that establish the group. The FoL through the ETH programme has provided the basis

for an ingroup. The ETH defined as an ingroup brings together people who share similarities and are “like minded” (PP2, PP12). Similarities include: retirement age (PP2, PP10), declining health, geography, memories (PP2), experiences (PP3, PP7), SAFC (PP10, PP12). These are examples of the crossed categorisation (Reimer, Schmid, Hewstone, & Ramiah, 2020) that takes place at the ETH. Crossed categorisation enables an ingroup to be developed based on a number of similar identifying factors. Figure 16 below, which is adapted from the work of van Dommelen, Schmid, Hewstone, Gonsalkorale, and Brewer (2015) and uses insight gleaned from data from the theory testing stage, demonstrates the relationship between the three significant group categorisations which contribute to the ingroup of the ETH. Here it can be seen that retirement age, being a resident of the city of Sunderland, and an interest in SAFC are overlapping categories which participants of the ETH can be allocated in to. These categories were deduced from the interview data gathered during the theory testing stage. Several participants (PP10, PP12, PP19, PP6) in the interviews identified a shared interest in SAFC helping them feel a part of the ETH in group.

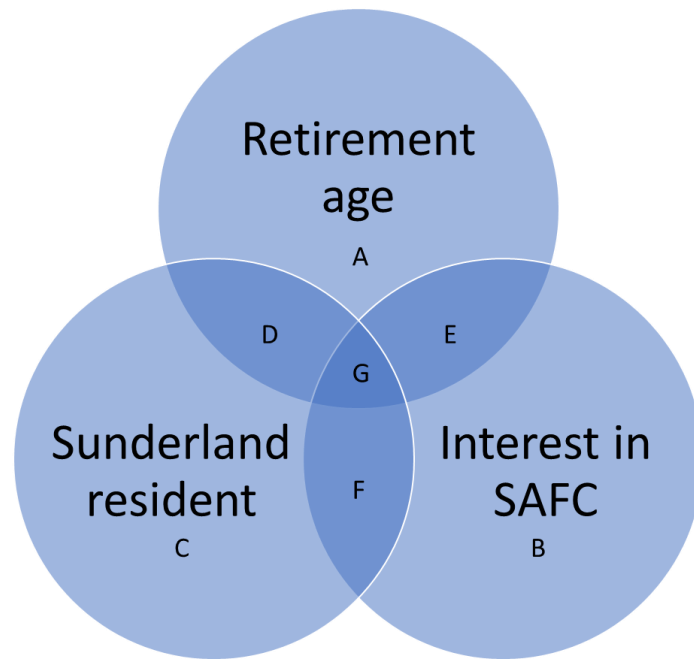


Figure 16- Group categorisations (adapted from van Dommelen, Schmid, Hewstone, Gonsalkorale, and Brewer, 2015)

This PT suggests that to be part of the ETH ingroup, individuals need to be part of one of the following combinations of categories:

$$A + B = E$$

$$A + C = D$$

$$A + B + C = G$$

Furthermore, being of retirement age (A) can also lead to participants perceiving themselves to be part of the ETH ingroup. However, this PT also suggests that being a Sunderland resident and having an interest in SAFC ($C + B = F$), and being a Sunderland resident (C) or a interest in SAFC (B) are not sufficient conditions to be a part of the ETH ingroup.

The following comment from PP19 not only highlighted that the shared interest in SAFC is helpful, but also that this has a stronger effect for the male participants. For

example, when asked about the effects of the shared interest in football and SAFC, PP19 said:

Yeah that's probably the one link with everybody?... Certainly with the men yeah the football. I'm sure the women are keen on the football as well, but probably a lot of them don't go to the matches.

Furthermore, the ETH is uniquely placed to be able to engage with those with an interest in SAFC (Bradley, 2022). Indeed, the ultimate aim of the ETHs nationally was to “harness[ing] the power of their local football clubs... [to] promote social connections and combat loneliness and inactivity” (Sport Industry Research Centre, 2022).

However, data supporting a similar location (PP24) and similar age (PP15, PP2, PP3, PP7, PP14) was stronger than a shared interest in SAFC, suggesting that similar location and similar age are more significant ingroup characteristics, particularly similar age. For example:

Well you feel comfortable because they've experienced the same kind of things having lived the same amount of time I suppose. And they are easy to talk to because they are of a similar ilk really I suppose. (PP3)

There were also practical reasons as to why retirement age and being a resident in Sunderland are more influential than holding an interest in SAFC. Because the ETH is targeted at individuals over the age of 55 (with only one known participant still working), and that the ETH needs to be accessible to individuals thus limiting access to those with the means and motivation to access the BoL.

During the focus group a discussion took place regarding the different group categories of: retirement age, residing in Sunderland, and interest in SAFC. From this discussion it became clear that being of retirement age is the important context for this PT in terms of providing the opportunity for social capital. That said, the focus group acknowledged that from a practical perspective, individuals need to live within a

catchment area to attend the ETH, however it is for individuals to decide for themselves whether they fall into the catchment area. Indeed, several participants travel from outside of Sunderland to attend the ETH. Confirming the PT, interest in SAFC is less important as a context for individuals to attend the ETH. However, it is important to highlight that it was through the Sunderland Senior Supporters Association that the first core group of ETHubbers came from. Thus, there is naturally an interest in SAFC from a large number of participants which contributes towards but is not essential to the outcome of this PT. The focus group agreed that living within and around the Sunderland area is important, however being part of a similar age group is the most important factor. AS PP2 stated: “The one thing we have got in common is that they’s [sic] all retired and that’s one thing. We can definitely talk about that we’re retired. ‘Oh what do you do with your time?’”.

As a result of the ETH ingroup, by default there is an outgroup of those who do not attend the ETH. This is caused by the boundaries that separate an ingroup from the outgroup. Boundaries have the ability to interrupt, divide, circumscribe, or segregate (Abbott, 1995; Tilly, 2005) and can be symbolic and/or social in nature (Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007). The three significant boundaries have been highlighted above- retirement age, residing in Sunderland, and SAFC. Table 8 below demonstrates the effect that these boundary characteristics have on whether being considered part of the ETH ingroup or not. The group boundaries mark those who participate in the ETH and are therefore within the group boundary, or those who do not participate in the ETH which results in being situated outside of the group boundary. To elicit outcomes from the ETH, individuals need to be within the group boundary. However, being within the group boundary does not guarantee the same or degree of outcome occurring when compared to other participants. Indeed, the social identity approach

suggest that the greater the level of ingroup identification of an individual, the stronger the level of outcomes.

Table 8- Ingroup and outgroup of ETH

Ingroup	Outgroup
Age 55+	Age under 55
Sunderland resident	Not residing in Sunderland
Interest in SAFC	No interest in SAFC

As a result of sharing similar ingroup characteristics, participants of the ETH are interacting with others who share similar interests and life stage. The comments below from the focus group demonstrates this:

PP3- Because we've all lived through the same things so we can all talk about.

...

PP2- The initial attraction to come is that we're a group of like-minded, similar aged people. So you're bound to be able to find somebody in the group who has something in common with you.

PP3- The thing is if you've got similar interests and similar backgrounds then you're having a two-way conversation. Whereas if you've done something and the other person hasn't, then it's more one way isn't it.

Thus, the ETH is able to bring together people from similar situations and interests in life, which provide the context for social capital being generated at the ETH.

Resource and reasoning- a system of pure-generalised exchange

As a result of participants feeling a part of the ETH ingroup because of the shared characteristics of retirement (context), participants may have a greater concern and interest (reasoning) for fellow ingroup members (B. Simpson, 2006; Tajfel et al.,

1971), contributing to a system of generalised exchange (resource). Indeed, there is evidence in the literature that a shared group-based social identity will have a stronger impact on generalised exchange (Whitham, 2018).

Generalised exchange (resource) is where the giving and receiving of benefits occurs among three or more individuals who are members of the same social group, whereby reciprocation is indirect (Flynn, 2005). The mutual dependence of generalised exchange is indirect in that: a benefit received by person B from person A is not reciprocated directly; rather indirectly by person B's giving to person C (or any other individual in the group) (Flynn, 2005; Molm, 2003). This is demonstrated by Figure 17 below, which is an example of pure-generalised exchange whereby any member of the ETH can give to or receive from any other member of the hub (Takahashi, 2000).

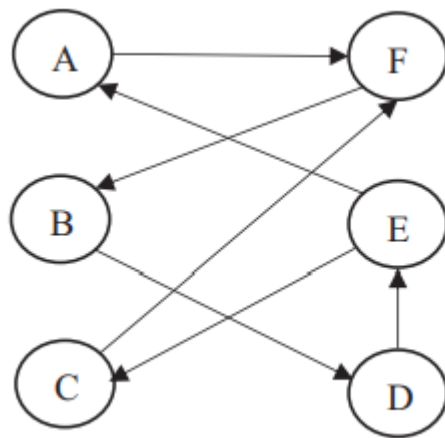


Figure 17- A system of pure-generalised exchange (Whitham, 2021, p. 505)

Therefore, generalised exchange requires a repayment, but not necessarily by the original recipient, or to the original giver (Yamagishi & Cook, 1993). Previous research suggests that individuals are more likely to partake in the process of generalised exchange with others whom they categorise as members of the same group

(Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). As a result, generalised exchange manifests itself when individuals identify at the collective level (Flynn, 2005), in this case as being part of the ETH ingroup (reasoning). This is consistent with Lin's conceptualisation of social capital in an individual contributing and then expecting a return. Indeed, Lin's (1999) conceptualisation of social capital does not state when that return needs to be received or who the return is provided by. As described above, a pure-generalised exchange system does not require immediate repayment or repayment by the original recipient, rather it depends on members of the system to have confidence that a repayment will be made by someone belonging to the ingroup at some point.

Pure-generalised exchange is evident within the ETH, demonstrated by participants not expecting anything in return immediately (Flynn, 2005), nor do they attach a debt to any specific individual (Takahashi, 2000). Indeed, alongside being willing to provide resources (in the form of support, encouragement, and information) to fellow members, there is a sense that that they would be supported themselves by other members if required. Examples of generalised exchange taking place within the ETH ingroup include supporting members with bereavement, supporting a deceased member's family and attending funerals (PP10, PP14, PP2). PP10 provided an example of how the ETH group responded when her mum had passed away:

Obviously because I've just gone through losing my mam, I got a lot of people commenting on that and condolences and that. And that beautiful bouquet of flowers that I got, I just didn't expect that. From a group that I haven't been coming to for so long but they've just made me feel so welcome. It's great. So I do feel safe in this little group.

Members of the ETH also provide encouragement when other members are feeling low (PP8, PP10), provide company to each other (PP7), along with providing information about how to resolve issues (PP7) or recommendations of businesses to

complete work with. Moreover, existing members also welcome new members to the ingroup:

From a group that I haven't been coming to for so long but they've just made me feel so welcome... Everybody was very friendly when I first came in and I sat and explained everything. [Fellow members] make me feel welcome into any conversations that they are having in the group, they let me join in. They just want to know about me and I like to hear about them. (PP10)

Further comments included: "You soon felt quite at ease because people made you feel welcome, they were all friendly, all very chatty" (PP3) and "But walking in, everybody made us feel welcome, and everybody sort of like chatted which as a newcomer coming in is what you need... to make you feel that you belong" (PP24).

In the examples of generalised exchange mentioned above, participants have no immediate expectation of a returned favour. Rather, the returned favour is usually indirect because of collective group interest in wanting to make the ETH as good as it can be for the members of the ETH (PP7, PP8, PP23). A potential reason for this sense of responsibility is because there is a level of participant ownership of the ETH. This is demonstrated through examples such as a participant bringing in books to share with participants, participants organising days out for the ETH, and the participant led committee. Indeed, this was one of the initial aims of the ETH- that the participants would have some ownership of the programme and for it to feel as if it is 'their club' (DS2, PP10, PP15). Participants demonstrated that this is indeed the case, particularly with field trips:

When it was set up we were asked for volunteers who would help to run it and then it became that we're supposed to make all the policy decisions you know, we'll do this, we'll do that, we'll go there, we'll have, we'll go to Beamish or do whatever, and then it's down to the backstreet red shirt guys to work out how to get there and who's going to take us, and how much it's going to cost etcetera. (PP2)

Thus, participants identify similarities between each other throughout this process of planning, further promoting a sense of belonging.

As a result of a greater interest and concern towards each other (reasoning), the participants of the ETH have developed a pure-generalised exchange system (resource). It was also acknowledged that the importance of attending the ETH grew if the ETH is the only social event an individual attends. The focus group participants agreed that a system of pure-generalised exchange is present within the ETH ingroup, demonstrated by the excerpt below:

PP3- Well like Audrey [pseudonym] told me about a really nice café and we went there and it was really nice. So I was then able to go back to her and say we went there and it was really nice and recommended it to other people since then.

PP13- I don't think anybody expects anything in return. You just do it because you're friends really.

PP23- I mean Martha [pseudonym] told me about a meeting with the Durham Cricket Club that I didn't know about.

It was noted that the pure-generalised environment which has been developed at the ETH is an effective way of increasing knowledge during later stage of life. A contextual condition that was identified was that older people may not feel comfortable asking for help. However, through participating and bonding together, the ETH helps develop the opportunity for participants to receive help more organically without perceived embarrassment. Indeed, by identifying similarities with each other, this helps individuals feel at ease with other participants.

Outcome- increased levels of social capital

The generalised exchange that takes place within the ingroup of the ETH leads to increases in individual levels of social capital (Whitham, 2018, 2021). Indeed,

according to Putnam (2000, p. 134) generalised exchange is “the touchstone of social capital”. Social capital as understood by Lin (1999) is the resources available to an individual as a result of a social network. The ETH ingroup has homophily and heterophily characteristics. Homophily characteristics- which have been highlighted in the context of this PT- include an interest in SAFC, living in the same geographical area, and similar life stage/age. Heterophily characteristics include different jobs, social class, and interests beyond SAFC. This PT suggests that homophily characteristics help develop the group boundaries of the ETH, which then enable heterophily characteristics to be shared within the group boundaries of the ETH, leading to social capital through bonding and in some cases bridging.

Bonding social capital takes place because the ETH brings together people from similar categories- retirement, living in Sunderland, and interest in SAFC. Whilst these homophily characteristics bring individuals together, it is often their heterophily characteristics that leads to an increase in social capital for individuals:

Not only can you learn about somebody’s interests and past working life or whatever, but sometimes within that they’ll be something similar that you’ve done as well, so it can link to something else that you might not have even been aware of. (PP19)

It’s like a good mix of different people from different backgrounds... And not all of them are interested in the same things, yet they’ll still join in the conversation and they’ll learn about things. (DS6)

Examples of the pure-generalised exchange of social capital within the ETH ingroup include: recommendations for building work, days out, and products to buy; as well as, directions to a particular location, and the exchange of general knowledge through the quizzes. Furthermore, the social capital gained as a result of attending the ETH has led to some participants becoming aware of the Sunderland Senior Supporters Association (PP24), and other local community groups (PP19). From observations, it

is evident that the weekly quiz provides the opportunity for participants to share their knowledge with each other. PP8 further supports this by saying:

It's doing things like the quiz, everybody has their own little something that they are special at, do you know what I mean, and it's only by everybody giving their thoughts and their knowledge, and it's only by pooling all of that that you can win the quiz like we did this morning.

Given that the ETH brings together people from different socio-economic backgrounds, there is potential for social capital bridging to take place. However, the data provides a lack of evidence to support this aspect of the programme theory, therefore this programme theory focuses on bonding social capital.

As a result of the increases in social capital obtained from the ETH, participants may experience an increase in life satisfaction. This is because contributing and receiving both have benefits for life satisfaction (Ahn & Davis, 2020). Participants feel more positive when sharing their own knowledge, as well as when they receive other people's knowledge (Portela, Neira, & Salinas-Jiménez, 2013). Moreover, given that the ETH is not branded as a loneliness project (Bradley, 2022), participants experience the benefits of social capital, without needing to accept that they need help. Indeed, it was acknowledged in the focus group that older people can be stubborn and not always willing to accept help. However, by attending the ETH, participants are likely to receive support, guidance, and new knowledge in an organic pure-generalised system, rather than feeling as if they are being 'fixed' by a programme which in turn might discourage attendance.

The refined programme theory

PT 4- Social capital

The ETH brings together people of retirement age from in and around the Sunderland area (context). By doing so, the ETH brings together people of the same age group categorisation which provides participants the opportunity to become part of the ETH ingroup (resource). Due to participants identifying a level of heterophily between each other, notably through similar age, participants have developed a pure-generalised exchange system within the ETH ingroup (reasoning). This system of pure-generalised exchange leads to participants experiencing an increase in their levels of social capital, which may lead to improved life satisfaction (outcome).

Chapter 12- (PT 5) Delivery staff contributing to reputation of FoL

Introduction to programme theory

The final two PTs focus on staff delivery within and beyond the ETH. Indeed, staff from other programmes have contributed to the refined PTs presented in the following two chapters. PT 5 is underpinned by Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach to impression management and is developed from IPT I. During the refining stage, attachment theory became relevant for the refined PT.

PT 5- Delivery staff contributing to reputation of FoL

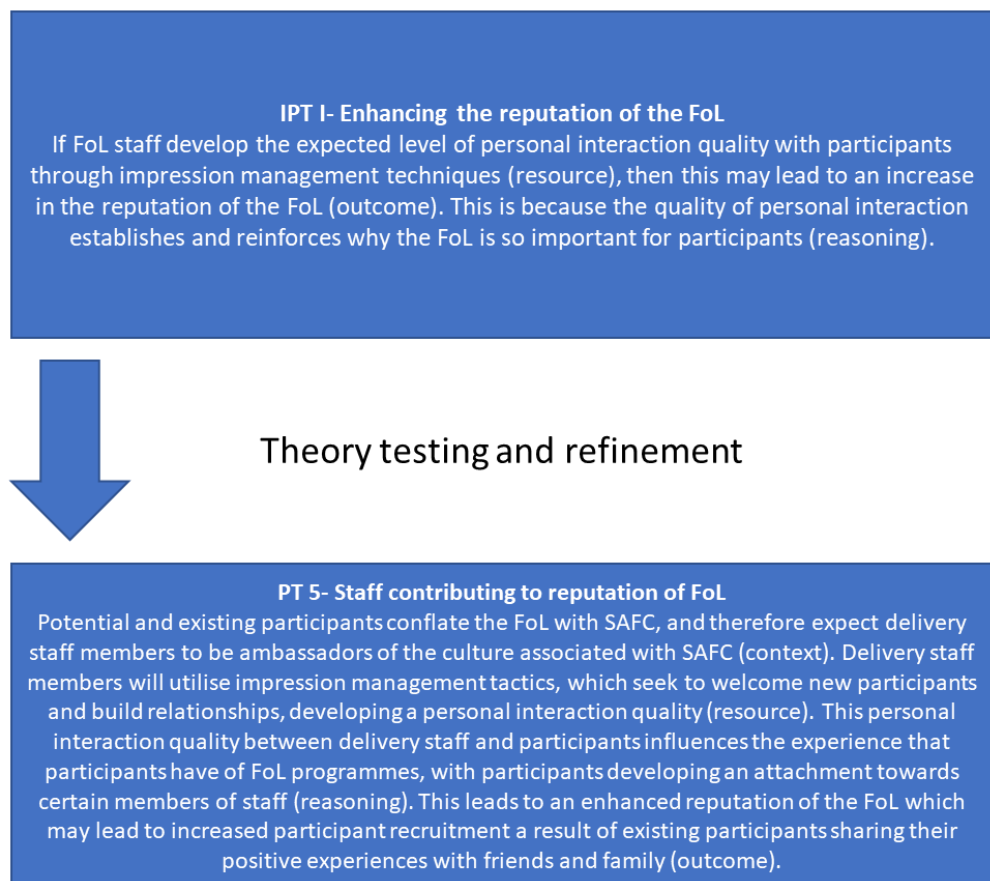


Figure 18- PT 5 development

Context- expectation of public

Given the link between the FoL and SAFC, stakeholders expect a high level of quality when the FoL deliver programmes. For example, participants highlighted the importance of the FoL and how they perceive it to fall under the umbrella of SAFC.

As PP8 mentioned:

I think it's important that the big umbrella is good, but what goes on underneath that umbrella is even more important. And as long as they continue to be caring about the people who come there, who come under this umbrella and they're looking after these people, whether it be for mental health, exercises, whatever, but if they've got the wellbeing of everybody under that umbrella at its heart then it can only go from strength to strength.

Staff members also recognise that they play an important role in the reputation that stakeholders hold of the FoL:

Well I think [staff] are the spokesperson aren't they, they're the public face, they're the face that they are seeing day in day out. We've always said as a senior management team that effectively your delivery team are your biggest risk to the business. Organisationally... these participants probably wouldn't know [the CEO] if they tripped over her in the street. They know Roberta [pseudonym], they know me, they knew Karl [pseudonym], they're building a relationship with Jasmin [pseudonym]. But it's kind of like they, we're the ones they associate with, rather than a [Managing Director] or a [Development Director], or somebody else, they know and that takes that time to grow and develop. (DS2)

Thus, delivery staff members recognise the importance of the personal interaction quality between themselves and participants (reasoning), which will lead to staff behaving and acting in a way to engage with participants (resource).

Resource- impression management tactics

Staff members were asked about several different types of tactics that they may use to improve the quality of personal interactions between themselves and participants.

From the impression management tactics mentioned in IPT H, observations of staff,

and reading of literature, several tactics were discussed during the refining stage with delivery staff members. These were: engaging, treating participants with dignity, caring, welcoming, enthusiastic, friendliness, and listening and attentive. By incorporating these behaviours, staff are seeking to develop and improve the personal interaction quality that they have with participants (and their families). This is because staff recognise that it is in their micro-political interests to develop a good personal interaction quality with participants. From interviews with delivery staff, two significant areas emerged: ‘real people, not project participants’ and ‘welcoming new participants’. These two areas will now be discussed in further detail.

Real people, not project participants

According to both staff and participants, staff members treat participants as more than participants. For example, DS7 referred to building relationships with participants through regular conversations, which helps to enable participants to raise any issues they might have. From a participant perspective, PP15 said:

Well personally I’ve just found you all [delivery staff] brilliant. No I think you all very very friendly, and I don’t think you patronise, because obviously you’re all much much younger than we are... I think we are all treated as equals by the staff. And I think all the staff just try their best to make it a happy place to be honest. And they’re all willing to listen to what anybody has to say.

When explaining how a good relationship has been built between participants and staff, PP2 said:

Nothing is too much trouble you know. I mean we’ve, Angie [pseudonym] and I have been negotiating with the Grand Hotel for the Christmas lunch right, so over the past week we’ve been in touch with Roberta [pseudonym] two or three times, outside of the hub, and she’s been only too, she’s always on her phone because she always picks the phone up. It’s nice to know that you can pick the phone up.

Indeed, staff seek to engage with participants as people, getting to know them in a way beyond a traditional transactional service delivery relationship (Schools et al., 2020).

For example, members of staff show an interest in the individual by exploring their personal lives beyond the FoL, “Because not every [participant] is the same” (DS10). DS11 highlighted that to make a difference in people’s lives, staff need to be able to engage and connect with the lives of participants. Indeed, this recognition of coaches/practitioners treating people as individuals is put forward by the literature for both elite and community coaching. From a CSfD perspective, Van der Veken et al. (2022) have suggested that an emotional connection needs to be established between coach and participant to help enable the outcomes of a CSfD programme to manifest. Potrac and Jones (2009) refer to ‘micro relations’ which encompass the session-by-session interactions practitioners have with participants. The sum of these micro relations contributes towards a coaching environment that “involves many different levels of interacting with and influencing other people, each of whom is an individual with unique problems, hopes and baggage” (R. Jones, 2007, pp. 163-164). It is important that when participants attend sessions, they experience psychological safety when it comes to their participation and their relationship with the members of staff delivering a session (Gosai, Jowett, & Nascimento-Júnior, 2023). Participants of the ETH identified that they feel they have a friend-like relationship with members of delivery staff. For example, PP2 stated that “The staff do a tremendous job of staying friendly with everybody”.

Potrac et al. (2002) previously highlighted that coaches recognise the importance of relationships with their athletes/participants in terms of meeting expectations. Coaches, such as those at the FoL, attempt to create social bonds which transcend beyond a programme participant-coach relationship, attempting to embrace each participant as an individual (Potrac et al., 2002). FoL staff attempt to do this in several ways such as seeking to recall the names of participants (DS15) and keeping track of

what participants are doing outside of their involvement in a FoL programme, such as swimming competitions. This is achieved through memory and making notes on the side of the register each week (DS12). As a result, members of staff “Kind of becomes [sic] part of that young person’s and adult’s life in a way” (DS12). Furthermore, staff will seek to make participants feel special:

You’re making sure you’re being vocal and you’re projecting voice and calling people’s names out. Again, hearing your name called out of in front of lot and lots of different people might make you feel really special. (DS15)

Thus, members of delivery staff are making an intentional effort to interact with participants on a relational basis.

Participants also highlighted the importance of continuity of the relationships which they have with members of staff- “When you get to our age, there’s nothing like a bit of continuity. You don’t want to be learning a new name every five minutes” (PP2). Throughout the data collection process, during interviews and through informal conversation at the ETH, participants revealed their frustrations at a perceived high turnover of staff- “Yeah well unfortunately we are going to have another turnover of staff as you know Keith is going” (PP12). Indeed, things can go wrong when the relationships are not developed which may be as a result of a high turnover of staff:

And that’s been kind of proven by some of the management have tried to go down with our ETHubbers and they’ve been met with hostility because they’ve not from the start done those things. Whereas the delivery staff from the start have found that if they go in like that and then just carry on they get more of, they reciprocate more and stuff like that. So it has been proven a lot with our hubbers that they are key. (DS8)

Therefore, the FoL should be aware of the importance that participants place on individual members of staff. Whilst each staff member may be replaceable from a

business perspective, participants suggest that staff members are not replaceable from a relational point of view.

Welcoming new participants

Delivery staff also recognise the importance of welcoming new participants to the various programmes that the FoL deliver. Staff will often intentionally seek to spend time getting to know new participants:

And then out on the walk I'd make a bigger effort to talk to them a lot- find out about them, what their local interests is, what their background, that kind of stuff. Point out other members of the group who might have the same interests so they can build friendships with that. (DS13)

Participants of the ETH stated that they have always felt welcome when attending the ETH, not just from staff delivering the ETH, but also from other members of staff that they may encounter when walking around the BoL:

They're [FoL staff] a grand bunch, they really are. From walking through that door, even on that walkway up, you pass somebody with a Sunderland badge on their top they either nod or speak, it's almost as if it's drilled into them. But no, it's a genuine warmth. (PP8)

Furthermore, PP6 highlighted the significance of staff members remembering participant names, saying that it made participants feel more cared for by staff. Delivery staff also acknowledge that they treat participants in a way which goes beyond a transactional participant facilitator relationship, for example:

I think when you look across the board in terms of like listening and attentive, you want to get to know them, you have conversations with them. You do you give them time- you invest your time in them to find out about them and you'll have those conversations where you'll actually pay attention because then the next week they come in and you'll ask them about what they've done. (DS12)

It's just about knowing and understanding the young people and who they are and what they like. You're not going to know that straight away, so give yourself a little bit of time taking the effort to get to know young people on a personal basis. (DS15)

Members of staff should continue to be welcoming to new participants and continue developing relationships over time.

It is important for the interest that staff show in the relationships with to be perceived by participants as sincere and genuine (Goffman, 1959). Key here is the perception from participants. It does not matter per se whether the staff member is genuinely interested in a participant (indeed, sometimes they are not); what matters is whether the participant believes the staff member is being authentic (Goffman, 1959). Interviews with the ETH participants suggest that participants believe that the behaviours of, and the interactions with delivery are genuine, for example PP8 referred to “A genuine warmth” from members of staff towards participants.

Reasoning- personal interaction quality

Participants associate their encounters and relationship with delivery staff as being reflective of the FoL as a whole. Therefore, the personal interaction quality (reasoning) which staff members develop through treating participants as individuals and being welcoming (resource), is vital. The personal interaction quality between participants and staff influences the reputation that participants hold of the FoL. As noted in IPT I, delivery staff are associated with the reputation of an organisation (Chiang & Chen, 2014). PP2 acknowledged that his relationship with the FoL is based on his association and interactions with the staff. This notion is supported by PP23:

[The relationships with staff are] a focal point for people... You see the organisation of the other staff of doing other things in terms of when the school children come in and when different other things come in you can see that they are dedicated. They seem to take the extra breath, stick the chest out as they say and they go you know and into the classroom and support the children.

Furthermore, PP3 highlighted the significant impact that the delivery staff have in terms of their own experience of engaging with FoL programmes:

I mean I've had no negative things happen at all. There's been no negative reactions or anything all the way through the time I've been coming here. I mean I've had no negative things happen at all. There's been no negative reactions or anything all the way through the time I've been coming here.

It is therefore important for delivery staff to develop strong relationships with participants. Staff cited that a key motivation is the sense of being “Ambassadors for the FoL” (DS14). Staff also recognised that their relationships with participants will affect the reputation that participants hold of the whole business. Therefore, delivery staff are motivated by dramaturgical loyalty (Goffman, 1959) in their delivery and relationships with participants. As DS8 said: “[It’s] not just affecting me, [it’s] affecting the person who I’m helping out, and then that’s affecting the business”. Dramaturgical loyalty recognises that performances are often team performances. A team refers to “any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine” (Goffman, 1959, p. 79). Indeed, for the ETH and other FoL programmes to be delivered effectively, multiple members of staff work together. Dramaturgical loyalty obligates a performer not to betray the secrets of a team in regard to: planning, backstage realities, and backstage identities (Potrac et al., 2021; Scott, 2015). FoL staff members recognise the importance of dramaturgical loyalty in their delivery and how this can impact upon the reputation of the FoL. When asked whether there is a pressure to conform to expectations, DS8 agreed by alluding to the impact of the wider business: “Yeah because that’s not just affecting me, that’s affecting the person who I’m helping out and then that’s affecting the business”.

Moreover, relationships with specific members of staff are developed over time, with some participants engaging with the FoL for many years:

A lot of the participants have been with us for a number of years, so naturally they build up a rapport with certain staff. And I think it does help that reputation because I think as much as we try and promote what we do with media stuff, social media, flyers, whatever we're trying to do, I think the people who really sell it for us are the ones who have been there and done it before. So if they go out and they're talking to their mates, or family members, and they're like- this was brilliant, we've done this with the foundation- that then starts to spiral and I think that spreads quicker than sometimes the messages we maybe try and spread as an organisation. (DS12)

Attachment theory (Bretherton, 1992) emerged during the testing and refining stages as an appropriate theory to include for this PT, helping to explain the significance of these relationships between delivery staff and participants. Given that the PT focuses on the personal interaction quality between delivery staff and participants, attachment theory helps to explain why this personal interaction quality is a significant factor in the reputation that the FoL develops. Several writers have drawn a link between how different attachment styles can lead to trust and commitment to an organisation (Frydman & Tena, 2022; Verbeke, Gijzenberg, Hendriks, Bouma, & Teunter, 2020). Thus, attachment styles help to explain the mechanism for this PT in answering how and why participants engage in relationships with members of delivery staff (Moussa & Touzani, 2017). The attachment styles, which are formed in early childhood and extend into adult life (Frydman & Tena, 2022) can be categorised as secure and insecure (Mende & Bolton, 2011; Verbeke et al., 2020). The secure attachment style, which is the most common attachment style at an estimate of 65% of the population, is where individuals "have experienced consistent caring efforts from their caretakers when in need or stress" (Verbeke et al., 2020, p. 3). Whereas, people with an insecure attachment style have experienced the rejection of attachment figures and therefore hold lower levels of trust and satisfaction towards attachment figures in adult life (Verbeke et al., 2020).

Mende and Bolton (2011) draw a link between an individual's attachment style and how this may influence their (non)attachment towards an organisation. Furthermore, they highlight how the different attachment styles of the individual interact with different sources of attachment from the organisation- firm accentuated and employee accentuated (Mende & Bolton, 2011). Firm accentuated relationships are dependent on the relationship customers have with the organisation as a corporate body, whereas employee accentuated relationships revolve around the more personal relationships between customer and employee. Whilst there is evidence of both types of relationship at the FoL, it is employee accentuated relationships which are the more significant aspect for this PT. PT 1 (identification leading to initial participation) evidences the firm-accentuated relationship in terms of participant conflation between the FoL and SAFC. However, as was noted in PT 1, relationships with staff play an important role in sustaining participants and encouraging word of mouth communications to encourage new participants to attend. For example, staff members highlighted the importance participants place on individual members of staff:

I mean the participants quite often tell you that, you'll hear them talking and they'll be like- 'oh yeah the foundation's brilliant. X delivery officer who we work with she's like passionate about it, she'll look after us, she does loads of different stuff for us'... They see the people as the foundation. (DS13)

Yeah. I think participants grow attached to coaches if they've worked with them for a really long time. So for example, if you were down in reception this morning and you saw some of the participants walking in, they're 13, 14, 15 years of age, and they've been coming to holiday camps or attending PDC training or RTC training, with the same member of staff since they were, in some cases 8, 9, 10 years of age. Like there's got to be that attachment there. How could there not be from a personal sort of relationship point of view. You know obviously from a professional relationship point of view as well, trusting somebody, makes a massive difference. But I also think, I think the brand has a massive part to do with it. Like you feel not just a part of the coach's life, but I think the participants feel a part of Sunderland- I think they feel attached to that. And I think that's where the power of the, all foundations really, like if you go to different foundations,

they're doing amazing work, it is the power of football that drives that, I'm a firm believer. (DS15)

Thus, the data collected as part of this evaluation supports attachment theory's premise that customers or participants will attach themselves to particular members of staff.

Participants of the ETH programme highly value the relationship that they have with individual members of staff, agreeing that the personal interaction quality between themselves and delivery staff encourages them to sustain participation (see PT 1) and is important for the reputation they hold of the FoL. Generic delivery staff also suggested that this is the case for participants across all FoL programmes. Firstly, the relationships participants have with the delivery staff provide an important motive for continued participation. For example, PP12 stated that the relationships with staff "Certainly helps" encourage her attendance at the ETH. PP15 provided detail as to why the relationship between participant and staff is important:

Because I think that's an important thing isn't it? I mean if you come in here and you find the staff were standoffish or weren't helpful or anything like that, you wouldn't come back. Or you wouldn't be happy coming, so I think you've got to have that good relationship between staff.

When asked what would happen if there was a negative relationship between participants and staff, PP15 went on to say:

You definitely wouldn't want to come I don't think, if you felt as if the staff were dictating to you, or whatever in any way that wasn't serving you, you wouldn't come back... because it wouldn't be a nice atmosphere.

Therefore, in order to develop the personal interaction quality, it is important for delivery staff to treat participants as real people and welcome participants to the programmes (resource). Furthermore, the ETH can deliver the best activities, however if the relationships between participants and staff are not good then participants will stop attending.

This is also the case for programmes aimed at children and young people. DS15 puts himself in the shoes of a parent:

Why would they pay for you to look after their child for a week? And it's because they feel as though you care- they're going to be welcomed, they're going to be listened to, they're going to have. And that you're a nice person on top of all that as well.

Thus, interviews with participants and staff of the ETH, and generic delivery staff highlighted the importance of the relationships between participant (consumer) and delivery staff (employee). Both participants and delivery staff have described the relationships between each other as 'friend-like'. For example, PP7 referred to staff "Friendliness and their openness [and] willing to listen, to help". PP19 mentioned that he "Would chat with them and I know I would feel comfortable with them". Further examples from participants highlighting the 'friend-like' relationship include:

Well they are part of it you know. You think when you go in, I think of them as friends... I do honestly, I think the staff are great. And I think it's not just me who says it, we all say it how nice the staff are here. (PP14)

I used the word friends, but we look on you, we look at you all [delivery staff] as friends... Yeah. But everybody who has been in there today, they're all nice people as the staff, you have a, you can have a chat. You're not sort of waiting for them to make conversation with you... It's a genuine, a genuine interest in how you do it. (PP24)

Staff members highlighted that whilst they sought to have 'friend-like' relationships with participants to improve the personal interaction quality, it is important for boundaries to be set in place and for participants to realise that the staff were not their friends. For example- "It's about professional boundaries- you can be friendly but not their friend. I think that's really important" (DS9). Thus, it is important for staff members to maintain professional boundaries. For instance, ensuring that contact with participants is only carried out during working hours.

Outcome- enhanced reputation of FoL

According to the model put forward by Verbeke et al. (2020), an individual's willingness to recommend a service provider will be dependent on the levels of trust, satisfaction, and commitment that they experience in their own relationship with the service provider. In other words, the personal interaction quality between participant and delivery staff (reasoning) is vital. This PT suggests that as a result of the personal interaction quality which is made up of staff treating participants in a friend-like manner and welcoming participants (resource), the public reputation of the FoL will be improved (outcome). Both ETH participants and members of staff delivering the ETH, as well as generic delivery staff recognise the impact that personal interaction quality can have on the reputation of the FoL. Indeed, several ETH participants acknowledged a direct link between their interactions with staff, and the reputation of the FoL (PP7, PP19). For example, PP19 confirmed that the positive relationship he has with delivery staff encourages continued attendance of the ETH.

The positive relationships with staff not only influences continued participation, but can also encourage participants to share their positive experiences with friends and family, recommending others to participate with the FoL. For example, PP10 commented that because of her positive experiences of the ETH, she has explored what programmes the FoL offer for her grandchildren. PP10 went further by commenting on the impression that staff give and how this influences the overall reputation of the FoL: "They give the impression that it's a good, what's the word I'm looking for, good organisation to do the best for the people in the community". The following comment demonstrates the link between a participant's relationship with a member of staff and how this influences the perception of the organisation as a whole:

There's seven or eight staff that we've come into contact with. If they are representative of the staff as a whole and the fact that they're doing lots of things for other groups as well for all age groups, it can only be a good thing. And I don't get, you know the staff when you come in, the staff at reception and everything they're all 'hello are you alright?', as you come through. That is welcoming. That is great. And if that is representative of the ethos and the attitude and the atmosphere across all the staff ... that is brilliant. It's not only brilliant for the hub, it's brilliant for Sunderland. And for the people who come along to the hub, and for the wider population and, it's just a shame that there's not a great number of people know what's available, and that's the, it's something that needs to be available to more and more people to enjoy and to learn and to bring people together. (PP24)

Furthermore, PP23 highlighted how he has witness positive interactions between FoL staff and younger participants:

Because you see the organisation of the other staff of doing other things in terms of when the school children come in and when different other things come in you can see that they are dedicated. They seem to take the extra breath, stick the chest out as they say and they go you know and into the classroom and support the children.

However, the FoL should exercise caution when utilising members of staff to improve the reputation of the FoL. As already mentioned, participants grow attached to particular members of staff who then may leave. This then causes problems for the staff who remain and new staff. Participants mentioned that it takes time to build up the relationships that they had with previous members of staff and cannot be replaced instantly. Therefore the FoL should consider what training and development can be provided to new staff to minimise this disruption.

By the staff enabling the resources of treating participants as individuals, and welcoming new participants through impression management, this may lead to a ripple effect of emotional labour. The next PT considers the cause and consequence of emotional labour for members of staff.

The refined programme theory

PT 5- Staff contributing to reputation of FoL

Potential and existing participants conflate the FoL with SAFC, and therefore expect delivery staff members to be ambassadors of the culture associated with SAFC (context). Delivery staff members will utilise impression management tactics, which seek to welcome new participants and build relationships, developing a personal interaction quality (resource). This personal interaction quality between delivery staff and participants influences the experience that participants have of FoL programmes, with participants developing an attachment towards certain members of staff (reasoning). This leads to an enhanced reputation of the FoL which may lead to increased participant recruitment a result of existing participants sharing their positive experiences with friends and family (outcome).

Chapter 13- (PT 6) Staff emotional labour

Introduction to programme theory

Delivery staff play an important part in the delivery of programmes that the FoL provide to the local community. The PT developed in this chapter PT builds on IPT H, and is underpinned by dramaturgical approaches to practice, particularly Goffman's (1959) impression management and Hochschild's (1979) work on emotional labour. This PT represents a ripple effect from PT 5 in regard to the consequences for delivery staff. Figure 20 presents the refined PT in visual form and compliments the written narrative which follows.

PT 6- Staff emotional labour

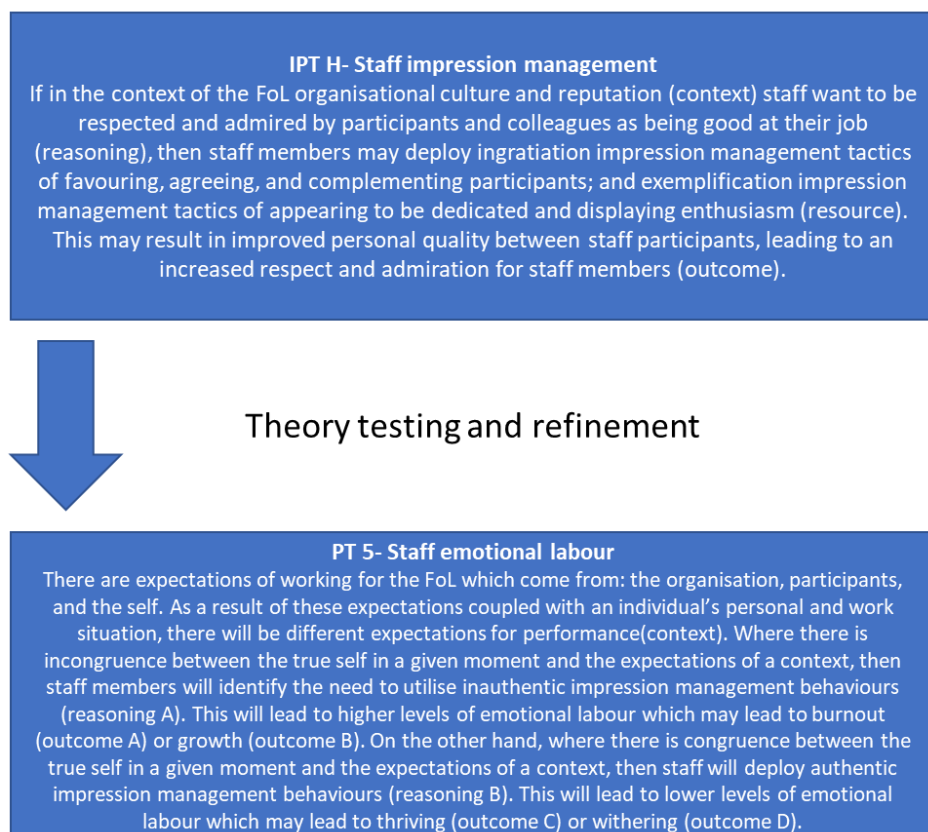


Figure 19- PT 6 development

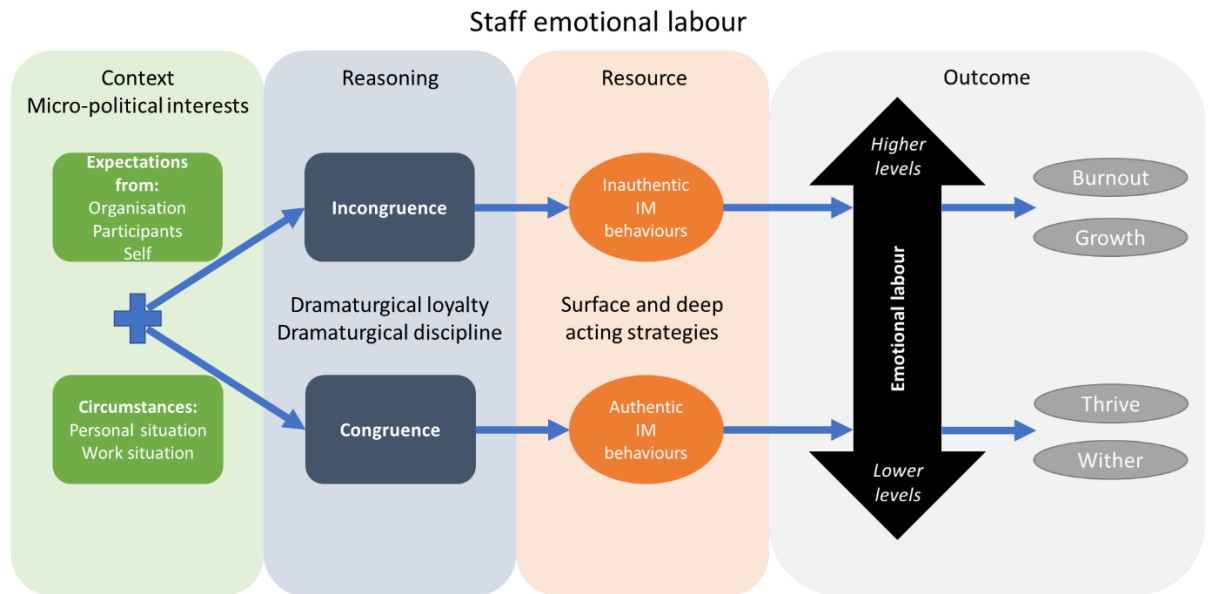


Figure 20- Staff emotional labour

Context- micro-political interests

The context for this PT consists of two parts- expectations and circumstances. Firstly, members of staff are expected to deliver in a particular manner which conforms to expectations from: a) emotion norms communicated by management and colleagues at the FoL; b) programme participants (and in the case of young people, their families); and c) the self. It is in a member of staff’s micro-political interests to meet these expectations. Micro-political interests are understood as the self-interests of a professional (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b; Andrew Thompson et al., 2015). Micro-political actions can be in the form of- “talking, pleading, arguing, gossiping, flattering, being silent and avoiding comments, avoiding taking sides, accepting extra duties (in exchange for a contract), changing the material working conditions, the use of humour” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 117). Secondly, circumstances are made up of: a) a staff member’s personal situation; and b) the specific work situation

a staff member finds themselves in. These elements of context will now be discussed in greater detail.

Expectations

FoL emotion norms

Delivery staff interviewed during the theory refinement stage agreed that it is important to behave in a way consistent with the emotion norms of the FoL. Indeed, staff drew a link between wearing the uniform and the expectation of conforming to the values of the FoL:

I think we wear a uniform and we wear a badge, so... we're easily trackable from that point of view. We're representing a bigger organisation so it's important that we behave in a way that represents the values of that and doesn't damage the reputation. (DS11)

I think we have a duty in our work I think carrying the brand, carrying the badge, wearing the kit we have a responsibility to be professional in absolutely everything that we do, whether you're collecting data, whether you're delivering, whether you are making phone calls, whatever it is that you are doing, whatever aspect of your role, you have that responsibility to uphold the responsibilities and your roles within that. (DS15)

Therefore, staff members recognise the importance of demonstrating the FoL values when delivering on behalf of the FoL. The importance of the uniform will be revisited in the resource section.

The expected values and behaviours of staff are learned through a combination of direct and indirect socialisation. Direct socialisation is whereby norms are explicitly communicated by others, whilst indirect socialisation is whereby individuals learn from observing others (Charmaz et al., 2019; Ives et al., 2021). Direct socialisation tends to happen when a staff member begins their work at the FoL, with indirect socialisation having more of an effect later. For example, DS8 mentioned that "It would be kind of seeing how other people are, but also we do get told it quite a lot

verbally like in meetings and 1-1s”. Other members of staff supported this combination of direct and indirect socialisation. A significant example of direct socialisation highlighted during the interviews is the induction process staff complete when commencing employment at the FoL. The induction process helps new staff learn and understand the expectations of working at the FoL (DS14, DS15). After an initial first period of working at the FoL, direct socialisation is replaced by indirect socialisation as the predominant way that staff members learn and reinforce the expectations. For example, DS15 refers to the business of FoL work which means limited direct contact with colleagues:

There’s only really Fridays where we get a chance to go through a morning’s worth of CPD or, for example we have done behaviour management this year. So that’s when we might go back to these are your expectations, this is what we see, but in the guise of, we’re talking about behaviour management this week as an actual topic. But then other than that, it’s yeah definitely indirect, informal, observational sort of aspect to that yeah.

Thus, in the day-to-day workings of the FoL, there is limited opportunity for direct socialisation, with norms being learnt through indirect socialisation.

Participants

Another source of expectations come from participants, and for young participants their families (DS1, DS6, DS7). DS7 referred to meeting participant expectations as “Very crucial”, as further highlighted by DS13 and DS15:

We’re taking them out on walks and we’re giving them fact sheets about what they’re going to see and all that type of thing, so if you’re just coming along and you’re not looking professional, you’re not acting professional, and that kind of the sheets and the maps that you are giving them aren’t up to a good presentation standard, then they’re not going to have that trust in that what you’re telling them is actually true... But getting good feedback off participants, certain participants within the group, you know you’ve had a really good session when they’ve went- ‘oh that was okay’- but I think it’s more if the participants are happy with what’s going on and what you’re delivering- that says more to me than just one of my colleagues saying “that was really

good” because at the end of the day it’s the participants that kind of keep the project going and that, not one of my other delivery officers or coordinators. (DS13)

All the programmes within, so myself the Primary Stars, the holiday week, and football courses, multi-sports things, some element of the disability stuff, these are all paid for services by the customer in a lot of cases for young people. So that’s a non-negotiable straight away-you’re making sure you’re on time in order to deliver a professional service that people are going to come and pay for again. So from a business point of view, you want people to come back and use you, or to go on social media and talk about how professional it was, or how organised the session was, or how there was loads of staff there to meet the students. (DS15)

Staff realise that they are role models to their participants, which leads to these expectations. For example, “I think a role model to students and often you end up in contact with their families as well and you can be a role model to families as well” (DS10); and “I think we are role models out in the community for some people that we work with, be that children and young people or adults themselves” (DS11).

Both DS13 and DS9 highlighted that they are motivated most in terms of meeting the expectations of the participants compared to their own and organisational expectations. DS1 revealed her frustration that comes about when not able to meet the expectations of the participants: “I feel like there’s a lot of frustration over wanting to do what’s best for the participants but not being able to”. DS7 described what the participants expect as:

I guess being me, continuing what I do, building that relationship up with regular conversation. I know the participants know that if there are any issues they can tell me, they don’t need to hide it away, because we are that flexible, we are there.

An important point is made here by DS7 in that he believes that the participants of the ETH want him to be authentic when working them. Indeed, Goffman (1959) highlights the importance of appearing authentic when performing. Similar comments were made by other delivery staff members (DS1 and DS5) in that they believe that the

participants want the delivery staff to be their authentic selves. ETH participants believe that ETH delivery staff are authentic (PP6, PP8, PP19, PP24). PP10 highlighted how she would feel if they perceived staff to be inauthentic:

Well you would think what are you doing this job for if you're not dedicated. They are dedicated staff. They love getting people involved. They love making you feel involved. And if somebody wasn't dedicated enough you'll think well why are you here?

Thus, it is important for staff members to appear authentic in their delivery, even if there is incongruence between their internal feelings and expected actions.

Further ETH participant expectations were mentioned by DS5 and DS6:

They expect a warm welcome, a cuppa, and somewhere where they can go where they can have a bit of craic... they expect someone to be there if they need some help. (DS5)

“Making sure that what you do is done properly. You have to be presentable, be on time, reliable, just that type of thing. Approachable. So they're there as a group and they're not all always into sport, but we have to look at them as if they're a social group as well as like wanting to do a little bit of activity but a lot of it's the social side. So we have to be able for them to be able to come to you and you speak to them, and have a relationship that way. (DS6)

Critically these are expectations that ETH delivery staff perceive that participants hold. From speaking to delivery staff involved in other programmes it is evident that there are similar perceived participant expectations across the different programmes that the FoL deliver.

The self

Finally, a staff member's personal expectations also inform their approach to their delivery. Indeed, DS11 is more motivated by internal expectations as opposed to organisational and staff. DS10 stated that “As a teacher you have your own code and professional standards”. DS9 and DS13 shared similar sentiments:

I'm going to throw a third one in there. I set a lot of the standards for how I work... My own sessions have been very successful, and I have

very high standards that I set myself, probably above what the Foundation expects, because that's just who I am as a person... You kind of set yourself up to that point where you have to be. Raising the bar all the time. When you set yourself really high standards it can have some stressors. (DS9)

I've got my own particularly high standards that I aim to achieve anyway, I think we can quite often be our own biggest critics, so people will be like- 'oh that's a really good session' but I can always find some fault in it somewhere. (DS13)

In addition to these three sources of expectations, staff will also be influenced by their personal and work situations.

Circumstances

Personal situation

Firstly, staff enter may be influenced by their personal situation. Staff members referred to how what is going on in their personal lives can have an influence on how they approach their work. For example:

If there's something going on in my personal life that hasn't been resolved. So I have a child with autism, if she's having a particular difficult time, shall I text her before the session and go 'oh I've had a really crap day at school and I'm really upset'. (DS9)

DS9 went on to highlight that the resilience that he has built up over his life helps in his role:

Resilience is a major one for me. Things aren't always going to go your way. There's lots of external factors that influence what you do- funding streams, young people, sometimes you get blocked by the schools or parents or other organisations telling you what you can and can't do, dictating how you have to do different things. So you've got to have resilience. You've got to be able to think on your feet, especially working with young people.

Resilience can come about through experience. Indeed, the more experienced members of staff interviewed seemed to be more comfortable in their roles than some of the less experienced staff interviewed, consistent with findings from Andrew Thompson et al. (2015).

Work situation

Specific work situations can also influence the context that members of staff operate in. For example, DS12 highlighted that the specific work situations that staff are in can influence how the values of the FoL manifest:

I think the four values change slightly depending on what setting you are in. So, if you're in a meeting and you're in with the kind of management that professionalism will come across probably in a different way because you might be presenting something back, it might be trying to inspire them on an idea. So that can be a different inspiration to what you might do with a group of participants where the inspiring might be being really enthusiastic, buzzing about in a session and trying to get them to get the energy off you to join in. And then around staff, I think the passion kind of comes in the way people share ideas and the way the informal chats go on in the office, that people have an idea, or have done a session, or they will have seen something and then it sparks a conversation. So, I think the professionalism underlies everything that we do but then the passionate and the inspiring and the innovate comes out in different ways depending on who you are working with and what that needs to look like for the group you're with.

The specific work situations vary between different delivery staff members and can also vary for each individual staff member. For example, in the morning a member of staff may be working with over 55's at the ETH, followed by an afternoon of working with children in a primary school. Thus, emotions can and should change depending on the group the delivery staff member is working with (reasoning) (Ives et al., 2021). The similarity or disparity between the expected pattern of behaviour and an individual's preferred pattern of behaviour will have an impact on whether staff will utilise authentic or inauthentic impression management behaviours (resource). Authenticity is understood as the ability to act according to one's true self (Kuntz & Abbott, 2017). The extent to which a staff member feels confident in performing authentically or not, will impact on how much emotional labour is exerted (reasoning). The more inauthentic a delivery staff members feels s/he must be, then the higher the levels of emotional labour they will experience (outcome).

Reasoning- dramaturgical loyalty and discipline

FoL staff are presented with different situations throughout the working week, which may result in different expectations for performance (context). Where there is incongruence between the true self in a given moment and the expectations of a context, then staff members will identify the need to utilise inauthentic impression management behaviours (resource A). On the other hand, if a staff member identifies congruence between the true self in a given moment and the expectations of a context, then they will deploy authentic impression management behaviours (resource B).

Based on the contextual conditions of expectations and circumstances, staff members will identify the micro-political interests (context) which informs their behaviour, which will be either incongruent or congruent to their true self (reasoning). It is in a staff member's micro-political interest to meet these expectations in their delivery (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). If the micro-political situation (context) is incongruent with a staff member's internal emotions, then this will lead to inauthentic impression management behaviours (resource A). However, if the micro-political situation (context) is congruent with a staff member's internal emotions, then this will lead to authentic impression management behaviours (resource B). Staff members are motivated to avoid spoiled performances and therefore will use Goffman's (1959) defensive strategies of dramaturgical loyalty and dramaturgical discipline (reasoning).

Dramaturgical loyalty regards the obligations a performer has in order to not to betray the secrets of the team (Potrac et al., 2021; Scott, 2015). An example of dramaturgical loyalty includes hiding the frustrations of office politics on the backstage, when

performing on the front stage, as revealed by the following interview dialogue with DS7:

Researcher- Do you feel like you have to hide those frustrations when you're engaged with the participants downstairs?

DS7- Yes. Because I don't want them to see my attitude or behaviour is in a bad way. I still want to be me. The participants who attend here need to see me the same way every week. Like smiling, being positive, that's what they are here for. They are not here to see me being miserable or angry or whatever that may be.

...

Researcher- Because you don't want the participants to know what's going on up here?

DS7- Yeah. I don't want them to be upset or being angry about what's happening. Because whatever happens upstairs stays upstairs.

This example demonstrates DS7's desire to hide his true internal feelings when moving from a difficult backstage situation to the front stage. DS7 refers to the expectations of the ETH participants- they do not expect him to be miserable or angry because of a situation in the office. This is supported by DS1 who acknowledged that she would put on a front and mask to appear as per participant expectations. How naturally these strategies come about for delivery staff will influence whether surface or deep acting is required.

Dramaturgical discipline is "an actor's careful management of their personal front so as to appear nonchalant, while concealing the extensive work that they are doing to create this very impression" (Scott, 2015, p. 88). This strategy is used by members of FoL delivery staff, particularly in terms of preparation of sessions. For example, members of staff will choose to spend time before the session and out of the gaze of participants to prepare for the session, which then enables them to appear more relaxed and nonchalant when delivering the session. Staff members commented that this time

of preparation is important to feel and appear to look prepared and in control of a session.

Resource- surface and deep acting

Staff will use surface and deep acting impression management tactics (resource) to portray themselves according to their micro-political interests which are based on the expectations of participants, members of staff at the FoL, as well as their own internal expectations (context). Depending on an individual staff member's personal situation and work situation, these tactics will either be authentic (congruent to expectations) or inauthentic (incongruent to expectations). The extent to which behaviours are authentic or inauthentic (resource) will influence how much emotional labour is required to meet the perceived expectations (outcome). Authenticity has been described as "the awareness of, and ability to act in accordance with, one's true self" (Kuntz & Abbott, 2017, p. 789). Authentic impression management involves communicating (verbal and non-verbal) identity-congruent images to an audience (Molleda, 2010; Peck & Hogue, 2018). Conversely, inauthentic impression management involves identity-incongruent images. Whether authentic or not, impression management behaviours can be automatic or controlled (Peck & Hogue, 2018).

Surface acting "occurs when individuals manage their outward expression of emotion to control what others perceive about their feelings" (Ives et al., 2021, p. 230). This is achieved through altering facial expressions, bodily posture, tone of voice, verbal expressions, and clothing (Charmaz et al., 2019; S. R. Harris, 2015). Depending on the audience, FoL delivery staff may adapt their tone of voice and verbal expressions

(not patronising older people; more dictatorial for younger participants, for example). On the other hand, deep acting involves attempting to manage the emotions an actor actually feels and experiences (Charmaz et al., 2019; S. R. Harris, 2015; Hochschild, 1983). This can be achieved through bodily, expressive, and cognitive techniques (Ives et al., 2021). Whether it is surface acting or deep acting, staff can use the techniques to demonstrate ingratiation and exemplification.

Surface acting

Surface acting impression management tactics used by FoL delivery staff are the most common and these take place during the delivery session itself. During the refining interviews, delivery staff were asked to comment on several surface acting tactics identified within the literature- clothing, bodily postures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and verbal expressions (Charmaz et al., 2019; S. R. Harris, 2015). A common surface level tactic is that of wearing the FoL uniform. Putting on the uniform helps delivery staff complete the shift into “Work mode” (DS12):

I think this one for me, I think the uniform is probably the first part of you becoming that tutor and becoming that deliverer, so that’s part of the first stage of the mask I would say for me- changing yourself into someone else. (DS11)

I think because you are in a separate kit to what you would wear at any other time, it does it gives you that chance to put the kit on- right it’s work mode, this means that I’m going to do x, y, z across the day, whatever that working day might look like. Then when you get home and the kit comes off you can revert back to whatever kind of mode or whatever mood it was at that point. (DS12)

Moreover, the uniform helps to provide staff members with a sense of work identity:

It’s like that’s it you’re now part of the family sort of thing. It’s like any football, you’re part of the tribe sort of thing. So yeah, it’s not just you who’s delivering this, you’re delivering on behalf of that badge that’s on your chest. (DS13)

Preparation is a key resource for delivery staff, and this can be seen in the way that some staff prepare their uniform. For example, DS15 talked about the importance of having the correct clothing as well as ensuring it was presentable:

So if I've not prepared properly, and my washing isn't done and I haven't got my white socks on to go with my white trainers, then I feel my emotional state of feeling ready is affected. Whereas when I've got them on and when I've got my black Sunderland shorts on, I've got my zip up top, and I've got what I need to go to work and be effective, and that makes me feel from maybe not a cognitive point of view, but that emotional sort of feeling like I feel ready to go.

This is an example of uniform contributing to cognitive deep acting, whereby DS15 is seeking to change the way he feels, alongside the surface acting of seeking to influence how other people perceive him. DS14 also alluded to the importance of "Look[ing] and feel[ing] the part" when coming to work and the impact that this can have:

You're not feeling particularly professional on that day then those things make a difference. And even if other people can't see that you are low and can't see that you're not feeling particularly passionate that day, they think he's turned up for work.

Thus, the way that staff prepare and wear their uniform is an important surface level strategy to meet the expectations of their delivery and can also be used as a deep acting strategy from a cognitive point of view.

Whilst the uniform that the staff wear can be considered as a prop for a staff's performance, the strategies of bodily postures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and verbal expressions relate to the acting that the staff member carries out. These tactics are not just used to disguise incongruent feelings, rather they can also be used by staff to emphasise the emotions that they are feeling (DS14). DS10 highlighted the importance of these tactics for his delivery performance:

I think looking at the yellow cards, tone of voice, facial expressions, verbal expressions, bodily postures, they're all part of the performance and sometimes, when you're not firing on all cylinders, doing more of those and being more expressive in your voice in terms of intonation

[sic] and register, being a little bit more lively, or verbal expressions, a bit more pantomime-ish in a way, can put you back into role quite quickly.

Moreover, other members of staff commented on the importance of these strategies and how they can be changed and adapted depending on the session and situation they are in:

Because these are generally, these would change for me during delivery, so there's sometimes where you just, I will control a tone of voice and it will be calmer. Bodily postures, some people love to stand in front of the group and I'll change that- I'll sit with so I'm one of them, rather than being this authority figure at the front. (DS11)

Yeah. It's the outwardly what people perceive when that first interaction as they come in. The high five, the handshake, the coming in the welcome, the facial expressions- oh they're buzzing to be here they want to do it. It's exciting. (DS12)

Instead of it's cold, it's wet, you're not feeling up for it, kind of hunched up shoulders and you know arms crossed and everything, just head up chest out sort of thing. And yeah facial expressions and the verbal expressions- don't have a look on your face of I don't want to be here. A smile, engage with people and positive words things like think sunny thoughts and that sort of thing. (DS13)

DS11 referred to the surface acting tactics as "Tools in the toolbox that you can pick out when you need them depending on the situation that you are in". This sentiment was echoed by other staff members, for example, DS15 acknowledged that delivery is a performance:

I actually think coaching and working with young people, whether you're teaching, tutoring, coaching, I think it is an act. It is a performance. Whether people like it or not you are performing for people.

DS8 acknowledged the importance of surface acting in developing "A front" to deliver a successful session: "And I'm always like showing a front like of being happy and bouncy and bubbly and all this type of stuff, so then it puts them off the exercises that they are doing". DS8 referred to the influence she can have in helping participants

complete the exercises by positively distracting them from thinking about the exercises, thus leading to a more successful and beneficial session.

Deep acting

Staff members also revealed that bodily deep acting strategies are used at times. These refer to strategies that seek to manipulate bodily arousal (Charmaz et al., 2019; S. R. Harris, 2015; Hochschild, 1983). DS10 shared a bodily strategy that he uses in order to try and encourage positive thoughts in a difficult situation:

I used to put my thumb between my fingers. And if I was having a down day I would try and use that physical gesture to bring back those positive thoughts. ... Sometimes if a student is presenting in a particularly challenging... I sometimes adopt the same physical gesture myself, just to try and ground myself and bring back that positivity.

Another bodily strategy was identified by DS11, in which there is the need to take time out and take some deep breaths between finishing one session and starting the next:

Yeah because I think you can't, as I say the way I would describe it, if you put your mask on and you perform and then something does go wrong that does stay with you, and unless you do have that time to get that out of your system in some way shape or form you potentially carry that to your next one, and that's not ideal.

Here is an example of the consequence of a performative faux pas. Goffman (1959) highlighted that it is important that those delivering can move on quickly from the faux pas to minimise the damage caused. DS11 supports this by saying that it is important that she is able to move on to the next session without the faux pas of a previous session having an effect.

As alluded to when discussing uniform as an important resource as a prop for the performance, preparation is important for delivery staff. During Stage 3 interviews, staff highlighted the importance of preparation and reflection as cognitive deep acting strategies. Indeed, preparation provides staff with the confidence to be able to perform consistently within the contextual expectations:

So I think the first thing is having that reflective period before the kids come in. So I always try to get there a minimum of 30 minutes before the session starts. And I'll be set up 30 minutes before the session starts. So I can actually just have that time to clear my mind or if I need to, sometimes I might have a bit of a rant to someone and just shift what's bothering me. So that helps me go into a place where I'm kind of, I can focus on the session rather than what's bothering me up here. But I think if you're prepared these things come easier. If you're not prepared for your session and the kids are due in in two minutes and you're rushing around like a blue arse fly trying to set up and trying to do everything else that can impact on that, because as they're coming in you're stressed- 'hang on hang on I'm not ready yet', and I think that then impacts on these [pointing at ingratiation and exemplification cards]... preparation is massively important. (DS9)

I think that's part of the requirements, partly because of the programme that we work on requires a lot of planning, but partly because I just want to do a good job. I want to be able to deliver sessions and activities that people can relate to, that make sense to people, that are on their level, and that does require a lot of prep and additional planning from just a bog-standard session really. (DS11)

Furthermore, lack of preparation time was identified as a challenge to overcome when delivering. The comments from DS8 below demonstrate the effect that a lack of preparation time can have on the emotional labour experienced:

It's mainly last-minute changes which, where we work we always get new sessions thrown onto us or helping out in different departments, but that's mainly from an anxiety perspective, because I like to have a certain standard and if I'm thrown into something I feel like it's not got the same standard as the rest. Sometimes I do feel a little bit disappointed and that is again whether or not my standard is being hit or that I feel. Sometimes depending on the sessions, if it's something that I don't know a lot about and I'm not that interested in I do get a bit bored teaching it and I think that if I'm bored then they're going to be bored, so I try and make it a little bit more interesting. That's really it. Just kind of last-minute things stress us out.

Thus, higher levels of emotional labour (outcome) can arise as a result of a lack of preparation time prior to delivering a session.

In addition to preparation, another cognitive deep acting strategy is the use of positive thoughts:

So I'll use some of our disability sessions- you can have the worst week ever but you know there are certain groups and you know that when

they come in you're going to have a good time and it's going to be fun and the group's really positive, and I think that can change that mindset and it can give you a little bit of a positive boost that probably sometimes you'll need. (DS12)

Here DS12 uses positive thoughts based on his previous experience of the group he will be working with, to help better prepare him emotionally for the upcoming session. Through this strategy, he is trying to change his internal emotions to become more consistent to what is expected of him for the FoL, participants, and himself (context).

Outcome- emotional labour

How authentic and true to oneself an actor is in a given situation will affect the levels of emotional labour experienced. Thus, inauthentic impression management will lead to higher levels of emotional labour compared to authentic impression management. Emotional labour is whereby “workers must manage emotions as an implicit or explicit part of their employment” (Charmaz et al., 2019, p. 137). Both higher and lower levels of emotional labour can lead to positive and negative outcomes for members of staff.

Emotional labour is experienced when delivery staff feel compelled to manage their emotions (Charmaz et al., 2019). This could be from surface acting in order to accentuate one's real response to fully convince an audience (Charmaz et al., 2019; Ives et al., 2021). Alternatively, this could also be from deep acting whereby the staff member seeks to change the way they actually think and feel in a given situation. The greater the level of inauthentic surface or deep acting a member of delivery staff feels they are required to perform, the more emotional labour they will experience. During Stage 2 interviews with delivery staff there was evidence of authentic delivery which contributes to lower emotional labour, as well as the requirement to deliver

inauthentically resulting in higher emotional labour. This refined PT suggests that staff will experience higher levels of emotional labour when they are unable to perform in an authentic manner. And on the other hand, lower levels of emotional labour will be experienced when staff feel able to perform in authentic manner.

Staff members feel a sense of responsibility to deliver in a way which aligns to the values of the FoL and the expectations of participants, as well as their own expectations (context). However, when this is not authentic (resource), this can lead to emotional labour (outcome). For example, emotional labour can be experienced through guilt:

I think sometimes, and I'm talking infrequently, but you have to remind yourself why you're here. And if I'm not feeling passionate, if I'm not feeling inspiring or innovative, and I don't feel like I've got it in me today, should I be here today? Because the learners deserve more. Is it because I'm not well? Or is it something that I've got to deal with outside of work that can be dealt with quite quickly and then I can come back on all cylinders... And I think they deserve the very best, that's why we're here. If you can't give the very best, perhaps you are better rescheduling until you can. (DS10)

Furthermore, returning to the importance of preparation, a lack of preparation can lead to emotional labour for delivery staff, as evidenced by this dialogue with DS8:

DS8- Yeah so, I do struggle a lot with preparation I would say. So I like to be able to write my list, make sure I've got it all and things like that because there's always one thing that you will forget and you can guarantee that that's the thing you need. So I like to be able to plan and prepare. But we are expected to already have that sorted and then being able to just be thrown things and just being able to sort it out like that really fast. That's what stresses me out. Sometimes I need to know what I'm doing and then being able to plan it a bit. Especially because I get thrown onto a lot of the football course, but I'm not football trained, I don't really watch football, I know nothing about it. So it's little things like that.

Researcher- So you feel that at times you're given a lack of preparation time which then leads to some stress?

DS8- Yeah. And then like I just get pulled or things thrown at us and that's the one thing I'm not used to, because I've always been on a hands on job. Even working in the gyms and stuff like that I've always

been able to do it pick it up and all this, but here there's so much background work like impacts and paperwork. Like as well I think I'm expected to liaise on with the marketing team but I find that I don't really have a lot of time to do that so then advertising doesn't go out as much. So I would say yeah it's mainly just that. It's learning. I'm better than I was but I'm still not amazing.

Thus, a lack of preparation time can have a negative impact on members of staff.

Depending on the intensity and duration of emotional labour, staff will experience positive or negative outcomes. Moreover, a lack of emotional labour may also lead to positive or negative outcomes. Indeed, inauthenticity and emotional labour are not negative per se (Kira & Balkin, 2014). Furthermore, delivery staff may experience negative outcomes despite being able to utilise authentic impression management behaviours. Therefore, a healthy dose of emotional labour is probably beneficial for staff members in terms of how others perceive their performance, and their own growth as a member of delivery staff. DS10 alluded that impression management techniques can help him come out of incongruent feelings, but these tactics can also "Drain" him. The model provided by Kira and Balkin (2014) outlines the relationship between work and preferred identities demonstrating how both alignment and nonalignment can lead to positive outcomes (see Table 9). Too much emotional labour may lead to negative outcomes (Huppertz, Hülshager, De Calheiros Velozo, & Schreurs, 2020), contributing to a state of 'withering'. Unique to their model is that Kira and Balkin found that work alignment does not always lead to a positive outcome. Rather, there may be occasions whereby work and identity alignment resulting in authentic impression management may lead to the outcome of withering because individuals are not challenged and therefore have limited opportunity for growth. The model proposes that work and identity alignment may lead to a sense of personal meaningfulness through authentic impression management which can lead to thriving. Whereas if work and identity lack alignment, resulting in inauthentic impression

management, then this can lead to burnout. Moreover, a misalignment can still lead to a positive outcome for the member of staff through growth. These outcomes will now be discussed further. Figure 20 at the start of this chapter also demonstrates the relationship between staff impression management, emotional labour, and outcome.

Table 9- Impression management outcomes

	Positive outcomes	Negative outcomes
Authentic impression management as a result of congruence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withering
Inauthentic impression management as a result of incongruence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnout

Burnout as a result of higher emotional labour

When staff experience emotional labour over a prolonged period of time, as a result of inauthentic impression management, this can lead to burnout (DS10, DS15). This burnout manifests itself mentally and physically:

DS9- I think your mental capacity on each given day has a tolerance, like this is how much I can take, and at this point something needs to give.

Researcher-What does burning out look like for you?

DS9- To me I want to be alone. I need nobody to body. That's my wife and kids included. I have to have time by myself. And I'll be exhausted-mentally and physically.

Furthermore, the dialogue with DS10 revealed:

DS10- I was just about to say to you, it leaves you absolutely cream crackered at the end of ninety minutes doing that. Particularly if it's in those scenarios if the learner is only able to give 10% that day. It is draining work.

Researcher- Yeah so emotionally draining for you?

Yeah. Physically, cognitively, yeah.

When staff members are burnt out and cannot perform to the standards expected, this can lead to feelings of guilt. For example, DS8 stated that “It makes us feel bad and that I’m not doing my job properly. But then I get kind of angry and frustrated because I can’t help being unwell”. Furthermore, DS1 shared:

DS1- Well personally I feel like I walk on eggshells all the time. I feel like I try my best with everything that I do and try and do it the correct way and the right way, but yeah I do think there is a fear there that your best isn’t good enough.

Researcher- Okay. How does that make you feel?

DS1- Like crap.

Researcher- And do you have any in terms of emotionally, does it play on your mind and emotions?

DS1- Yeah.

Researcher- What does that look like?

DS1- Well it affects my non-working days. Because it plays on my mind. As much as I try and be a very positive person all the time, I’m worried that when it is playing on my mind I bring the negativity to the sessions.

Researcher- Do you try and mitigate that by trying to hide that negativity?

DS1- Yes.

Researcher- How do you do that?

DS1- Just by not talking about it. Try not to say what’s on my mind.

Here it can be seen that DS1 is trying to manage her emotions and respond to and manage the emotional labour that she is experiencing. DS1 went further by saying: “As much as it can be frustrating at times, I don’t really know to be honest how I cope with it”. Thus, burnout can occur when emotional labour is experienced over a prolonged period of time (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Growth as a result of higher emotional labour

Staff members may experience growth as a result of a period of inauthentic impression management, despite higher levels of emotional labour in the short term. Previous experiences which include overcoming challenging situations can lead to growth for members of staff. For example, when faced with a difficult situation, staff may be able to reflect to a previous similar experience where they had to deploy inauthentic impression management strategies:

It allows you to reflect back and think, for example, oh I'm having a difficulty with student X, I used to work with someone like that a few years ago- what used to work for them was a lot of positive affirmation when they walk through the door and try and boost them up before we start the work. So I'll try that with so and so. You do reflect back and develop that skill set. (DS10)

Therefore, this PT suggests that more experienced staff will be more likely to be able to cope with higher levels of emotional labour. Moreover, because of their experience, they are more likely to benefit from previous periods of emotional labour.

Thriving as a result of lower emotional labour

Where a staff member experiences congruence between their internal feelings and the expectations of their work, this will lead to more authentic impression management behaviours, resulting in lower levels of emotional labour. This may result also result in positive or negative outcomes. Evidence was gained supporting the positive outcome of thriving. For example, when asked whether being authentic helps to thrive at work, DS12 responded:

Yeah I think so. Because then you're not trying to be, you're not trying to be a different person to what you are at home or out in the wider world. I think you just being you and I think people we work with recognise that and buy into that. So it's not just a work show in essence. You're not putting on a performance in work to try and get people to like you, to buy into you, groups you work with think that's brilliant,

you're just being who you are, and I think that helps people buy into you and really enjoy what you are doing.

Furthermore, DS13 mentioned:

Yeah if you're trying to be something that you're not, then you're not going to do as good a job. Whereas you go out and, I'm quite known for my sarcasm and that, so if I can put my sarcasm and my sense of humour into the sessions, I do think it comes across better than trying to be somebody who's all straight and there's no humour in it at all sort of thing because that's not me.

Staff members are able to thrive because there is congruence (reasoning B) between their state of mind and the emotion norms and expectations of their role (context). When this happens, staff can use authentic impression management (resource B), and therefore will experience lower levels of emotional labour, resulting in thriving in their role (outcome).

Withering as a result lower emotional labour

Lower emotional labour may also lead to withering due to not facing any challenges and therefore no growth at work (Kira & Balkin, 2014). However, primary data from the evaluation was unable to support or refute this, Therefore, future investigation here would be appropriate.

The refined programme theory

PT 6- Staff emotional labour:

There are expectations of working for the FoL which come from: the organisation, participants, and the self. As a result of these expectations coupled with an individual's personal and work situation, there will be different expectations for performance (context). Where there is incongruence between the true self in a given moment and the expectations of a context, then staff members will identify the need to utilise inauthentic impression management behaviours (reasoning A). This will lead to higher levels of emotional labour which may lead to burnout (outcome A) or growth (outcome B). On the other hand, where there is congruence between the true self in a given moment and the expectations of a context, then staff will deploy authentic impression management behaviours (reasoning B). This will lead to lower levels of emotional labour which may lead to thriving (outcome C) or withering (outcome D).

Chapter 14- Summary of findings

Introduction to chapter

The FoL's slogan is "changing lives through the power of football". As established in Chapter 3, more evidence is required to establish how CSfD may be used as a tool to achieve social change (Adams & Harris, 2014; Coalter, 2007, 2010a, 2017; Henry, 2016; Houlihan, 2010b; G. J. Jones et al., 2017; Kay, 2009; Levermore, 2011; Moreau et al., 2018; K. Simpson, 2013; Spaaij & Schaijée, 2020; Weed, 2014). This has also been highlighted as the case for football foundations (Zwolinsky, McKenna, Parnell, & Pringle, 2016), where evidence is often an afterthought with "imprecise and exaggerated claims" (Parnell, Pringle, Widdop, & Zwolinsky, 2015; Pringle et al., 2016, p. 242). It was highlighted that theory-driven approaches such as realist evaluation may assist in furthering development of more robust evidence in this area. The aim of this thesis has been to evaluate how football foundations may reduce and prevent loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people. A realist evaluation of the FoL's ETH programme was conducted to help achieve the aim of the thesis.

The aim of this chapter is to further elaborate on and synthesise the findings of the realist evaluation, outlined in Chapters 8-13, highlighting how football foundations and CSfD programmes have the potential to prevent loneliness and social isolation. This chapter highlights the interconnectedness of the PTs and their value in explaining how the ETH works, as a whole, in its ultimate endeavour of reducing and preventing loneliness and social isolation. It also uses substantive theory to further understand the transferability of findings, highlighting in what circumstances PTs could work in other football foundations across the UK.

Bringing the findings together

This thesis has sought to provide a better understanding of what the ‘power of sport’ is for programmes seeking to reduce and prevent loneliness and social isolation, and whether this power which is often attributed to sport actually exists. To do this, a realist evaluation of the FoL’s ETH, a CSfD programme seeking to reduce and prevent loneliness was completed, resulting in 6 refined PTs. Figure 21- ETH programme theory map) shows how the PTs with their key contexts link together in preventing loneliness and social isolation. As the diagram shows, PT 1 needs to take place before the other PTs can be activated. Once participants start to regularly attend the ETH, then they may experience, physical continuity, social continuity, and increased levels of social capital. These outcomes may then lead to the prevention of loneliness and social isolation. Moreover, Figure 21 demonstrates the importance of the relationships between participants and staff, and how that links to staff emotional labour. A limitation of the diagram is that it betrays the complexity of the ETH and how the PTs work for participants. It is therefore important to acknowledge that Figure 21- ETH programme theory map merely provides an overview of how the ETH works. Chapters 8-13 provide a more in-depth and nuanced account of how each PT works.

Extra Time Hub programme theory map

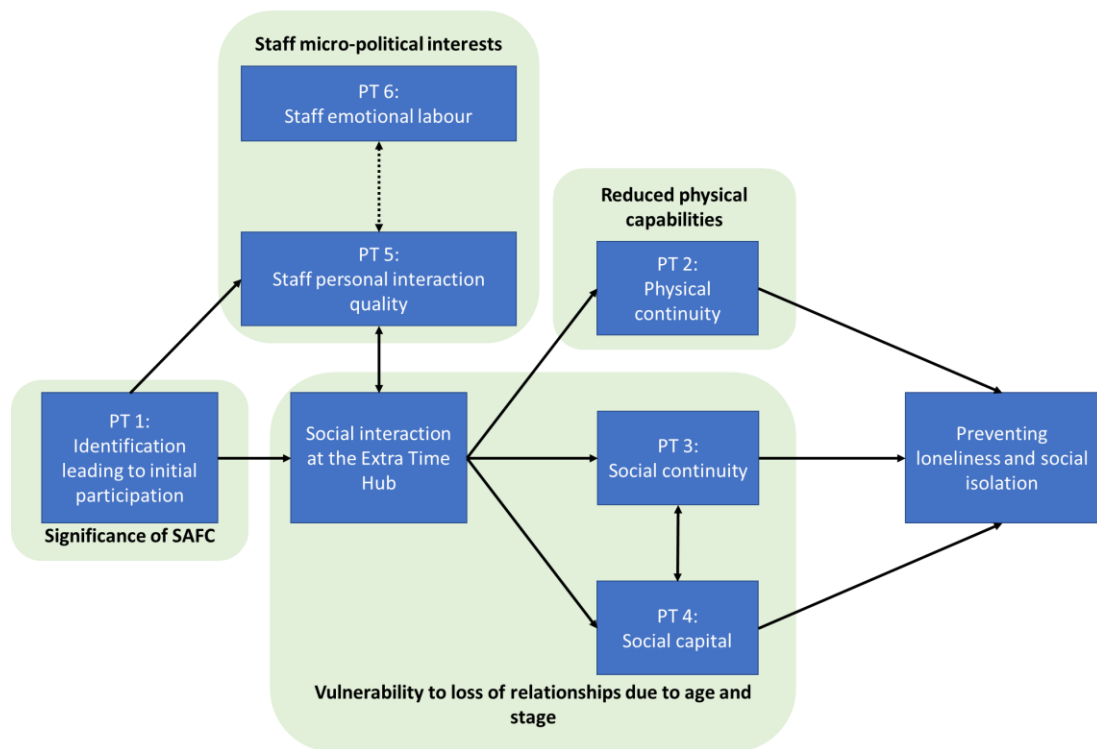


Figure 21- ETH programme theory map

As discussed in Chapter 4, loneliness is the feeling of not being part of a community, and can occur even when in the presence of other people (Hauge & Kirkevold, 2012). Simply attending a CSfD programme such as the ETH does not help to prevent loneliness, rather it is important that participants feel included within the programme and are able to interact with fellow participants, along with practitioners delivering the programme. Indeed, this social contact helps participants feel part of a community. This evaluation suggests that because participants share similar characteristics- particularly age and connection to SAFC (PT 4)- there is a reduced risk of feeling lonely at the ETH. The ETH also has the ability to prevent social isolation. Social isolation is when an individual is on their own for a prolonged period of time (Holwerda et al., 2014). Whilst an individual may not feel lonely when alone, they

will still be considered isolated. CSfD has the potential to prevent older individuals experiencing social isolation.

PT 1 identifies the importance of the symbols used by the FoL which acts as a magnet to attract individuals within the local Sunderland community. However, over time this magnetic attraction of the sense of belonging because of the links to SAFC is replaced with the relationships and activities of the programme itself. Relationships with staff is represented by PT 5, whilst interaction with fellow participants is explored in greater detail in PT 3 and PT 4. Furthermore, PT 1 acknowledges that some people might be repelled by the link to SAFC. This is an important learning point for football foundations- not to overly depend on the football club association. Whilst the association may attract participants, it may also discourage people from engaging with programmes.

PT 2 and PT 3 focus on the discontinuities of later life, and the efforts and strategies to maintain some continuity- physically and socially- in later life. Firstly, the findings of PT 2 highlight that it is important for football foundations, and any other CSfD organisation, to provide appropriate activities for the physical capabilities of participants to prevent isolation and exclusion. In the case of the ETH participants, the FoL have a good range of activities which offer something for everyone. Indeed, it is important to get the balance right; activities which provide a suitable amount of challenge, but are not too easy or too difficult for participants to take part in. CSfD programmes should plan activities which are appropriate to the target group of participants. For example, a loneliness programme for young people may opt for different activities to those provided at the ETH. PT 3 looks at continuity from a social perspective and outlines how the ETH can help participants replace relationships which may have been lost because of life events such as retirement, widowhood, and

the death of friends. As a result of these life events, as individuals get older, they are more vulnerable to a decrease in the number of relationships they hold. This can lead to both loneliness and social isolation (Donaldson & Watson, 1996; Hauge & Kirkevold, 2012; Hoang et al., 2022; Tomaz et al., 2021; Victor & Bowling, 2012). By attending the ETH, individuals have the opportunity to develop new relationships to replace those that have been lost. Furthermore, these new relationships are with people in similar situations and sharing similar challenges of later life, which according to PT 4 leads to greater interest and care in others. However, the extent to which the ETH recruits participants who are already socially isolated is likely to be limited. This is because the main way that participants hear about the ETH is through word of mouth and promotions through other social networks such as the Sunderland Senior Supporters Association. Given that social isolation means a lack of contact with individuals and networks, it is therefore unlikely that those who experience high degrees of social isolation would be aware of the ETH. Therefore, the findings of the evaluation suggest that the ETH is more effective at preventing social isolation, rather than reducing it.

PT 4 outlines how individuals who attend the ETH are able to mutually share and increase levels of social capital. This is achieved through a system of generalised exchange between participants of the ETH. The FoL facilitates this generalised exchange system through hosting ETH sessions and providing opportunities for structured social contact at sessions. Increasing social capital helps to enrich people's lives as they get older and helps to prevent social isolation. The relationship between social capital and social isolation is bi-directional; those with higher levels of social capital are unlikely to be socially isolated, whilst those who are socially isolated are

likely to have lower levels of social capital (Choi et al., 2022; Jarvie, 2003; Lu, Lum, & Lou, 2016; Sherry, 2010; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008; Tcymbal et al., 2022).

PT 5 and PT 6 refer to staff practice; how the relationships that staff develop with participants can influence the experience of participants, and the importance of delivering according to the expectations placed on staff and the effect this can have regarding emotional labour. Figure 22- Demonstrating the link between PT 5 and PT 6 provides a more detailed visualisation of the link between PT 5 and PT 6.

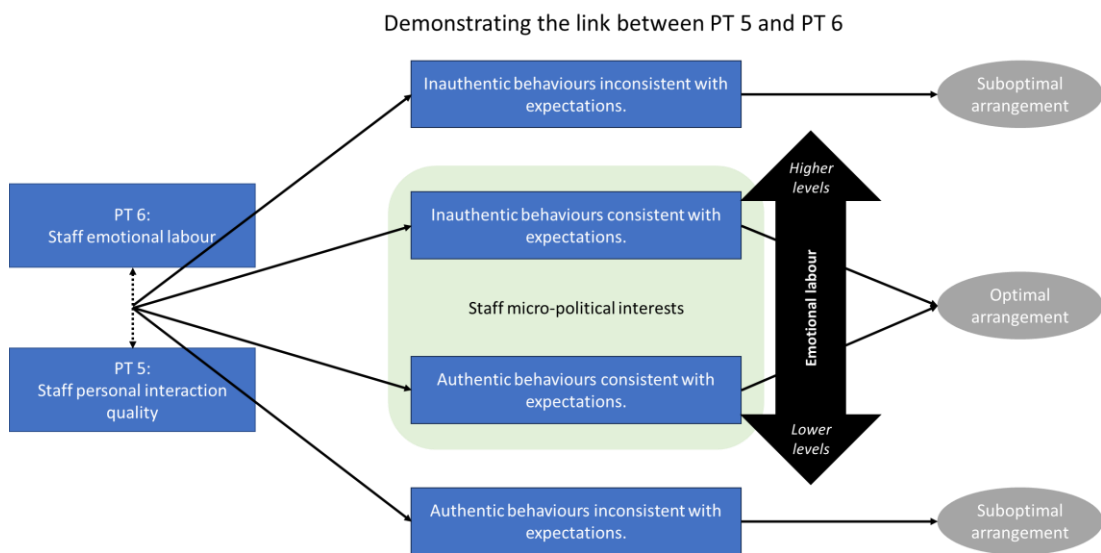


Figure 22- Demonstrating the link between PT 5 and PT 6

The findings of the evaluation highlight the importance of relationships between delivery staff and participants. The findings of PT 5 recognise the importance of relationships with participants, which is consistent with business literature regarding staff-customer relationships (Frydman & Tena, 2022; Mende & Bolton, 2011; Mende, Bolton, & Bitner, 2013; Moussa & Touzani, 2017; Verbeke et al., 2020). Participants will develop attachment towards certain members of staff and this relationship encourages continued participation. Participants consider members of staff to be

friends, which cannot be replaced when a member of staff leaves. This finding poses both encouragement and challenge to CSfD organisations such as the FoL. Organisations should continue to recognise the important role that delivery staff play in engaging with participants, however organisations should also be mindful that for several participants, their continued participation is dependent on that member of staff remaining in position. When a member of staff leaves, this may lead to several participants terminating their participation in a programme. Therefore, organisations should consider succession planning to minimise the negative effects of staff members leaving.

Delivery staff are often considering the expectations placed on them, and therefore will perform in a way which is to the benefit of their micro-political interests. PT 6 helps to explain the impact of performing in a particular manner may have on a member of staff's emotional labour. Given the evolutions of the CSfD professional shifting away from an emphasis on sports coaching (Jeanes et al., 2019; Van der Veken et al., 2022), PT 6 provides an understanding of how practitioners are adapting to the changing environment and expectations placed on their roles, and the emotional impact that this may have. PT 6 highlights that some emotional labour over short periods of time may lead to growth, however high levels of emotional labour over a prolonged period of time may lead to burnout. Figure 22 above highlights that the optimal arrangement for organisation and staff member is inauthentic behaviours consistent with expectations or authentic behaviours consistent with expectations. The diagram acknowledges that it is unlikely that staff will always be their authentic self in meeting expectations. Rather, over time and with experience, staff will develop the ability to manage their emotions despite incongruence with expectations. The suboptimal arrangements of inauthentic behaviours inconsistent with expectations,

and authentic behaviours inconsistent with expectations are unsustainable for both individual and organisation. Therefore, organisations should communicate clearly what the expectations of employees are. Indeed, the FoL do this notably through a detailed induction process which includes a presentation on the culture of the organisations. Moreover, organisations should recognise and consider what training and support can be given to help employees with their emotion management.

Transferability of findings- what works for whom, in what circumstances, and why?

The FoL is one of the 92 football foundations associated with the football clubs in the top four tiers of English football. One of the objectives of this thesis has been to consider the transferability of findings from the realist evaluation of the FoL's ETH to other football foundations and their programmes, and beyond. Indeed, as per the (adapted) realist evaluation strapline- 'what works on a sunny Sunday in Sunderland, may not work in the same way as a thundery Tuesday in Tranmere' (Pawson, 2006). Moreover, an objective of the evaluation has been to consider how the findings might inform understanding of other programmes delivered by the FoL to different demographics of participants. The potential transferability is now discussed under three headings- 'The badge is not enough', 'Prevention but not reduction', and 'Developing relational community practitioners'. These areas will then be revisited further in Chapter 15.

The badge is not enough

Given that all the 92 clubs in the top four tiers of English football are required to have a football foundation linked to the club, PT 1 has the most potential to be transferred

to the broad variety of programmes. Furthermore, football foundations work with a variety of different participant groups, such as the Premier League Kicks programme which works with young people (K. Richardson & Fletcher, 2018). Previous studies have highlighted the significance of the link between a football foundation and associated club when it comes to engaging with participants (Anagnostopoulos, 2013; A. Brown et al., 2008; Cashmore & Dixon, 2016; Curran et al., 2014; Dixon et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2016; S. Morgan, 2013; Watson, 2000). The data from the evaluation furthers existing understanding by highlighting the initial, but temporary impact that the magnetic pull of the association to a professional football club can have on participation. Indeed, as PT 1 uncovers, sustained participation for a participant is dependent on the relationships with other participants and staff members, rather than the link to the football club. Previous CSfD literature has highlighted the importance of relationships within a programme (Coalter, 2013b).

Prevention but not reduction

Older people become increasingly vulnerable to a reduction in the number of the relationships which they hold because of outliving their spouse and friends (A. M. Gray, 2017). This can lead to both loneliness and social isolation. Friendships and social capital can play a compensatory role in helping to prevent loneliness and social isolation (Lu et al., 2016). As a football foundation, the FoL brings together people with similar interests in SAFC, and as per CSfD programmes in general, brings to together people of similar demographics. For older people this provides the opportunity to develop new relationships to replace those that they have lost through retirement, widowhood, and the death of friends. CSfD programmes are able to provide the opportunity for social interaction. However, the data revealed that individuals need to have both the desire and the ability to make new relationships to

replace lost relationships. For many individuals experiencing loneliness and social isolation, this is because they do not have the ability (physically and/or psychologically) to develop new relationships. This provides further doubt as to whether programmes such as the ETH can reduce loneliness and social isolation, since participants who do attend programmes typically have at least the desire to develop new relationships. The activities of CSfD programmes can bring about a sense of companionship between participants (Diener & Biswass-Dinener, 2008; Genoe et al., 2022; Sherry, 2010), and this is the case with the ETH. As a result of attending CSfD programmes, individuals may develop new friendships. Initially these will be casual friendships which are dependent on both individuals of a friendship continuing to attend the programme. However, these casual relationships may develop further into close friendships which extend beyond the CSfD programme where the friendships were initially formed. It is close friendships which are more likely to provide individuals with deeper emotional support (Requena, 2013). Indeed, evidence from the realist evaluation suggests that over time participants will grow stronger relationships providing the opportunity for deeper emotional support, benefiting those most with a lack of family support around them.

Consistent with previous studies (d'Hombres, Rocco, Suhrcke, & McKee, 2010; Lu et al., 2016), the research of this thesis suggests that social capital may help prevent the onset of social isolation. It is the maintenance of social capital which helps to prevent loneliness and social isolation. Furthermore, different forms of group activity, sport has previously been identified as being effective for individuals accessing social support through social capital (A. Gray, 2009). Sharing common group labels such as being retired and having an interest in SAFC help to provide the context for developing new relationships and the emergence of social capital from these relationships. By

attending programmes such as the ETH, individuals are able to retain or reestablish connections with people of similar backgrounds. Indeed, football foundations such as the FoL have a unique asset in bringing people together in the name of affiliated football club. Through partaking in the activities, as well as a more socially focused coffee and chat time, participants have the opportunity to exchange social capital between each other. Given the increased vulnerabilities of social isolation as individuals age, it becomes ever more important for older people to have the opportunities to exchange social capital.

Developing relational community practitioners

Finally, PT 5 and PT 6, are ready to be tested in different environments within the CSfD industry. The PTs highlight the shift from sports coaches to community practitioners and why this is important for participants of CSfD programmes. Indeed, Figure 22- Demonstrating the link between PT 5 and PT 6 highlights how the PT 5 and PT 6 work in tandem, resulting in optimal or suboptimal arrangements. Achieving the optimal arrangement for organisations such as the FoL who have a regular turnover of staff is a challenge and the example of the ETH demonstrates this. Indeed, the attachment that participants develop with individual members of staff takes time to develop, and then when it is developed is strong. Therefore, when a member of staff leaves (as was the case on a couple of occasions during the evaluation) this leaves a relationship gap for participants. New members of staff are unable to fill this gap immediately.

Several members of staff at the FoL started their careers as football coaches and have moved more towards CSfD officers/community practitioners. It would be interesting to see whether they share the same impression management and emotional labour experiences to those who have had different pathways into CSfD. For example, testing

these PTs in a sport for social change programme delivered by a non-sporting organisation and non-sport professionals would add to the current findings.

Chapter summary

This chapter has summarised the findings of the evaluation outlined in the previous chapters, with Figure 21- ETH programme theory map providing a visual representation. It has highlighted transferability of findings and original contributions to knowledge generated from the evaluation. Moving forward there is the opportunity for the refined PTs to be used and tested in different contexts across football foundations, CSfD in general, and beyond. The next chapter discusses the implications and recommendations of the evaluation findings and how they contribute to the research question of this thesis.

Chapter 15- Discussion

Introduction to chapter

The aim of this thesis has been to contribute knowledge towards how sport, specifically football foundations may reduce and prevent loneliness experienced by older people. This discussion chapter provides a reflection on the research underpinning the thesis. The implications for football foundations, CSfD, and loneliness and social isolation research and practice are discussed, after which the potential for transferability of findings is outlined along with recommendations of the thesis. After this, methodological reflections are provided, before the strengths and limitations of the research are discussed, feeding into areas for future research. Before concluding, some personal reflections of carrying out the research for this thesis are shared.

Summary of findings

The ETH programme seeks to reduce and prevent loneliness and social isolation for older individuals, defined as over 55. There are three main findings of the realist evaluation which were highlighted in the previous chapter- ‘The badge is not enough’; ‘Prevention but not reduction’; and ‘Developing relational community practitioners’. The transferability and relevance of these findings will be further discussed below. The findings of the realist evaluation suggest that the ETH can help to *prevent* loneliness and social isolation. Despite the ETH seeking to *reduce* and *prevent* loneliness and social isolation, the evidence arising from the realist evaluation suggests that CSfD programmes delivered by football foundations are more effective at *preventing*, as opposed to *reducing*, loneliness and social isolation.

Through a mixed methods realist evaluation, 6 refined PTs have been produced. The first four PTs contribute to a better understanding of how CSfD may be used in efforts to prevent loneliness and social isolation, whilst PT 5 and PT 6 explore the importance of how and why staff deliver in particular ways within the context of a football foundation. In essence, the findings from the realist evaluation of the ETH demonstrate that CSfD does have a role to play in obtaining social outcomes for older people such as preventing loneliness and social isolation. However, the uniqueness of this is limited; CSfD is not the magic bullet that it is traditionally assumed to be within policy and practice (Coalter, 2007; Lindsey & Bacon, 2016). Rather, CSfD helps to bring together people who share an interest in sport (whether that be playing or in the support of a local club), facilitating the mechanisms which may lead to social outcomes occurring.

Contribution to CSfD research

The findings of this research extend existing knowledge within the CSfD field which can be summarised in three parts- 1) The badge is not enough; 2) Prevention but not reduction; and 3) Developing relational community practitioners. Building on the previous chapter, these areas will now be discussed more broadly.

The badge is not enough

The ETH is an example of a plus-sport programme (Coalter, 2007), whereby sport is part of a broader process with the aim to achieve wider social outcomes of a reduction and prevention of loneliness and social isolation amongst older people. Whilst the ETH incorporates sport and physical activities, the realist evaluation identified that the actual power of sport for the ETH is the unique association with the local football club

SAFC (PT 1). This finding is consistent with previous studies which recognise the pull-effect of association with a football club from a social identity perspective (D. D. Bingham, Parnell, Curran, Jones, & Richardson, 2014; Curran et al., 2014; Dixon et al., 2019; Kiernan & Porter, 2014; Martin et al., 2016; Pringle et al., 2014; Spandler et al., 2014). This study goes further in understanding how sustainable this magnetic effect is for participants.

Football foundations provide a sense of belonging that other CSfD providers may not be able to take advantage of. By being linked to professional football clubs, football foundations are able to make their programmes more attractive to those who support the football club. However, football foundations should not overly depend on the link with the football club as the way of maximising participation and securing additional funding. Indeed, as the realist evaluation has demonstrated, it is the relationships and the activities of a programme which will sustain participation. This builds on the findings of Dixon et al. (2019) which highlighted that alongside the shared language and feelings towards football, participants of a programmes delivered by football foundations can develop a sense of community with each other. Furthermore, the findings of this thesis extend knowledge by suggesting that the link between football foundation and professional football club can act as a repellent for individuals who do not have a sense of belonging towards the club or are not interested in football. This demonstrates that what works for some individuals (who support the local football club) may not work in the same way for other individuals (who have no interest in football at all).

Prevention but not reduction

The ETH programme initially received funding from Sport England to increase older people's physical activity levels. However, the EFL Trust acknowledged that whilst

the physical activity component of the programme was required in order to receive the Sport England funding, the priority of the ETH was to improve social connectedness for older people (Bradley, 2022). Indeed, there is evidence of similar CSfD organisations adapting their provision in order to receive funding (K. Harris & Adams, 2016).

The focus of this thesis has been evaluating the psychological benefits of CSfD in reducing and preventing loneliness and social isolation, building on previous research of CSfD programmes centred around loneliness and social isolation (Andersen et al., 2019; Brady et al., 2020; Casper et al., 2021; Cedergren et al., 2007; Choi et al., 2022; Eather et al., 2023; Franke et al., 2021; Lyons & Dionigi, 2007). Taking part in CSfD can increase and maintain levels of social connectivity for individuals, which helps to prevent loneliness and social isolation in later life. Previous literature has identified the psychological (Eime et al., 2013a; Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013b; O. J. Mason & Holt, 2012). The findings of this thesis suggest that CSfD can *prevent* loneliness and social isolation but has a limited effect on *reducing* loneliness and social isolation. This is because the findings question the extent to which a CSfD organisation can reach an individual who is already lonely or socially isolated. Indeed, there is a minimum amount of social connectivity individuals need to have in order to be aware of programmes such as the ETH- further research would be welcome in understanding what the threshold of connectivity is.

Sport and physical activity can help to bring people together with common interests and purpose. It is not the sport and physical activity per se that contribute to a prevention in loneliness and social isolation, rather it is what sport and physical activity enable which helps to prevent loneliness and social isolation. Consistent with previous research (Andersen et al., 2019; Ottesen et al., 2010), the findings of this

thesis demonstrate that taking part in sport in groups allows individuals to connect with other individuals, thus preventing loneliness and social isolation. Furthermore, activities which involve taking part as a team have previously been argued to be more effective than individual sports (Andersen et al., 2019; Ottesen et al., 2010). Therefore, CSfD programmes should seek to provide team sports to promote camaraderie, teamwork, and social interaction. As a result, CSfD programmes (and any sport programme for that matter) can help individuals develop and maintain relationships, as well as exchange and increase in levels of social capital.

Developing relationships helps to *prevent* the feeling of loneliness, and social isolation. Higher levels of social capital has previously been linked to lower levels of social isolation (Ottesen et al., 2010). Older people are particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of social isolation because of reduced mobility and deteriorating health. Indeed, previous literature has highlighted a bi-directional relationship between social isolation and social capital (Choi et al., 2022; Jarvie, 2003; Lu et al., 2016; Sherry, 2010; Skinner et al., 2008; Tcymbal et al., 2022), in that higher levels of social isolation leads to lower social capital, whilst higher levels of social capital lead to lower levels of social isolation. However, there is a difference between a CSfD programme with a sporting activity, and a sport session focussed primarily on a sporting activity. Therefore, CSfD organisations should consider how best to facilitate social interactions between participants before, during, and after the sporting activity. This may include a time for informal social interaction at the end of the session.

Developing relational community practitioners

The research of this thesis highlights the importance of relationships within a CSfD programme. Considering the importance of the relationships between staff and

participants in achieving outcomes (Coalter, 2013b), there is a limited existing literature exploring why and how these relationships are important. The research of this thesis builds on the limited existing literature regarding the importance of delivery staff how they manage their performances when delivering, and what internal impact that this has on them. The findings demonstrate that for participants, relationships with fellow participants and with staff members are important in the generation of outcomes related to preventing loneliness and social isolation.

As discussed in Chapter 2, as greater attention is placed on using sport to achieve social change, the role of the sports coach and sport development practitioner has evolved and expanded to include responsibilities more akin to a social worker (Jeanes et al., 2019; Van der Veken et al., 2022). Therefore, the expectations placed on practitioners have changed- no longer are those working in sport only expected to improve a participant's performance, but also to have an impact on a holistic level for individual (socially and emotionally for example). The findings of this thesis further develop the work of Potrac and colleagues (Avner et al., 2023; Chesterfield et al., 2010; Ives et al., 2021; R. Jones, 2014; Potrac et al., 2021) in applying Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical principles, and Hochschild's (1979) emotional labour. The findings highlight and support previous work (S. Bolton, 2004; Kira & Balkin, 2014) that suggests that emotional labour is not bad per se, and that some emotional labour may be useful for the professional growth of an individual. Due to the micro-political interests of sports professionals (Potrac & Jones, 2009; Andrew Thompson et al., 2015), sports professionals will adapt to the changing requirements of their work in order to meet the stakeholder expectations (Anne Thompson et al., 2021). As more emphasis is placed on the requirement of sports organisations to facilitate social outcomes, traditional sports coaches are adapting their roles and developing skills to

help develop the relationships with participants which are required for participants to obtain the social outcomes. These findings have helped the FoL senior leadership team to recognise the importance and value of having the right individuals and right number of staff involved in delivering programmes.

Contribution to loneliness and social isolation research

Over recent years the loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people has emerged as an area of greater public concern (P. Devine, Montgomery, Cowden, & Murphy, 2020; Johansson et al., 2021). This concern has come about particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures enforced by governments around the world (Day et al., 2021; Hong et al., 2022; Irvine et al., 2022; O'Donnell, Cárdenas, Orazani, Evans, & Reynolds, 2022; Tomaz et al., 2021). These restrictions contributed to social distancing, social isolation, and shielding, which arguably had a greater impact on the older generation due to underlying health vulnerabilities associated with older age (Rachel et al., 2021; Rodney, Josiah, & Baptiste, 2021). In response, the number of programmes seeking to reduce and prevent loneliness and social isolation have increased, along with greater attention placed on them within policy and academia (Anna Rosa & Lagacé, 2022; Fakoya, McCorry, & Donnelly, 2020; S. J. Richardson et al., 2020; C. Y. K. Williams et al., 2021; T. Williams, Lakhani, & Spelten, 2022). However, knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of CSfD as a tool within loneliness and social isolation programmes is in its early stages; the research underpinning this thesis begins to address this knowledge gap. Moreover, given the increase in the number of programmes seeking to tackle loneliness and social isolation, this thesis provides much needed contemporary research on how loneliness and social isolation may be tackled through CSfD.

This thesis contributes to loneliness and social isolation research by highlighting how CSfD can be used as a preventative tool. Previous loneliness research has been developed from positivist (Eime et al., 2013b) and interpretivist paradigms (Brady et al., 2020; Franke et al., 2021). Therefore, this thesis is unique in conducting the research from a realist paradigm. As a result, the thesis has been able to begin developing knowledge as to how and why programmes seeking to prevent and reduce loneliness and social isolation may or may not work, why, for whom, in which circumstances, and to what extent. For instance, the realist evaluation suggests that the ETH may have limited success in *reducing* loneliness and social isolation, with more success with the *prevention* of loneliness and social isolation. The realist evaluation, through the PTs, identified several mechanisms and outcomes which may help prevent loneliness and social isolation.

This thesis has identified that CSfD is one strategy for preventing loneliness and social isolation. Indeed, as highlighted in Chapter 4, CSfD can be considered to fall into the leisure/skill development and social facilitation intervention types outlined by Gardiner et al. (2018). Given that CSfD is just one strategy for tackling loneliness and social isolation, it is apt to compare the findings of this thesis to other research, focusing on programmes falling to the leisure/skill development and social facilitation intervention types. Gardening programmes, men's shed clubs, and computer programmes are highlighted as alternative leisure/skill development interventions (Gardiner et al., 2018; Milligan et al., 2016; Wilson & Cordier, 2013). These leisure activities, like CSfD programmes provide the opportunity to maintain social contacts, thus helping to reduce/prevent loneliness and social isolation. Social facilitation interventions are the most prominent category of intervention (Gardiner et al., 2018) and this thesis argues that leisure/skill development interventions also include social

facilitation. Social facilitation usually involves a group coming together with similar interests (Alaviani, Khosravan, Alami, & Moshki, 2015; Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2007; Hemingway & Jack, 2013). In the case of this research, a broad interest and sense of belonging in SAFC helps to bring people together into a group setting. Thus, along with previous research, this thesis suggests that a common interest or goal can help bring people together into a group setting which contributes to a prevention of loneliness and social isolation.

Transferability of findings

One of the objectives of this thesis has been to ensure the transferability of findings from the realist evaluation of the ETH in Sunderland, to CSfD and loneliness/social isolation more broadly. Indeed, realists argue that transferability through MRTs is an important part of a realist evaluation (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010; Bonell et al., 2023). Whilst, positivists, interpretivists, and post-structuralists will no doubt identify critiques of the realist approach taken, it is hoped that this section highlights how the findings developed are rigorous according to realist principles and can be transferred into different settings and research approaches. It is important to judge the quality and rigour against the philosophical underpinning of the research (B. Smith & McGannon, 2018), which for this thesis is realism. There are a set of reporting standards for realist evaluations (Wong et al., 2016), which this thesis has followed throughout the research process, highlighting the credible and reliable nature of the data and findings.

Realist evaluations are methods neutral and will often incorporate a mix of quantitative and qualitative data (S. Chen & Henry, 2016). As has been acknowledged, most of the data used for this realist evaluation was qualitative. This was mitigated by

incorporating substantive theory to the PTs. Therefore, whilst the primary data used was largely qualitative based, the refined PTs are also underpinned by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data as a result of the substantive theory used. Furthermore, the predominant method used for realist evaluation is realist interviews (Renmans & Castellano Pleguezuelo, 2023). This thesis sought to follow the outline of the three different types of realist interview provided by Manzano (2016). The realist evaluation involved interviewing both participants and staff of the ETH programme. This allowed for the experiences of both participants and staff to be reflected in the PT development process. Interviews were deemed as the appropriate predominant method for the evaluation as they allowed for deep conversations with interviewees, helping to move towards the domain of the real. Interviews were completed by other primary methods including observations, World Café, and focus group. Indeed, the focus group added value to the evaluation by being a source of group reasoning, as opposed to the individual reasoning of the interviews (Breen, 2006; Manzano, 2022; Ochieng et al., 2018).

During the realist evaluation, member checking took place on two levels. Member checking as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is a process whereby data is presented back to the research participant for them to decide whether the data are accurate. Firstly, after each interview (and the focus group) was transcribed, participants were provided a copy of the transcript to review, with the opportunities to highlight any inaccuracies. Secondly, the teacher-learner cycle used during the theory testing (interviews with ETH participants) and theory refining (interviews with staff and focus group with ETH participants) stages enabled a degree of member checking to take place. This was where the PTs were taught to interviewees who were then able to challenge or confirm the PT in its current form. This was particularly useful during

the theory refining stage with staff interviews and the focus group with ETH participants. As a result of the above measures and by following the realist reporting standards, the research of this thesis should be relevant in other settings. The recommendations of the findings are now discussed.

Recommendations

From the above discussions, several recommendations are made. The unique role of football foundations should continue to be recognised by funders such as Sport England who initially funded the ETH programme. Furthermore, given the link between loneliness and social isolation with health, public health bodies should recognise the role that football foundations may be able to play in preventing the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation. Football foundations such as the FoL have the unique resource of a link to the local professional football club (A. Brown, 2008; Cashmore & Dixon, 2016; Dixon et al., 2019; Phelps, 2005; Verriet, 2019), which can lead to the mechanism of a sense of belonging from individual participants. Even for individuals who are not interested in football, they are still able to feel a sense of belonging to the football club, due to it being a major symbol in the local community. However, whilst this may contribute a sense of belonging for some people, given the tribal nature of football (Duarte et al., 2017; Giulianotti, 2002) for others this association with a football club may be a cause of alienation and result in non-participation. Furthermore, the evaluation suggests that the significant barrier for people engaging with the FoL is the assumption that it only delivers activity related to football. Football foundations should seek to be better at demonstrating the diversity in delivery beyond football. Therefore, there is a place for other CSfD organisations to deliver programmes in the same communities as football foundations. For example,

in Sunderland there is Durham County Cricket Club nearby, and the local Salvation Army also deliver CSfD sessions. Thus, it is advisable that local funders ensure that they do not award all funding to one organisation to tackle a social issue within the community. Rather, spreading the funding out amongst different organisations and programmes, whilst providing the lion's share to the most effective programmes, will likely lead to more people engaged in the programmes.

The role of CSfD organisations is becoming increasingly more important given the economic and political context of the UK. During the years of austerity from 2010, football foundations began to establish themselves as important agents in taking over services previously provided by local councils. Given the economic consequences of the government's COVID-19 measures and the cost of living crisis (L. Marshall, Bibby, Suckling, & Holden, 2022; Patrick & Pybus, 2022), it is again important for football foundations to provide services that local communities need such as opportunities for physical activity, physical and mental health related programmes, and programmes promoting social cohesion. Indeed, the UK Government's recently published new sports strategy *Get Active* highlights the desire for joined up thinking between government, communities and local health care systems, with the hope of reducing the burden on the NHS and levelling up opportunities within sport based activities (Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2023). Thus, football foundations again have an opportunity to establish themselves as community assets in the face of government spending cuts. With a general election on the horizon in 2024, it will be important for football foundations, and other CSfD to demonstrate nimbleness when it comes to meeting the needs of communities. This will help CSfD organisations maintain and grow the funding that they receive for the programmes that they deliver.

The research demonstrates that it is a challenge to engage with people who are already experiencing loneliness and especially social isolation, suggesting that programmes will only work for those people who are aware of a programme's existence and are motivated to attend. Individuals who are already socially isolated are unlikely to have the same awareness and knowledge of programmes, therefore limiting the opportunity for CSfD to claim that it can reduce social isolation. As a result, it is recommended that providers of programmes such as football foundations should invest resources in trying to ensure that the people who need the programmes most are aware of them. Strategies include working with local health providers and housing associations, who can then refer individuals to programmes delivered by football foundations. With an increasing shift towards digital technology for advertising and promotion of programmes, and increasing emphasis placed on digital technology for day to day life (Lowe, 2023), there is a risk that older people who have low levels of digital literacy may become or remain isolated. Therefore, CSfD organisations should consider how best to promote their programmes given the needs and abilities of their target population. This may involve working with local mental health providers such as Age UK and Andy's Man Club and other community organisations who are able to identify individuals who may be vulnerable to loneliness and/or social isolation.

The final recommendation regards staff and their delivery. This thesis has highlighted the changes and developments experienced by sports practitioners. The realist evaluation highlights the importance of relationships between participants and staff, and the emotional impact this can have on staff. Therefore, CSfD organisations should consider how they can help and support staff members to be able to deliver authentic and congruently with the expectations of their role. Regular training and development may help with this. However, Crisp and Brackley (2023) that the softer skills of sports

professionals are often neglected. The findings of this thesis suggest that this is an important area for CSfD organisations to work at to help staff members be better self-emotion managers.

Methodological reflections/implications

Realist evaluation remains an emerging approach within CSfD (L. Ryan et al., 2023) with the literature acknowledging that realist evaluation is a complex method of evaluation, requiring a level of capacity building for academics, practitioners, and policy makers (K. Harris, 2018, 2020a). There are several methodological implications and reflections when considering the place that realist evaluation may have for future CSfD research. The research of this thesis adds to the growing research portfolio (see Chapter 3) that utilises the realist approach in CSfD.

Given the political nature of sport policy and its implications for CSfD, as it stands the progress of realist evaluation within the field will be limited. This is because the knowledge that is currently valued is still very much outcome-driven, as opposed to process-driven (Coalter, 2007; Moreau et al., 2018; Spaaij & Schailée, 2020). Policy makers have limited ability to commit time to evidence and are therefore focused on what works, not how it works (Cairney, 2015). This perhaps remains the biggest hurdle for evaluators- how to gain buy in for more nuanced process-based methods of evaluation beyond outcome-driven methods within the CSfD field. This is because sports practitioners and organisations succeed or fail based on the centralised outcome-driven monitoring and evaluation benchmarks. If realist evaluators want their findings to influence policy making decisions, they need to have an awareness of how the policymaking process work (Cairney, 2015). For the CSfD field this will include

understanding what information funders and policy makers want from evaluators. This may mean that the realist terminology needs to be changed when presenting findings to ensure that the findings are relevant and useful for policymakers (Bailey & Harris, 2021). Furthermore, evaluators should be aware that policy makers within CSfD will be spread across many levels with differing understandings of what ‘good evidence’ is (Cairney, 2020).

There has been some progress towards more emphasis being placed on process-based evaluation. Indeed, Public Health England recently published *A brief introduction to realist evaluation* (Public Health England, 2021), demonstrating a greater level of attention being placed on theory and process-based evaluation approaches. Given the socio-political context of CSfD and sport policy in general, it is likely that it will require academics to continue work with policy makers and delivery organisations in moving towards a more process-driven and complex form of evaluation. What this thesis has shown is the value that conducting a realist evaluation can have in deepening the understanding of what works for whom, in which circumstances, and why in when evaluating CSfD programmes. In answering these questions, the thesis highlights that CSfD programmes delivered by football foundations will typically work for those who have a preexisting interest in the local football club but may put people off who have no interest in football. It is important that CSfD programmes provide appropriate activities for the target population to take part in, and therefore CSfD organisations should spend time in the programme planning stage to understand the needs of the target group. In answering the question of why, the realist evaluation demonstrates that an existing sense of belonging towards a football club community can help encourage individuals to attend programmes delivered by football foundations. However, to achieve sustained participation, programmes need to move away from depending on

one area of belonging, rather importance needs to be placed on the activities and developing relationships with fellow participants and staff. A shared sense of belonging can assist with developing relationships with fellow participants; however, it will not automatically lead to sustained belonging and thus prevent loneliness and social isolation. Furthermore, the realist evaluation has highlighted the difficulties in programmes engaging with those on the margins of society who are the ones most vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation. The evaluation demonstrates that CSfD can help to *prevent* people experiencing loneliness and social isolation, however the findings suggest that CSfD is less able to *reduce* social isolation for individuals. This is because those experiencing social isolation are unlikely to hear about programmes such as the ETH.

Given that realist evaluation is an emerging method for academics studying CSfD, it would be beneficial for more CSfD specific guidance to be available for the academic interested in realist evaluation. Whilst there are many publications which cover realist evaluation in a general sense and within health, there is limited guidance specifically for the area of sport. Some existing literature attempts to provide useful reflections on how academics can make realist evaluation more accessible to practitioners and policy makers (Bailey & Harris, 2021; L. Ryan et al., 2023). Given the cross over between CSfD and health, there is the opportunity for sports academics to build up some specific guidance, particularly with how to share realist findings and engage with sport policy makers such as Sport England.

Strengths of research

This thesis has demonstrated how realist evaluation can be used within CSfD as an area of inquiry and has several key strengths. Firstly, it is important for academics not to be isolated from the immediate and wider team of practitioners. Indeed, embedding within the FoL enabled good collaborative relationships to be built with members of staff (K. Harris, 2020b). This helped contribute to a positive environment for the evaluation to take place. This also contributed to senior leaders at the FoL embracing the findings of the evaluation when the findings were shared with them at interim points throughout the evaluation. Co-location at the FoL offices also meant that there was strong buy in from the outset of the evaluation; this buy in facilitated recruitment and data collection, and without it the thesis would have been inferior. During the realist evaluation an effort was made to help staff members understand that the research was being carried out *for* them, rather than *of* them; helping to improve delivery and sustainability of the FoL in the long term. Furthermore, during the evaluation, the teacher-learner cycle was utilised (Manzano, 2016) in a way which met the needs of those being interviewed (S. Griffiths et al., 2022). Evaluators should consider how best to involve practitioners during the evaluation process, recognising that this will require a level of capacity building to take place (K. Harris, 2020a, 2020b; Oatley & Harris, 2021). Moreover, it is important to recognise that a one size fits all formula is unlikely to maximise the opportunities for collaboration (J. Spencer, Gilmore, Lodenstein, & Portela, 2021). Rather, researchers should use the tools and guidance available in conjunction with their own situational awareness.

Another strength of this research is the timely research into loneliness and social isolation programmes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As has been alluded to, greater attention is now being placed on loneliness and social isolation as problems

which can have negative consequences on individuals and society as a whole. This research highlights how sport and physical activity can be used as part of a programme to help to prevent loneliness and social isolation, specifically the unique advantage that football foundations have in engaging with people interested in football.

Thirdly, FoL staff recognise that they have historically not been good at understanding and sharing the success of their programmes. The realist evaluation of the ETH has helped to provide the FoL with a better understanding of what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and why. Furthermore, data from the evaluation provides the FoL with insight into if and how they change lives through the power of football. The buy in and support from the senior leadership, has helped to enable the findings to have an impact on the delivery and decisions of the FoL, with the findings already being used in funding applications by the FoL.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this thesis to acknowledge. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated government lockdowns and restrictions undoubtedly had an impact on this thesis. Whilst efforts were made to mitigate the effects, it would be naïve to claim that the research was unaffected. For example, Stage 1 of the realist evaluation was amended to be in line with government guidance, using remote data collection at times. Due to the changing government policies, it was imperative to be dynamic and proactive in adapting were required. This involved several ethics amendments throughout the research project. The pandemic is also likely to have had a more direct impact on the findings. As has been acknowledged by a national evaluation of the ETH programmes (Sport Industry Research Centre, 2022), the

pandemic and lockdowns did have an impact on national data when it came to individual responses to loneliness and life satisfaction.

As alluded to in Chapter 5, the use of the photovoice method did not yield what was hoped or expected. On reflection, using photovoice early in Stage 2 of this realist evaluation was not the optimum time to use the method. It would have perhaps been better to use the photovoice method towards the end of Stage 2 or within Stage 3. However, the photovoice did elicit some useful data particularly for PT 1 and helped to engage participants in preparation for their realist interviews. There is currently limited guidance for using photovoice within a realist evaluation (Mukumbang & van Wyk, 2020; Polzella et al., 2022), therefore this thesis contributes a much needed example and reflections on using the method as part of a realist evaluation.

Taking part in physical activity during later life also brings about physiological benefits. However, given the plethora of evidence for the physiological benefits, in addition to an emphasis on the positivist paradigm for studying physiological benefits, it was decided to focus on the psychological benefits for the realist evaluation of this thesis. However, the data from the realist evaluation suggests that participants draw a link between the physical activities of the ETH and their general mobility.

Realist evaluators acknowledge that full understanding is never achieved (Pawson, 2006; Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012). Thus, there is scope for more work to be done at the FoL and nationally across different football foundations to further test and refine the PTs which have come about from this research. Furthermore, this thesis focussed on the issues of loneliness and social isolation. CSfD seeks to achieve a wide range of social outcomes, and therefore further research in other areas would extend and deepen knowledge and understanding of the role CSfD can play in society.

Areas for future research

Whilst this thesis provides evidence highlighting the role CSfD may play in targeting loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people, there are many more outcomes associated with CSfD which require robust evidence to support the claims made. Indeed, the FoL deliver a wide range of programmes targeting a range of outcomes and people. For example, claims such as sport's power to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime, as well as the power to unite communities together, require more robust evidence. From a loneliness and social isolation perspective, the evaluation focussed on those who were already socially connected to some extent. The challenge for future research is to be able to identify and make contact with those who are socially isolated, in order to uncover the experiences of those who are not connected socially. This future insight would help to equip policy makers and programme deliverers with the knowledge and tools to engage with those on the very margins of society.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to further test the PT 5 and PT 6 regarding staff practice in several different settings, potentially even beyond CSfD. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the role of the sports practitioner continues to expand. Indeed, it is no longer helpful to refer to someone simply as a 'sports coach'. Much of the literature around sports practitioners focusses on coaches working in elite sport. This thesis provides a platform for further research into practitioners involved in CSfD. For example, further research into the internal emotions experienced by CSfD practitioners and the strategies they use to try and manage their emotions. Moreover, research building upon the existing coach development literature (Crisp & Brackley, 2023; Lauwerier et al.,

2020; Redgate et al., 2020; Van der Veken et al., 2022) could highlight effective ways of practitioners developing the more relational skills required within CSfD.

In Chapter 3 it was highlighted that Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an emerging approach for evaluating the value of CSfD. The strength of SROI is the ability to attach financial values to a programme. Some academics have started to highlight the potential of combining realist evaluation with the SROI approach (R. Anderson, Gilmore, Bate, & Dalkin, 2021; R. Anderson & Hardwick, 2016; Roberts et al., 2023). It was beyond the scope of this thesis to carry out a SROI of the ETH, however now that the PTs have been established there is the opportunity to link the PTs to a subsequent SROI in the future.

Personal reflections

This thesis has been four years in the making. The final presentation of this thesis may suggest that the research during this time was neat and tidy. However, at times the process has been messy and challenging. In this section I provide some personal reflections of the ups and downs, along with some of the critical choices that were made in the process of completing the thesis.

The research for this thesis was carried out as part of a collaborative research project between Northumbria University and the FoL, and as a result I was embedded as a researcher into the FoL. I was a young researcher entering a live and busy CSfD environment. Whilst I had previously worked as a sports practitioner within football, I was conscious that I may be perceived as someone interfering and spying on those who work at the FoL. Therefore, one of my priorities was to try and communicate with staff that my role was to help them understand the good work that they may be doing.

The COVID-19 lockdowns from March 2020 resulted in over a year of not working at the BoL with FoL members of staff. Because of the lockdowns, the original programme that I was due to evaluate- Premier League Kicks- was not delivered for a long period of time. As part of the FoL's response, the ETH programme was developed and adapted for the periods of lockdown, with online sessions delivered during the week. Therefore, in January 2021, in agreement with the FoL, a strategic change was made to focus the research on evaluating the ETH programme in terms of how the FoL may be able to tackle loneliness and social isolation. Whilst still CSfD, this was a shift away from my background and knowledge, moving towards health and social prescribing. This meant that I was required to familiarise myself with the issues of loneliness and social isolation and develop an understanding of how these issues have traditionally been addressed.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 restrictions had an impact on what data could be collected and the methods used. Data collection during the theory gleaning stage was in the form of observing online sessions, remote interviews with delivery staff, and substantive theory. By the Autumn of 2021, restrictions had eased enough to be able to carry out an in-person World Café with participants of the ETH. This required various ethical amendments and risk assessments to be approved by the university. Furthermore, there had been limited opportunities at this point to engage with ETH participants in the flesh. Therefore, a strategy I used was to invest my initial time and energies with the members of the ETH Committee. This meant that when it came to organising the World Café, I had established a good rapport with the committee members which contributed to the committee agreeing to the World Café taking place in lieu of their usual ETH session.

As has been acknowledged already, the photovoice did not yield the data that was hoped for. There are a couple reasons that I have identified which may have contributed to this. Firstly, because of the disruption and adaptations that needed to be made to collect data, the IPTs were not as developed as I hoped for them to have been. This then made it harder to develop robust theory-driven photo triggers. And as previously mentioned, there are a lack of examples of realist studies utilising photovoice as a method. I hope that my reflections and learnings of using photovoice as part of this realist evaluation can be used by researchers in the future to guide them when considering ‘what?’ and ‘when?’ for implementing photovoice.

I was conscious that I wanted to avoid the perception that I only turned up the ETH when I wanted something from the participants. To try and avoid this, I regularly attended the ETH from January 2022 all the way through to June 2023. This also had the positive effect of me better understanding how the ETH worked and the experiences of the ETH participants. By attending and taking part in the quizzes and sporting activities, this helped me to develop relationships with a wide variety of participants at the ETH. Having these relationships helped me to recruit participants for my interviews. Furthermore, whilst ETH participants were aware that I was a doctoral student, by attending the ETH regularly, they began to view me as one of the members of staff which may have helped my interactions with them.

One of the limitations highlighted of this thesis is the lack of quantitative data used. One of the reasons for this was situational- having witnessed the attitude of ETH participants completing questionnaires and surveys, it became clear to me that this was not the most effective way of collecting data from participants. Indeed, several participants mentioned to me that they much preferred the interview they completed with me, as opposed to completing the regular surveys.

I want to conclude this section with some guidance for researchers who may be considering a similar research project. Firstly, realist evaluation is not easy. From attending realist training sessions for doctoral students, I realised that I was in a fairly unique position of having applied realist evaluation principles for a number of years beforehand. Despite this, completing this thesis has required me to challenge my own thinking and learning. The development of IPTs to refined PTs has demonstrated my own learning and development as a realist. Secondly, from an embedded and collaborative perspective- relationships matter. Because of the COVID-19 lockdowns, I was isolated from the staff that I needed to be working with. Indeed, it was only when I was back attending the BoL regularly from January 2022 (two years after starting the research) that I felt that I was becoming embedded within the FoL. To someone starting an embedded research project in 2023 and beyond I say to them- spend as much time as you can with the people that you are working with. Water cooler chats and being embedded within the busyness of an organisation will help you better understand the organisation and the people that you are working with. Thirdly and finally, I have learnt that research is not to be taken lightly. Indeed, the research I have completed for this thesis has challenged and stretched me, resulting in me being a better academic. There is a large amount of work that I have completed which has not made it into this final thesis. This does not mean that the work excluded has not been useful. Rather, for someone reading this thinking a doctoral thesis is straightforward and linear, it is not. This thesis is merely a cleaned-up snapshot of the work that I started in January 2020 and have completed in November 2023.

Conclusion

Football foundations by associating themselves with professional football clubs, have the opportunity to *prevent* loneliness and social isolation. Unique to football foundations is the social identity that can be used and developed to encourage participation. However, football and sport in general is not the silver bullet. As the PTs of this thesis demonstrate, sport *enables* rather than *causes* the outcomes which may lead to the prevent of loneliness and social isolation. Indeed, more evidence is welcomed and encouraged, and the PTs of this thesis provide the platform to be able to do that. Previous literature has identified the challenges that older age brings, and this was further compounded by the COVID-19 related restrictions. The ETH for many participants has been a lifeline, helping to prevent the negative and harmful outcomes of loneliness and social isolation. The title of this thesis is: *Preventing and reducing loneliness and social isolation: A realist evaluation of the Foundation of Light's Extra Time Hub programme*. The realist evaluation conducted for this thesis demonstrates that football can be used as a tool to help prevent loneliness and social isolation.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Example participant information briefing sheet (photovoice)

Improving lives through the power of football: A realist evaluation of the Foundation of Light's Tackling Loneliness Together/ Extra Time Hub

Participant Information Sheet (Participant photovoice)

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide it is important for you to read this leaflet so you understand why the study is being carried out and what it will involve.

Reading this leaflet, discussing it with others or asking any questions you might have will help you decide whether or not you would like to take part.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to answer the following question:

Where sport, and in particular football is used as a tool to deliver social change in the context of tackling loneliness; what works, for who, in which circumstances, and why?

The study will collect data from various stakeholders, including delivery staff and programme participants. This data will be used to develop and test programme theories, which will go some way to answering the above question. The focus is not on whether the programme works, rather how and why the programme produces particular outcomes for certain individuals.

Who is organising this research?

This study forms the part of a PhD being completed by Andrew Bailey at Northumbria University in collaboration with the Foundation of Light.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to take part in this study as you have been identified as being a participant of the Tackling Loneliness Together programme and/or the Extra Time Hub programme delivered by the Foundation of Light.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may ask the researcher questions before agreeing to participate. However, it is believed that your contribution will assist in achieving the research aims and objectives.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. However, at any time, you are free to withdraw from the study and if you choose to withdraw, you will not be asked to give any reasons.

Whether you decide to participate in this study or not, your current involvement in the Tackling Loneliness Together and Extra Time Hub programmes will not be affected.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to participate in this part of the study, you will be asked to provide photos from your day-to-day life which you believe are linked to your involvement in the Tackling Loneliness Together and/or Extra Time Hub programmes. You will then upload these onto a secure WhatsApp chat, before participating in a focus group/interview to discuss some of the photos.

You will be provided with some training as to what photos you may take and how to upload them onto WhatsApp.

The data collected from you in this study will be confidential and stored securely. An exception to this confidentiality is if the researcher feels that you or others may be harmed if information is not shared. Only the researcher and those present at the time of data collection (e.g., fellow focus group participants and overseeing FoL staff member) will know who has provided what data. All those present at the time of data collection will be asked and reminded not to share any information shared through the interview/focus group.

Any photovoice data which is shared and may reveal an identity will be shared in a way which has been agreed by the participant (e.g. pixelated face if the participant features in the photo).

The focus group/interview will be conducted by the researcher of the project Andrew Bailey. The focus group will last approximately 60-120 minutes. The interview will last approximately 30-60 mins.

You may be asked you to participate in a follow-up interview, though participation in this is optional.

How will my data be stored, and how long will it be stored for?

All electronic data, including the recordings from your interview, will be stored on the University U drive, which is password protected. All data will be stored in accordance with University guidelines and the Data Protection Act (2018). All paper data, including paper consent forms will be kept in locked storage. Once the paper data is no longer needed this will be destroyed securely.

At any point you may request to see the data which you have provided.

Anonymised data will continue to be stored securely beyond the research study as per the University's Research Data Management Policy.

What categories of personal data will be collected and processed in this study?

Any personal data collected through this research will be anonymised as outlined above. Any data collected as an indirect result of the research (e.g. contact details of participants) will be protected as per the General Data Protection Regulation.

What is the legal basis for processing personal data?

The legal basis for processing personal data for this research project is Article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR Act: "processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest".

Who are the recipients or categories of recipients of personal data, if any?

The researcher (Andrew Bailey) will be the only individual involved in processing personal and identifiable data. The supervisory team will as appropriate have access to anonymised data. Anonymised data may also be shared with senior staff at the Foundation of Light.

What will happen to the results of the study and could personal data collected be used in future research?

The research will not involve transferring personally identifiable data to third parties for further processing. Anonymised data may be used when publishing any findings from this research. These findings may include (but not limited to): documents, lectures, presentations, conference papers and written publications. Moreover, a PhD thesis will be produced which will use anonymised data from this research. Upon request you will be provided with a summary of the findings from the study.

As noted above, any photovoice data which is shared and may reveal an identity will be shared in a way which has been agreed by the participant (e.g. pixelated face if the participant features in the photo).

Data you have provided will not be personally identifiable unless you have provided specific consent for this beforehand. Anonymised data will continue to be stored securely beyond the research study as per the University's Research Data Management Policy.

Who is organising and funding the study?

The study is being organised and funded by Northumbria University in partnership with the Foundation of Light.

Who has reviewed this study?

Before this study could begin, permissions were obtained from Northumbria University through the online ethic system. Moreover, the study has been approved by the Senior Leadership Team of the Foundation of Light.

What are my rights as a participant of this study?

Upon request you have a right to access a copy of the information comprises of any data that you provide as part of this research. You have the right to have inaccurate personal data rectified. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Should you be dissatisfied with the processing of personal data, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Contact for further information:

Researcher email: Andrew.Bailey@Northumbria.ac.uk

Supervisor email: S.Dalkin@Northumbria.ac.uk

Foundation of Light: Jamie.Wright@foundationoflight.co.uk

Name and contact details of the Records and Information Officer at Northumbria University: Duncan James (dp.officer@northumbria.ac.uk).

You can find out more about how we use your information at:
www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/legal-services-team/gdpr/gdpr---privacy-notice/

or by contacting a member of the research team

Improving lives through the power of football: A realist evaluation of the Foundation of Light's Tackling Loneliness Together/ Extra Time Hub

Participant Consent Form (Participant World Café)

Researcher details:

Andrew Bailey

Andrew.Bailey@Northumbria.ac.uk

For participant completion:

Please mark with a "Y" where applicable:

I have carefully read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.	
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study and I have received satisfactory answers.	
I understand I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason for withdrawing, and without prejudice.	
I agree to take part in this study.	
I agree to have my photo taken during the World Café (photos may be used in promotional material by the Foundation of Light and Northumbria University; names will not be used or linked to any photos taken without further permission).	
I also consent to the retention of this data under the condition that any subsequent use also be restricted to research projects that have gained ethical approval from Northumbria University.	

Signature of participant	
Name of participant	
Date	

Appendix 3- Example observation field notes

16th March 2021

TLT- Seated Chair Exercise (10:00-11:00)

Five attendees in total, after one arrived after warm up and first song.

3 female and 2 male.

3 standing and 2 sitting ([staff member] was sitting)

Participants generally wearing non-sport clothing- it was not obvious that anyone was wearing sportswear. Leisure wear at best. One participant wearing jeans and shirt.

Football chat prior to workout starting was promoted by participants, asking each other: "so do you think we will win on Saturday?"

Good camera set up from [staff member]- I wonder how much thought went into it? Would she prefer better camera angles from participants?

Participants were very keen for me to partake in the session. I said I would just watch today but might participate in future weeks. One participant jokingly said "Coward!". Certainly something to bear in mind in terms of how my observations can glean the most data and then when it comes to interviewing the participants later on.

Approximately halfway through [staff member] provided reminder for participants to stay hydrated- "why aren't you drinking as much as me? Make sure you are drinking."

[staff member]- "Let's do Mary's favourite" (from memory this was Human).

I was wondering whether this is their only physical activity during the week. Would be interesting to know what other physical activity (if any) they do outside of these sessions.

[staff member] mentioned she was at 125. I assume this was in reference to heart rate.

"We know how to play the system"- in response to the overview I gave of the evaluation work I am doing. "We will gang up on you if you don't write good things." I reiterated that it is about developing understanding, rather than getting anyone into trouble.

Let me entertain you- brought back memories of Charlton Play Off Final which Sunderland lost- which one was it?

One participant was not able to put gallery view on Zoom, meaning at times she could not see [staff member] demonstrating the moves.

Prior to each song, [staff member] demonstrated the moves, and then through the song completed the moves with participants.

Participant- "I've got a sweat on here... "I'm in front of the aga".

Participants said that they were looking forward to getting back into the Beacon.

Hard to hear [staff member] when music is on.

No correction when participants don't quite get the move/stretch right.

Emphasis is on continuous movement (except in cool down).

After cool down finished, back to participant led Sunderland football chat.

Mary- "Does Andrew support Sunderland?" Arsenal. Ray- "Well at least its red and white"

Participants talked about Sunday's cup final win.

[staff member] provided a reminder about the quiz taking place tomorrow.

Reference made to the footie banter session.

"And hopefully three points tomorrow night"

Noticeable how [staff member] smiles throughout.

Songs used throughout the workout:

- Don't go breaking my heart
- Moves Like Jagger
- Waka Waka ([staff member]- "Let's do Shakira")
- I love to Bogie
- 500 miles
- Human
- Let me entertain you
- Crazy little thing called love
- Proud Mary
- Ain't no mountain high enough
- All of me

Once participants had left (at approx. 11:15) briefly chatted with staff member:

Staff member mentioned the phone calls she makes. Suggested that the phone calls have more impact, but also have more difficulties in terms of what the participants share.

One lady was not able to attend today's session due to struggles with technology.

Staff member suggested that those who attend the online sessions are those who are already well connected/sociable individuals, compared to some of the people she phones.

Approx. 60 people on phone list.

Staff member provided me with details for tomorrow's quiz session.

Appendix 4- World Café plan

World Café plan

Date- Wednesday 3rd November 2021

Location- Beacon of Light (classroom)

Time- 10:00-11:20

Time	Activity	Resources required
10:00- 10:10	Registration- participants being provided with briefing sheet and asked to sign consent form. Participants to get drink and make themselves comfortable.	Laminated PIBS (multiple copies) plus non laminated copies if anyone wants to take them away. Consent forms (x 35). Provide participants with individual forms to complete. Pens (black/blue) Coffee shop style music. FoL to provide refreshments.
10:10-10:20	Corporate welcome and introductions. Summary of what the morning is about. Brief overview of PIBS.	A. Bailey to introduce co-facilitator. Why we are here. The value of your knowledge and experiences as individuals and a collective.
10:20- 10:30	Round table 1	
10:30- 10:40	Round table 2	
10:40- 10:50	Round table 3	
10:50- 11:00	Round table 4	
11:00- 11:15	Make notes on the wall/complete individual form.	
11:15	Close and thank you. Room will still be set up for a while if you wish to share more thoughts. Please complete individual form and put in box.	

Table set up

On each table:

- Laminated sheet with topic and guidance questions.
- 4 sheets of flipchart paper (16 sheets total).
- Set of flipchart pens (4 sets total).
- Post it notes

- Biro- at least 2 of each colour.

Questions to ask:

On the tables:

Talk about more generic concepts of the programme(s) as a whole:

- What are your experiences of loneliness?
 - What does loneliness look and feel like?
 - How does your loneliness make you feel?
 - What do you do when you feel lonely?
 - Is there anything that helps prevent you from feeling lonely?
- What does the Foundation of Light mean to you?
 - What does FoL provide to you?
 - How have you engaged with FoL?
 - Are there any costs associated with engaging with FoL?
 - What would you do if FoL did not exist?
- Tackling Loneliness Together
 - What made it easy or hard to engage with?
 - What were the parts you engaged with and why?
 - What were the parts you did not engage with and why?
 - Were there any highlights?
 - Were there any lowlights?
 - How did engaging with TLT make you feel?
 - What impact did TLT have on you during the lockdowns?
- Extra Time Hub
 - What makes it easy or hard to engage with Extra Time Hub?
 - Are there any highlights?
 - Are there any lowlights?
 - How does engaging with the Extra Time Hub make you feel?
 - What impact does Extra Time Hub have on your life?

Wall set up

Flipcharts on the wall:

Focusing on the specific interventions of TLT and ETH:

- Phone calls
- Activity packs
- Seated chair exercise
- Quiz/bingo
- Football banter
- ETH- bingo/quiz/physical activity.

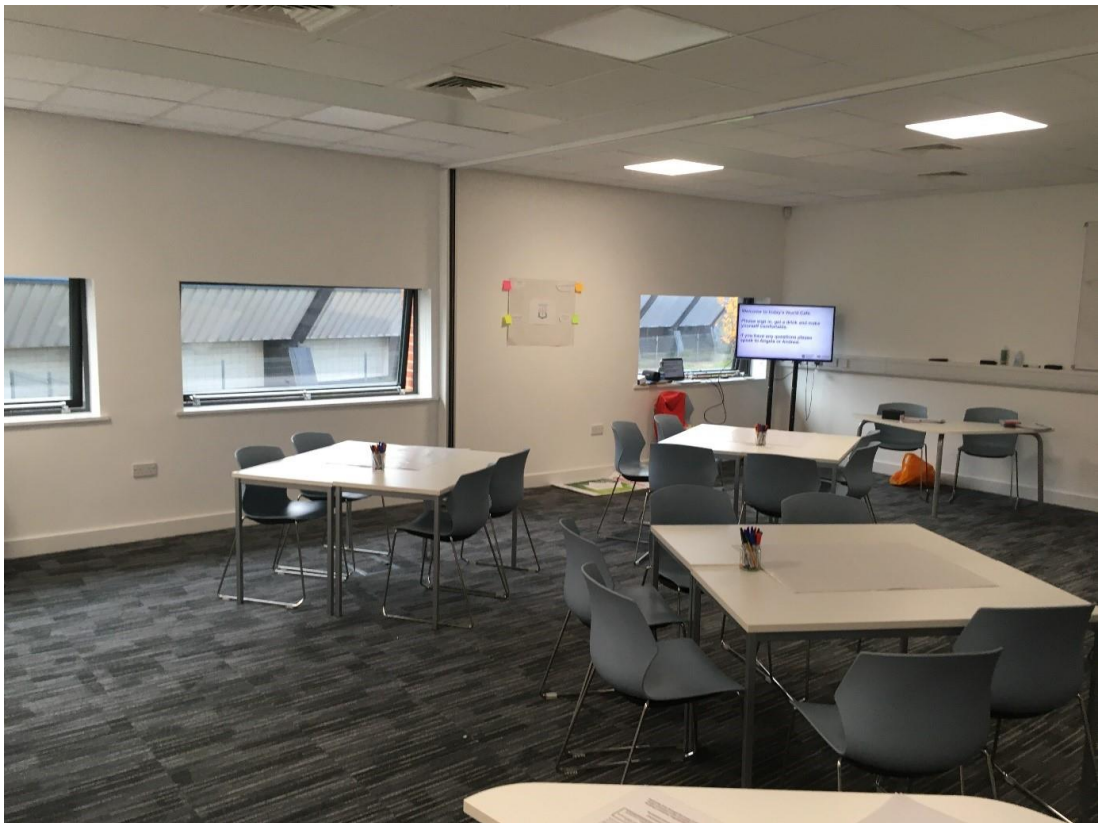
For each strategy, include the following questions:

- Why did you (not) engage?
- Benefits
- Costs
- Impact

Participants can answer using flipchart pens/biros or post its onto the flipchart paper.

Appendix 5- World Café room layout







Appendix 6- World Café participant questionnaire

appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire below.

Please note that only Andrew Bailey and Angela Bate will be able to link information below with yourself. Once the information has been transferred onto a computer, these forms will be securely destroyed.

1. What activities related to Tackling Loneliness Together and Extra Time Hub have you engaged with? (Please circle all that apply)

Phone calls

Activity packs

Online quiz/bingo

Online seated chair exercise

Online football chat/banter

Beacon seated chair exercise

Beacon Extra Time Hub (Wednesday)

Other activities (please state below)

2. What has enabled you to engage with these activities? Please list the top three enablers.

3. What has prevented you from engaging with these activities? Please list the three biggest barriers.

4. How do you think you have benefitted from you time engaging with Tackling Loneliness Together and Extra Time Hub? Please list your top three benefits of engaging.

PLEASE TURN OVER...

5. Would you like to be contacted about possible future interviews to further discuss your experiences? (Please circle)

Yes No

6. Name

7. Contact email

8. Contact number

9. Date of birth

10. Postcode

11. Existing/previous job

12. How many individuals do you live with? (Please circle)

0 1 2 3 4 5+

13. Do you have any other thoughts or feelings you wish to share about your experiences of Tackling Loneliness Together and/or Extra Time Hub?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 7- Example theory gleaning interview schedule

Interview Schedule- delivery staff (seated chair exercise)

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of a collaborative research project between the Foundation of Light and Northumbria University, evaluating the impact of the Tackling Loneliness Together programme. The interview should take no longer than one hour.

The interview will firstly refer to the TLT programme in general, after which we will focus specifically on the seated chair exercise sessions. Please feel free to share as much as you want and do not be afraid if you think we are going off topic. Some answers you provide may seem obvious to you, or you may feel you have already answered a particular question at an earlier point. However, none of the questions are designed to catch you out.

What you share with me will remain anonymous through the use of participant IDs and pseudonyms.

This interview and the research project forms no part of any performance management being carried out by the Foundation of Light.

The audio of the interview will be recorded, and at times you may see me making notes. The recording will be used to fully transcribe the interview afterwards.

In advance of this interview, you received a participant information sheet and a consent form, which you were asked to read, sign, and return to me. Thank you for doing this.

Before I start the interview, do you have any questions?

Background

1. Can you please tell me what your involvement with the TLT programme has been?

Context

2. Why was the TLT programme set up?
3. What are the objectives of the TLT programme?
4. Have you noticed any impact of the TLT programme on participants? If so, can you elaborate please?

Participants:

5. Who are the participants?
6. Where have they been recruited from?
7. Did you know any of the participants before the TLT programme started?
8. Why are they engaging with programme?
9. How would you describe the participants that you work with on TLT?
10. What are the needs of the participants?

Seated chair exercise specifics:

11. What is/are the aim(s) of the seated chair exercise session?
12. How does the seated chair exercise meet the objectives of the overall programme?
13. Why do you think some TLT participants join, whereas other TLT participants do not?
14. How did you feel when you first started delivering TLT and the seated chair exercise sessions? And how does this compare to now?
15. What resources do you use to plan the sessions?
16. What impact do you think the seated chair exercise has on the participants who attend?
17. What impact has remote delivery had?
18. Any challenges/ frustrations that you face with the online seated chair exercise sessions?

Sustainability:

19. What do you envisage will happen with TLT and the seated chair exercise sessions as restrictions begin to be lifted?
20. What would you like to see happen?

Any additional questions from me

Thank you. That is all my questions completed. Do you have any information that you would like to share that you have not already provided? Do you have any questions for me?

If at a later point you want to share anything further with me, please let me know.

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 8- Example theory refinement interview schedule

Stage 2- ETH participant realist interview schedule

Opening remarks

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of a collaborative research project between the Foundation of Light and Northumbria University, evaluating the impact of the Extra Time Hub programme. You are being interviewed because we believe that as a participant of the Extra Time Hub programme you have some insightful knowledge and understanding of how the ETH works.
- This interview and the research project will not impact your participation of the Extra Time Hub.
- In advance of this interview, you have received a participant information sheet, and a consent form, which you were asked to read, sign, and return to me. Thank you for doing this.
- The interview should take no longer than one hour. If we are still chatting come the hour mark, I will ask whether you want to carry on, stop and return another time, or stop and not be interviewed again.
- Please feel free to share as much as you can. Some answers you provide may seem obvious to you, or you may feel you have already answered a particular question at an earlier point. However, none of the questions are designed to catch you out. Please feel free to disagree with me at any point.
- What you share with me will remain anonymous through the use of participant IDs and pseudonyms.
- The audio of the interview will be recorded, and at times you may see me making notes. The recording will be used to fully transcribe the interview afterwards.
- Before I start the interview, do you have any questions?

Opening questions

1. Please can you tell me what your involvement with the Extra Time Hub and Foundation of Light has been?
2. How long have you attended the ETH?
3. What parts of the ETH do you regularly engage with and how often?
4. Do you come to the ETH with anyone?

Continuity

IPTA- general continuity

If the FoL provide weekly ETH sessions which gives a sense of routine (resource) ~~through popular activities and association to SAFC~~, then participants may adapt to this provision

(reasoning) because they want to maintain a sense of continuity and familiarity (outcome) in later life (context).

5. Why is routine important to you?
6. How does it make you feel when you have or do not have routine in your life?
7. Do you think that the ETH provides a sense of routine to you? If so please can you provide some examples?
8. Has the ETH helped fill in any gaps in your life? If so, how? What would you be doing if the ETH did not exist?
9. How, if at all, has the ETH changed the way you live your life?

IPTB- role stability and preserving sense of identity

If participants have a limited sense of continuity due to life events such as widowhood or retirement (context), then they may use the ETH as a coping resource (resource) for adapting to their current situation (reasoning). This may lead to a reduction in feelings of loneliness (outcome).

10. Have you experienced any significant life events, such as widowhood or retirement in the last few years?
11. In what ways may the ETH help you in living/adapting to your life now?
12. Does the ETH help you cope with life?

IPTC- Uniting past, present and future

If the FoL provide suitable physical activities (such as indoor carpet bowls and seated chair exercise) then this may provide with a sense of continuity (resource) as they adapt to activities which they identify as more suitable to their physical capabilities in later life (reasoning). As a result, participants can reconcile and connect their past, present, and future (outcome).

13. What have been some of favourite activities at the ETH? What impact do these activities have on you?
14. Has the ETH led you to take part in any new activities, or help restart some activities of the past? Or a continuation of activities?
15. What impact do you think your physical health has had on your participation on activities that you have taken part in across your life??

IPTD- Security and identity

If the FoL bring together people of similar ages (resource), then participants may develop a sense of security in their older self (outcome). This is because spending time and interacting with people in similar situations to them (context) makes them feel that they are not alone (reasoning), as they enjoy adapting to later life.

16. One of the things our work has suggested is that spending time with fellow hubbers might make you feel less alone. Is that something that you would agree with and if so why? Could you give examples?
17. How does spending time with fellow hubbers make you feel? What is it about the hubbers that makes you feel that you are not alone?
18. How does being around people of similar age and life stage make you feel more secure? make you feel more secure? Emotionally, physically?

Community

IPTA- Categorisation

If FoL effectively promote the ETH through SAFC match days, media channels and word of mouth of current participants (resource), then an increased number of the target group will come to know about the ETH, which may lead to increased number of participants and participant horizontal social mobility (outcome). This is because some individuals may categorise the ETH as a form of needed social scaffolding (reasoning) associated with SAFC (context).

19. I would like to know how you heard about the ETH before you started to attend?
20. What were your first impressions about the ETH? What has made you keep coming back?
21. What support/impact does the ETH provide to you?
22. How else have you seen the ETH promoted?
23. Have you told friends about the ETH? If so why? And why do you think they have come/not come?

IPTB- Identification

If FoL use symbols associated with SAFC, such as the club badge and uniform (resource), then individuals may engage with programmes delivered by FoL, such as ETH. This is because

participants may attach meaning to the symbols associated with SAFC (context) in similar or differing ways, resulting in feeling as if they belong to the ETH community (reasoning), strengthening their feelings of social identity (outcome).

24. I have identified that the symbols associated with SAFC, such as the club badge and uniforms staff wear as a key resource to encourage you to engage with programmes delivered by the FoL such as ETH. Would you say this has been the case with yourself? If so, please can you tell me more?
25. What does the SAFC badge mean to you?
26. Does your association with SAFC help you feel that you belong to the ETH with fellow SAFC people? Why is this the case?
27. How and why does this affect your identity?

IPTC Comparison

If participants regularly attend ETH then participants may develop their social capital through bonding (outcome). This is because as individuals participate together within the group boundaries of the ETH (resource), they develop relationships and exchange knowledge between each other that they may not otherwise do if they did not share membership of the same group (reasoning).

28. How do you interact with other with the other participants? In what ways do you do this?
29. How does this differ with people outside of the ETH?
30. Would you say that the hubbers are similar to you? If so in what ways? How are they different?
31. Are there any benefits from talking to the fellow hubbers? Do they have any impact on your life?

Friendship

IPTA- Simple and complex friendships

If the FoL provide opportunities for meaningful social contact between participants (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants who did not have existing friendships with fellow participants (context), may develop friendships (outcome). This is because the activities provide an

opportunity for participants to develop generalised trust (reasoning) between each other which is important for developing friendships. However, if participants knew each other before attending the ETH (context 2), their simple friendships may develop into complex friendships (outcome 2) via the development of particularised trust (reasoning).

32. Did you know anyone at the ETH before joining? If so, how would you describe this relationship? Has this relationship developed as a result of attending ETH?
33. Would you say that the ETH activities provide the opportunity to get to know fellow hubbers? How does this happen?
34. How has the ETH helped you make friends? How would you describe these friendships?

IPTE- Development of trust

If in the working-class context of Sunderland and cultural hesitancy for trusting new people (context) the FoL provide opportunities for meaningful social contact between participants (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants who attend regularly may develop stronger friendships with fellow participants (outcome). This is because it takes time to develop the trust required for friendships to form between participants (reasoning).

35. Would you say that the ETH community is a trusting community or not? Why? Can you give me some examples please?
36. Can you tell me a bit about the new friends you have made through the ETH? Why do you think you became friends with them?
37. We think that trust is an important element when it comes to friendship. How important to you is trust when it comes to friendship?

IPTB- Improved mood

If in the context of a lack of appropriate leisure activities for older people (context) the FoL provide opportunities for participants to take part in fun joint activities (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants may share fun experiences with fellow participants leading to better

moods (outcome). This is because the joint activities bring individuals together and discover shared similarities in each other (reasoning).

38. Why do you enjoy partaking in activities with fellow hubbers?
39. What impact does partaking as a group have on you?
40. What alternative local provision is there which is similar to the ETH? Do you participate in this? Why/why not?

IPTC- Social support

If in the geographical context of Sunderland (context), the FoL use their association with SAFC (resource) to bring participants together through the ETH, then this may lead to participants having access to better social support through the ETH community (outcome). This is because of their shared interest of SAFC (context) and their current stage of life there is homophily between the participants (reasoning).

41. As a group of hubbers, do you feel that you support each other? Can you give me some examples please?
42. Why do you think hubbers support each other? Is it to do with your shared interest in SAFC? Stage of life? Friendliness?

IPTD- Social boundaries

If participants stop attending (for reasons such as family relations and ill health) (context) the weekly ETH sessions, then the friendships made within the social boundary (resource) that the ETH hub provides may dissolve (outcome). This is because friendship is a bidirectional relationship (reasoning), which can only take place within social boundaries.

43. Do you know of anyone who has stopped attending the ETH? Why did they do so?
44. What impact do you think this had on your relationship/friendship with them?
45. What makes the ETH a place where you can make and develop friendships?
46. Do you engage with friends made at the ETH outside of the ETH? In what ways?

Staff impression management

IPTA- Ingratiation

If in the context of the ETH programme (context) staff want to be seen as being good at doing their job (reasoning), then staff members may deploy ingratiation impression management tactics of favouring, agreeing, and complementing participants (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff participants, leading to an increased reputation for staff members (outcome).

47. Do you think that the staff are good at their jobs? Why? What do they do to make you feel like this?
48. What personal qualities have the staff shown to you?
49. How would you describe your relationship with members of staff at the ETH?
50. What do they do to help improve your relationship?

IPTB- Exemplification

If in the context of the FoL organisational culture and reputation (context) staff want to be respected and admired by participants and colleagues (reasoning), then staff members may deploy exemplification impression management tactics of appearing to be dedicated and displaying enthusiasm with participants (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff and participants, leading to an increased respect and admiration for staff members (outcome).

51. I have observed that some of the staff are dedicated and enthusiastic when working with you- do you agree with this and are there any examples that you can think of?
52. How does this improve the relationship you have with the staff?

IPTC- Supplication

If the FoL provide opportunities for staff with traditional sport development roles (context) to facilitate ETH, then these staff members may deploy impression management tactics of supplication including... (resource). This is because staff want to be seen as doing a good job, despite lacking the resources for the new role (reasoning). By deploying supplication impression management tactics successfully this may lead to FoL staff transitioning from sport development officers to community developers (outcome).

53. How do you think the staff may have adapted to the various changes and disruption experienced over the last couple of years?
54. What would you describe the staff roles to be?

IPTD- FoL reputation

If FoL staff develop the expected level of personal interaction quality with participants through impression management techniques (resource), then this may lead to an increase in the reputation of the FoL (outcome). This is because the quality of personal interaction establishes and reinforces why the FoL is so important for participants (reasoning).

55. Do the interactions you have with staff influence the reputation you hold of the FoL?
56. How so and is this important to you?

Closing questions

57. Before we finish, is there anything else you would like to mention regarding what we have discussed, or anything you think is important that you have not yet shared?

Closing remarks

- Thank you very much for your time in partaking in this interview.
- The interview will now be transcribed with a copy sent to you to review. Please get back to me if there are any inaccuracies.

Appendix 9- Example theory consolidation interview schedule

Stage 3 Interview Schedule- delivery staff (seated chair exercise)

Opening remarks

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of a collaborative research project between the Foundation of Light and Northumbria University, evaluating the impact of the Extra Time Hub programme. You are being interviewed because we believe that as a member of staff you have some insightful knowledge and understanding of how the ETH works.
- This interview and the research project plays no part in FoL performance management.
- In advance of this interview, you have received a participant information sheet, and a consent form, which you were asked to read, sign, and return to me. Thank you for doing this.
- The interview should take no longer than one hour. If we are still chatting come the hour mark, I will ask: a) whether you want to carry on, b) stop and return another time, or c) stop and not be interviewed again.
- Please feel free to share as much as you can. Some answers you provide may seem obvious to you, or you may feel you have already answered a particular question at an earlier point. However, none of the questions are designed to catch you out. Please feel free to disagree with me at any point.
- What you share with me will remain anonymous through the use of participant IDs and pseudonyms.
- The audio of the interview will be recorded, and at times you may see me making notes. The recording will be used to fully transcribe the interview afterwards.
- Before I start the interview, do you have any questions?

Continuity

PT 1- Routine

If the FoL provide ETH sessions during the week which contributes to a sense of routine for participants (resource), then participants will prioritise attending the ETH because it provides a purpose to their lives (reasoning) during the latter stages of life (context). This results in participants having a more positive outlook on their later stages of life (outcome).

1. Have participants given you the impression that the routine that the ETH provides, has a positive impact on their lives?

PT 2- Uniting past, present, and future

If the FoL provide suitable physical activities (resource), based on participants age and health conditions (context), then participants may be able to reconcile and connect their past,

present, and future (reasoning). This results in participants feeling secure in their identity as they encounter old age (outcome).

2. Do you think the activities are suitable for all participants of the ETH? Are they suitably adapted?
3. How were the activities decided?
4. What impact do the activities have on participants?

Identity

PT 3- Identification leading to participation

If in the promotion of the ETH the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC (resource), then this may encourage individuals in Sunderland (context) to attend the ETH programme. This is because participants may attach (different/similar) meanings to the symbols associated with SAFC (reasoning), encouraging participants to attend the ETH (outcome).

5. Roughly speaking, what proportion of ETH participants would you say are SAFC fans?
6. How strong an impact do you think the badge and the association with SAFC has on participants choosing to attend the ETH?
7. What do you think SAFC means to participants? How do these meanings differ between each other?
8. Which symbols are the most influential and why?
9. Participants are suggesting that the SAFC helps encourage them to attend the ETH, but then regular attendance is due to the people and activities. What are your thoughts on this?

PT 4- Developing social capital within social boundary

If individuals regularly attend the ETH (context) then they may develop social capital through bonding with others who attend regularly (outcome). This is because as individuals participate together within the social boundary of the ETH (resource), they develop relationships and exchange knowledge between each other that they may not otherwise do if they did not share membership of the same group (reasoning).

10. How would you describe the ETH?
11. What are the symbolic boundaries?

12. Are there social boundaries within the ETH? Cliques?
13. How significant is the boundary of the ETH? For new participants?

Friendship

PT 5- Development of generalised trust

If when individuals have a pre-existing friendship with each other (context A), the FoL provide regular opportunities for structured social contact over a prolonged period of time (resource), then regular attendance at the ETH may lead to a simple friendship developing into a complex friendship (outcome). This is because as individuals engage with each other in a different environment, they may develop particularised trust with one another (reasoning). If the friendship is of a complex level before attending the ETH, then the ETH will have no impact on the friendship.

If when individuals have some familiarity of each other (context B), the FoL provide regular opportunities for structured social contact over a prolonged period of time (resource), then regular attendance at the ETH may lead to the development of a simple friendship (outcome). This is because as individuals engage with each other they may develop generalised trust with one another (reasoning).

If when individuals do not know other participants of the ETH before attending (context C), the FoL provide regular opportunities for structured social contact over a prolonged period of time (resource), then regular attendance at the ETH may lead to the development of acquaintance or simple friendship (outcome). This is because as individuals engage with each other they may develop generalised trust with one another (reasoning).

14. Would you say that the ETH is a trusting community? Why do you think this?
15. Which activities are the most effective for participants being able to develop relationships/friendship
16. How would you describe the relationships participants have with each other?

PT 6- Happier lives

If participants of similar age and life stage (context) are given the opportunity to co-engage through the activities of the ETH (resource) then participants will feel safe/comfortable in each other's company since they recognise the similarities they share with each other (reasoning). As a result, participants may, through their co-engagement at the ETH provide companionship to each other resulting in happier lives (outcome).

17. What are some of the common challenges that you are aware participants face?
18. How do the participants help provide support to each other through these challenges?
19. Can you recall any examples of participants providing support to each other?
20. Do you think that participants are happier as a result of the ETH? How and why?

Staff impression management

IPTA- Ingratiation

If in the context of the ETH programme (context) staff want to be seen as being good at doing their job (reasoning), then staff members may deploy ingratiation impression management tactics of favouring, agreeing, and complementing participants (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff participants, leading to an increased reputation for staff members (outcome).

21. What impression do you try and give off to participants?
22. Do you seek to please the members of the ETH?
23. How important is it for you to be liked by the members of the ETH?

IPTB- Exemplification

If in the context of the FoL organisational culture and reputation (context) staff want to be respected and admired by participants and colleagues (reasoning), then staff members may deploy exemplification impression management tactics of appearing to be dedicated and displaying enthusiasm with participants (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff and participants, leading to an increased respect and admiration for staff members (outcome).

24. How important is it for you to be respected and admired in your role? How do you try to achieve this?
25. What does dedication look like in your role at the ETH?
26. Tell me more about the culture of the FoL...
27. How does the culture (if at all) affect your work at the FoL?

IPTC- Supplication Deep acting?

If the FoL provide opportunities for staff with traditional sport development roles (context) to facilitate ETH, then these staff members may deploy impression management tactics of supplication including... (resource). This is because staff want to be seen as doing a good job, despite lacking the resources for the new role (reasoning). By deploying supplication impression management tactics successfully this may lead to FoL staff transitioning from sport development officers to community developers (outcome).

28. How have you adapted to your new role since the end of the pandemic?
29. Do you feel that you have to put on a front/performance to appear competent?
30. Who are you performing to? Fellow staff, participants?
31. How authentic do you think you are?
32. What tactics do you use to portray yourself in a positive light?
33. Do you perform differently to different categories of participants? Participants have mentioned that the FoL staff do not patronise them despite the age differences. Can you perhaps tell me a bit more about this and whether this is on your mind?
34. Do you feel under pressure to conform to the expectations of staff and participants?
35. How may you try and adapt your appearance and manner to be viewed in a positive way?
36. Do you feel that you hide thoughts and opinions (such as frustrations) when interacting with participants?
37. How would you describe the mask you put on for the ETH?
38. What props do you use as part of your work? How do they make you feel?
39. What does the SAFC badge mean to you?
40. Do you feel under pressure to act in a certain way? To conform to who's expectations? Participants or staff? (or both?)

IPTD- FoL reputation

If FoL staff develop the expected level of personal interaction quality with participants through impression management techniques (resource), then this may lead to an increase in the

reputation of the FoL (outcome). This is because the quality of personal interaction establishes and reinforces why the FoL is so important for participants (reasoning).

41. How important is it for you to contribute to the reputation of the FoL?
42. In what ways do you think you (and other members of staff) can influence the reputation of the FoL (positively or negatively)?
43. How does the performance of other members of staff impact on how the rest of the team is perceived?

Facilitators

44. Would you describe your role as a facilitator for the ETH?
45. Why is this role important?
46. How does it manifest?
47. What are the challenges with the role of a facilitator?
48. What are the expectations of participants?

Closing questions

49. Before we finish, is there anything else you would like to mention regarding what we have discussed, or anything you think is important that you have not yet shared?

Closing remarks

- Thank you very much for your time in partaking in this interview.
- The interview will now be transcribed with a copy sent to you to review. Please get back to me if there are any inaccuracies.

Appendix 10- Generic staff interview schedule

Generic delivery staff interviews

Opening remarks

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of a collaborative research project between the Foundation of Light and Northumbria University, evaluating the impact of the Extra Time Hub programme and staff practice. You are being interviewed because we believe that as a staff member you have some insightful knowledge and understanding which will be useful for this research project.
- This interview and the research project are not related to FoL performance management. What you share with me will remain anonymous through the use of participant IDs and pseudonyms.
- In advance of this interview, you have received a participant information sheet, and a consent form, which you were asked to read, sign, and return to me. Thank you for doing this.
- The interview should take no longer than one hour. If we are still chatting come the hour mark, I will ask whether you want to carry on, stop and return another time, or stop and not be interviewed again.
- Please feel free to share as much as you can. Some answers you provide may seem obvious to you, or you may feel you have already answered a particular question at an earlier point. However, none of the questions are designed to catch you out. Please feel free to disagree with me at any point.
- The audio of the interview will be recorded, and at times you may see me making notes. The recording will be used to fully transcribe the interview afterwards.
- Before I start the interview, do you have any questions?

Opening questions

1. Please tell me what your role is and what programmes and participants you work with typically?

PT 7- Authenticity

PT 7- Staff authenticity

If delivery staff perceive their preferred work identity aligns with values of the FoL and specific work situations (context), then delivery staff may employ authentic impression management behaviours, which may include dramaturgical circumspection and discipline (resource). This may lead to an exertion of lower emotional labour in order to meet expectations (reasoning). This will result in the outcome of either thriving or withering (outcome).

If delivery staff perceive their preferred work identity does not align with values of the FoL and specific work situations (context), then delivery staff may employ inauthentic impression management behaviours which may include dramaturgical loyalty and discipline (resource). This may lead to an exertion of higher emotional labour in order to meet expectations (reasoning). Depending on the intensity and duration of emotional labour, this may lead to burnout, or growth (outcome).

- FoL values (white cards):
 - Passionate
 - Innovative
 - Inspiring
 - Professional.
- 2. My work is suggesting that to some degree we manage how we appear to others when delivering. Thinking about the four values of the FoL, why is it important for you to show these values in your delivery?
 - a. How much preparation do you carry out in order to demonstrate these values? Or do these values come naturally to you? (reasoning)
 - b. I suspect that when you display these values, it is not always how you are actually feeling- is this a fair assessment? (context and reasoning)
 - c. How and why do the expectations of management, participants, and delivery staff influence you demonstrating these values in your delivery? (context and reasoning)
- 3. Depending on how authentic you feel able to be during your delivery, this may have an impact on you in the following ways (outcome):
 - a. By aligning with the values of the FoL, this allows you to thrive due to delivering in a way which is consistent with your authentic self?
 - b. Whereas, when you are not experiencing these values internally and you feel under pressure to try to disguise this, this may lead to inauthenticity and burnout?
 - c. However, sometimes by managing how your feelings appear to others, this might be beneficial to you- when and how is this the case?
 - d. Also, by constantly aligning to the values of the FoL, you may not experience any growth as a professional and as a result stagnate or wither in your job- have you had any experience of this?
- 4. My theory is suggesting several ways in which you might manage and disguise how you appear when delivering in order to maintain the front of the FoL values. Which of these resonant with you? Why? How do you use them? What impact do these tactics have on you emotionally? (resource)
 - a. Surface acting- managing how you appear to feel (yellow cards). Altering:
 - i. Facial expressions
 - ii. Bodily posture
 - iii. Tone of voice
 - iv. Verbal expressions

- v. Clothing
- b. Deep acting- managing how you actually feel (pink cards)
 - i. Bodily- manipulating bodily arousal. e.g. if angry taking deep breath to calm down.
 - ii. Expressive- manipulating emotional display in hope that real feel will follow. E.g. pretending to hold an emotion and then it being your actual emotion.
 - iii. Cognitive- changing our thoughts to modify feelings. E.g. positive thoughts.
- 5. Previous work suggests (Huppertz et al. 2020) that the surface acting examples require a greater effort than the deep acting examples- does this resonant with you?
- 6. How have you come to learn what is expected of you as a member of at the FoL?
 - a. Norms and expectations directly communicated by others (direct socialisation)?
 - b. Perceived by observing others (Indirect socialisation)?

PT 8- FoL reputation

PT8- FoL reputation

Context- what is the context? Importance placed on staff members and relationships?

Resource- impression management techniques of ingratiation and exemplification.

Reasoning- personal interaction quality establishes and reinforces why the FoL is so important for participants.

Outcome- this may increase the reputation of the FoL.

- 7. My theory is leading me to believe that it is the personal interaction quality between delivery staff and participants that influences the opinion held by people of the FoL. This is because the personal relationships between delivery staff and participants are so key- participants develop an attachment towards particular members of delivery staff (reasoning), which may contribute towards a better reputation of the FoL (outcome). As a result of this, I am suggesting that you may use several tactics to improve the personal interaction quality between you and participants. Which of the following tactics do you use and find useful? Why do you use these tactics? Do you have any examples you can share with me? (resource)
 - a. What ingratiation tactics do staff use? (green cards)
 - i. Listening and attentive
 - ii. Treating participants with dignity
 - iii. Friendliness
 - b. What exemplification tactics do staff use? (green cards)

- iv. Welcoming
 - v. Caring
 - vi. Engaging
 - vii. Enthusiastic (about participants)
8. Why do you think that the relationship between you and participants influences their opinion of the FoL? (reasoning)

PT 3- Identification leading to participation

If in the promotion of the ETH the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC (resource), then this may encourage individuals in Sunderland (context) to start to attend the ETH programme (outcome). This is because participants may attach (different/similar) meanings towards the symbols associated with SAFC, contributing to a sense of belonging towards the ETH community (reasoning). However, overtime these symbols associated with SAFC are replaced by other motives for attending, such as the activities and relationships developed.

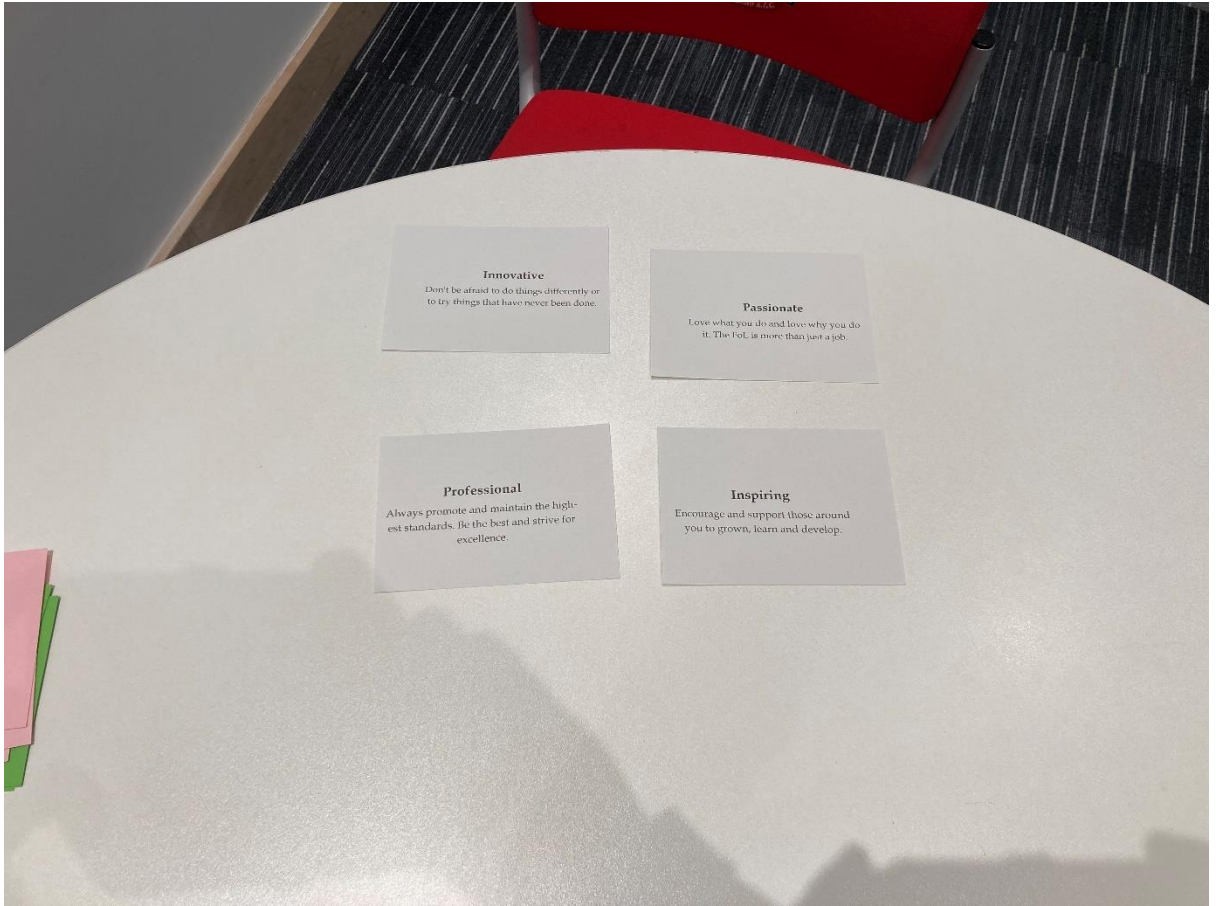
9. I have identified that the link between the FoL and SAFC is a significant resource for the FoL. Do you think the branding of the FoL, being associated with SAFC encourages individuals to attend your programmes?
- c. Why is this?
 - d. Does this effect continue, or over time, is the association with SAFC replaced by the activities and relationships developed? Why do you think this
10. One of the things I have identified is that the FoL may give people a sense of belonging. Does this resonate with you? What role do you think the link to SAFC has on this sense of belonging?

Closing questions

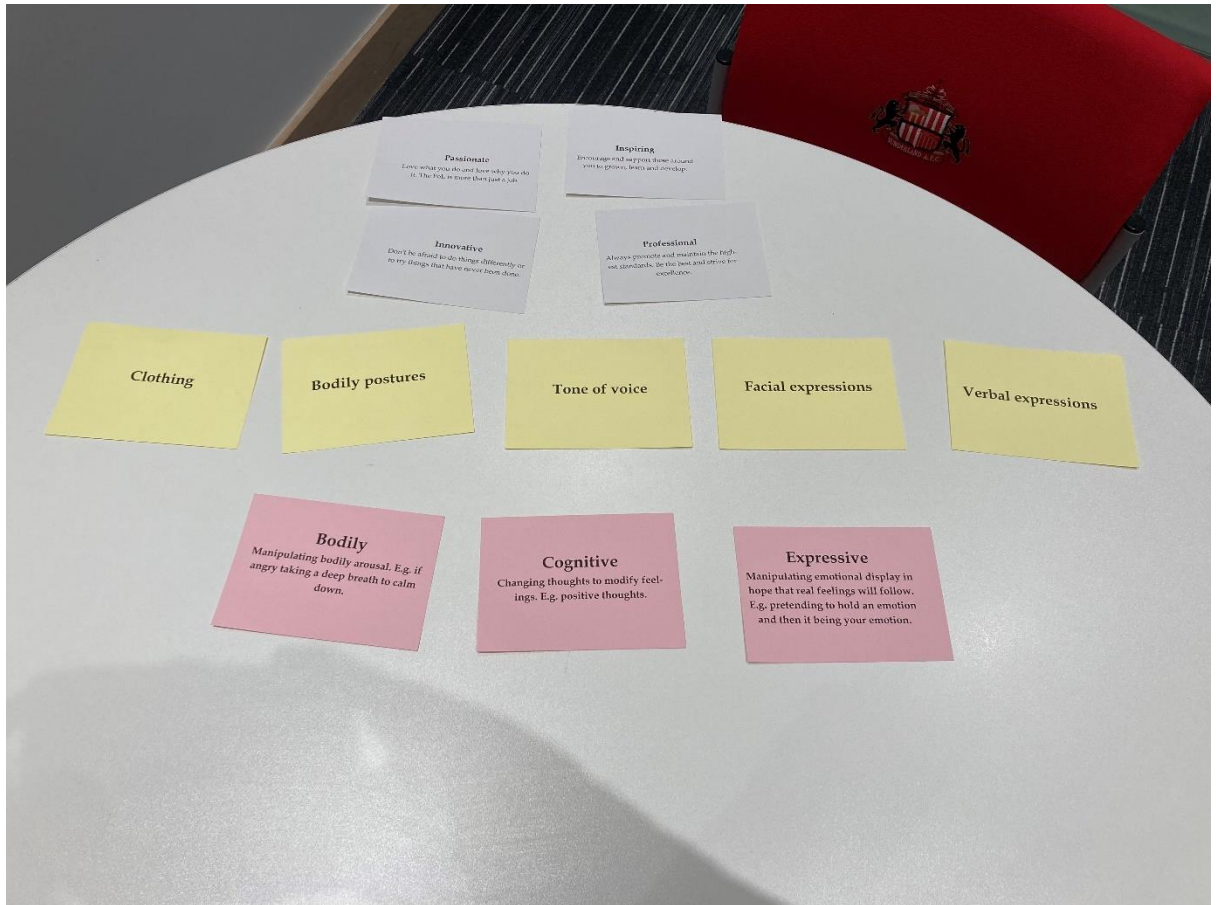
11. Before we finish, is there anything else you would like to mention regarding what we have discussed, or anything you think is important that you have not yet shared?

Closing remarks

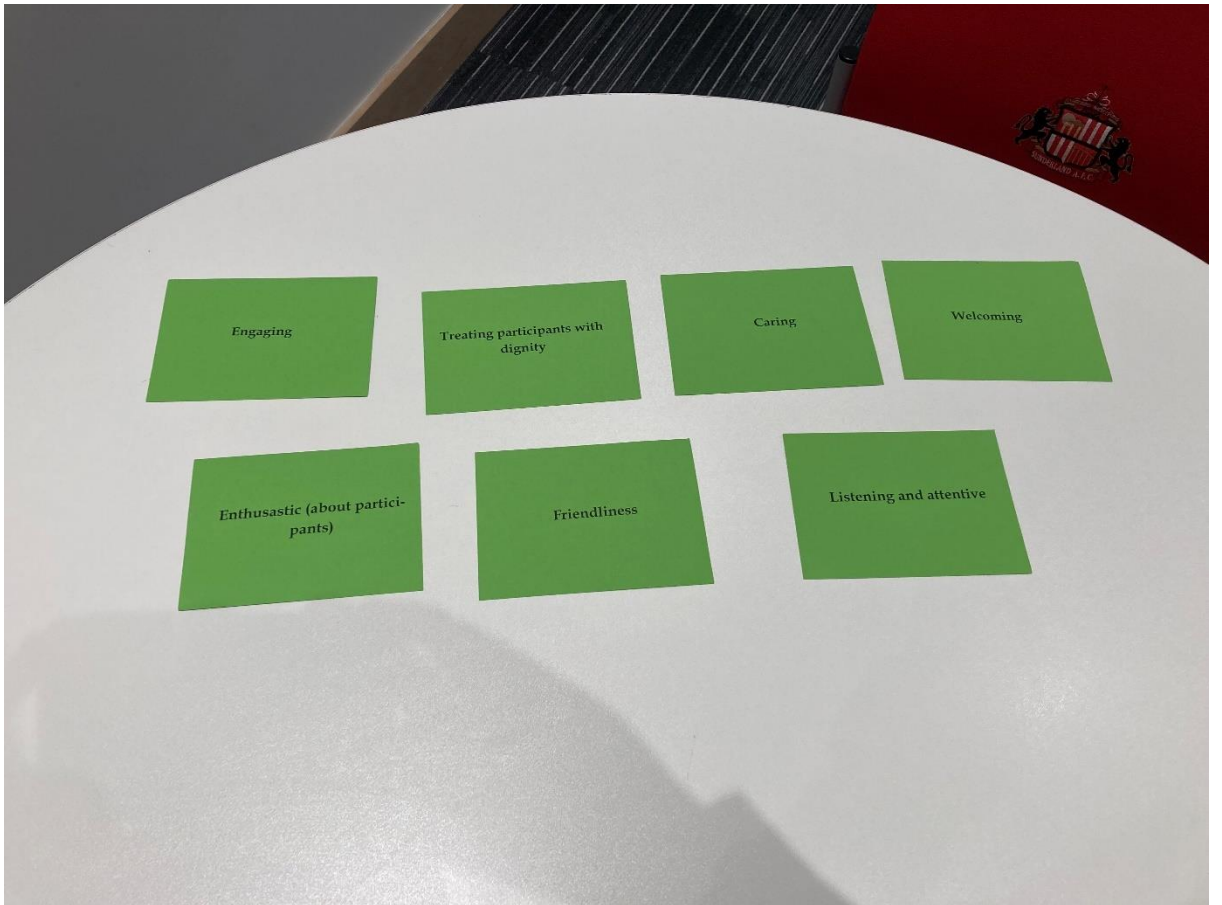
- Thank you very much for your time in partaking in this interview.
- The interview will now be transcribed with a copy sent to you to review. Please get back to me if there are any inaccuracies.



White cards- FoL values.



Yellow cards (surface acting) and pink cards (deep acting).



Green cards- ingratiation and exemplification tactics

Extra Time Hub Photovoice

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the Extra Time Hub Photovoice project, which forms part of the evaluation work being carried out between Foundation of Light and Northumbria University. This sheet is designed to help guide you through the photovoice process.

If you require any further details please refer to the Participant Information Briefing Sheet or contact Andrew Bailey: Andrew.Bailey@Northumbria.ac.uk.

Step 1– take photos related to the following areas:

- What causes you to feel lonely, and what do you do when you feel lonely.
- If you meet friends during the week, what do you do.
- Important aspects of your weekly routine.
- Items/places/symbols that you identify with.
- Impact of the Extra Time Hub programme.



People can take photos of you, but avoid taking photos of other people without their permission.

Step 2– send photos to Andrew Bailey via WhatsApp:

When you send photos, please include a note to say under which area the photos relate to.

Andrew will message you direct on WhatsApp so you have the chat to send the photos to him.

Please send all photos by Thursday 14th April.

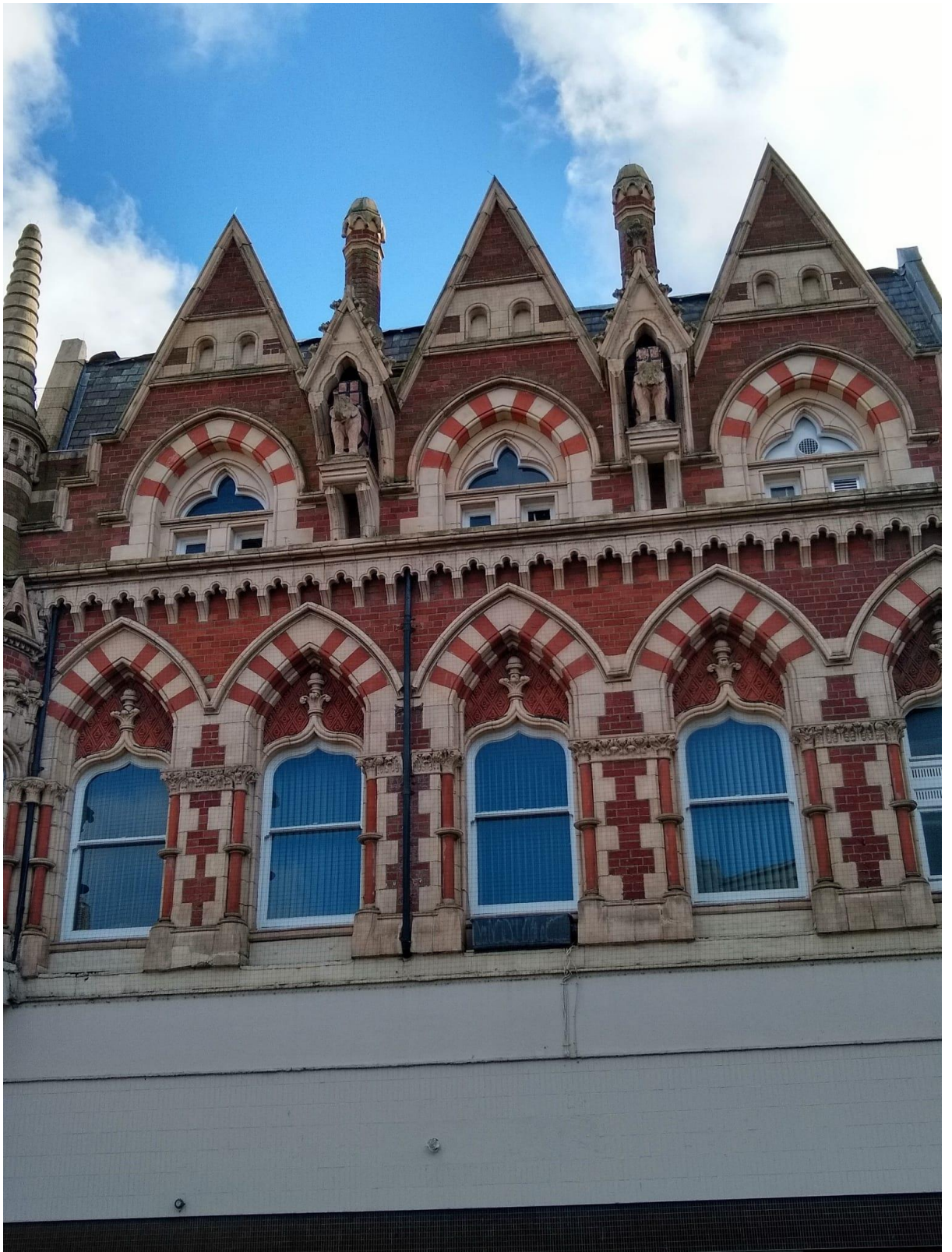
Step 3– follow up interviews:

After the photo collection stage, you will be invited to talk about your photos and explain why they have meaning to you.



Appendix 12- Example of photovoice data (PP13)

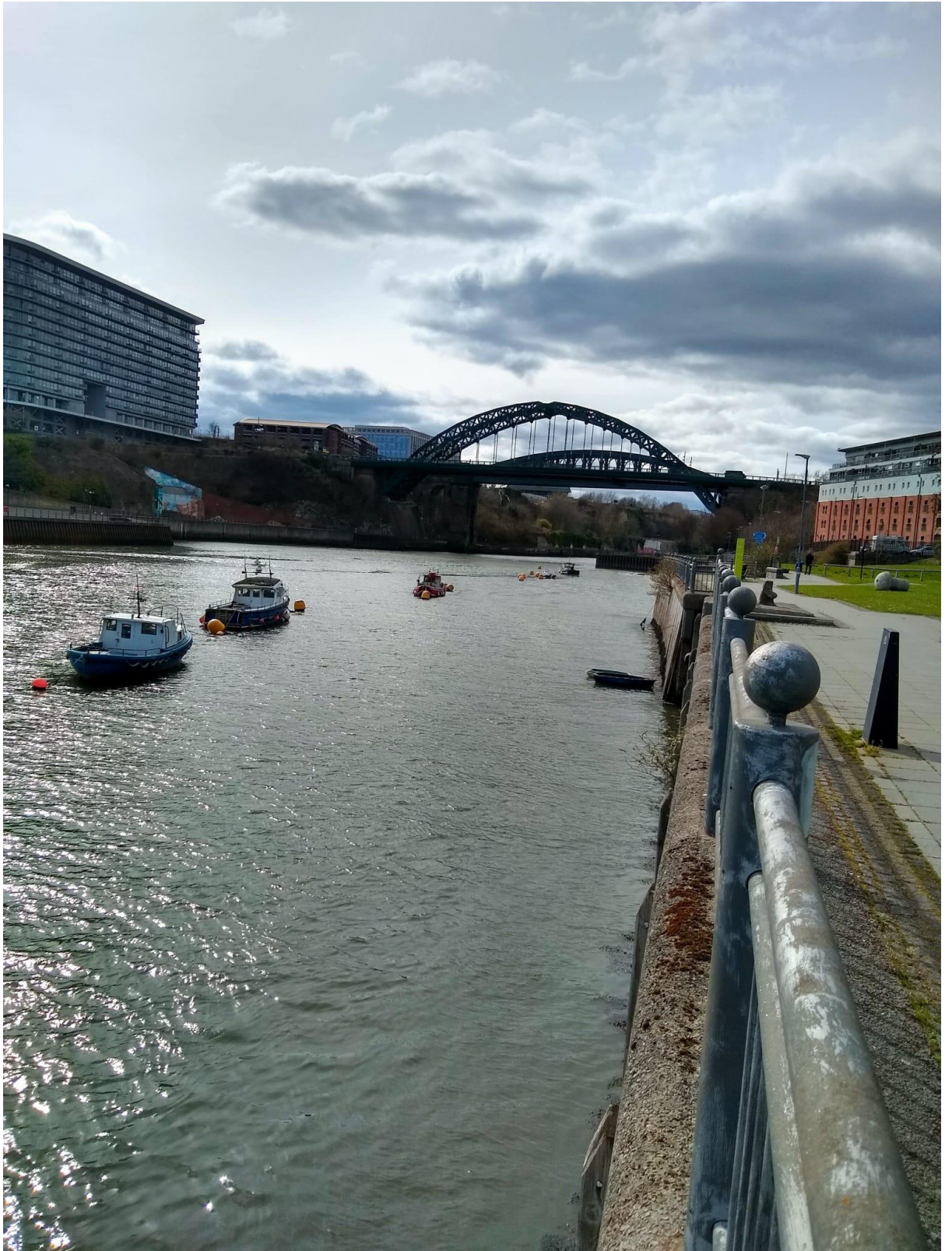
PP13 photovoice photographs



PP13_1- "Elephant building Sunderland"



PP13_2- [no caption]



PP13_3- "Wearmouth bridge"



PP13_4- [no caption]



PP13_5- "Red brick house"??



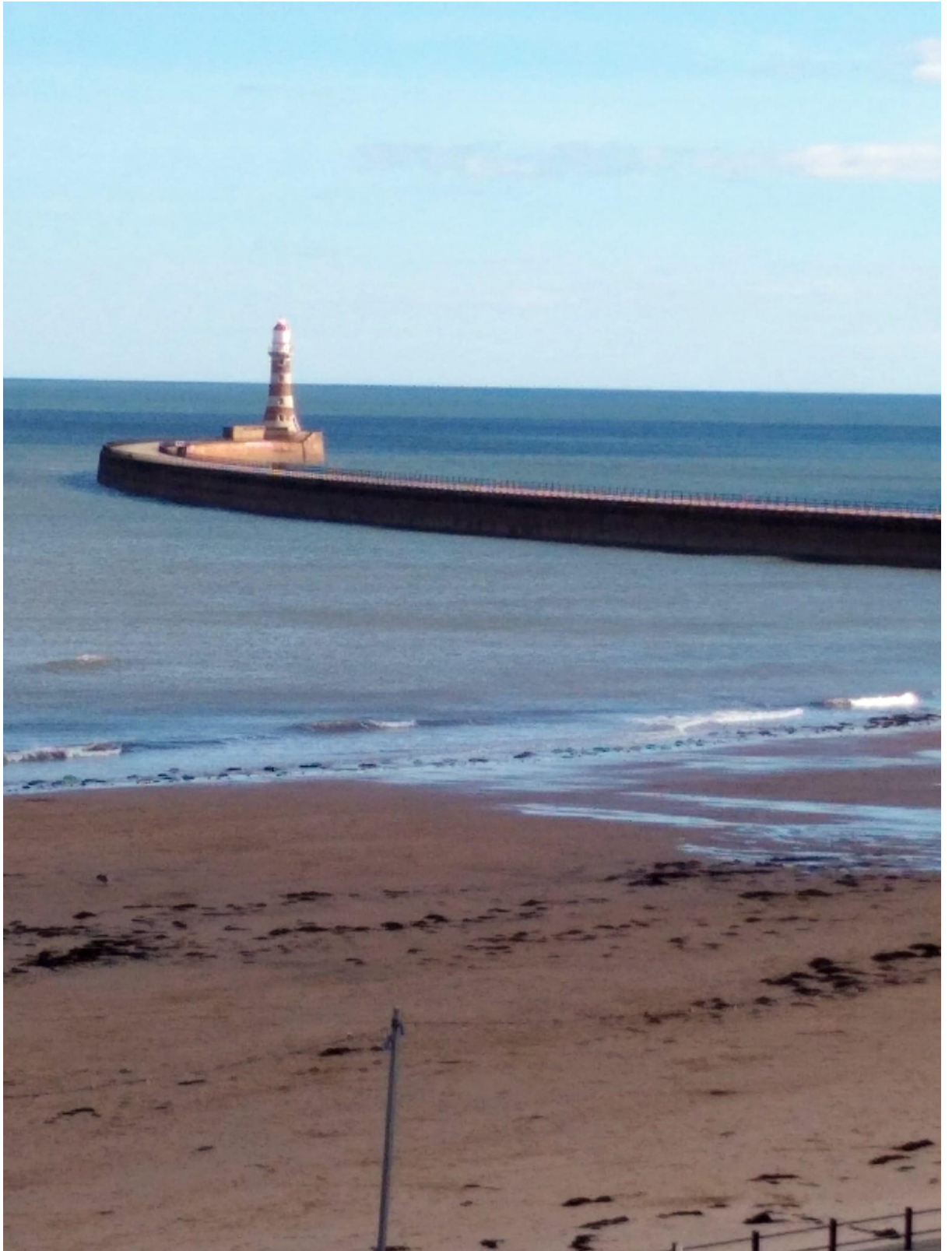
PP13_6- "Red brick house"



PP13_7- [no caption]



PP13_8- [no caption]



PP13_9- [no caption]



PP13_10- "Post box I use for my weekly crossword."



PP13_11- "St.Andrews church,Roker"



PP13_12- "Friday night pint with the boys. 🍺👍"



PP13_13- [no caption]



PP13_14- "Fishermens cottages"



PP13_15- "Grand house in Whitburn"



PP13_16- "Checking out the caravan"

Appendix 13- Focus group pre-reading

ETH Focus group prereading

Name	
Dates and times	Please tick your selected focus group
Wednesday 8 th February 12:15- 14:00	
Wednesday 22 nd February 12:30- 14:15	

Over the past 12 months I have been developing my understanding of the Extra Time Hub and how the ETH may provide benefits to you. As a result of interview ETHubbers and staff, along with being with you at the ETH and academic reading, I have identified six different ways in which the ETH may be beneficial to you. Based on these six areas, I have developed statements which explain how, why, for whom, and in what circumstances the ETH might work. This has been an ongoing discovery process; the statements are not yet finalised, and I would like to draw on your experience of the ETH to develop each one further.

Below are the six statements that I have developed. We will be discussing them in the focus group. Prior to taking part in the focus group, it would be helpful if you could read them and write down any thoughts you may have. Any suggested changes will be valuable so please do not hesitate to amend/add to/disagree with the statements.

1. Identification leading to initial participation

By using symbols associated with SAFC in the promotion of the ETH, then this may encourage individuals in Sunderland to start to attend the ETH programme. This is because participants attach meanings towards the symbols associated with SAFC which contributes to a sense of belonging towards the ETH community. However, overtime these symbols associated with SAFC are replaced by other motives for attending, such as the activities and relationships developed.

Notes:

2. Routine

The routine of ETH sessions each week provides those in the later stages of life with a sense of purpose to their lives. This results in individuals having a more positive outlook during the later stages of their lives.

Notes:

3. Self-esteem

By providing a safe environment for participation through appropriate physical activities, staff supervision, and participant social modelling, participants with lower physical abilities may experience an increase in their confidence to take part in the activities successfully. This success is defined as having fun. This leads to a greater sense of achievement and an increase in confidence in all walks of life.

Notes:

4. Social capital

By sharing membership of the ETH, which is made up of individuals from similar backgrounds, then ETHubbers may have a greater concern for fellow ETHubbers. This encourages the exchange of knowledge and experience between ETHubbers without expecting anything in return. As a result, ETHubbers may increase their knowledge.

Notes:

5. Developing friendships (trust)

By providing regular opportunities for structured social contact, the ETH enables repeated reciprocal interaction between participants to take place. This allows participants to demonstrate mutual interests and concern for each other which may lead to trust between participants being formed. This may lead to the development of 'casual friendships' and in some cases 'close friendships', which provide certain benefits to participants.

Notes:

6. Happier lives

By providing the opportunity to participate together in activities, the ETH provides individuals with smaller social networks and more susceptible to loneliness the opportunity to develop a sense of companionship with each other. This reduces feelings of loneliness, leading to happier lives.

Notes:

Appendix 14- Focus group interview schedule

Focus group interview schedule

Introductory remarks and warm up questions

- Thank you for participating in this focus group.
- The aim of today's session is to better understand how the ETH works for you.
- Thank you for reading the participant information sheet and signing the consent form.
- It is very important that what is shared during this time is not shared outside of this room.
- What you share will remain anonymous using participant IDs and pseudonyms.
- The audio will be recorded, and the recording will be transcribed afterwards.
- Any questions?

PT 3- Identification leading to initial participation

If in the promotion of the ETH the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC (resource), then this may encourage individuals in Sunderland (context) to start to attend the ETH programme (outcome). This is because participants may attach (different/similar) meanings towards the symbols associated with SAFC, contributing to a sense of **belonging** towards the ETH community (reasoning). However, overtime these symbols associated with SAFC are replaced by other motives for attending, such as the activities and relationships developed (reasoning), which leads to sustained participation (outcome).

1. One of the things that I have picked up on is that the links between SAFC and the ETH might provide you with a sense of belonging. Does this resonate with you? Can you give some examples? (reasoning)
2. To what extent does the link between the ETH and SAFC continue to influence your sense of belonging to the ETH? Or are other factors now influencing your belonging? (reasoning and outcome)
 - a. Activities
 - b. Relationships
3. What is it about these factors that makes you want to continue to attend the ETH (reasoning and outcome)

PT 1- Routine

If the FoL provide ETH sessions during the week which contributes to a sense of routine for participants (resource), then participants will prioritise attending the ETH because it provides a purpose to their lives (reasoning) during the latter stages of life (context). This results in participants having a more positive outlook on their later stages of life (outcome).

4. Here, I am suggesting that the routine that the ETH provides you with, helps provide you with a greater sense of purpose and optimism in later life. How does the ETH help do this? (context, resource and reasoning)
5. Why is having a sense of purpose important to you? What happens when you feel that you do not have a purpose? (reasoning)
6. Do you think that having a greater sense of purpose helps you have a more positive outlook on life? In what ways? (outcome)
 - a. A reason to keep going in life?

PT 2- Increased self-esteem

If, based on participant age and health conditions (context), the FoL create a safe environment for participation through appropriate physical activities, staff supervision, and participant social modelling (resources), then participants may experience an increase in self-efficacy to take part in the physical activities successfully. (reasoning) This success is understood as having fun. This leads to a greater sense of achievement and increase in global self-esteem (outcome).

7. Many of you will have experienced or are experiencing a decline in physical health. How does this affect your confidence in completing physical based activities/jobs? Why is this? (context)
8. How and why do the following contribute to making you feel comfortable/confident to take part in the physical activities at the ETH? (resource and reasoning)
 - a. Appropriate physical activities
 - b. Staff supervision
 - c. See others take part (social modelling)
9. I have identified that success is not completing the activities correctly but having fun (reasoning). Why is having fun important to you when taking part in the activities?
10. Do you think that by completing the activities at the ETH, this increases your self-esteem/confidence outside of the ETH? Why is that the case? In what ways? (outcome)

If individuals of similar backgrounds (context) are brought together and share membership of ETH ingroup (resource), then participants may have greater concern for the ETH's collective and individual participant needs, which encourages generalised exchange to take place (reasoning). Therefore, individuals who attend the ETH may increase their levels of social capital through bonding, and in some cases bridging (outcome).

11. I believe that there are three categories which contribute towards you being part of the ETH group- living in Sunderland, being retired, and being interested in SAFC. Why are these important in feeling part of the ETH group? (context and resource)
12. One of the benefits of being part of the ETH is maybe what you get out of it, in that you all help one another in different ways. You might also help someone (offer advice on something) but not expect to get anything in return for that. Does this match with your experiences? Is this because of the care and concern you have for each other? (reasoning)
13. Does being from similar backgrounds contribute to a sense of belonging within the ETH? And provide you with having concern for fellow ETHubbers? (context, resource and reasoning)
 - a. Do you think that being in similar situations and facing similar challenges leads to being concerned and caring for each other more than if you were not sharing similar experiences?
14. What are the benefits of exchanging knowledge and favours with each other in an indirect way? (outcome)
 - a. Include some examples of bonding and bridging.

PT 5- developing friendships

Context- loneliness? Lack of friends?

If the ETH provides regular opportunities for structured social contact over time (resource), then through reciprocated repeated interaction, participants may be able to demonstrate/communicate alignment of interests and concern for each other which may lead to trust between participants being formed (reasoning). This may lead to the development of casual, and in some cases close friendships (outcome)... and benefits associated with these relationship types.

15. My work is suggesting that to build casual and close friend relationships with other ETHubbers, trust is required to be developed over time. I think this happens at the ETH through the bonds which are developed by participating in the activities together. How do you think the activities provide the opportunity to bond with each other? (resource and reasoning)
16. Why does sharing common experiences with each other lead to greater levels of trust? (reasoning)
17. At the ETH do you trust specific individuals (particularised trust) or the ETH group as a whole (generalised trust)? (reasoning)
18. My work is suggesting that casual friendships are developed at the ETH. Key characteristics of casual friends include- lower emotional involvement than close friends, but more dependent on opportunities for contact. In other words, your friendships at the ETH are dependent on continuing to attend the ETH. Why do you think your relationships at the ETH are more closely aligned to casual friendships? (outcome)
19. As a result of retirement and bereavement, you may have experienced feelings of disconnection. How does the relationships you have developed at the ETH make you feel more connected? (outcome)
 - a. Why is this connection important to you?
20. In what ways does spending time with ETHubbers contribute to a happier and more enjoyable life? (outcome)

PT 6- happier lives/companionship

If older individuals who have smaller social networks which increases the susceptibility of loneliness (context) are provided the opportunity to participate together through the activities of the ETH (resource), then participants may develop a sense of companionship

with each other (reasoning). This may lead to reduced feelings of loneliness thus resulting in happier lives (outcome).

21. I believe that the companionship that the ETH provides through taking part in activities together is important for people like yourselves. This is because as older people, you are more susceptible to feelings of loneliness. How does taking part in the activities contribute to feeling socially connected and reducing feelings of loneliness? (reasoning and outcome)
 - a. What makes taking part in the activities with other ETHubbers an enjoyable experience for you?
22. How does the companionship you share with each other lead to you feeling happier when you leave the BoL? (outcome)


Closing remarks

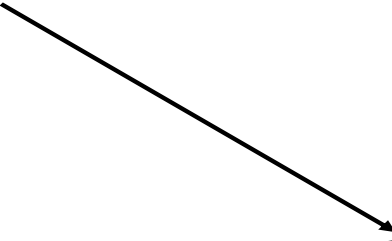
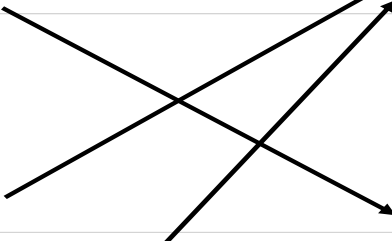
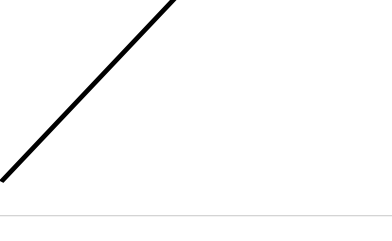
- Thank you very much for your time in partaking in this focus group.
- The meeting will now be transcribed with a copy sent to you to review. Please get back to me if there are any inaccuracies.

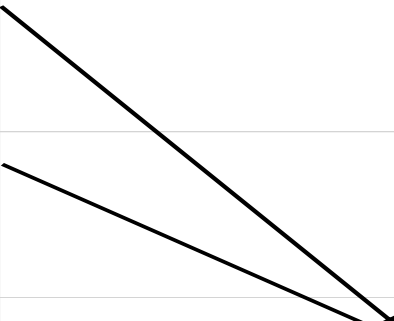





Appendix 15- IPT development mapping

Rough IPTs	IPT development 'Hypothesising and shredding' (Pawson, 2013) Methods used: Literature Observation Delivery staff interviews World Café	IPTs put forward for testing and refinement
<p>Categorisation If FoL effectively promote the ETH through SAFC match days, media channels and word of mouth of current participants (resource), then an increased number of the target group will come to know about the ETH, which may lead to increased participants and participant horizontal social mobility (outcome). This is because some individuals may categorise the ETH as a form of needed social scaffolding (reasoning) associated with SAFC (context).</p>		<p>IPT A- A sense of belonging If the FoL use symbols associated with SAFC, such as the club badge and uniform (resource), then individuals within the geographical community of Sunderland (context) may engage with programmes delivered by FoL, such as ETH. This is because participants may attach meaning to the symbols associated with SAFC in similar or differing ways, resulting in feeling as if they belong to the ETH community (reasoning). Therefore, through participation of programmes such as the ETH, participants may experience a strengthening of their social identity (outcome).</p>
<p>Identification If FoL use symbols associated with SAFC, such as the club badge and uniform (resource), then individuals may engage with programmes delivered by FoL, such as ETH. This is because participants may attach meaning to the symbols associated with SAFC (context) in similar or differing ways, resulting in feeling as if they belong to the ETH community (reasoning), strengthening their feelings of social identity (outcome).</p>		<p>IPT B- Social support If in the geographical context of Sunderland (context), the FoL use their association with SAFC (resource) to bring participants together through the ETH, then this may lead to participants having access to better social support through the ETH community (outcome). This is because of their shared interest of SAFC and their current stage of life (context) there is homophily between the participants (reasoning).</p>
<p>Social support If in the geographical context of Sunderland (context), the FoL use their association with SAFC (resource) to bring participants together through the ETH, then this may lead to participants having access to better social support through the ETH community (outcome). This is because of their shared interest of SAFC (context) and their current stage of life there is homophily between the participants (reasoning).</p>		

<p style="text-align: center;">Rough IPTs</p>	<p>IPT development</p> <p>'Hypothesising and shredding' (Pawson, 2013)</p> <p>Methods used: Literature Observation Delivery staff interviews World Café</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IPTs put forward for testing and refinement</p>
<p>General continuity If the FoL provide weekly ETH sessions which gives a sense of routine through popular activities and association to SAFC, then participants may adapt to this provision because they want to maintain a sense of continuity and familiarity in later life.</p>		
<p>Role stability and preserving sense of identity If participants who have a limited sense of continuity due to life events such as widowhood or retirement, then participants may use participating in the ETH as a coping resource for adapting to their current situation. This will lead to a reduction in feelings of loneliness.</p>		<p>IPT C- A desire to maintain social continuity If the FoL provide multiple ETH sessions each week this may provide an opportunity for participants to establish a weekly routine (resource). This is because as the risk of discontinuity in later life increases due to changes in social context (context), participants have a desire to maintain continuity during later life (reasoning). Therefore, in an effort to positively adapt to a social routine in later life, individuals may attend the ETH (outcome).</p>
<p>Uniting past, present and future If the FoL provide suitable physical activities (such as indoor carpet bowls and seated chair exercise) then participants may be able to maintain a sense of continuity as they adapt to activities which are more suitable to their physical capabilities in later life. As a result, participants can reconcile and connect their past, present, and future.</p>		<p>IPT D- Physical continuity If the ETH provides the opportunity to take part in suitable physical activities (resource) based on the physical capabilities of participants (context), then participants may identify which activities they are confident taking part in (reasoning). This may lead to participants being able to connect their past, present, and future, which may result in happier lives during the later stages of life (outcome).</p>
<p>Security and identity If the FoL bring together people of similar ages, then participants may develop a sense of security in their older self. This is because spending time and interacting with people in similar situations to them makes them feel that they are not alone, as they enjoy adapting to later life.</p>		

<p style="text-align: center;">Rough IPTs</p>	<p>IPT development</p> <p>'Hypothesising and shredding' (Pawson, 2013)</p> <p>Methods used: Literature Observation Delivery staff interviews World Café</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IPTs put forward for testing and refinement</p>
<p>Comparison</p> <p>If participants regularly attend ETH then participants may develop their social capital through bonding (outcome). This is because as individuals participate together within the group boundaries of the ETH (resource), they develop relationships and exchange knowledge between each other that they may not otherwise do if they did not share membership of the same group (reasoning).</p>		<p>IPTE- social capital</p> <p>If participants regularly attend the ETH then participants may develop their social capital through bonding (outcome). This is because as individuals participate together within the group boundaries of the ETH (resource), they develop relationships and exchange knowledge between each other that they may not otherwise do if they did not share membership of the same group (reasoning).</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Rough IPTs</p>	<p>IPT development</p> <p>'Hypothesising and shredding' (Pawson, 2013)</p> <p>Methods used: Literature Observation Delivery staff interviews World Café</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IPTs put forward for testing and refinement</p>
<p>Simple and complex friendships If the FoL provide opportunities for meaningful social contact between participants (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants who did not have existing friendships with fellow participants (context), may develop friendships (outcome). This is because the activities provide an opportunity for participants to develop generalised trust (reasoning) between each other which is important for developing friendships. However, if participants knew each other before attending the ETH (context 2), their simple friendships may develop into complex friendships (outcome 2) via the development of particularised trust (reasoning).</p>		
<p>Dissolution of friendship If participants stop attending (for reasons such as family relations and ill health) (context) the weekly ETH sessions, then the friendships made within the social boundary (resource) that the ETH hub provides may dissolve (outcome). This is because friendship is a bidirectional relationship (reasoning), which can only take place within social boundaries.</p>		<p>IPT F- Simple and complex friendships</p> <p>If the FoL provide opportunities for meaningful social contact between participants (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants who did not have existing friendships with fellow participants (context), may develop friendships (outcome). This is because the activities provide an opportunity for participants to develop generalised trust (reasoning) between each other which is important for developing friendships. However, if participants knew each other before attending the ETH (context 2), their simple friendships may develop into complex friendships (outcome 2) via the development of particularised trust (reasoning).</p>
<p>Development of trust If in the working-class context of Sunderland and cultural hesitancy for trusting new people (context) the FoL provide opportunities for meaningful social contact between participants (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants who attend regularly may develop stronger friendships with fellow participants (outcome). This is because it takes time to develop the trust required for friendships to form between participants (reasoning).</p>		<p>IPT G- Dissolution of friendship</p> <p>If participants stop attending, (for reasons which may include family relations and ill health) the weekly ETH sessions (context), then the friendships made within the social boundary (resource) that the ETH hub provides may dissolve (outcome). This is because friendship is a bidirectional relationship (reasoning), which can only take place within social boundaries.</p>
<p>Improved mood If in the context of a lack of appropriate leisure activities for older people (context) the FoL provide opportunities for participants to take part in fun joint activities (resource) (such as bingo, quizzes, cooking, indoor sports hall activities, and refreshment breaks) as part of the ETH, then participants may share fun experiences with fellow participants leading to better moods (outcome). This is because the joint activities bring individuals together and discover shared similarities in each other (reasoning).</p>		

<p style="text-align: center;">Rough IPTs</p>	<p>IPT development</p> <p>'Hypothesising and shredding' (Pawson, 2013)</p> <p>Methods used: Literature Observation Delivery staff interviews World Café</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IPTs put forward for testing and refinement</p>
<p>Ingratiation IPT If in the context of the ETH programme (context) staff want to be seen as being good at doing their job (reasoning), then staff members may deploy ingratiation impression management tactics of favouring, agreeing, and complementing participants (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff participants, leading to an increased reputation for staff members (outcome).</p>		
<p>Self-promotion IPT If the FoL provide opportunities for staff with traditional sport development roles (context) to facilitate ETH, then these staff members may deploy impression management tactics of self-promotion (resource). This is because staff members have a desire for their performance to be consistent with the expectations of colleagues and participants (reasoning). This leads to an improved personal interaction quality between staff and participants, resulting in... (outcome).</p>		
<p>Exemplification IPT If in the context of the FoL organisational culture and reputation (context) staff want to be respected and admired by participants and colleagues (reasoning), then staff members may deploy exemplification impression management tactics of appearing to be dedicated and displaying enthusiasm (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff participants, leading to an increased respect and admiration for staff members (outcome).</p>		<p>IPT H- Staff impression management</p> <p>If in the context of the FoL organisational culture and reputation (context) staff want to be respected and admired by participants and colleagues as being good at their job (reasoning), then staff members may deploy ingratiation impression management tactics of favouring, agreeing, and complementing participants; and exemplification impression management tactics of appearing to be dedicated and displaying enthusiasm (resource). This may result in improved personal quality between staff participants, leading to an increased respect and admiration for staff members (outcome).</p>
<p>Supplication IPT If the FoL provide opportunities for staff with traditional sport development roles (context) to facilitate ETH, then these staff members may deploy impression management tactics of supplication including... (resource). This is because staff want to... (reasoning) leading to the expected personal interaction quality with participants (outcome).</p>		<p>IPT I- Impact of IM on FoL reputation IPT</p> <p>If FoL staff develop the expected level of personal interaction quality with participants through impression management techniques (resource), then this may lead to an increase in the reputation of the FoL (outcome). This is because the quality of personal interaction establishes and reinforces why the FoL is so important for participants (reasoning).</p>
<p>Staff desire to invoke IM tactics IPT In the context of the FoL organisational culture (context) if some FoL staff develop and go beyond the expected level of personal interaction quality with ETH participants by using impression management techniques (resource), then this may lead to an increase in the reputation of particularly staff members (outcome). This is because these staff are motivated to pursue professional progression and recognition (reasoning 2). Whereas some members of staff may not deploy impression management techniques, because these staff are not motivated to pursue progression and recognition (reasoning 2).</p>		
<p>Impact of IM on FoL reputation IPT If FoL staff develop the expected level of personal interaction quality with participants through impression management techniques (resource), then this may lead to an increase in the reputation of the FoL (outcome). This is because the quality of personal interaction establishes and reinforces why the FoL is so important for participants (reasoning).</p>		

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