

**Changing their game? The institutional effects of Sport England's  
Lottery Fund on voluntary sports clubs**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This thesis investigates the expectations placed on voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) in exchange for Lottery funding awarded by Sport England, the resulting effects of those pressures on VSCs' organisational structures and VSCs' responses to these pressures. Using institutional theory as a framework, it is argued that receipt of funding from Sport England's Lottery Fund exposes VSCs to the normative prescriptions of the sports policy sector to a greater extent than they ever were before applying to the Fund. These normative pressures are reinforced by Sport England through coercion and the provision of legitimate models for VSCs to mimic resulting in a more bureaucratic structure for VSCs in receipt of funding.

The research was conducted in three phases. Phase one constituted the identification of institutional pressures exerted by Sport England through its Lottery Fund on VSCs through semi-structured interviews with Sport England staff and analysis of Lottery Fund documents. A survey of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England was conducted in phase two to establish any change in the VSCs' structures since receiving funding. Finally, in phase three, six case studies of VSCs were selected from phase two. Pairs of VSCs from three sports were selected for qualitative investigation. One of the pair exhibited an increased level of structure while the other demonstrated no change or a reduction in its level of structure.

The majority of VSCs surveyed in phase two experienced an increase in structure to some degree after receiving Lottery funding. However, the case studies in phase three demonstrate that the changes in VSCs' level of structure cannot be attributed only to receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England. Two of the six case studies also made resistant responses to the institutional pressures of Sport England's Lottery Fund.

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## LIST OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2 FUNDING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 STATE-SECTOR FUNDING RELATIONS	17
2.2 THE NATIONAL LOTTERY	27
2.3 SPORT ENGLAND'S LOTTERY FUND	30
2.4 CONCLUSION	35
<b>3 VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS	37
3.2 THE NATURE OF VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS	40
3.3 THE CHANGING NATURE OF VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS	54
3.4 CONCLUSION	60
<b>4 ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1 VARIATIONS WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL THEORY	66
4.2 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONS	75
4.2.1 SOCIETAL SECTOR	76
4.2.2 SECTOR LEVELS	79
4.2.3 SECTOR DECISION MAKING	86
4.2.4 INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENTS	92
4.2.5 INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	94
4.2.6 OVERCOMING DETERMINISM	109

4.2.7	RESPONDING TO INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	113
4.2.8	POWER IN THE SOCIETAL SECTOR	124
4.2.9	CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH	127
<b>5</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</b>	<b>129</b>
<hr/>		
5.1	BUREAUCRACY	129
5.2	CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH	139
<b>6</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>140</b>
<hr/>		
6.1	CRITICAL REALISM	142
6.1.1	ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY	142
6.1.2	CAUSALITY	145
6.1.3	CRITICAL REALISM IN THE SOCIETAL SECTOR	147
6.2	RESEARCH DESIGN	148
6.3	PHASE ONE: SPORT ENGLAND INTERVIEWS	150
6.4	PHASE TWO: TELEPHONE SURVEY	153
6.4.1	SAMPLING	156
6.4.2	QUESTION DEVELOPMENT	158
6.4.3	DETERMINANTS OF RESPONSE	160
6.4.4	PILOTING	163
6.4.5	TYOLOGY CONSTRUCTION	167
6.5	PHASE THREE: CASE STUDIES	174
6.5.1	CASE STUDY DESIGN	177
6.5.2	CASE SELECTION	178
6.5.3	INTERVIEWS	181
6.5.4	DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	184
6.5.5	PRINCIPLES OF DATA COLLECTION	187
6.5.6	TEMPLATE ANALYSIS	190
6.5.7	NUDIST N-VIVO	192
6.6	EVALUATION OF METHODOLOGY	194
6.7	CONCLUSION	198
<b>7</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>199</b>
<hr/>		
7.1	GENERIC INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES OF SPORT ENGLAND'S LOTTERY FUND	199
7.2	TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS	205
<b>8</b>	<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>209</b>
<hr/>		
8.1	SANDOWN WHITE STAR FOOTBALL CLUB	209
8.1.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	211
8.1.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	214
8.1.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	223
8.1.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSES	229
8.1.5	CASE CONCLUSIONS	233
8.2	ASCOT LADS' CLUB	236
8.2.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	239
8.2.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	242
8.2.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	243

8.2.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSES	247
8.2.5	CASE CONCLUSIONS	253
<b>8.3</b>	<b>GOODWOOD CRICKET CLUB</b>	<b>254</b>
8.3.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	256
8.3.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	258
8.3.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	265
8.3.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSES	269
8.3.5	CASE CONCLUSIONS	275
<b>8.4</b>	<b>NEWBURY CRICKET CLUB</b>	<b>275</b>
8.4.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	278
8.4.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	279
8.4.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	283
8.4.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSES	290
8.4.5	CASE CONCLUSIONS	294
<b>8.5</b>	<b>DONCASTER TENNIS CLUB</b>	<b>296</b>
8.5.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	298
8.5.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	299
8.5.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	304
8.5.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSE	308
8.5.5	CASE CONCLUSIONS	310
<b>8.6</b>	<b>AINTREE LAWN TENNIS CLUB</b>	<b>311</b>
8.6.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	312
8.6.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	313
8.6.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	318
8.6.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSE	325
8.6.5	CASE CONCLUSIONS	330
<b>9</b>	<b>CROSS-CASE CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>332</b>
9.1	CRITICAL ORGANISATIONS	333
9.2	INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES	335
9.3	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	343
9.4	STRATEGIC RESPONSE	347
<b>10</b>	<b>THEORY DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>355</b>
10.1	THE STRATIFIED SPORTS POLICY SECTOR	355
10.2	DYNAMIC INTER-CONNECTIONS IN THE SPORTS POLICY SECTOR	358
10.3	SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY	365
10.4	QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	369
<b>REFERENCES</b>		<b>372</b>
Appendix 1:	Interview schedules for phase one	384
Appendix 2:	Internal case study interview schedule	388
Appendix 3:	External case study interview schedule	391
Appendix 4:	Post-pilot telephone questionnaire	392
Appendix 5:	Pilot telephone questionnaire	402
Appendix 6:	Case study sources	410
Appendix 7:	Relationship between the research issues, interview schedules and the template codes	413

Appendix 8: Final template for analysing qualitative and documentary data	415
Appendix 9: Initial template for analysing qualitative and documentary data	417
Appendix 10: Letter from Lottery Case Officer to Sandown White Star FC	419
Appendix 11: Reply from Sandown White Star FC to its Lottery Case Officer	420
Appendix 12: Sandown White Star FC's development plan	421
Appendix 13: Letter from Goodwood Cricket Club to Sport England asking for a revised award	422

### List of Tables

Table 1: Distributing bodies of the NLDF	29
Table 2: Application and distribution figures for Sport England's Lottery Fund January 1995-December 2000	32
Table 3: The sports most commonly awarded by Sport England's Lottery Fund January 1995-December 2000	33
Table 4: Key features of voluntary sports clubs	42
Table 5: Old and new institutional theory	67
Table 6: Decision making patterns for the sports policy sector	89
Table 7: Carriers as the source of institutional pressures	97
Table 8: Strategic responses to institutional pressures	110
Table 9: Predictors of organisational responses to institutional pressures	114
Table 10: Willingness, ability and strategic response	119
Table 11: Allocative and authoritative resources	125
Table 12: The main features of bureaucracy	131
Table 13: Indicators of structure applicable to voluntary sports clubs	135
Table 14: Critical realist, positivist and constructivist paradigms	143
Table 15: Three phases of the research	149
Table 16: Phase one interview questions by research objective	151
Table 17: Size, formalisation, specialisation and professionalisation survey questions	160
Table 18: Determinants of response to the telephone survey	161
Table 19: Telephone survey responses and non-responses	166
Table 20: Questions contributing to structural scores	171
Table 21: Maximum and minimum indicator scores	173
Table 22: Characteristics of the selected case studies	180
Table 23: Internal and external case study interviewees	183
Table 24: Phase three interview questions by research objective	184
Table 25: Summary of Sandown White Star's Lottery application	211
Table 26: Predictors of Sandown's response	232
Table 27: Summary of Ascot Lads' Club Lottery application	237
Table 28: Usage programme for Ascot Lads' Club submitted to Sport England	251
Table 29: Predictors of Ascot's response	252
Table 30: Summary of Goodwood Cricket Club's Lottery application	254
Table 31: Predictors of Goodwood's response	275
Table 32: Summary of Newbury Cricket Club's Lottery application	276
Table 33: Newbury Cricket Club's Business Plan	277
Table 34: Funding sources for relaying the cricket square	278
Table 35: Predictors of Newbury's response	293
Table 36: Summary of Doncaster Tennis Club's Lottery bid	298
Table 37: Membership numbers for Doncaster Tennis Club 1993-1999	304
Table 38: Predictors of Doncaster's response	308
Table 39: Summary of Aintree Lawn Tennis Club's Lottery bid	312
Table 40: Predictors of Aintree's response	328

Table 41: VSC relations with critical organisations	340
Table 42: Predictors of response for each case study	350

### List of Figures

Figure 1: Breakdown of National Lottery sales	28
Figure 2: The structure of Sport England's Lottery Fund	31
Figure 3: The sports policy sector	77
Figure 4: Levels of the sports policy sector	81
Figure 5: VSCs' inter-connections within the sports policy sector	85
Figure 6: VSCs' inter-connections within the sports policy sector during the application for Lottery funding	85
Figure 7: The contribution of total specialisation, formalisation, professionalisation and size to structural scores.	174
Figure 8: Single/multiple and holistic/embedded case study designs	177
Figure 9: The distribution of structural scores	206
Figure 10: The distribution of structural scores by sport	207
Figure 11: Sandown White Star's pre-bid organisation structure	226
Figure 12: Sandown White Star FC's post-award organisation structure	228
Figure 13: Ascot Lads' Club organisation structure	246
Figure 14: Goodwood Cricket Club's organisation structure	268
Figure 15: Newbury Cricket Club's pre-bid organisation structure	286
Figure 16: Newbury Cricket Club's post-award organisation structure	287
Figure 17: Doncaster Tennis Club's pre-bid organisation structure	306
Figure 18: Doncaster Tennis Club's post-award organisation structure	307
Figure 19: Aintree Lawn Tennis Club's pre-bid organisation structure	322
Figure 20: Aintree Lawn Tennis Club's post-award organisation structure	323
Figure 21: The stratified sports policy sector	357
Figure 22: Superficial adopters of institutional pressures	360
Figure 23: Sincere conformers to institutional pressures	362
Figure 24: Pre-conformers to institutional pressures	363



## Abbreviations

<b>CAQDAS</b>	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis
<b>CCPR</b>	Central Council for Physical Recreation
<b>CDO</b>	County Development Officer
<b>CFA</b>	County Football Association
<b>CPFA</b>	County Playing Fields Association
<b>CSAC</b>	County Sports Advisory Council
<b>DCMS</b>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
<b>ECB</b>	England and Wales Cricket Board
<b>FA</b>	Football Association
<b>FC</b>	Football Club
<b>FSA</b>	Foundation for Sport and the Arts
<b>GMFCYP</b>	Greater Manchester Federation of Clubs for Young People
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>LTA</b>	Lawn Tennis Association
<b>NCVO</b>	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
<b>NDPB</b>	Non-departmental Public Body
<b>NESTA</b>	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
<b>NGB</b>	National Governing Body
<b>NLDF</b>	National Lottery Distribution Fund
<b>NSO</b>	National Sports Organisation
<b>PAI</b>	Priority Areas Initiative
<b>QDA</b>	Qualitative Data Analysis
<b>SCSI</b>	School Community Sports Initiative
<b>SDO</b>	Sports Development Officer
<b>STRI</b>	Sports Turf Research Institute
<b>VSC</b>	Voluntary Sports Club

# 1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the effect that the expectations accompanying capital grants from Sport England's Lottery Fund have had on the voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) that have received them. Over the six years that Sport England<sup>1</sup> has been distributing Lottery funding many changes have been made to the way in which Lottery money is granted to sports organisations and individuals. New funding streams have been introduced consisting of capital and revenue funding targeted at elite and mass participation sport but the core aims and values of Sport England's Lottery Fund have remained constant.

VSCs have a crucial role to play in the sports development system of the UK. This importance increases given the drive for sporting excellence amongst the developed nations of the world particularly in the west (Houlihan, 1997; Oakley and Green, 2000). Many nations such as Australia and Canada (Houlihan, 1997) have implemented elite athlete identification and development systems. The UK has its own elite development system in the nascent UK Sports Institute. If the UK Sports Institute at the peak of the sports pyramid is to be successful then it must be supported at the base of the sports pyramid by the provision of mass participation opportunities. Providers of these opportunities, such as VSCs, must be plentiful and effective if they are to provide the UK Sports Institute with the raw material it needs to increase the chances of international success. The wider aim of awarding Lottery funding to VSCs is therefore to raise the number of participants in sport and to provide these participants with the facilities to allow them to excel at their sport. These participants would then be identified and offered the chance to develop their

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<sup>1</sup> Sport England is the brand name of the English Sports Council. Before January 1997 the English Sports Council existed as part of the GB Sports Council which had a remit for particular sporting issues across the entire UK. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland already had their own Sports Councils (Sport England, 2001).

sporting ability to an elite level at the UK Sports Institute. VSCs are therefore one vital part of the inter-dependent sports development system in the UK.

The importance of VSCs to the sports development system of the UK is recognised by government in the most recent sports policy statement from the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) titled A Sporting Future for All (DCMS, 2000). However, it seems that in their present state VSCs are not effective enough as the policy statement talks of the “need for more systematic and structured development of sports clubs across the country” (DCMS, 2000: p. 40). This states the need for change in the way mass participation opportunities are provided by VSCs at the base of the sports pyramid. A Sporting Future for All (DCMS, 2000: p. 13) continues:

In each area we will support the development of clubs which have the potential to develop a number of teams offering opportunities to progress to higher levels of competition, and professional management of all their activities. These clubs will link with smaller clubs to provide levels of competition and coaching which welcome and encourage everyone regardless of age or ability and include good junior sections. We will work with governing bodies to improve the training, support and recognition of the volunteers on whom clubs depend and create an accreditation scheme for clubs with high quality junior sections.

Change is then a likely feature of the future for some VSCs in terms of how they operate and how they are structured. With the distribution of Sport England’s Lottery Fund being inextricably linked to the policy aims and objectives of Sport England and the DCMS, it is likely that Lottery funding will be used to encourage VSCs into complying with the DCMS’ and Sport England’s policy objectives. However, the DCMS’ plans for the UK’s sporting future seem to rely heavily on the willingness of VSCs. Some VSCs will undoubtedly welcome the opportunity to contribute to the UK’s chances of international success by increasing their membership and raising the standard of their teams but other VSCs may not be concerned with such aims. Much the same can be said of VSCs’ concern with Sport England’s Lottery Fund. By making an improvement in their provision some VSCs have seen Sport England’s

Lottery Fund as an opportunity to be taken. Other VSCs, content as they are, will have ignored such opportunities.

With the emphasis being placed on international sporting success by developed nations, the importance of VSCs' role in the UK's system of sports development and the instrumental and inextricable link between sports policy and Lottery funding it is pertinent to ask questions about the effects of Lottery funding on VSCs.

This is particularly so given an unsolicited finding from Gratton et al.'s (1997) research into the value of volunteers in sport. Gratton et al. reported that some VSCs were experiencing increased demands and pressures on their operation. These pressures and demands came about firstly as a result of developing and submitting an application for Lottery funding from Sport England and secondly as a result of managing the Lottery funded project. It therefore seemed that Sport England's Lottery Fund was placing demands and pressures on VSCs that applied for Lottery funding over and above those pressures present in the day-to-day operation of a VSC. Further research was therefore needed to establish the nature of these demands, their effect on VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England and the response of those VSCs to these increased demands and their effects. If these pressures adversely effect the ability of VSCs to play a productive and effective role in the UK's sports development system then it will have consequences for the UK's ability to achieve international sporting success.

However, Sport England is not the only organisation that is able to place demands and expectations on VSCs in their application for Lottery funding. A number of organisations may be critical to the success of a VSC's Lottery bid. These critical organisations may also be able to pressurise a VSC to behave in a manner that fulfils the organisations' objectives in exchange for support. It was therefore important to

identify the range of (critical) organisations that could possibly place demands or pressures on VSCs when they make their applications for Lottery funding from Sport England, the nature of these pressures to which VSCs were being exposed by these critical organisations, the effects of these pressures on VSCs and VSCs' response to these pressures.

The framework used to investigate the research objectives of this thesis emphasises the effects on an organisation of social or institutional pressures. It was therefore of primary interest to identify the institutional pressures exerted on VSCs in pursuit of Lottery funding, to identify the key or critical organisations conveying these pressures, to investigate the effects of these pressures on the organisational structure of VSCs and to investigate the responses of VSCs to these pressures. The exercise of agency by VSCs introduces the possibility that they do not always conform with and react in the same way to the expectations and demands imposed by external organisations when pursuing Lottery funding. The objectives of this research can therefore be stated as:

1. To identify the critical organisations for VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England.
2. To analyse the institutional pressures conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund and of other critical organisations to which VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding are exposed.
3. To investigate how VSCs may be changing with receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England.
4. To establish the responses of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding to the institutional pressures of the Sport England's Lottery Fund.

Tomlinson (1979) suggests that in the study of voluntary leisure groups three important phases are discernible. Firstly, data must be collected on the number of clubs and groups, the stability of these numbers, membership patterns and overall aims and goals. This has been partly achieved in the voluntary sector in sport by Gratton et al.'s (1997) economic valuation and estimation of the numbers of volunteers and VSCs in UK sport (see also Allison, 2000). The second stage must

locate the club or group in its essentially local context, seeking to depict its internal dynamics and the patterns of authority and participation characterising it. Hoggett and Bishop (1985) achieved this with their ethnographic study of voluntary leisure organisations in Kingswood and Leicester although their study is perhaps somewhat dated now. The third phase would relocate the club or group in the wider social system, in the social structure as a whole. An attempt at this third stage is made by this thesis as it places VSCs in the context of the social inter-relations of the sports policy sector.

This third stage is particularly valuable because previous research on VSCs has presented the subject of its study as isolated, independent and disconnected from organisations in wider society. However, as distinctly social organisations (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985; Slack, 1997), VSCs are influenced and pervaded by the social world within which they are embedded. In order for the members of VSCs to make sense of their organisation, they must use the wider social world and its structures as a horizon against which all action in the VSC takes place. Studying VSCs in separation from this social world decreases the explanatory power of any investigation into the nature and behaviour of VSCs.

Above all this research represents a contribution to our present knowledge on the state of VSCs as there are few if any studies that have looked explicitly at the structure of VSCs in the UK. Furthermore, little if any research exists on how VSCs are influenced by their environment and even fewer studies have examined how VSCs' structures may be changing over time as a consequence of their environment.

Beyond their role in sport, VSCs also have a role in wider society. VSCs exist primarily on voluntary labour and are therefore vehicles for volunteering. Davis Smith (1998) reported that sports and exercise volunteering constituted the single largest

element of all volunteering in the UK. The potential for volunteering to strengthen communities (Putnam, 1993, 2000) and to benefit the volunteer through the development of confidence, contacts, skills and enhanced life chances is well recognised (Davis Smith et al. 1998). Thus volunteering can contribute to social capital – the web of relationships and networks outside of the state and market – and to the fight against social exclusion (Blair, 1997). This is all the more important given that Knight and Stokes (1996) believe there to be a civil society deficit in the UK with falling membership of community associations, trade unions, co-operative societies and churches.

The health of VSCs as a vehicle for voluntary activity is therefore important to more than just international sporting success. In recognition of this, the Education and Employment Secretary David Blunkett recently announced that police checks for volunteers working with children would not be charged for. Charging volunteers for police checks may have discouraged voluntary activity, placed voluntary organisations under financial pressure and reduced the benefit society derives from voluntary action. Mr Blunkett echoed these concerns (Department for Education and Employment, 2001):

It is vital that parents have the peace of mind of knowing that those working in the voluntary sector are suitable to work with their children. However, this shouldn't be at the risk of putting financial strain on the voluntary sector and diverting money away from activities that benefit the community.

It is thought that 1.5 million checks on volunteers would be needed each year, and for the Scouts alone this would have cost £650,000 per year (Department for Education and Employment, 2001). Instead, the cost of police checks for volunteers is to be met by the government.

The broader importance of voluntary activity to public services was also underlined by the Chancellor Gordon Brown earlier in 2001. He set a target of every individual giving two hours a week to the community within five years, stating (Hill, 2001):

The next five years will see the role of government shift even more from the old 'directing and controlling' to enabling and empowering voluntary action. Increasingly the voluntary sector will be empowered to play a critical role ranging from under-five provision and preventative health, to adult learning and the war against unemployment and poverty.

It seems that increasing reliance on voluntary action is likely to be a feature of government policy in the next parliament but will the voluntary sector be empowered to pursue purposes outside of government policy for their intrinsic value or just those purposes that achieve policy goals? The 'enabling and empowering' approach of the Chancellor does not seem to match the 'directing and controlling' stance towards the voluntary sector in sport taken in *A Sporting Future for All*. This prescribes the role of VSCs in sports policy and the way they should develop with the aid of funding. Nevertheless, the attention given by government to volunteering over recent years has confirmed the importance and benefit of voluntary activity to communities, individuals and organisations such as VSCs, and to policy areas such as sport. The effect of Lottery funding on VSCs is therefore a pertinent issue for research.

Chapter 2 of this thesis examines issues in the funding relationship between the voluntary sector and national and local government. The National Lottery in general is introduced and then more specifically Sport England's Lottery Fund is discussed. Chapter 3 examines in greater detail the policy importance of VSCs within the UK and establishes the nature of the organisations that are the subject of this study. To end, the chapter suggests ways in which VSCs may be changing. Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framework employed in this research, delineates the sports policy sector within which VSCs are located and introduces the concept of institutional pressures. Oliver's (1991) strategic responses to institutional pressures are also introduced into



the framework to acknowledge VSCs' agency. Chapter 5 examines the relevance of the concept of bureaucracy as a tool with which to establish the impact of external funding on VSCs. Chapter 6 justifies and examines the methodology used in this study and identifies the philosophical basis on which the research was carried out. The results of the research are presented across chapters 7 and 8 with conclusions being made in chapter 9. The contribution to knowledge made by this thesis is discussed in chapter 10 along with suggested amendments to the theoretical framework employed in the research. Finally, questions for further research are posed.

## **2 Funding the Voluntary Sector**

This chapter takes a broad look at national and local government's funding of the voluntary sector, highlighting how it may affect the voluntary sector and the voluntary organisations that receive funding. This helps to establish the context and issues of funding relations of which the introduction of the National Lottery, and its distribution guided by government pre and proscriptioin, is a major element. The chapter then goes on to look at the structure and operation of the National Lottery and in particular at Sport England's Lottery Fund.

### **2.1 State-sector funding relations**

Over the last decade policy and legislation changes have altered the relationship between state and the voluntary sector. For instance the Efficiency Scrutiny of Government Funding of the Voluntary Sector in 1990 (Home Office, 1990), the Care in the Community Act (Department of Health and Social Security, 1992), the Charities Act (Her Majesty's Treasury, 1992), and the National Lotteries Act 1993 (DCMS, 1993) have all affected this relationship. With the social, political and economic value of the voluntary sector increasingly being acknowledged the sector is increasingly being viewed as a potential partner and sometimes a more effective and efficient channel of service provision by central and local government. The voluntary sector has consequently experienced direct and indirect pressures from funding related to the change in the position, role and perception of the sector held by the various levels of government. At a local level this is likely to vary according to each local authority's (LA's) own policies and strategy (Leach and Wilson, 1998; Nichols and Sparrowhawk 1999).

It is possible that one effect of the changing relationship between voluntary organisations and state delivered through the funding system is bureaucratisation (Rosenbaum, 1981). Rosenbaum sees bureaucratisation as an acute consequence of the demands of seeking and securing funding, pursuing performance targets and being held increasingly accountable through more formalised state-sector relations. This though, is set within a more general trend of the move towards bureaucratisation in society and the growing size of individual voluntary organisations which possibly contributes to their bureaucratisation.

Bureaucratisation is not necessarily a negative phenomenon, as Rosenbaum believes it has helped to eradicate amateurism and crisis management by introducing professionalism and planning although he provides little evidence to support this suggestion. Amateurism and crisis management may have been due to the under resourcing of the sector in the first place though. Another positive of bureaucratisation for Rosenbaum is that as the larger voluntary organisations develop into classical bureaucracies (see Table 10 for the characteristics of bureaucracy) it allows the organisation to deal with government much more efficiently and effectively, therefore increasing their chances of securing funding. It could be inferred from this line of argument then that voluntary organisations should increase their level of bureaucracy to a certain level in order to improve communication with government and further their chances of obtaining funding.

However, bureaucratisation should not be taken to be the panacea of a voluntary organisation's struggle to gain funds, because in line with the changing nature of the government-sector relationship, funding too has changed. Income for local voluntary organisations has risen steadily over the five years from 1989/90 to 1993/4, with statutory sources becoming increasingly important although most organisations did experience a decline in real terms at some point during the five year period (Russell

et al., 1996). The trend for statutory sources of funding becoming increasingly important for voluntary organisations may be a long-standing one though as the Wolfenden Committee (1978) noted a similar trend in 1978.

The nature of funding has also changed with grants from local and national government becoming more specific. Targeted at particular programmes, there is less general funding available to meet administration costs of the voluntary organisation and many grants do not cover the core administration costs of funding a particular scheme (Rosenbaum, 1981; Russell et al., 1996). The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1995a) notes a similar trend of funding by objectives amongst LAs, as do Nichols et al. (1998). Leach and Wilson (1998) suggest the move towards such instrumental funding decisions by LAs is motivated by the need to achieve value for money. An instrumental attitude to the funding and support of voluntary organisations is just one philosophy held by LAs towards the voluntary sector though. Other attitudes include providing support in recognition of the voluntary sector's value in promoting citizenship and social inclusion and also in recognition of existing funding precedents (Leach and Wilson, 1998).

An instrumental approach is taken by the Home Office (1994) which suggests that funding voluntary organisations should be considered especially when they can help achieve the objectives of central government departments and that administration costs should amount to no more than 10-15% of a funding application. However, the allowance for administration costs accounts only for the cost of implementing a specific project and not for the costs of chasing the funding and the general day to day running of the organisation. When funding ignores the cost of administering a project the balance must be sought from other sources such as public donations. This can result in the public, or other external sources of funding, subsidising government funded programmes (Rosenbaum, 1981).

As Russell et al. (1996) note the absolute amount of funding received by voluntary organisations increased during their five year study and an increasingly important source of this funding was the statutory sector, reflecting the changing relationship between state and sector. Rosenbaum warns though, of the dislocation of the voluntary organisation from its community and of the erosion of its independent perspective because of increasing government funding in proportion to donations from individuals or private organisations. He states (1981: p. 85):

The discipline of seeking charitable contributions and donations of volunteer time from the public has kept voluntary organizations in close contact with their communities and responsive to community needs.

The funding received by voluntary organisations from the state or its non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) may mean that recipients become service delivery agents for the state rather than representatives of their communities and users. Applying this argument to the context of a VSC receiving a grant from Sport England's Lottery Fund, it is perhaps unlikely that such a grant would cause a dislocation of the VSC from its community although a restriction on its independence could perhaps be anticipated. The VSC is still very much dependent on its community, not only for its membership and ultimately its volunteers but also for funds through membership fees, sales and its publicity. The nature of Lottery funding is that grants are made for capital projects which may necessitate more volunteers and attract more members through enhanced provision and publicity. Conditions attached to the award such as the establishment of a junior section and community use agreements can only serve to ground the VSC in its community rather than distancing it. Given that a National Lottery award is not a continuous revenue payment, rather a discrete, one-off, capital payment, it could be that the VSC becomes more dependent on its membership and volunteers to provide the revenue funding required to sustain

the capital project. Hence members may be asked to pay larger fees and volunteers asked to donate more time.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1995a) suggests there may be a negative relationship between receipt of a significant amount of funding by an organisation and the amount of volunteers in that organisation or the amount of volunteering that takes place in that organisation. Potential or existing volunteers may feel that their efforts are no longer needed if the voluntary organisation has just received a large amount of funding. Therefore volunteering may be displaced by funding and receipt of a grant from Sport England's Lottery Fund may affect the need and availability for volunteers in a VSC.

The relationship between funder and the funded may not always be perceived as, or indeed actually be, equal (Rosenbaum, 1981; Kramer, 1994). Rosenbaum (1981: p. 88) explains:

Organizations need the money, but the government has many options. Thus voluntary organizations negotiate from a position of weakness while government feels free to impose whatever conditions it wants upon the assistance provided

However, evidence from a National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) survey reveals that 50% of LAs did not enter into contractual relations with voluntary groups when providing funding (NCVO, 1994). This leads Leach and Wilson (1998: p. 14) to conclude that "the practice of allocating grants with few, if any strings attached and little in the way of performance monitoring remains resilient" within LAs. They do concede though that relationships between LAs and voluntary organisations have become more structured.

Therefore the situation of government 'imposing whatever conditions it wants' may be somewhat extreme and unrealistic, but theoretically possible. However, in the UK,

the Efficiency Scrutiny of Government Funding of the Voluntary Sector should help to make this situation less likely as "voluntary sector interests and concerns [should be] taken into account when formulating or implementing Government policies" (Home Office, 1994: p. 4). Indeed Rosenbaum (1981) believes that it is in a voluntary organisation's best interests not to accept government money unless the funding objectives are central to the organisation's aims. This may underestimate the dependence on external funding with some voluntary organisations having to accept funding conditions that detract from the organisation's aims. However, Oliver (1997: p. 705) suggests that an organisation "will be more likely to acquire valued resources when the acquired resources do not violate the [organisation's] cultural norms and values". Voluntary organisations are therefore less likely to be awarded or accept funding with conditions that do not fit with their own aims, according to Oliver.

In responding to the Home Office's (1990) initial efficiency scrutiny report the NCVO (1992) suggested that the report defined a dual role for the government in funding the voluntary sector: firstly, to link funding to government policy objectives, and secondly for government to foster effectiveness within the sector. But the NCVO has several concerns with these purposes despite offering a conditional welcome to them. For instance, "too great an emphasis on funding specific activities to the exclusion of strategic investment by government could weaken the sector" (NCVO, 1992: p. 13) as voluntary organisations appreciate the relative security offered by government funds enabling them to attract other funding and compensate for the short-term and uncertain nature of these other sources.

The NCVO (1992) argue that raising the effectiveness of the voluntary sector in terms of the services it provides would require funding aimed at developing the skills of personnel in the sector. However, it could be argued that this would lead to professionalisation. Thus demands for greater effectiveness possibly produces

professionalisation and bureaucratisation. But in suggesting that increasing demands are the cause of bureaucratisation and professionalisation it must be asked from where these demands originate. The answer is clearly two fold; it is the user and the funder who are demanding that voluntary organisations conduct themselves in a more business like manner (NCVO, 1992). On the funding side, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1995a) suggests that the difficulties created by a dynamic funding environment are the root cause of increased demands on voluntary organisations. But again Lottery funding is not continuous hence its bureaucratising influence is likely to be less or shorter in duration than that caused by long term funding. Despite this the effects of National Lottery funding on small local voluntary organisations are unknown.

One problem with the literature reviewed thus far, and which has been emphasised previously, is that it is primarily concerned with large national or international service delivery charities and voluntary organisations at the expense of smaller community based organisations, whether member orientated or not. Consequently, much of the existing data available on funding, concerns the funding structures of the largest charities (Russell et al., 1996). However, it seems that a common complaint revealed by the literature from both segments of the voluntary sector (community and national organisations) is of a lack of information and guidance regarding the application for funding and the procedures involved (Gratton et al., 1997; NCVO, 1992). Gratton et al. (1997) also note the pressure on VSCs to produce professional looking funding applications. The Home Office did make a recommendation that funding criteria should not judge applications on their presentation, allowing for the limited resources of small voluntary organisations (NCVO, 1992). This, though, is of little concession to VSCs as they have few opportunities to apply to central government for money as noted by the government's absence from a list of potential funding sources in Running Sport publications (Sport England, 1997). Useful though it is, the Efficiency



Scrutiny of Government Funding of the Voluntary Sector only concerns central government funding and not LA or National Lottery funding which is more relevant to VSCs.

A valuable contribution is made to the literature in the light of the above observations by Russell et al. (1996) whose longitudinal study examined the funding experiences of small community based service delivery voluntary organisations in the North of England over a five year period from 1989-1994. The study therefore examined the changing funding relationship between funding bodies and voluntary organisations in a period of substantial upheaval in state-sector relations. They noted the patterns of success and costs involved in obtaining funding from external sources.

Success in securing funding is aided by four factors according to Russell et al.'s study, three of which are relevant to this research. The first is the statutory sector's policies and priorities. If a voluntary organisation's aims fit the funding body's strategy then its chances are increased. Additionally, location within a poorly served geographic area, or priority area, is also likely to boost the organisation's chances of success. The same can be said of Lottery applications. A VSC is more likely to be successful if it is located within a Priority Areas Initiative (PAI) designated by Sport England and if its proposed project fits the sports development strategy of its LA (Nichols and Sparrowhawk, 1999), National Governing Body (NGB) and the objectives of Sport England. Secondly, the response and attitude of the voluntary organisation to funding opportunities influences their success. For instance, organisations which have a very rigid and defined mission may resist financial incentives to deviate from this and make provision in line with the funding body's strategy. Other voluntary organisations, depending on their funding needs, may adopt a more flexible and opportunistic approach effectively being market led. These two cases may be determined by their dependence on external funding and the

rigidity of their aims. Thirdly, organisations are more likely to secure funding if they are "well connected to formal and informal networks, professional forums and have other influential social and political contacts" (Russell et al., 1996: p. 405). For a VSC this would clearly necessitate close contact with their LA's Sports Development Officer (SDO) or their NGB's County Development Officer.

Incurring in the pursuit of funding are costs, of which Russell et al. (1996) identify four characteristics relevant to this study. Initially there exists an element of constant uncertainty with reappraisals by the state of its funding priorities and policy. The cessation of the Urban Programme in 1990 is one example of the fickle nature of external funding sources. Non-statutory funding offers similar problems as it represents "an uncertain, unstable patchwork... of sources (but)... is vital to supporting core costs and 'non-statutory' services" (Russell et al., 1996: p. 406). This could possibly be said of the search for matching funding in Lottery bids.

Secondly, much of the funding available to local voluntary organisations is short term in nature. For example 12% of the 29% increase in statutory funding between 1992/3 and 1993/4 to the voluntary organisations studied is derived from time limited programmes (Russell et al., 1996). Short-termism on the one hand may encourage flexibility and innovation, thus helping to avoid dependency, but uncertain funding does not encourage a stable organisation. In this case Sport England's Lottery Fund may provide the means to create new provision and opportunities, but revenue funding for the VSC still needs to be raised from internal and external sources. Some external funding sources may have been adversely affected by the National Lottery.

Thirdly, and staying with the issue of revenue funding being absent from many sources of finance, there is the problem of constrained growth. An organisation can only expand so far without broadening its base or strengthening its core operations.

Future growth may require that short-term costs be borne by the organisation, which may or may not be possible for voluntary organisations without further aid.

Fourthly, the intensive consumption of resources in the pursuit of funding is noted. The effort, skills, resources and time of volunteers required to make applications for and manage the funding, if successful, are great and may be beyond some small voluntary organisations (Gratton et al., 1997). Such costs are compounded by a lack of appropriate technology (Russell et al., 1996) e.g. presentation and management skills (Gratton et al., 1997; NCVO, 1992). In some cases, Russell et al. found that "generating income is a terrible distraction to the extent that 'you lose sight of what you are here for'" (1996: p. 406) which endangers the nature and purpose of the voluntary organisation. It is possible to envisage that some positions within the organisation, or indeed the entire organisation itself, becomes preoccupied with seeking funding.

Of the voluntary organisations considered by Russell et al. (1996) it was evident that some providing social services had to undergo flexibilisation. This results from the changing nature of their income with statutory funding constituting a greater proportion of income but also bringing with it the costs of continuous uncertainty, short-termism and growth with constraint all determined by the statutory sector's needs, policies and priorities. The effect of this sort of funding is compounded by two trends. Firstly, the downward pressure on unconditional voluntary income from individual donations and fund-raising events and secondly, a growing acceptance by social service voluntary organisations of the need to sell services, whether to statutory purchasers or to individuals so as to cross subsidise other activities (Russell et al., 1996). However, the effect of introducing the National Lottery and particularly the National Lottery Charities Board (NLCB) on these organisations is not captured within the five-year span of Russell et al's. study.

Even after a substantial award from Sport England's Lottery Fund that seemingly guarantees its future, a VSC may still have to develop new working practices and become increasingly professional to ensure a continued flow of income. After all, the idea behind Sport England's Lottery Fund is to provide quality facilities which will benefit the community and provide years of hard use. The facility may be built to last but is the VSC if it lacks external support of some kind or can it rely on its members to ensure its survival and what effect will the funded facility have on the VSC?

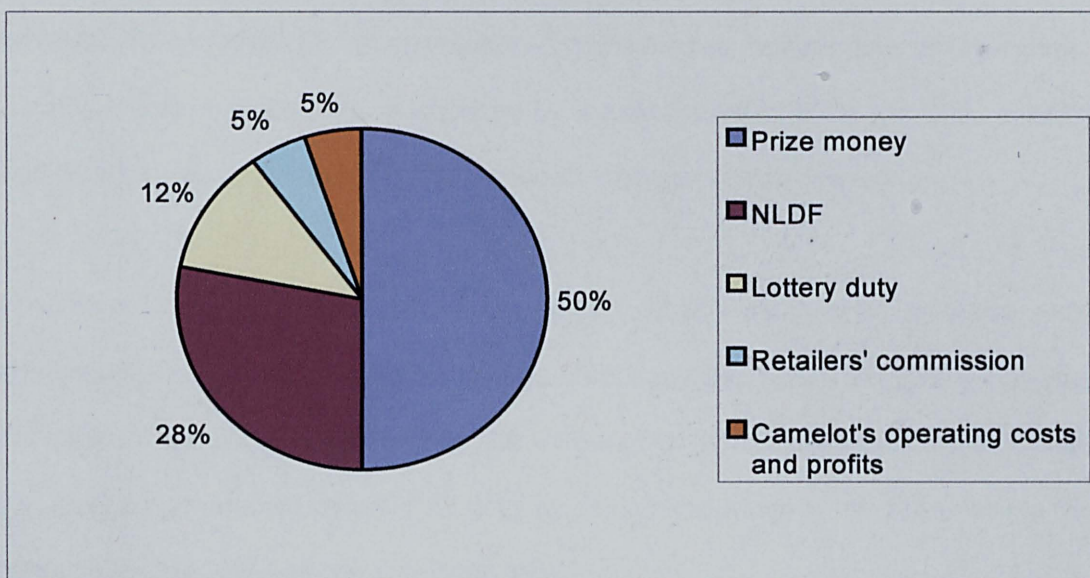
## **2.2 The National Lottery**

Established by the DCMS through the Lotteries Act 1993 (DCMS, 1993) the National Lottery initially aimed to provide funding for five good causes of the arts, charity, heritage, sport and projects to celebrate the Millennium. The first National Lottery draw was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1994. The New Opportunities Fund was added as the sixth good cause by the 1998 Lottery Act (DCMS, 1998). The National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF), which is administered by the DCMS, receives money from Camelot every Tuesday in respect of tickets sold in the previous week. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of how the money from Lottery ticket sales is apportioned with 28% going to the NLDF. The allocation of the NLDF is then the job of the thirteen distributing bodies, see Table 1. When an award has been made by one of the distributing bodies responsible for assessing the grants, the NLDF releases the appropriate funds.

The four good causes of sport, arts, charities and heritage each receive 16.33% of the NLDF but the Millennium Commission and the New Opportunities Fund receive 20% and 13.33% of the NLDF respectively. The sport and arts funds provide both capital and revenue funding for grass roots and elite facilities and performers. The

Heritage Lottery Fund provides funds to preserve, restore or acquire the heritage that makes up the fabric of our history and culture. Projects must therefore be of local, regional or national importance to the nation's heritage. The NLCB allocates funds to help those who are disadvantaged and other institutions established for charitable purposes. The Millennium Commission distributes funds to projects marking the year 2000 and seeks to find projects and awards that make a substantial contribution to the community and the New Opportunities Fund provides grants for expenditure on health, education and the environment. The Secretary of State may order that some of the money allocated to the New Opportunities Fund be given to the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA).

**Figure 1: Breakdown of National Lottery sales**



Source: Fitzherbert and Paterson (1998)

**Table 1: Distributing bodies of the NLDF**

Distributing bodies	% of NLDF
<b>Arts</b>	16.2/3%
Arts Council of England	
Arts Council of Wales	
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	
Scottish Arts Council	
<b>Sport</b>	16.2/3%
UK Sport	
Sport England	
Sport Scotland	
Sports Council for Wales	
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	
<b>Charities</b>	16.2/3%
National Lottery Charities Board	
<b>Heritage</b>	16.2/3%
National Lottery Heritage Fund	
<b>Millennium projects</b>	20%
Millennium Commission	
<b>New Opportunities Fund</b>	13.1/3%

Source: Fitzherbert and Paterson (1998)

There is clearly considerable overlap among the funding bodies and jointly funded projects are common. Each distributing organisation is independent of Government but has to follow guidelines, established by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, when deciding who should receive National Lottery money.

The major principle on which the National Lottery was established was that of net additionality. That is, the funding distributed from the NLDF should not replace government funding. However with the introduction of the New Opportunities Fund and various other controversial funding decisions the integrity of this principle has been questioned (Bailey and Connolly, 1997).

According to the NCVO the National Lottery was likely to have an enormous impact on voluntary organisations (NCVO 1993), both positive and negative. Criticisms of unequal allocation across the country, directed mostly at the Arts and Heritage distributing bodies, encouraged measures to aid bids from areas notably lacking in awards. Sport England's response was to introduce the PAI, which is discussed in

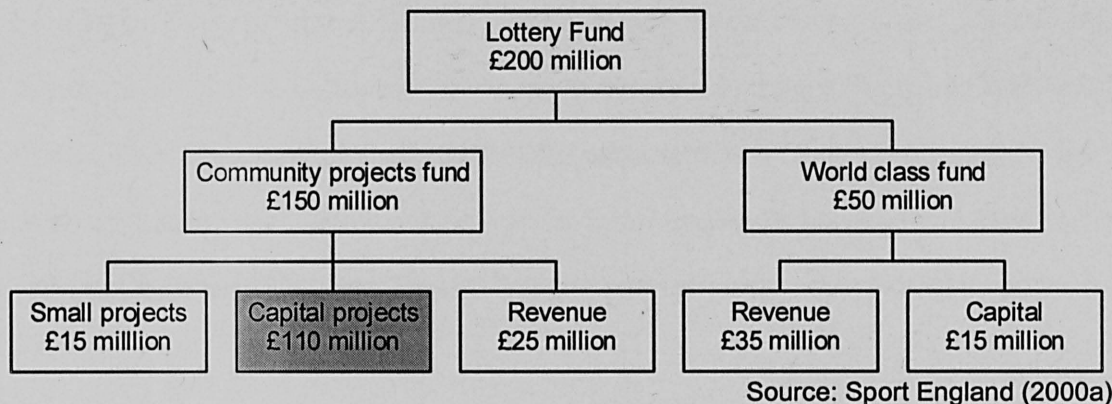
the following section. The biased distribution was recognised as a problem by the 1998 Lottery Act (DCMS, 1998) as it encourages a more strategic distribution of Lottery funds "which takes account of need, and will produce results that can be measured" (DCMS, 1997: p. 20). To encourage strategic distribution the government removed the legal obstacles on soliciting bids in a manner appropriate to each distributor (DCMS, 1998). Decision making, where appropriate and possible was devolved closer to the grass roots. The government wanted to see the development of strategies for the distribution of awards by the distributing bodies whilst devolving decision making powers about applications made on the basis of these strategies. The success of the strategy will remain largely dictated by the applications received though.

### **2.3 Sport England's Lottery Fund**

Sport England's Lottery Fund is the most significant source of new and additional funding that sport has ever received although White (2000) notes that the amount distributed by the Fund is surpassed by all LA spending on sport and recreation. The significance of the Fund is that it constitutes the single greatest and most direct funding link that sport has known between a sports policy body and the voluntary sector in sport. An investigation of the Fund's impact on recipients at the grass roots is therefore relevant.

Sport England distributes Lottery funding to the grass roots of sport through the Community Capital, Community Revenue and Awards for All schemes. Figure 2 shows the structure of Sport England's Lottery Fund and the amount of funding due to be distributed through each of its elements in 2002 under its new Lottery strategy (Sport England 2000a). These funding projections are of course dependent on the size of the NLDF, which is in turn dependent on National Lottery ticket sales.

**Figure 2: The structure of Sport England's Lottery Fund**



Although the Fund distributes grants to the elite and grass roots of sport, this research is concerned only with the latter and in particular the Community Capital Projects element of Sport England's Lottery Fund highlighted in Figure 2. Only the Community Capital Projects Fund is of interest here because when the research was initiated in 1997 this was the only branch of Sport England's Lottery Fund that was operating and that had made an award. The other funding schemes identified in Figure 2 were either not operating or not conceived in 1997, and to establish the effects of Lottery funding on VSCs the research needed to investigate a funding scheme that had a history of distribution. Additionally, had the Small Projects and Revenue funding schemes been operational in 1997 then the Community Capital Projects Fund would still have been of primary interest because of the nature of the projects eligible for funding under each scheme. Awarding capital projects costing between £500 and £5,000 means that the Small Projects scheme is likely to have less of an impact on the structure of a VSC than a capital project costing over £5,000 awarded through the Community Capital Projects Fund. Revenue funding is likely to have less impact again on a VSC's structure because of the absence of an additional facility and its implications for the management and operation of a VSC. Thus the Community Capital Projects Fund was the only eligible scheme for the research.



The Community Capital Projects Fund was the original fund administered by Sport England under the 1993 Lotteries Act (DCMS, 1993). Applications for Lottery funding were taken from January 1995 and Sport England made its first round of awards in March 1995. As of December 2000 Sport England's Lottery Fund has distributed £1.18 billion worth of capital grants to 3260 projects (Sport England, 2000b). Table 2 gives application and distribution figures for Sport England's Lottery Fund from March 1995 to December 2000 and Table 3 lists the ten most commonly awarded sports.

**Table 2: Application and distribution figures for Sport England's Lottery Fund January 1995-December 2000**

Application	
Total applications received	7577
Total amount requested	£3,982,597,487
Total project cost	£5,997,315,081
Average applications/month	110
Average £ requested/month	£57,718,804
Distribution	
Projects funded	3260
Total awarded	£1,118,958,490
Total project cost	£2,153,926,846
Average projects awarded/month	47
Ave £ awarded/month	£17,231,282

Source: Sport England (2000b)

Under the Community Capital Projects scheme Sport England expects VSCs to find a minimum of 25% matching funding from external sources and at least 10% matching funding from the VSC's own funds. The total cost of the project, including all of the matching funding, must total more than £5,000. The exception to this being the PAI and the School Community Sport Initiative (SCSI) where match funding requirements have been reduced to 10% and 20% respectively. "The main condition to be eligible for Lottery funding is that the project must be for the public good and community benefit, and not intended primarily for private gain" (English Sports Council, 1996: p. 15). Also the bidding organisation must have a written constitution, memorandum and articles of association or statutory powers, with priority going to projects that cater for the widest possible cross-section of people.

**Table 3: The sports most commonly awarded by Sport England's Lottery Fund January 1995-December 2000**

Sport	Number of awards received
Cricket	540
Lawn Tennis	488
Association Football	415
Bowls	326
Multi-Sport	197
Sailing and yachting	137
Hockey	130
Swimming and diving	115
Rugby Union	104
Sub-aqua	85

Source: Sport England (2000b)

If the VSC must raise 10% of the project cost itself then the VSC must look towards its members and volunteers to provide or raise the money, thus increasing the VSC's reliance on its members. At the same time the VSC may become more dependent on external funders for 25% of the project cost. This situation would seem to suggest that it is possible for the VSC to become increasingly dependent on both internal and external sources of funding i.e. members and volunteers for the VSC's 10% of the project cost and other organisations for 25% of the project cost. In the case of VSCs bidding through the PAI or SCSi, the lower amount of external funding required means that the VSC is likely to be less dependent on external organisations and its members for matching funding. Also the requirement that the project must be for the benefit of the community obligates the VSC to consider the community more often in its decisions.

As noted by Nichols and Sparrowhawk (1999) many LAs (51%) do not have a recreation strategy, but simply aim to achieve what they can from the Lottery for their area. Indeed the support offered to VSCs varies according to the type and size of LA (Nichols et al., 1998). The help offered may simply constitute reacting to Lottery enquiries, responding and offering support, or proactively encouraging bids. The

most common form of help (44%) was 'responding and offering support' but Nichols and Sparrowhawk suggest this support may be linked to the availability of two sources of funding other than the Lottery. They state (1999: p. 10-11):

Although Lottery grants are decided by the Sports Council and represent a replacement of local authorities own capital budgets, authorities can still influence their distribution. This can be done through deciding which sports clubs to support in their own bids, but more importantly, by deciding which bids to match with the authority's own funding... As officers learn to create synergy between different pots of money the criteria determining the allocation of more significant grants, such as the Single Regeneration Budget, are more likely to indirectly influence the distribution of Sports Lottery bids as these grants provide a source of matched funding.

So from Nichols and Sparrowhawk's research it is primarily the availability of matching funding that determines strategic support and the LA's leisure or sport strategy second.

Like Gratton et al., (1997), the 1998 Lottery Act, notes the concerns of small community groups regarding the minimum grant sizes required by some distributing bodies and the amount of detail and effort required in applications. To remedy this situation the Act enables simpler, faster application processes for smaller grants, improved information to applicants pre-bid and post-award and the flexibilisation of the monitoring of small grants because of the costs involved. Sport England has already introduced 'in principle grants' based on a tentative outline application pending a more detailed application, which is submitted after being accepted in principle. Sutcliffe (1998) estimated the average cost involved in making an application to the Lottery Fund to be £35,000. This cost is probably vastly inflated by major projects submitted by LAs and NGBs but indicates that the cost of submitting a bid is clearly prohibitive for a VSC given that the Fund is ten times over subscribed (Sutcliffe, 1998) and that only about one in three applications are successful (Fitzherbert and Rhoades, 1997).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Statutory organisations are becoming a more frequent and important source of funding for voluntary organisations. This seems to be the case particularly for small and medium sized local voluntary organisations that are receiving funding from local authorities more often than they once did. However, it is not just the frequency with which funding is received that has changed but also the nature of the funding. Statutory organisations have come to realise that the voluntary sector, traditionally responsive to society's needs, is a convenient, effective and efficient means of achieving policy objectives and delivering services previously provided by the statutory bodies. The nature of funding has therefore shifted from recognising the voluntary sector for its intrinsic value and more towards recognising the voluntary sector for its instrumental value to fulfilling statutory bodies' policy objectives and service obligations. As a consequence, and under the contract culture encouraged by Compulsory Competitive Tendering, funding received by many voluntary organisations has become short-term, linked to specific projects and often conditional on the achievement of specific objectives. Rosenbaum (1981) among others has suggested that this may be leading to a change in the nature of the voluntary organisations that receive funding from and enter into agreements with the statutory sector. In particular recipients of funding may become more bureaucratic as they attempt to administer their funding, manage the projects for which they have been funded and achieve specified objectives. All this may require a degree of organisational change.

Whilst Sport England's Lottery Fund may not involve the downloading of statutory service obligations to VSCs many of the features of the changing state-voluntary sector funding relationship are evident in its relations with the voluntary sector in sport. Lottery funding is distributed to VSCs that are able to contribute towards the

achievement of Sport England's policy objectives set in agreement with the DCMS. The funding is primarily capital funding and linked to the development of a specific project. The Fund also represents a source of additional funding that was not previously available to VSCs, and also the greatest and most direct funding link to be created between the voluntary sector in sport and a public sector body. Given the possible changes taking in place in the wider voluntary sector as a result of its altered funding environment it is necessary to investigate whether those VSCs receiving Lottery funding from Sport England are affected in a similar way. To do this it is first necessary to establish the defining characteristics of VSCs and suggest how these might be changing.

### **3 Voluntary Sports Clubs**

This chapter considers the nature of the organisations that are the main focus of this research. The importance of VSCs for sports policy is first considered and then the nature of VSCs established. Finally, it is suggested that the nature of these organisations may be changing and that these changes may have policy implications given VSCs' collective size and importance to the structure of sports provision and policy in the UK.

#### **3.1 The importance of voluntary sports clubs**

It was with the process of the urbanisation and industrialisation in the nineteenth century that the voluntary sector in leisure as we know it today came about. This is not to say those voluntary leisure organisations or movements did not exist prior to the urbanisation and industrialisation of society but that the previous agrarian based society gave rise to a different form of voluntary leisure pursuits and movements. The extended family and relationships within rural communities generated many of the social and individual benefits associated with the voluntary leisure organisations of today but with the development of urban communities industrialisation required more formal provision to achieve the same social interaction (Tomlinson, 1979).

With a dramatically changing society, voluntary leisure provision was primarily concerned with the achievement of rational ends or the suppression of particular leisure practices such as the consumption of alcohol, vice and those based around cruelty to animals (Henry, 1993). It was not until the late nineteenth century that voluntary leisure organisations pursued leisure practices for their own intrinsic value through mutual aid organisations. From this time until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the

promotion and development of sport was almost entirely undertaken by VSCs (Allison, 2000).

Today the voluntary sector in sport is important for its size and its social, economic political value. At 26% of all volunteering, sports and exercise volunteering is the most common form of organised voluntary activity in the UK (Davis Smith, 1998). It therefore provides the opportunity to further social inclusion and citizenship by enabling the individual to become involved in their local VSC and their local community which benefits society as a whole (Putnam, 1993; 2000).

The size of the voluntary sector in sport amounts to 1.5 million volunteers at an estimated value of £1.5 billion per annum in the UK (Gratton et al., 1997). Additionally, Gratton et al. (1997) estimated that there were 150,000 VSCs in the UK and subsequently Allison (2000) estimated there to be 13,000 VSCs in Scotland. Allison's figures must be treated with caution though. She admits her findings relate only to those clubs responding to her postal questionnaire as the response rate was not high enough to be representative. In addition, the extent to which VSCs in Scotland are typical of all VSCs in the UK is uncertain.

No studies have calculated the number and value of volunteers in VSCs separate from the number and value of national and international sports volunteers. However, Gratton et al. (1997) did estimate that the 150,000 VSCs in the UK accounted for 80% of the total number and value of sports volunteers in the voluntary sports sector (1.2 million and £1.2 billion respectively). Given that there are around 150,000 VSCs in the UK it is clear that only a minority of VSCs have applied or received Lottery funding as Table 2 shows that a total of 3235 projects have been awarded by Sport England. This number also covers NGB, LA and VSC projects. This is supported by

Allison (2000) who found that only 6% of the VSCs responding to her survey had obtained Lottery funding from Sportscotland.

The value of VSCs goes beyond economic measures, as they are also important politically. Lying at the foot of the sports pyramid, VSCs form the grass roots of sports provision in the UK (Gratton and Taylor, 1991). Not only are VSCs crucial for sporting opportunities and participation within the local community, but as part of the mass participation end of the sports development continuum they contribute to performance at national and international level by developing the elite performers of today and tomorrow (Garrett, 2000a).

The importance of VSCs to sports policy is recognised in the latest sports policy document from the DCMS. A Sporting Future for All (DCMS, 2000: p. 40) states that:

Amateur... sports clubs have an important role to play in providing sporting opportunities and in supporting the development of talented performers. Club development is a key factor in the success of many of our sporting competitors.

A Sporting Future for All is an attempt to extend the principles of 'joined up government' to sports policy and provision and as such presents a much more coordinated and coherent structure for sports provision in the UK in the pursuit of greater participation and achievement. The role of VSCs in this overall scheme is to link with schools to enable junior participants to engage in sport outside of school, after the age of sixteen and to provide further opportunities for the development of talent. However, the present state of VSCs means "there is a need for more systematic and structured development of sports clubs across the country" (DCMS, 2000: p. 40). Over the next ten years the government wants to transform the grassroots of UK sport indicating that change is likely for VSCs as they are central to these plans. The policy document continues (DCMS, 2000: p. 13):



We want to launch a new drive with governing bodies and local authorities to develop a more effective club structure. In each area, we will support the development of clubs which have the potential to develop a number of teams offering opportunities to progress to higher levels of competition, and professional management of all their activities. These clubs will link with smaller clubs to provide levels of competition and coaching which welcome and encourage everyone regardless of age or ability and include good junior sections. We will work with governing bodies to improve the training, support and recognition of the volunteers on whom clubs depend and create an accreditation scheme for clubs with high quality junior sections.

Thus VSCs are central to the government's vision of a modern, professional and inclusive structure for sport. This implies a change in the way that VSCs are positioned within the wider sports sector with them becoming more closely linked to LAs, NGBs and neighbouring VSCs. However, the extent to which VSCs are willing to conform to the government's vision for sport is uncertain as Houlihan (1991) points out that members of organisations are concerned primarily with organisational maintenance and enhancement rather than pursuing the policy goals of government or its agents such as Sport England. Evidence in Allison's (2000) study supports this and is considered in the following section. Overall the emphasis on VSCs to help create a new structure for sport may cause a change in the nature of VSCs. The possibility that the nature of VSCs is changing is considered in section 3.3. Section 3.2 now identifies the nature and characteristics of VSCs.

### **3.2 The nature of voluntary sports clubs**

The characteristics of VSCs to be discussed are summarised in Table 4 and are presented as ideal features recognising that variations in the degree of these characteristics occur. An identification of the key characteristics of VSCs is necessary to understand the nature of the organisations under investigation.

The simple structure characterising VSCs identified by Hoggett and Bishop (1985) and Tomlinson (1979) will be discussed under section 4.2. Suffice to note for now

that the organisations are not bureaucratic and that Tomlinson (1979) suggests VSCs avoid developing a bureaucratic structure because they see this as a rejection of their informal origin and history.

Perhaps the most obvious feature of VSCs is that they are sports specific (Tomlinson, 1979). Unlike the larger multi-sport clubs in Europe, VSCs in the UK tend to exist around the pursuit of only one sport (Deckers and Gratton, 1995). Allison (2000) reported 93% of VSCs in her survey provided for just one sport. However, some sports such as swimming and water polo or tennis and squash may be incorporated in one club. VSCs also tend to be geographically specific being based in one area or around available facilities. More than one site may be used if the VSC does not have its own facilities or the facilities owned by VSCs are inadequate (Tomlinson, 1979).

The activity of a VSC takes place within the formal boundary of an organisation and because of this, its voluntary activity is considered to be formal as opposed to informal. Tomlinson (1979) agrees suggesting VSCs are membership-based relatively formal associations for specific activities. Davis Smith (1998) distinguishes between formal and informal voluntary activity. Informal voluntary activity is considered to be any activity taking place on a non-organised basis such as a neighbour helping another neighbour. In contrast, formal volunteering is considered as any activity bounded by an organisation. Formal volunteering must therefore take place within "a formal entity, such as a national voluntary organisation or statutory agency, or a more loose knit grouping such as a residents' committee or sports club" (Davis Smith, 1998: p. 14). Other definitions ignore volunteering's informal side completely stating that the activity must be bounded by an organisation if it is to be considered as voluntary activity at all. Goddard (1994: p. 1) states:

Voluntary work was defined as unpaid work (except for expenses) done through a group or on behalf of an organisation of some kind, but not for a trade union or political party.

Voluntary activity within VSCs therefore falls under both Davis Smith's and Goddard's 'formal' view of volunteering. Nevertheless, there still remains an internal distinction within the formal category. Davis Smith hints at this when he states that some organisations are 'more loose knit'.

**Table 4: Key features of voluntary sports clubs**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sport and site specific.</b> They tend to focus on one sport in one geographic location (Allison, 2000; Deckers and Gratton, 1985; Tomlinson, 1979).</li> <li>• <b>Formal volunteering.</b> Voluntary activity within a formally defined but imprecise organisational boundary (Davis Smith, 1998).</li> <li>• <b>Member orientated.</b> VSCs exist to pursue the common interests of their members with an emphasis on the social process of producing their leisure opportunities (Allison, 2000; Gordon and Babchuk, 1959; Hoggett and Bishop, 1985; Rochester, 1992; Smith, 1997).</li> <li>• <b>Implicitly goal directed.</b> Organisational goals may not always be explicit. Instead, members intuitively agree on the function of their VSCs (see above) (Schlagenhauf and Timm, 1976).</li> <li>• <b>Independent.</b> Having a high input / output overlap means that they are financially self-sufficient but that volunteering is critical to the existence of the VSC (Allison, 2000; Boothby and Tungatt, 1978; Chanan, 1993; Heinemann, 1984; Hoggett and Bishop, 1985).</li> <li>• <b>Democratically organised.</b> VSCs are organised through a committee structure (Allison, 2000; Boothby and Tungatt, 1978; Ibsen 1999).</li> <li>• <b>Simply structured.</b> The organisational structure of the VSCs is simple and flat, bounded by a member / non-member distinction (Schlagenhauf and Timm, 1976, Tomlinson, 1979). However, VSCs usually remain close to their potential members.</li> </ul> |
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A popular way to distinguish between formal voluntary organisations is to ask for what or who the organisation exists, what are its functions and where do its impacts lie. Blau and Scott (1963) put this as *cui bono* (who benefits)? Distinctions have been drawn between instrumental, expressive and instrumental-expressive voluntary organisations (Gordon and Babchuk, 1959; Jacoby and Babchuk, 1963), member benefit/non member benefit (Smith, 1997) and service delivery and mutual aid organisations (Rochester, 1992). The increasing trend for voluntary organisations to acquire objective related funding from statutory organisations makes this an important distinction because an organisation may become more concerned with the statutory body's objectives than its own in order to fulfil the funding conditions. Thus the

voluntary organisation may become more concerned with external objectives than its own internal objectives.

Under Gordon and Babchuk's (1959: p. 27) typology VSCs are considered as expressive organisations because they:

perform a function primarily for the individual participants through activities confined and self contained within the organization itself. More specifically, they provide the opportunity for carrying on activities, such as recreation, of direct interest to the participants or help to provide satisfactions of personal fellowship.

Thus VSCs clearly have "internal or member benefit goals" (Smith, 1997: p. 271) equating them to expressive associations. Allison (2000) found that 89% of clubs responding to her survey reported their primary purpose as providing opportunities for members to enjoy their sport. VSCs can therefore be considered as member orientated.

Instrumental associations such as LAs, NGBs and Sport England exist to achieve societal goals lying outside of the organisation. Gordon and Babchuk's (1959) distinction is therefore based on whom the organisation aims to serve and on whether it has a social function as well. The 'more loose knit' groups that Davis Smith (1998) identifies are clearly the more expressive associations. It is possible of course that instrumental associations provide for their participants' expressive needs whilst achieving goals lying outside of the organisation. This constitutes the instrumental-expressive association.

Today, expressive and instrumental associations are more likely to be called mutual aid and service delivery organisations respectively. Rochester (1992: p. 122) describes the nature of mutual aid volunteering as opposed to service delivery volunteering:

...people are not typically recruited to play specific roles in the pursuit of activities that have already been designed. Instead, they become involved in some way with an organisation that offers a range of opportunities to play a part in planning its work and carrying it forward. The volunteer's eventual role in the organisation may be a product of not only personal interests and skills but also of negotiation and pure accident. And the motivation and rewards for involvement are less to do with personal development and more to do with a sense of shared purpose. Working with others towards a valued goal is rewarded by fellowship and brings a feeling of 'ownership' of the organisation and its work.

In VSCs, members turn their skills; manual or intellectual, acquired in the labour market or elsewhere to running the organisation. In the service delivery context the reverse is probably truer as people volunteer to gain skills. This is not to suggest that volunteers cannot gain valuable experience in VSCs or that it is less worthwhile than that gained by volunteering in service delivery voluntary organisations. Volunteering in VSCs may be structured and demanding in terms of tasks and time required for committee volunteers. Heinemann (1984: p. 202, original emphasis) says of these committee volunteers that "a precondition for their status is that they are to a certain extent in a position to live *for* their club without having to live *from* it". Other voluntary efforts given through unnamed positions in VSCs may be (but not always) more spontaneous, irregular, and less demanding.

The service delivery/mutual aid distinction is rooted in economic and social conceptions of the broader voluntary sector (Nichols and Garrett, 2000). The existence of VSCs can therefore be explained according to their economic or social function. The use of the term 'third sector' in North America to describe voluntary activity is indicative of the economic conceptualisation that dominates there. The voluntary sector is viewed as being residual to the public and private sectors and its role is to perform an economic function where market failure cannot be corrected efficiently through government intervention or provision. For example, Smith (1995: p. 100), a North American voluntary sector researcher, comments that "member-

benefit non-profits... result from market failure just as much as do public-benefit [non-profit] organizations”.

Weisbrod (1978) and Gratton and Taylor (1991) would suggest that VSCs arise to meet the demand for provision that cannot be met by private sector clubs or LA provision. This is because as a collective good there is insufficient consensus on VSCs' value to justify public provision or to make provision effectively. Therefore, only individuals acting collectively in small groups can meet the demands of infinite clusters of interests.

Papadimitriou (1994) notes a problem in applying Weisbrod's public goods theory to VSCs. She states that one theme of Weisbrod's theory is that non-profit production is associated with delivering services or meeting social goals that lie outside of the organisation. This, though, cannot explain the existence of organisations such as VSCs that pursue private member orientated goals. Although, VSCs provide for an infinite range of interests, the pursuit of these interests is essentially for the benefit of a few individuals rather than society at large. Whereas Weisbrod's (1978) conceptualisation emphasises the service delivery and economic functions of the voluntary sector, in relation to the public and private sectors, an alternative conceptualisation of the voluntary sector is one that is primarily social.

The social perspective focuses on the mutual aid aspects of voluntary organisations. Rather than being a residual service provider, VSCs can be seen as an active response from consumers to take control of the supply of opportunities to pursue their sporting interests through a highly social process. Hoggett and Bishop (1985: p. 38) summarise this position:

One can consider the general position of this 'sector' in leisure as compared to the voluntary sector in welfare. For the latter one part of their role is to fill gaps left by the public sector, and hence they can

create little action-space of their own, outside the pattern laid down by public provision. In the world of leisure, the relationship is the opposite: it is the public sector which has to try to fill the gaps and provide the 'enabling' which permits the many distinct clubs and societies to continue.

This approach not only considers the output or the goal of voluntary organisations but also the process of attaining that goal. As organisations are social entities (Slack, 1997) this process is inevitably and primarily social (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985) and is often as important as the activity itself (Tomlinson, 1979).

Protected by their self-determination, members' interests are paramount in VSCs. Under a for-profit organisation, members' interests would be structured by the organisation's profit-orientated goals. This makes the voluntary sector politically attractive for promoting active citizenship and building social capital.

Thus VSCs enable collective action based on communities of interest rather than geographic communities (James, 1997). Although these communities of interests may span the world, individual VSCs tend to be geographically specific because of the need to be centred around their facilities.

Hoggett and Bishop (1985: p. 39) note that voluntary leisure organisations "by and large, consume their own products" and therefore have united supply and demand sides. Wilson and Butler (1986) perceive this as a high overlap between the resource origin (input) and those who receive the benefit (output) of the organisation. Consequently the majority of the resources that a VSC needs to survive are to be found within its boundary. VSCs in the UK are therefore typically self-supporting (Boothby and Tungatt, 1978) despite external funding which is occasionally sought (Heinemann, 1984). The combined buying power of a member benefit organisation

returns economic benefits to its members (Smith, 1997) making the pursuit of an activity cheaper as a group than as an individual.

VSCs may obtain resources from membership fees, playing fees, fund raising activities, trust funds, sponsorship, members spending, grants, loans, donations, and voluntary labour. There are no doubt other sources. From this list it seems that VSCs are reliant on outside sources. However, dependence on member generated income for the continuation of the organisation is greater than that from external sources on a day-to-day basis. Allison (2000) provides empirical support for this as 86% of the VSCs responding to her survey derived their income primarily from membership fees. It can also be stated that the importance of volunteering as a resource to VSCs is critical (Burgess, 1996; Gratton et al., 1997; Taks et al., 1998) and in many cases voluntary work is the VSC's most important resource (Heinemann, 1984). Funding from external sources is normally small, infrequent and tends to be capital funding and sponsorship to realise projects that might not be achievable through members' efforts alone. Again this is backed by Allison's (2000) findings that only 6% of VSCs responding had received Lottery funding and 20% had received other external grants. Therefore a framework emphasising only the dependence of VSCs on external funding as an influence in the operation and structure would not be suitable for this research.

This low dependence on external resources and high dependence on internal sources attributes independence (Allison, 2000), or local autonomy (Chanan, 1993), to VSCs. This is fiercely defended by VSCs in certain sports (e.g. mountaineering, Nichols, 1998) and in general by local voluntary leisure organisations (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985). Consequently, VSCs may not see themselves as part of the voluntary sector (Allison, 2000; Handy, 1990). Instead, they see more in common with other groups who pursue the same activity (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985), rather than non-profit



charity and welfare organisations that also constitute the voluntary sector and are far more service delivery orientated. This assertive independence felt by VSCs might also be a result of the situation of leisure provision described earlier by Hoggett and Bishop where the public sector is left to fill the gaps left between the voluntary and private sectors.

However, independence does not exclude the possibility of occasionally receiving grants and loans from external actors. Nor does it mean that external actors are indifferent to what happens within the VSC. As interest groups with their own culture and values, the problem for VSCs occurs when their aim, values and identity are subject to any sort of challenge (Tomlinson, 1979). Tension may exist between internal values and aims of a VSC and the external policy environment (Houlihan, 1991; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000). This situation is conceivable in the distribution of Lottery funding by Sport England to VSCs because VSCs are primarily concerned with their members' enjoyment of their sport (Allison, 2000). Junior development, emphasised in sports policy by Sport England and the DCMS, was only a top three priority for 27% of Allison's respondents. A clash of interests therefore seems possible when VSCs apply for Lottery funding from Sport England.

A further characteristic of VSCs is their democratic self-organisation (Boothby and Tungatt, 1978; Ibsen, 1999). VSCs are organised through a committee/sub-committee structure. This creates a distinction between the ordinary members and committee members. Members are entitled, directly or indirectly to influence what happens in the VSC by voting on decisions and electing members to the committee. This feature is important because "without a flourishing non-profit sector, particularly the associational segment" Smith (1997: p. 293-294) suggests "a healthy democracy is impossible [as] all kinds of grassroots association are to some extent potentially political and part of the process of maintaining a participatory democracy". Although,

the committee posts are filled by election, election to the post is by no means based on competence alone (Heinemann, 1984). This is characteristic of prioritising the social process of producing the opportunity to pursue a particular sport over the activity being pursued by the VSC.

The member orientation of VSCs has already been alluded to. Many definitions of an organisation suggest that they are goal directed (Slack, 1997, and Daft, 1992; 1998). VSCs as organisations pursue their members' goals that reflect their common interests or enthusiasms. Indeed, "the function of a voluntary organization within society is... determined by the wishes of its members" (Schlagenhauf and Timm, 1976). Thus, the goal of a VSC can be inferred as to provide for its members' interests because the members ultimately decide the goal of the organisation through democratic self-organisation.

Although goal directed, it could be said that VSCs are characterised by a degree of goal ambiguity. This is especially the case when compared to the public and private sectors (Knoke and Prensky, 1984; Schlagenhauf and Timm, 1976). Schlagenhauf and Timm (1976: p. 17) put their case.

Though the clubs... have rules, which quite explicitly mention the purpose of the club (such as the promotion and cultivation of a certain type of sport)... the formulation of such goals and mechanisms of regulation, provided they exist at all, has little or no informative content... Therefore we find it is a characteristic feature of a sport club, that it has no specific goal, which all members try to reach... this does not mean that an official goal has been disregarded, but that such a goal is nowhere noticeable and the purpose of the organization is being defined according to the personal interests of its individual members.

Individual members pursuing their own goals within the organisation also makes the overall goal of the organisation more ambiguous. The finding that 20% of the VSCs studied by Schlagenhauf and Timm (1976) could not agree whether their goal was participatory or competitive sport evinces this point. It is not that sports VSCs do not

have goals but that these goals are often implicit, giving the impression of ambiguity, making their goals difficult to quantify and that sections of the organisation will define its goal differently.

The absence of an elaborate and complex structure (Schlagenhauf and Timm, 1976, Tomlinson, 1979) through which goals are established and monitored does not help this ambiguity. This is not to imply that a VSC has no structure whatsoever (Slack, personal communication), but that any structure is likely to be informal, flat, and simple.

Member orientation though, does not just mean that voluntary associations pursue the memberships' common interest. It also means that an individual joins a VSC and contributes resources as long as the VSC has something of interest to offer him (Heinemann, 1984). Precisely what it is that is offered is debatable. For Heinemann (1984: p. 202) membership is facility-driven highlighting his economic concept of VSCs.

The range of facilities offered is the basis of membership motivation, both aspects being inseparable in the case of sports clubs as opposed to business enterprises and government agencies.

This, however, ignores the social processes taking place within VSCs. Earlier, Hoggett and Bishop (1985) emphasised the importance of social factor as shaping a leisure organisation's final identity far more than the publicly stated nature of their activity.

In this view it is the social act of producing the opportunity to consume or pursue an activity that attracts members to a VSC rather than a VSC's facilities or state of provision. Jacoby and Babchuk (1963: p. 469) agree saying that "if a person seeks an associational environment in which the flow of activity and interaction is person

directed he will be more likely to seek and affiliate with expressive associations". The relevance of this feature is also supported by Smith (1997: p. 285) as he suggests that:

what really matters is the development of meaningful and positive social relationships with other group members, not the purpose of the group or kind of activities involved.

Hoggett and Bishop's 'social factor' may explain why members of a VSC remain in the organisation, but it does not adequately explain why people join in the first instance. After all it may take time to build social relations after joining a VSC. The initial attraction must therefore be the opportunity to pursue the VSC's ostensible activity.

Another characteristic distinguishing VSCs is the presence of choice in the individual's action of becoming a member. For Webb (1974) the mere fact that membership to an organisation is voluntary makes the organisation a voluntary one. Heinemann (1984) supports this view suggesting that membership of a VSC is voluntary, it is not conferred on a person at birth or by legal compulsion; joining and resigning are independent decisions taken by a free agent. The extent to which members are free agents is debatable though. Webb and Heinemann's definitions are too inclusive incorporating many for-profit organisations that an individual may wish to join. They also ignore the possibility discovered by Snow et al. (1980) that potential members may experience social pressure to join a social movement organisation from friends and relatives who are already members of that organisation. Then, after a significant period of membership the social relations developed and sense of obligation, or normative commitment (Pisnar-Sweeney, 1997), may bind the member to the VSC.

So even before the decision to become a member is taken the member's choices may be limited. Boothby and Tungatt (1978) demonstrate this feature in relation to VSCs. Like Snow et al. (1980), Boothby and Tungatt (1978) found that recruitment is typically achieved through friendship and family networks indicating the importance of word of mouth. The next most common means of recruitment was that of a VSC advert or invitation. However, Boothby and Tungatt (1978: p. 26) suggest that "so close were the clubs to their potential membership that few had been attracted by the limited advertising of the clubs". Sometimes then, consideration of all local VSCs for potential membership is precluded by a period of close association with one VSC but not actual membership. Similar to Knoke and Prensky (1984), Boothby and Tungatt seem to be suggesting that a VSC's boundary is imprecise or porous.

On the basis of these traits VSCs fulfil Smith's (1997) five expected impacts or benefits resulting from grassroots association activity. These are (a) social support, helping or service, (b) stimulation and/or self-expression, (c) happiness and/or health, (d) socio-political activation and, (e) economic impacts.

VSCs offer social support by being member orientated and emphasising the solidary aspects of association. Self-expression and stimulation are available from association in a VSC through the pursuit of a common interest with other members. Engagement in the primary activity of the VSC requires the participants to master the skills of that activity. Happiness and health are available to the membership due to the solidary nature of association and also the engagement in an active lifestyle. Internally, VSCs afford a level of citizenship and participatory democracy and are therefore considered to be socio-politically active by Smith (1997). Lastly, the economic benefits of a VSC are returned directly to the membership because of the

simultaneous production and consumption of leisure opportunities afforded by the voluntary nature of the VSC.

The characteristics of VSCs are largely inter-related. The recruitment of members has implications for the VSC's self-sufficiency and for defining its organisational boundary. Financial self-sufficiency and reliance on volunteer labour allows the VSC to be independent. The VSC's members consume the product of this voluntary labour. The VSC is goal directed, but the goals are decided by the membership so that the membership acts within the structures it creates. What is more, these goals may be ambiguous and implicit giving the appearance of a VSC with no goal direction. Underpinning all these characteristics is likely to be a flexible and informal structure reflecting the potentially unspecified nature of the VSC's goals. Consequently, changes in these characteristics are likely to result in changes to the structure of the organisation. Focusing on organisational structure is therefore a good way to identify the effects of Lottery funding on VSCs. Research objective three can therefore be re-stated as investigating how VSCs' organisational structure may be changing with receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England.

Little is known about how VSCs have changed over time and in response to various pressures or influences, if they have changed at all. Allison's (2000) and Gratton et al.'s studies were not longitudinal preventing any appreciation of how VSCs may have changed. However, the state of VSCs outlined here is unlikely to be static. Tomlison (1979) cites the Sport Council (1974) as finding that only 3% of leisure clubs existed in the same form for a decade. This surprising figure, which begs the question what was considered to represent continuity, suggests rapid and frequent change. Nor is the state of VSCs likely to remain static in the future if the DCMS achieves its aims outlined in *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000). "What is clear is that in some clubs, their functions, structures and ideologies changed as a result of developments

in local authority provision" (Allison, 2000: p. 12). At the same time though, the VSCs Allison interviewed "displayed a remarkable ability for survival that had carried them more or less intact through years of local authority and governing body changes as well as more general social change. It could be argued that many sports clubs in Scotland have had greater degree of continuity than their statutory and core-funded partners" (2000: p. 36). Not only does this provide a mixed assessment of the issue of VSC change but highlights the degree to which VSCs are linked to their environment. The issue of a VSC's connections with its environment is taken up in chapter 4.

### **3.3 The changing nature of voluntary sports clubs**

As volunteering is a vital resource for VSCs, what is the state of volunteering in these organisations? The answer seems to be that no one really knows because, despite the above discussion, problems of definition and their elusiveness mean that it is difficult to isolate mutual aid associations from other voluntary organisations. For a consideration of such matters one has to return to the broader volunteering picture. The National Survey of Volunteering (Davis Smith, 1998) is probably the most recent barometer of volunteering and allows comparisons with previous national surveys in 1984 (Field and Hedges, 1984) and 1991 (Lynn and Davis Smith, 1991). Goddard's (1994) study, however, has a much greater sample than Davis Smith's (1998) as it was part of the 1992 General Household Survey but presents only a snapshot of the situation.

Davis Smith found that the number of people volunteering in the UK had decreased. In 1997, 48% said they had volunteered in the previous 12 months compared to 51% in 1991 (Davis Smith, 1998). The mean contribution per week for those who volunteered in the previous twelve months had risen from 2.7 hours to 4.05 hours

(Davis Smith, 1998). Goddard (1994) found the mean contribution per week to be consistent with these figures at just under four hours. Thus, the absolute number of volunteers has reduced, but the time donated per week by those continuing to volunteer has increased substantially. Therefore voluntary effort seems to have increased.

At 26% of all volunteering, sport and exercise was the most common form of voluntary activity in Davis Smith's (1998) sample. However, this last figure obviously covers sports volunteering which takes place at regional, national, and international events for NGBs and not just local sports VSCs. Sports volunteering may then be divided up into non-affiliated, event based volunteering and VSC volunteering, although, it is known from the National Survey (Davis Smith, 1998) that 69% of all volunteers were involved with a local independent group such as a VSC. Similarly, the Valuing Volunteers study (Gratton et al., 1997) suggested VSCs represented 80% of all sports volunteering. Therefore it is reasonable to believe the state of volunteering in VSCs reflects the national pattern identified by Davis Smith (1998) of fewer volunteers but increasing amounts of time contributed by those volunteers that remain. Dependence on voluntary labour will vary by sport and VSC though. Consequently, a reduction in volunteer labour and an increase in contributions from existing volunteers is unlikely to be experienced equally across all VSCs.

Based on Gratton et al.'s (1997) research Nichols (1998) gives six pressures that may be causing a change in the nature of voluntary sport in the UK because of their effects on individuals' propensity to volunteer. These pressures may reflect those exerted on mutual aid associations in the wider voluntary sector.

Firstly, as individuals in society, our time is being increasingly squeezed. It is the upper socio-economic groups that have the greatest propensity to volunteer



(Goddard, 1994) but Nichols argues, it is precisely these groups that are experiencing the greatest time squeeze because of their increased working hours. Thus upper socio-economic groups are most likely to report time pressures as a barrier to volunteering. Contrary to both Goddard's and Nichols' evidence The National Survey (Davis Smith, 1998) indicates that people from manual backgrounds were most likely to serve on committees. Committee members should not therefore perceive the greatest time squeeze. Additionally there is uncertainty regarding whether working hours are increasing.

This reduced propensity to volunteer creates the second pressure: a reduced willingness. Fourteen of the twenty-six NGB's consulted in Gratton et al.'s (1997) research reported a reduction in the number of volunteers. Gratton et al. (1997) also found that 74% of VSC committee members reported a shortage of people willing to volunteer. This shortage became increasingly acute when recruiting for the more demanding committee positions of chairman, secretary, treasurer, and fixture secretary.

Thirdly, there exist more leisure opportunities in society, all competing for attention. Potential VSC members are now offered a greater range of alternatives from the private and public sectors (Nichols, 1998). This not only increases the competition for potential members and volunteers in VSCs but also raises the expectations of those potential members. Competition from the private sector means that traditionally informal VSCs have had to become more efficient and effective in their provision resulting in the adoption of more bureaucratic methods of operation. Literature from Finland (Koski, 1999), Norway (Skirstad, 1999), Germany (Heinemann and Schubert, 1999), France (LeRoux and Camy, 1999), Italy (Porro et al., 1999) and Spain (Puig et al., 1999) illustrates this point. However, little empirical evidence exists concerning this trend in the UK and the extent to which trends in European sports clubs are

applicable to VSCs in the UK is debatable given the difference in the nature of the clubs highlighted by Deckers and Gratton (1995). Furthermore, competition for the attention of leisure consumers suggests the existence of a market or at least a quasi-market in the provision of leisure opportunities. Voluntary, public and private sectors would therefore be in direct competition as opposed to the residual conceptualisation of the voluntary sector provided by Weisbrod (1978) and Gratton and Taylor (1991) and the more active conceptualisation of the sector by Hogget and Bishop (1985). In presence of direct competition any change in the structure and nature of VSCs could be the result of market forces. However, in section 4.1.4 it is argued that VSCs are subject more to an institutional environment than the technical demands of a competitive market environment. Thus an increase in bureaucracy and professionalism within VSCs is likely to be caused by interacting with agents of the state in their institutional environment rather than market forces present in their technical environment.

Related to bureaucracy, Nichols' fourth point is that voluntary positions in VSCs are perceived to have become more complex and skilled, and have been attributed more responsibility (Nichols, 1998). Legislation such as the National Minimum Wage Act and the Child Protection Act have all impacted upon the nature of roles in voluntary organisations. Applications to Sport England's Lottery Fund were also noted for the time and skill demands that they place on volunteers (Gratton et al., 1997). This may mean that potential volunteers are reluctant or deterred from volunteering for the more demanding roles of Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Fixture Secretary in VSCs. Alternatively, Stamm and Lamprecht (1999) suggest VSCs may become more selective about which volunteers are recruited if specialised skills are required, thus marginalising those without these skills.

This contributes to the next pressure: an increasingly professional orientation to volunteering. For example, applications to Sport England's Lottery Fund require a level of business acumen to prepare business plans that not all volunteers possess. A canoeing volunteer interviewed for Gratton et al.'s (1996: unpaginated) research comments on the origin of this professional orientation. The interviewee states:

I think the increase in responsibility is partly due to the Sports Council being far more professional than it used to be. This is putting pressure on the governing bodies, and the governing bodies find that they don't have the time to perform all these tasks that are required of them. They therefore put some of this burden onto amateurs. I don't think that is what they want to do but that's the way the cookie crumbles. This is not only affecting the participants in the sport, but it is toning down the effectiveness of sport because the ever decreasing number of amateurs are looking to the Sports Council, the [National Coaching Foundation] and their governing bodies for more and more support to do the job. Organisation 5 years ago was more of a back of a fag pack job, now its all computers, with things going out on the internet, which is much more professional. And if you put something forward it has to look good, it can't just be hand written and passed around the boys, it has got to go to one committee and on to the next. Presentation is partly where this extra time is taken, but it is needed to get sponsorship, to get backers and so on. To get this sponsorship you have to put the professional touches on it.

Thus the increasingly professional approach of Sport England is affecting the operation of VSCs indirectly through their NGBs. With the direct link that the Lottery Fund creates between Sport England and VSCs, VSCs applying to the Fund are likely to be exposed to the source of these pressures for professionalisation to a much greater extent than they ever were before. This will potentially make VSCs more complex, formal and professional. Professionalisation has occurred in Europe where Koski (1999), Puig, Garcia and Lopez (1999) and Skirstad (1999) note the growing trend for paid administrators in sports clubs. The smaller single sports clubs of the UK (Deckers and Gratton, 1995; Tomlinson, 1979) are perhaps less in need of or less able to employ paid professional administrators though. This said, Allison (2000) reported that 39% of VSCs in her survey used either paid or salaried staff to help operate the club. However, the modal number of salaried and paid staff per club was just one and these staff were unlikely to be employed in key volunteer roles such as

committee or coaching positions. Instead they were more likely to be employed in bar/catering/cleaning or facility manager/maintenance roles.

The final pressure is what Nichols terms 'the hegemonic redefinition of the voluntary sector'. He believes that the state now views the voluntary sector less as a place for mutual assistance and more as an agent to achieve social goals. Allison (2000) also notes this trend in LAs' support for VSCs. Thus voluntary leisure organisations are thought to be playing an increasingly instrumental/service delivery role rather than an expressive/mutual aid role. This redefinition means that leisure opportunities provided by VSCs are seen mainly as an opportunity to consume. Therefore individuals approach mutual aid VSCs expecting a service in return for their subscription. This attitude is less likely to produce volunteers who are willing to create and consume their own leisure opportunities. Tomlinson (1979: p. 36) agrees that the produce/consumer relationship in VSCs is vital because VSCs "die when they are comprised solely of consumers and [when] no one is willing to produce as they survive on the initiative, drive, selflessness and disinterestedness of its members".

Nichols (1998) based his ideas upon the research of (Gratton et al. 1997) but this research was not longitudinal and relied heavily on the respondents' impressions. However, Gratton et al.'s research was taken seriously enough by Sport England to launch the Volunteer Investment Programme. The programme aims to raise awareness of the importance of volunteers within sport and gives advice to VSCs and NGBs on how to recruit, retain and manage volunteers more effectively. This, in itself, could be seen as evidence that volunteering in VSCs may be becoming increasingly professional and rationalised.

The potential changes taking place in the UK voluntary sports sector hypothesised by Nichols' (1998) could be symptomatic of the increased involvement of the state with

the wider voluntary sector in developed societies. This increased involvement results from a willingness to engage the voluntary sector in the pursuit of the state's policy objectives (Hall and Reed, 1998) in exchange for short-term programme specific funding (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1995a; Russell et al., 1996). The closer relationship between state and sector can result in the latter requiring a more skilled, formalised and professional approach to its activity (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1995b) that changes the structure of the organisation (Slack and Hinings, 1994) and the nature of volunteers' roles (Lewis, 1994). Slack (1999) argues these trends challenge the traditional culture of VSCs. He states (1999: p. 321):

Historically the culture of voluntary sport clubs has been based on an ideology of self-help, fulfilling common interests, and informality with the attendant structural arrangements of low specialisation and very little proceduralisation. The move to the more business like club demands that many of these cultural norms be given up and replaced. For many club members this may be difficult and tensions and conflicts may ensue.

The traditional concept of a VSC as a community of like minded people on the one hand and the increasing orientation towards a service delivery organisation on the other is just one example of such a conflict (Heinemann, 1999).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Given their member orientation VSCs may not be concerned primarily, and in some cases at all, with sports policy but it is likely that are affected by sports policy especially when engaging key policy actors such as Sport England when applying for Lottery funding. The role and importance of VSCs in sports policy is evident from A Sporting Future for All (DCMS, 2000). External actors such as Sport England, NGBs and local authorities among others therefore have an interest in influencing the behaviour of VSCs. This influence may be exerted in the form of advice and occasionally funding. This serves to reinforce the point made in the introduction to this thesis that VSCs cannot be studied in isolation from their environment.

It has already been established in the previous chapter that policy and objective related funding has the potential to affect the receiving organisation. Any changes taking place in VSCs may be evident from changes to the characteristics of VSCs listed in Table 4. In turn, changes to the characteristics of VSCs may be identified through an investigation of VSCs' organisational structure because of the relationship between the former and the latter. This allows the third objective of this research to be more specific. Additionally, these characteristics may influence how VSCs respond to external pressures. These characteristics set VSCs apart from most, but not all organisations in society. Across all VSCs, the characteristics in Table 4 will undoubtedly vary. Some VSCs will be more member orientated than others, some more independent than others, some will have a more complex structure than others and so on.

Representative empirical proof that the nature of VSCs in the UK is changing is lacking. However, anecdotal evidence is available and it is upon this that Nichols (1998) bases his six pressures potentially changing the voluntary sector in sport. One of these pressures is the changed attitude of government to the voluntary sector, which echoes the points made in chapter 2. According to Nichols this leads to a more professional and more complex approach to the operation of VSCs which is compounded by the perception of the VSCs that they have to compete with the burgeoning leisure opportunities in society. These pressures are all the more important given the recent emphasis on VSCs' role in sports policy.

The independence and self-sufficiency characterising VSCs makes theoretical frameworks that emphasise only resource dependence less relevant than frameworks focusing on the reinforcement of social norms and values through resource pressures

such as Lottery funding. Chapter 4 therefore takes up the theme of greater state involvement in sports policy through the use of institutional theory.

## 4 Organisations

The investigation of the relationship between VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding, Sport England as distributor of Lottery funding and other organisations with a concern for VSCs bidding for Lottery funding, requires a framework that focuses on inter-organisational relations and that is sensitive to the absence of market forces and a profit orientation in these relations. In contrast to many approaches that emphasise the importance of materialist pressures such as technology, resources and market forces, institutional theorists are concerned primarily with the social and cultural context within which the operation and structure of an organisation is embedded (Scott, 1995a).

Institutional theory is located within the structural functionalist paradigm of organisation theory (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Child, 1997). Whilst it remains primarily functionalist in nature, Child (1997) suggests institutional theory has progressed somewhat from the functionalist paradigm described and critiqued by Burrell and Morgan (1979). It is not claimed here that the faults and deficiencies of functionalism have been corrected in this thesis but that these have been noted, understood and addressed as far as is necessary and practically possible within in this research.

Neither is it claimed that alternative paradigms are any less useful for the research problem, if the problem was to be interpreted in a different way. A possible alternative to institutional theory was that of social network theory (Nohria and Eccles, 1992). Placing greater emphasis on the inter-dependence of organisations in a network to the extent that organisational boundaries are thought to blur in the pursuit of mutual objectives, social network theory can not appreciate the independent nature



of VSCs. Despite emphasising inter-organisational connections, institutional theorists place less emphasis on the inter-dependence of organisations and do not suggest the blurring of organisational boundaries. Therefore, institutional theory was a more appropriate framework for this research as it was able to accommodate the conceptualisation of VSCs in the previous chapter. Indeed, Feeney (1997) used institutional theory to explain the changes taking place in case studies of non-profit organisations, some of which were of a mutual aid type similar to VSCs.

Furthermore, the superiority of one paradigm over another is not being claimed, as to do so would be to claim that a long-standing, meta-theoretical debate in the social sciences had been resolved. Instead, it is suggested that at the outset of this study, institutional theory was perceived to be an adequate theory with which to frame the research, when adapted to meet the researcher's own world view. Consequently, the choice of one paradigm from a range of apparently incommensurable paradigms is not based solely on its relative merits and criticisms but on its appropriateness for the study and its aesthetics as perceived by the researcher (Strati, 2000).

It is also argued that the area of social life under investigation is unified around a set of social norms and values that perpetuate the status quo. That is, sports policy in the UK has an underlying value consensus (Houlihan, 1991; 1997) which, despite occasional conflicts, enables it to continue in a relatively stable fashion. More radical paradigms within organisation theory, though, emphasise change in society through "economic or political... conflicts of such intensity that the status quo is necessarily disrupted or torn apart and replaced by radically different social forms" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: p. 358). Such an emphasis on dramatic and radical change is incompatible with a consensual view of sports policy. Therefore, the functionalist paradigm, with its emphasis on stability, integration and consensus

(Burrell and Morgan, 1979), was more appropriate given the view of sports policy taken by this research.

Institutional theorists are therefore able to recognise that VSCs are primarily social entities and that VSCs' goals are largely social and not profit orientated. The absence of a profit orientation suggests that cultural and social influences shape VSCs' behaviour. Despite their independence, VSCs have inter-relations with important and powerful organisations in their social system such as NGBs and LAs as well as other VSCs in their area and in their community of interest. It is these inter-relations that form the vertical and horizontal networks through which coercive influence can be applied to VSCs by the more powerful and important organisations upon which they may be dependent from time to time.

Tomlinson (1979) sees VSCs as a manifestation of a need for intimate relationships in an impersonal world that has become more contractual and formal. For Tomlinson, the multiplicity of leisure groups therefore demonstrates a capacity for freedom in a given social structure despite the rationalisation of society. However, given that VSCs are embedded within the social structure and VSCs are social entities (Slack 1997) pervaded by social structures, it would be difficult for VSCs to avoid becoming more rational, formal and contractual in their internal and external relations. Tomlinson (1979) later agrees stating that VSCs usually reflect the structure of the social system they are located within. Of course the degree to which VSCs become more formal and rationalised may depend on the extent to which they engage with society. Thus the state of the wider social system and its inter-relations within which VSCs are located is highly important to a study of the expectations accompanying Lottery funding received by VSCs from Sport England.

This chapter therefore introduces institutional theory as the theoretical framework used to guide this research. Section 4.2 concentrates on inter-organisational relations within the sports policy sector. Emphasising social norms and expectations that present themselves as rules and regulations prescribing an organisation's structure, institutional theorists use the societal sector of organisations as the level of analysis to investigate inter-organisational relations. The societal sector is defined and applied to the distribution of Sport England's Lottery Fund within the sports policy sector. It is argued that although technical requirements exist in the inter-organisation relations of the sports policy sector the majority of relationships are primarily institutional in nature and many of the technical requirements are in fact socially based, reinforced through the allocation of funding. These institutional pressures operate within the societal sector of sports policy organisations and encourage similarity or isomorphism in the aims, operation and structure of those organisations. It is further argued that the rules and requirements of the distribution of Sport England's Lottery Fund are based the norms and values of the sports policy sector and the Fund therefore constitutes a concentrated source of institutional pressure to which VSCs are exposed when they apply for and perhaps subsequently receive funding. This outline of institutional theory reflects how it has been employed in this thesis but there are in fact many ways in which institutional theory can vary. Section 4.1 identifies some of the variations, ambiguities and debates existing in institutional theory.

#### **4.1 Variations within institutional theory**

Institutional theory is not a unified and coherent theory. It is in fact a broad, complex and sometimes contradictory set of theories based around a common set of propositions (Donaldson, 1995). Tolbert and Zucker (1996: p. 175) note the existence of "very little consensus on the definition of key concepts, measures or

methods within" institutional theory. For instance, the fact that institutionalists tolerate two opposing ontologies and theories of action suggests that there are significant divisions and debates within the theory. Add to this the varying emphases on the types and sources of institutional pressures, differing explanations of change, differing levels of analysis and corresponding methodological approaches and it creates a theory that is often ambiguous and contradictory. These ambiguities and debates fall loosely into the distinction between old and new institutionalisms but the differences between the two are not clear cut in empirical work or theory. Whilst the specific debates and contradictions existing within the theory will be highlighted by reference to the literature, it is helpful at this point to distinguish between the old and new versions summarised in table 5. It will become apparent that the version of institutional theory used in this thesis combines elements of the old and new institutionalisms but borrows more heavily from the old.

**Table 5: Old and new institutional theory**

Dimension	Old institutionalism	New institutionalism
Level of investigation	Micro (single organisations)	Macro (field/sector)
Environmental focus	Internal and local external	External
Methods	Indepth case studies of single organisations	Longitudinal quantitative analysis of organisational sectors
Conceptualisation of institutionalisation	Bottom up	Top down
Mechanism	Norms and values and some coercion	Cognitive structuralism
Source of inertia	Political interests	Maintenance of legitimacy
Conflict	Central	Minimised
Source of change	Organisational adaptation to local environment	Stresses stability and persistence
Ontology	Social realist	Social constructivist
Theory of action	Logic of appropriateness and a tolerance of rationality	Logic of appropriateness

Adapted from: DiMaggio and Powell (1991); Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997); Latavish (2001).

Meyer and Rowan's (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) papers signalled the arrival of new or neo-institutionalism in organisation theory. They brought with them an emphasis on the apparent irrationality of organisational behaviour and a preference for explanations of that behaviour based on structural cognition

established through longitudinal, quantitative research methods with a large number of organisations.

The argument that organisational behaviour often seems irrational stems from the observation that organisations do not necessarily adopt processes or forms for rational, means-ends, task related reasons but to pacify powerful organisations or institutions in their sector so as to maintain or gain legitimacy. Consequently, apparently irrational behaviour may help to ensure the focal organisation's survival as it may increase its credibility with important legitimating bodies in the sector. That organisations attempt to gain legitimacy is therefore a defining element of new institutionalism.

Institutional theory is based around the notion that sectors and individual organisations are influenced primarily by their social context but also their economic circumstances. The social interference with an organisation's operation means that it cannot always be expected to behave in a manner that maximises the fulfilment of its own self-interests, i.e. an organisation may not always behave in a way that is optimal for achieving its economic objectives.

As alluded to above another characteristic of new institutionalism is a rejection of rational action. Neo-institutionalists therefore view organisational behaviour as taken-for-granted, predetermined and unreflective activity produced by the enactment of institutions. In fact Jepperson (1991) proposes that behaviour is predetermined to the extent that rather than acting, which implies a level of conscious decision making, organisations enact institutions in the sense suggested by Weick (1997). Consequently, for an actor to take action, and thus consciously make a decision, would be to contradict institutional prescriptions and expectations, or as Jepperson (1991: p. 149) succinctly states: "one enacts institutions; one takes action by

departing from them, not by participating in them". Thus purposive, interest-driven behaviour is denied a role in the explanation of organisational behaviour (DiMaggio, 1988). However, rather than precluding rational choice, Scott (1987) and DiMaggio and Powell (1991) suggest that what in fact occurs is that a possible range of responses are institutionally defined and shaped so that actors' interests and behaviour are directed rather than predetermined. Thus, cognitive institutions limit but do not dictate the choice of the means and ends of organisational action. This would seem to allow more scope for organisational action.

Abell (1995) and Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997: p. 84) criticise neo-institutionalists rejection of rational action as being unrealistic and therefore weakening the explanatory power of institutional theory because "cognitive structuring is only part of the story; purposive action fleshes out an institutional explanation". Attention to purposive action is given by old institutionalists almost to the extent that their version of the theory is "derided as being overly rationalistic in contrast to the more phenomenological [and perhaps over-socialised] orientation of new institutional scholars". Therefore, it seems that Selznick (1957; 1965; 1996: p. 274) has a greater tolerance of rational action than neo-institutionalists, as:

[organisational] phenomena are produced in and through the responsive and problem-solving behavior of individuals. This behavior does not necessarily conform to rational-actor models, but it very often does include attention to short-term opportunities, constraints and incentives.

With their higher tolerance of rational and purposive action, old institutionalists view organisational behaviour as the product of unintended consequences created when actors attempt to direct the organisation. The acknowledgement that actors attempt to direct the organisation rather than being directed suggests that old institutionalists believe a greater degree of agency is possible than new institutionalists, although the consequences of their action may not be desired or anticipated. According to Abell (1995), Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997) and Selznick (1996) it would seem that any

investigation of institutional pressures must recognise the possibility of rational action and therefore agency.

A rational theory of action forms the logic of compliance for actors subjected to coercive or regulative pressures that are emphasised by old institutional theory. However, the logic of compliance for actors subjected to normative pressures, also emphasised by old institutionalists, is that such behaviour is appropriate and socially acceptable rather than expedient. This gives rise to the situation where old institutionalists base their theory on a realist ontology but two theories of action; rational action and practical action based on a logic of appropriateness. Neo-institutionalists too hold a practical theory of action based on the 'logic of appropriateness'. However, rather than actor choices being shaped by socialisation processes involving the internalisation of norms and values, neo-institutionalists prefer a cognitive language of taken-for-granted scripts, rules and classifications that direct action (Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997).

Old institutionalists primarily but not exclusively investigate organisational behaviour at the micro level, that is individual organisations. Neo-institutionalists such as Henisz and Delios (2001), Fligstein (1991), Orrú et al. (1991) and Suchman (1995) have adopted a more macro level of analysis by concerning themselves primarily with aggregate changes in populations of organisations, that is fields or sectors at the expense of organisational agency.

Varying levels of analysis exist because within institutional theory there is a debate about where institutions are created and in what way they are transmitted. Conceptually this is conceived as being an issue of whether institutions originate through top-down or bottom-up processes. Top-down processes involve institutions precipitating downwards to and dispersing among sectors from macro level

exogenous models and authoritarian influences that exist in the wider cultural milieu (Latavish, 2001). The top-down conception of institutions is evident in the work of Russo (2001), Forgarty and Dirsmith (2001), Gooderham et al. (1999), Henisz and Delios (2001) Lounsbury (2001) and D'Aunno et al. (2000) and is most closely associated with neo-institutionalists. Alternatively, bottom-up processes involve organisations and individuals at the micro level through their endogenous planning, strategy and negotiation to create and transmit institutionalised behaviour (Latavish, 2001), for example Suchman (1995). The bottom-up approach is most commonly but not exclusively associated with old institutional theory because of its focus on individual or small numbers of organisations (Latavish, 2001; Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997) yet it is used by neo-institutionalists such as Suchman (1995), Lant and Baum (1995), Brint and Karabel (1991). There are also theorists that utilise an interactive conception of top-down and bottom-up processes such as Ahmadjian and Robinson (2001) and Carpenter and Feroz (2001).

Associated with conflicting ideas regarding the locus of institutionalisation are alternative conceptualisations of the environment. Old institutionalists conceive of organisations being "embedded in their local communities to which they are tied by multiple loyalties of personnel and by interorganizational treaties ('co-optation') hammered out in face-to-face interaction" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: p. 13). The use of the term 'co-optation' suggests that organisations use the environment in pursuit of their institutionally defined needs by consciously co-opting elements to achieve their ends. Neo-institutionalists offer a more subtle but powerful view of the environment. Rather than being used almost as a resource by the organisation, the environment penetrates the organisation and inter-organisational relations in the sector as an ever present and ubiquitous force. This structuralism in turn suggests a more passive and submissive conceptualisation of the organisation. The environment is perceived as "creating the lenses through which actors view the world and the very



categories of structure, action, and thought" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: p. 13). The respective conceptualisations of the environment are directly related to each version's theory of action, which were discussed earlier.

Furthermore, neo-institutionalists such as Henisz and Delios (2001) and Arndt and Bigelow (2000) give precedence to the cognitive dimension of institutional pressures (Latavish, 2001), that is the shared and dominant cognition of the organisational sector. Thus in neo-institutionalists' view, organisations' behaviour or structure is the result of a common cognitive framework at the sector level which is likely to result in mimeticism and in turn homogeneity or isomorphism within the sector. Normative and coercive or regulative pressures are of primary concern for old institutionalists. The nature and sources of these three types of pressure will be discussed in section 4.1.5, which will help to identify further ambiguities in the theory.

Associated with old and new institutionalists' preference for particular institutional pressures and the logic for complying with these pressures, are their respective ontological positions. The emphasis by neo-institutionalists on the cognition, beliefs, categories and scripts of an organisational sector requires that reality be viewed as a shared social construction (Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997; Latavish, 2001; Scott, 1995b; Scott and Christensen, 1995). However, old institutionalists prefer to present reality as being objective and real. Such realism enables attention to evaluative expectations, governance systems, conflicts of interest and sanctions, or in other words normative and regulative pressures (Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997; Latavish, 2001; Scott, 1995b; Scott and Christensen, 1995).

As one would expect, such differences have affected the methodological approaches employed. Corresponding with their emphasis on macro level, structural analysis, neo-institutionalists have used quantitative and longitudinal studies of a small number

of variables to usher in a "new era of 'structuralism' that seeks to develop generalizable knowledge derived from regression lines at the expense of understanding the uniqueness of individual organizations" (Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997: p. 79). Contrary to this, old institutional theory relies on richly contextualised case study methodologies reflecting their view of organisations as being embedded in dense webs of social, political and economic relationships (Latavish, 2001).

There also exists differing conceptions of change within institutional theory. Whilst institutional theorists are not disposed to focus on radical change there are those that emphasise organisational adaptation to local external and internal influences and those that emphasise stability and persistence in organisational behaviour. For example, most research in institutional theory is centred on the adaptation of organisational behaviour to existing or new institutional pressures. Change therefore takes place within institutionally defined limits but very little research using the institutional perspective examines the extinction or redundancy of institutions (Oliver, 1992). It is therefore assumed that institutions are ongoing, reasonably stable and persistent, and this is particularly true of research characterised by a neo-institutionalist approach. Zucker (1988) though has proposed that entropy rather than stability characterises social systems. Similarly, theorists of the old institutionalism, accepting that change occurs, tend to view organisation's behaviour as the result of it adapting to its local environment. Thus institutions are created, changed and deinstitutionalised. For instance Russo's (2001) study concerns the institutionalisation of behaviour in a new sector and Ahmadjian and Robinson (2001) describe the deinstitutionalisation of life long employment in Japanese companies due to international economic pressures.

Oliver (1992) has drawn attention to deinstitutionalisation through three means; political, functional and social pressures. Politically, deinstitutionalisation can occur

when organisations attempt to protect their own interests in the face of institutional pressure or attempt to resolve conflict around an organisational activity. If an institution loses its functional necessity it may become redundant having been rejected on economic or technical grounds (e.g. Ahmadjian and Robinson, 2001). Deinstitutionalisation through social pressures takes place when laws are altered or because the norms in the environment have become fragmented. By acknowledging conflicts of interests, purposive action and the decline of institutions, and by not emphasising the stability and persistence of institutions Oliver's approach seems to be more akin to the old institutionalism.

The distinction between the old and new institutionalism provides a loose framework for explaining other debates within the theory. However, it is only a loose framework as it is not always the case that varying theoretical positions on the sources of institutional pressures, ontology, conceptions of institutionalisation and theories of action fall neatly into the old/new distinction. The old and the new are not completely alien though as there are similarities (Latavish, 2001), as one would expect from what is essentially a development of theory. Firstly, both forms attend to the relationship between organisations and their environments, as well as attempting to reveal that the structure and behaviour of organisations and their sectors are often inconsistent and at odds with their technical environment. Secondly, both old and new hold a scepticism, to varying degrees, of rational action and thirdly, both view the process of institutionalisation as an evolving condition of organisations making them less rational by limiting possible options for action.

Indeed, numerous authors are calling for some degree of, if not a full, reintegration of the two versions (e.g. Latavish, 2001; Nielsen, 2001; Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997; Greenwood and Hinings, 1996; Brint and Karabel, 1991). Selznick (1996: p. 275-6)

notes several disadvantages in maintaining the old/new distinction, perhaps the most important of which:

is a failure to intergrate the old and the new by taking full account of the theoretical and empirical continuities. This outcome is exacerbated when theorists of the new institutionalism... embrace potentially pernicious dichotomies. These and other contrasts may well describe some (possibly transient) differences in focus, but institutional theory should encompass them all and trace their connections.

However, due to the nature of the social world, empirical work rarely reflects the distinction between old and new institutionalisms. Instead elements of each are often combined for a more appropriate and fuller explanation (e.g. Arndt and Bigelow, 2000; Gooderham et al., 1999; Lounsbury, 2001; Ocasio, 1999; Russo, 2001; Westphal and Zajac, 2001). All this produces a contradictory and ambiguous theory that is punctuated by internal debate.

Where necessary the version of institutional theory used in this thesis combines elements of the old and new institutionalisms but borrows more heavily from the old as will become evident. For example the research investigates the impact of the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector on individual VSCs rather than the entire population of these organisations. In this way VSCs are seen as being located within the social structure of the sports policy sector but are investigated as individual organisations rather than an aggregate population. In addition there is a tolerance of rational action and therefore agency in an attempt to achieve a fuller understanding of VSCs' behaviour, as well as the adoption of a social realist onotlogy.

## **4.2 Inter-organisational relations**

Inter-organisational relations may be local and global. Recognising this, institutional theory can be operationalised at any level of analysis from the world system to the

organisational sub-system (see Scott, 1995b: p. 59) using the concept of the societal sector.

#### **4.2.1 Societal sector**

The concept of a societal sector within organisational sociology bears a close resemblance to the idea of a policy community and a policy network within policy analysis (Houlihan 1991; 1997). Indeed, institutional theory has often but not exclusively been applied to public policy analysis (for example, Kitchener, 1998).

Within institutional theory, Scott and Meyer (1991: p. 117) define a societal sector as:

a collection of organizations operating in the same domain, as identified by the similarity of their services, products or functions, together with those organizations that critically influence the performance of the focal organisations: for example, major suppliers and customers, owners and regulators, funding sources and competitors.

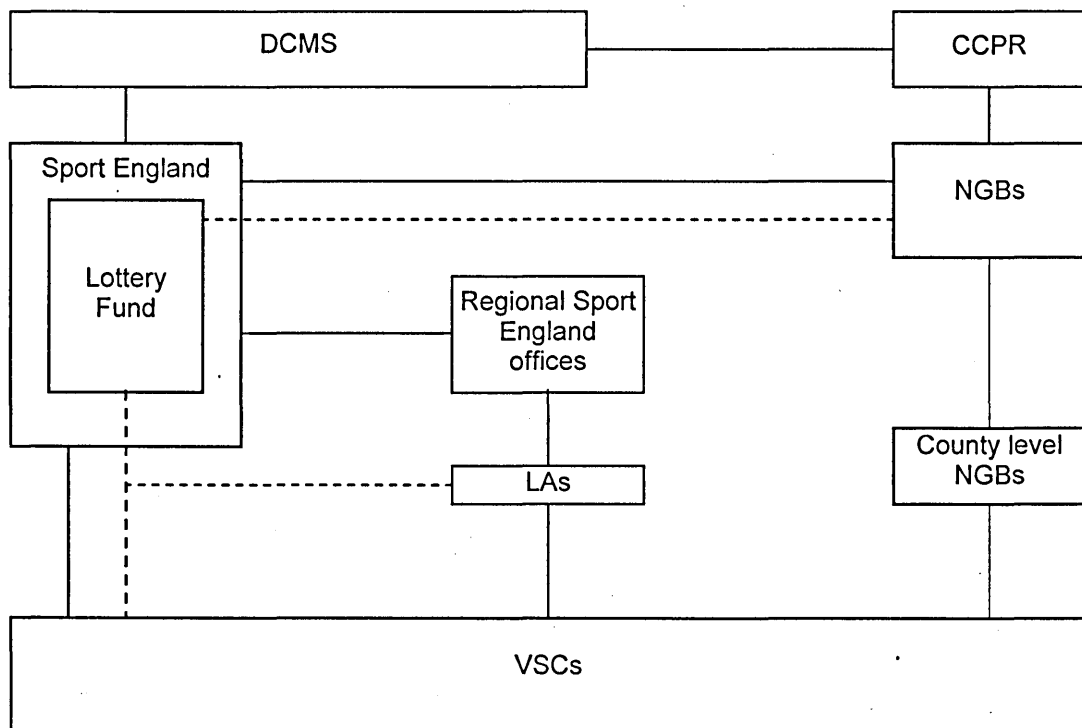
This definition of an organisation's societal sector is based on two elements; the common function that organisations in the domain share and the critical organisations that influence the performance of those organisations in the domain. An organisation's domain can be defined at several levels. For example, VSCs as one domain can be broken down in to various other domains by sport. As this research is not interested in one sport in particular it seems sensible to investigate the domain of VSCs as a whole.

VSCs can be related by their function of providing sporting opportunities for their members through voluntary effort. The critical constituencies or organisations in the VSCs' sector can be suggested as the VSCs' NGBs and LAs but a societal sector can include local to international organisation actors as the boundaries are defined by function not geography. VSCs are therefore the domain under investigation but the critical organisations for those VSCs making applications to Sport England's Lottery Fund are problematic and need to be established. However, it is difficult to establish

the structure of a societal sector a priori and empirical investigation will produce a sharper delimitation of the sector (Powell, 1988). The first issue to be investigated by this research is therefore the empirical identification of critical organisations for VSCs that were awarded Lottery funding by Sport England.

Deephouse (1996) suggests that the actors from whom a focal organisation will seek legitimacy depends greatly on which actors are important to the focal organisation's existence and performance. On this basis Sport England, as distributor of the Lottery Fund is certainly going to be a critical organisation for those VSCs applying to its Fund. Figure 3 is a hypothetical representation of the sports policy sector containing the domain of VSCs and the critical organisations that influence their performance when applying for Lottery funding.

**Figure 3: The sports policy sector**



Adapted from Houlihan (1991)

Policy communities comprise those actors sharing a common identity or interest in a particular area of government policy. The sports policy community therefore contains all those organisations with an interest in and that are affected by sports policy. These organisations need not be solely government bodies but instead interest groups such as the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR), professional associations such as the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, providers and consumers such as VSCs, governmental actors such as the DCMS, Department for Education and Employment, Sport England and LAs, and non-governmental bodies such as NGBs. Actual involvement in policy formation is not a prerequisite for membership of the community but having an interest in or being affected by policy is. The policy community is identified through its value consensus, that is its organisation around similar interests, concerns, attitudes and objectives (Houlihan, 1991). The societal sector is also identified by its value consensus but it is a much narrower concept than a policy community.

Similar to the societal sector, a policy network is a much more specific concept containing those actors involved in developing policy for particular issues such as Lottery funding for sport. VSCs are undoubtedly part of such a policy network and indeed they were consulted in the development of Sport England's recent Lottery Strategy (Sport England, 2000a). In any policy network there is a focal point, normally the government department responsible for that area of policy. The DCMS heads the sports policy network and operates largely through its NDPBs, such as Sport England (Taylor, 1997). These NDPBs receive much of their support from public funds and are managed by the DCMS at arm's length. Despite this supposed arm's length relationship Taylor suggests that the DCMS in fact exercises a much greater degree of control on the sports policy network. Where there has recently been an increasing distance between most policy networks and government, Taylor (1997: p. 449) observes the opposite in sports policy stating: "there has been a

decisive political input from the [DCMS], with clear ideas on policy... as the political centre in the cultural policy networks". For example, as a distributing body of the NLDF, Sport England operates independently of but within a policy framework established by the DCMS.

The central role played by the state and its NDPBs in the inter-relations of organisations involved in particular areas of policy is also emphasised by institutional theorists as it is viewed as source of institutional pressures within the sector (Westphal and Zajac, 2001; D'Aunno et al., 2000; Scott and Meyer, 1991). Therefore the state-societal sector relationship identified by Taylor (1997) is important to the concept of a sports policy sector within institutional theory.

#### **4.2.2 Sector levels**

Five levels are apparent within the sports policy sector (see Figure 4) that are all inter-connected to some extent by vertical linkages to Sport England as the DCMS' NDPB and central actor in the sector. These links are based primarily on resource dependence that is in turn founded upon value consensus perpetuated through power relations (Houlihan, 1991). There is also an additional social element to these links as information and advice is frequently exchanged between VSCs and other actors in the sector such as Sport England, NGBs and LAs. The more peripheral a focal organisation is in the sector the weaker and less direct the vertical link to the centre is likely to be. Therefore the links between VSCs on the periphery and Sport England at the centre are unlikely to be great in number or strength.

Scott and Meyer's (1991) assumption is that contemporary societies increasingly exhibit functionally differentiated societal sectors whose structures are vertically connected with lines stretching up to the central nation-state. Society is therefore seen as a system of organisations tending towards rationalisation and centralisation

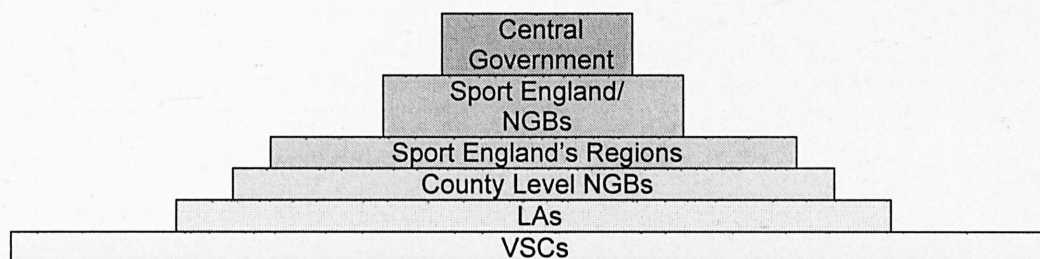


guided by an increasingly powerful, active, and inclusive organisation – the nation-state and/or its non-governmental representative in each societal sector. This is pertinent to the sports policy sector as Taylor (1997) provides evidence indicating that the DCMS exercises direct control over the sports policy sector, debunking the rhetoric of an arms length relationship between state and sector.

The structure of relationships between organisations in a societal sector is important because it influences the structure, performance and life chances of those organisations (Russo, 2001; Ahmadjian and Robinson, 2001; DiMaggio, 1983; Scott and Meyer, 1991). Societal sectors vary in the extent of their complexity of intra-relationships and organisational coherence, and these differences can be expected to affect the structural features of organisations operating within a sector. The more external organisations that a focal organisation is linked to the more complex its environment (Slack and Hinings, 1987). Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) demonstrated that organisations existing in complex environments have more complex structures than those existing in more simple environments. As an organisation creates more links to its environment so it is likely to add roles, policies will be developed along with procedures, and the locus of decision making may be changed to deal with these links and the demands placed on the organisation. Organisation-sector links are often characterised by the exchange of human, physical or, in the case of the Sport England's Lottery Fund, financial resources that can also affect the structure of an organisation (Slack and Hinings, 1987).

The number of levels at which organisational units exist in a societal sector is indicative of the complexity of that society (Scott and Meyer, 1991). The sports policy sector is thought to be relatively simple in that inter-level relationships rarely span all levels of the sector.

**Figure 4: Levels of the sports policy sector**



Thus, within a sector, if central regulatory organisations develop systems that require organisational interaction and linkages with more peripheral units, institutional theorists would expect to observe changes in the structural features of those peripheral units. In particular, changes in the structure of societal sectors are expected to produce changes in the administrative components of organisations belonging to that sector since these are the structures that perform boundary-maintaining and boundary-spanning functions with other organisations. This is the anticipated situation in respect to VSCs and their interactions with Sport England's Lottery Fund.

For VSCs, whose societal sector is thought to be relatively simple and centralised with clear and simple linkages between organisations at different hierarchical levels, this means that their administrative components will be relatively simple. This is supported by Papadimitriou's (1998), Schlagenhauf and Timm's (1976) and Tomlinson's (1979) conceptualisation of VSCs provided earlier. Additionally, Powell (1988) compared the structures of a television company (WNET) and an academic publisher in America. Both employed similar sized workforces and operated with similar sized budgets. However, the television company had a much larger administrative structure with boundary-spanning units than the publisher. Powell (1988: p. 126) attributes this difference to the former's more complex societal sector:

Organizations, such as WNET, that are located in environments in which conflicting demands are made on them will be especially likely to generate complex organizational structures with disproportionately large administrative components and multiple boundary spanning

units... Organizations respond to the inconsistent claims generated by pluralistic environments by incorporating structures and policies designed to please and report to a variety of organized constituencies. As a result, structural complexity increases, and the criteria for determining success become less clear.

The academic publisher's societal sector was simpler because, like a VSC, its supply and demand sides were one and the same. The simplistic nature of a VSCs administrative structure is therefore likely to be indicative of a simplistic societal sector structure. The relationship between the structure of a societal sector and the administrative structure of organisational units means that changes in the structure of the sports policy sector are likely to be accompanied by corresponding changes in the administrative structures of VSCs. The distribution of Lottery funding by Sport England represents a new and additional vertical link between Sport England at the centre and VSCs at the periphery. With this increase in the structural complexity of the sports policy sector it is reasonable to expect that those VSCs receiving funding will experience an increase in the complexity of their internal administrative structure. This argument is supported by the quote from the canoeing volunteer in section 3.3. The volunteer suggests that it is Sport England via the NGBs that is driving the need for a more professional and bureaucratic approach to running a VSC. With the direct link created by the Lottery Fund between Sport England and VSCs applying for funding, the pressure for change in the way VSCs operate can be applied more directly and perhaps more effectively. No change in the administrative structure of VSCs would indicate that they were somehow being buffered from the impacts of a more structured sector created by the Lottery Fund.

Hence the nature of the sports policy societal sector is hypothesised to influence the structure and performance of VSCs along with the other organisations in the sector. The introduction of the Sport England's Lottery Fund represents a significant increase in the centralisation of resources and power within the sector. It has increasingly

structured the sector by creating a greater number of stronger resource links between the state's agent, or NDPB, and other organisations in the sector such as VSCs and also by strengthening existing inter-organisational links with the NDPB that are characterised by resource provision. This makes the sector more complex than it once was. The operation of the Lottery Fund further structurates the sports policy sector (DiMaggio, 1983; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) as it causes an increase in the amount of interaction between organisations in the sector; it creates sharply defined inter-organisational structures of domination and patterns of coalition; it increases the amount of information which organisations involved in Lottery funding must deal with and; it helps to create a mutual awareness among organisations in the sector that they are involved in a common enterprise.

However, something that institutional theorists seem to neglect is the possibility that the network of vertical linkages in the sports policy sector is unlikely to be static. Given the characteristics of state-voluntary sector funding highlighted in chapter 2, the funding relations characterising the daily life of the sports policy sector (Houlihan, 1991) are likely to be dynamic. Russell *et al.* (1996) noted how statutory organisations are an increasingly important source of funding for local voluntary organisations. Furthermore, it was noted by the Home Office (1994), the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1995a), Nichols *et al.* (1998) and Russell *et al.* (1996) that statutory bodies increasingly distribute funding in order to pursue their own objectives and often only fund specific programmes for a short period of time. As policies and priorities change this creates a dynamic funding environment characterised by short term funding.

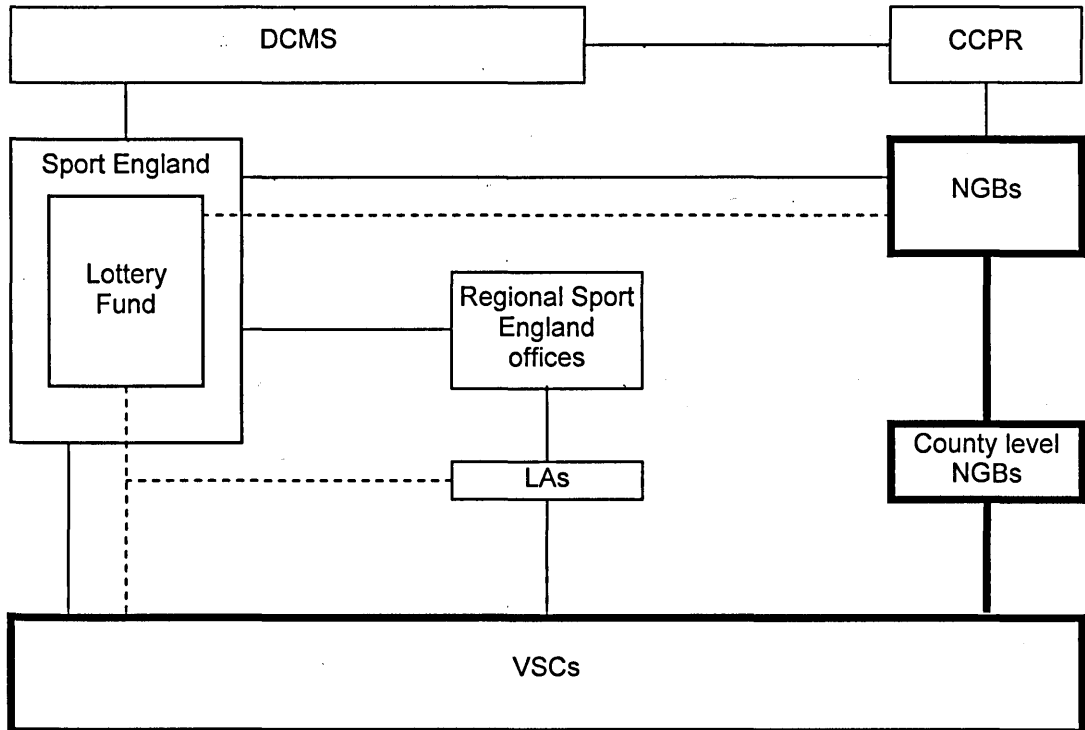
Thus organisations such as LAs and Sport England may be increasingly important sources of funding for VSCs but only in the short term as capital grants and funding are allocated to distinct projects with specific conditions. This contention is supported

by evidence from Allison's (2000) study of VSCs in Scotland. She found that of all VSCs responding (n=3485), 85% had links with NGBs, 61% with local sports councils, 50% with other VSCs, 50% with primary and secondary schools and 41% with LAs. The concept of 'a link' was not defined in her postal survey and could therefore be taken to mean both long and short-term links with or without the receipt of funding. Notable though is the absence of SportScotland from this list and the relatively low incidence of links with LAs. Given that Allison's research was not longitudinal it may just be that none of the VSCs that responded were applying for Lottery funding at the time of inquiry. It does however suggest that links with SportScotland are uncommon and short in duration.

The implication of this for the structure of the sports policy sector and particularly for VSCs seeking Lottery funding is that the inter-relations characterised by resource dependence may be short-term and dynamic. Therefore a VSC's dependence on Sport England for Lottery funding may be high during the application stage, creating a strong and direct vertical link between the two, but once the funding is awarded the VSC's dependence on Sport England decreases weakening this link. Although exposure to external pressures from Sport England may be relatively short in duration the pressures may be acute.

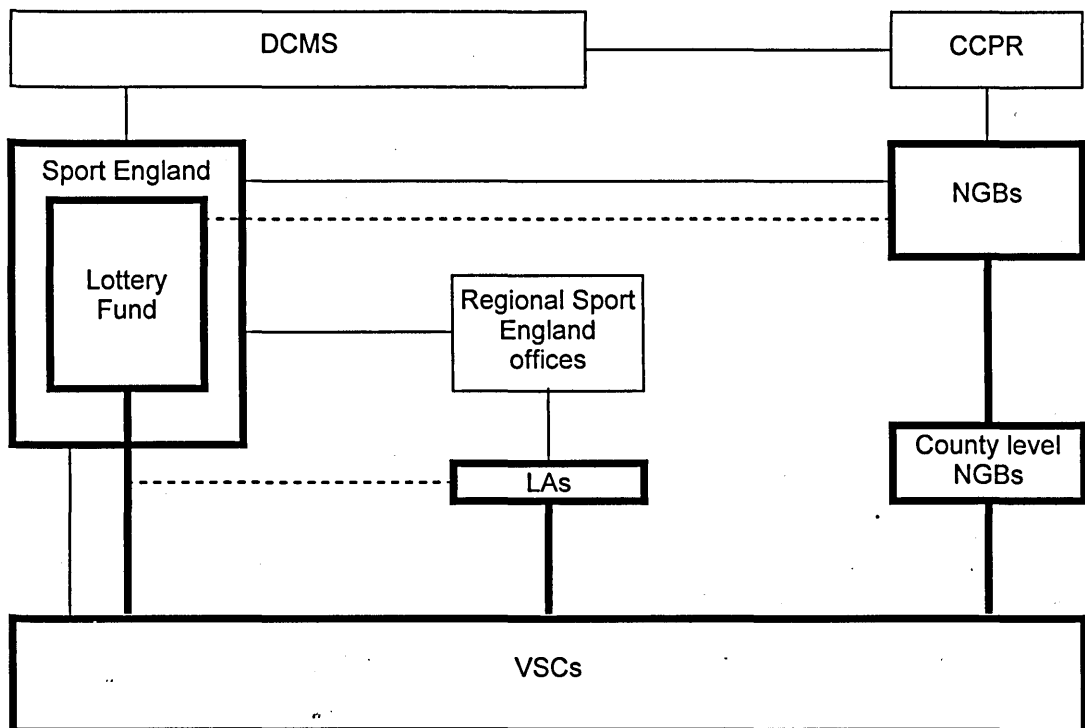
The most important organisation for a VSC is probably its NGB. This relationship is likely to remain constant even when the VSC is seeking funding from Sport England because VSC-NGB relations are rarely characterised by resource exchange but more by the exchange of information. Figure 5 illustrates this situation. The scenario of a VSC pursuing Lottery funding from Sport England is depicted in Figure 6. In both figures the dependence of the VSC on other organisations in the sports policy sector is indicated by the thickness of the inter-connecting lines.

**Figure 5: VSCs' inter-connections within the sports policy sector**



Adapted from Houlihan (1991)

**Figure 6: VSCs' inter-connections within the sports policy sector during the application for Lottery funding**



Adapted from Houlihan (1991)

According to institutional theorists, the structures of VSCs are made more complex by an increase in the complexity of the sports policy sector that they exist within. This is because these inter-connections are likely to need administering and also because they enable controlling organisations to exert an influence over weaker organisations thus allowing the former to prescribe organisational structures within the latter. The temporary and dynamic nature of these funding relations and inter-connections makes the effect of Lottery funding on a VSC's structure even more problematic as it may limit the duration over which influence may be coercively reinforced through the use of funding. However, the influence exerted may be more acute.

#### **4.2.3 Sector decision making**

A further characteristic that structures the societal sector is that of decision making. This concerns firstly the nature of the decisions made and secondly the distribution of decision making across the sector. The nature of the decisions made are categorised by Scott and Meyer (1991) as follows.

1. Programmatic decisions refer to the right to determine the purposes or goals to which sector activities are directed.
2. Instrumental decisions refer to the right to determine the means or procedures to be employed in pursuing sector objectives.
3. Funding decisions refer to the right to determine what levels of funds are to be expended and/or how funds are to be allocated among programme activities and across units within the sector.

Three dimensions indicate the distribution of these decisions across the sector:

1. Centralisation/decentralisation refers to whether decisions are made at higher or lower levels in the sector.

2. Fragmentation/unification refers to the extent to which decisions are integrated or co-ordinated at any one level of the sector. While centralisation refers to vertical integration, unification refers to horizontal or lateral integration.
3. Federalisation/concentration refers to the extent to which decisions are made independently at varying levels of the sector.

Table 6 outlines the decision making patterns for the sports policy sector. Although funding is available for VSCs from just about all levels of the sports policy sector the proportion of funding that originates from the Lottery Fund at the national level is far greater than any single external source at any other level. Resources and the power to make decisions about how to distribute them have therefore been centralised at the top of the sector by the Lottery Fund. Taylor (1997) has noted the active guidance given to Sport England by the DCMS on how it should distribute its Lottery Fund but within this guidance there is a degree of flexibility (White, 2000). The Lottery Fund has therefore enabled Sport England to address one of its key concerns identified by Houlihan (1991) which is to increase its control over the financial resources allocated centrally to the sports policy sector. To quote White (2000: p. 25-26):

Each distribution board has set up, developed, and adapted its grant aid processes and policies in ways which they believed to be most compatible with the requirements of their potential, and sometimes existing, clients, and within the boundaries of the policy directions issued by the Secretary of State for [Culture, Media, and Sport]. These directions are clear but they have also clearly been, and been able to be interpreted by each body in ways which fit comfortably with the ethos and approach of the parent organisation. The existing long-standing relationship patterns of the quangos are replicated in the new lottery systems; the distribution board becomes an extension of the old quango, and takes on elements of its culture, values and distinctive approach.

White is suggesting that the distribution of Lottery funding by Sport England is prescribed centrally but that these prescriptions are interpreted by Sport England according to its own view of how Lottery funding should be distributed in the sports



policy sector. Therefore Sport England is able to distribute its Lottery Fund according to its own norms, values and objectives.

Hinings and Greenwood's (1988) study of LAs in England found that resources distributed by central government were likely to have a greater influence over a policy sector than those distributed from the periphery of a sector. Therefore those funds distributed from the centre of the sports policy sector are likely to have much greater effect on VSCs than that from the periphery. The centralisation of funding decisions has therefore been accompanied by the concentration of decision making because the final decisions about its distribution are not made by any other organisation at that level or at any other level in the sector. Funding is also available from NGBs at the national level but because of the horizontal funding links and common policy objectives between Sport England and the NGBs (Gratton and Taylor, 1991), funding decisions are considered to be unified. Evidence for this can be found in that NGBs will often give money to support a VSC's Lottery project supported by Sport England and vice versa.

Programmatic decision-making is centralised at the national level because the state and Sport England (Taylor, 1997) and, to a lesser extent, the NGBs determine sector policy and initiatives. The restriction of policy decisions to these actors means that decisions are concentrated in the hands of a few organisations at the national level and do not take place anywhere else. As with funding decisions the close horizontal linkages between these organisations at the national level, the common policy objectives (Gratton and Taylor, 1991) and the fact that they do not share their power with any other organisations at the same level means that programmatic decision making is relatively unified. Slack and Hinings (1994) found that the Canadian government's decision to encourage national sport organisations (NSOs), Canada's

equivalent to the UK's NGBs, to develop four-year plans focusing on excellence created more bureaucratic structures within NSOs.

So far programme and funding decisions are thought to be centralised, unified and concentrated within the sector, but patterns of instrumental decision making are somewhat different, see Table 6. The means of pursuing the sector's policy goals are not prescribed but left up to local actors in the sector such as LAs and VSCs, therefore creating decentralised decision-making. This is evident in the different types of strategy pursued by LAs (Leach and Wilson, 1998; Nichols and Sparrowhawk, 1999). However, the prescriptions of Lottery funding and its conditions have meant there has been a move to more centralised decision making since the Lottery Fund was introduced. Fragmentation is also common at the very lowest levels of the sector particularly among VSCs. Again though, the Lottery Fund seems to be providing the resources to coerce a more co-ordinated approach to provision at the local level set out in A Sporting Future for All (DCMS, 2000). The ability to decide how a goal or policy should be pursued seems to exist in the entire depth of the sector representing federalisation.

**Table 6: Decision making patterns for the sports policy sector**

	Funding	Programme	Instrumental
Centralisation/ decentralisation	Centralised (Houlihan 1991; Taylor, 1997; White, 2000)	Centralised (Taylor, 1997)	Decentralised (Nichols and Sparrowhawk, 1999)
Unified/ fragmented	Unified (Gratton and Taylor, 1991)	Unified (Gratton and Taylor, 1991)	Fragmented
Concentrated/ federalised	Concentrated	Concentrated (Taylor, 1997)	Federalised

Due to their emphasis on the role of the central state and its agents or NDPBs in a societal sector, Scott and Meyer (1991) can be criticised for devaluing the role of peripheral organisations in funding and programmatic decisions. Therefore institutional theorists may under value the role and agency of VSCs in the sports

policy sector. The tendency for institutional theorists to adopt a deterministic approach is addressed in sections 4.2.6-4.2.8.

Scott and Meyer make two propositions relevant to the decision making patterns identified in the sports policy sector. Firstly, they suggest that “organizations operating in sectors characterized by centralized, unified and concentrated programmatic decision making are expected to be tightly coupled across levels and to exhibit relatively small administrative components at each level” (1991: p. 133). Thus we can expect the sports policy sector to be highly inter-connected with little administrative bureaucracy at each level compared with more bureaucratic societal sectors. However, VSCs are less inter-connected with the rest of the sports policy sector because they have minimal contact with a small number of organisations (VSCs, NGBs and LAs) and so have the simplest administrative structures. By creating stronger and more direct links to the periphery, it is argued that Sport England’s Lottery Fund may result in an increase in the bureaucracy of VSCs. For those VSCs that are already well inter-connected within the sports policy sector the expected change in administrative structure will not be so great. This justifies the third research objective of this study; to identify how the structure of VSCs may be changing with receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England.

Secondly, Scott and Meyer (1991: p. 134) state that “the more centralised, unified, and concentrated programmatic and funding decision making within a sector, the greater the extent to which organizations within that sector will be limited and specific in the types of the functional activities they perform”. This is reflected in the distinct purpose of each type of organisational actor in the sports policy sector. Although their purposes are highly co-ordinated and complimentary the organisations’ functions are specific and do not seem to overlap. For example, although there are many NGBs each one is responsible for governing and promoting its own particular sport(s)

and VSCs, which also tend to be sports specific. There is only one NDPB (Sport England) in the sector, which reports directly to the DCMS although other state departments do influence its work to a degree. The remaining organisations in the sector, such as Sport England's regional bodies, county level NGBs and LAs may perform similar functions at their own levels but their work is not duplicated as they operate in specific geographic areas.

The sports policy sector can therefore be expected to be tightly inter-connected within its central or upper levels but less so at its lower or peripheral levels, have minimal bureaucracy at each level and consist of highly specific organisations. Despite being tightly inter-connected within its upper levels the structure of the sector is in fact relatively simple. However, the introduction of the Lottery Fund distributed by Sport England has produced a more complex sector structure because of the additional inter-organisational linkages it has created particularly with VSCs.

So far a cohesive and consensual picture of the sports policy sector has been painted. It is important to recognise though, that many of the organisational actors in the sector are at times in conflict or competing within one another when defending and promoting their interests in the policy process (Houlihan, 1991). Thus power relations are important when considering the intra-relations of the sports policy sector. This issue is addressed in section 4.2.8. Although the daily relations within the sector may be based on resource dependence (Houlihan, 1991) it is the argument of this thesis that the allocation of these resources is normatively governed and established upon institutionalised practices. Houlihan (1991: p. 164) agrees suggesting that "value consensus derived from acceptance of a 'deep structure' of power relations is the foundation upon which community relationships develop".

#### **4.2.4 Institutional and technical environments**

There are thought to be two types of influence at work on the component organisations of the sports policy sector: institutional and the technical pressures (Scott and Meyer, 1991). It is argued that the sports policy sector is primarily institutional rather than technical, but this is not to deny the existence of technical demands. Scott and Meyer make two propositions leading to this assumption.

1. Organisations functioning in sectors that are highly developed both institutionally and technically will develop more complex and elaborate administrative systems and will experience high levels of internal conflict.

From the earlier conception of VSCs it is apparent that they do not have elaborate administrative systems or experience great internal conflict. Thus, it is suggested that, for VSCs at least, the sports policy sector is not highly developed institutionally *and* technically, but may be highly developed either institutionally *or* technically.

2. Organisations functioning in sectors that are not highly developed either technically or institutionally are expected to be relatively small in size and weak in terms of their capacity for survival.

Although small in size many VSC's capacity for survival is certainly not weak having survived for over 100 years. Based on these propositions, it is reasonable to assume that the sector is not highly developed both institutionally and technically but may be developed either institutionally or technically.

Definitions of technical and institutional environments help to further establish the nature of the sports policy sector. Scott and Meyer (1991: p. 123) describe a technical environment as one:

in which a product or service is produced and exchanged in a market such that organizations are rewarded for effective and efficient control of their production systems. In the purest case, such environments are identical to... competitive markets.

Clearly this kind of environment is not relevant to VSCs because the mutual provision and consumption of sporting opportunities does not take place in a market. Therefore the technical environment, although not totally irrelevant to VSCs, is more pertinent to the commercial sector. For VSCs technical pressures may include the cost of membership subscriptions, the type of facilities and equipment required to provide a sport, the technical demands placed on the VSCs by those facilities and also the safety precautions demanded by many sports. Rowing clubs for instance normally need a boat house or somewhere near water to store their equipment, swimming coaches have to be trained lifeguards and in canoeing there has to be a certain ratio of instructors to participants when on open water. However, institutional environments, according to Scott and Meyer (1991: p. 123), are:

characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy. The requirements may stem from regulatory agencies authorized by the nation-state, from professional or trade associations, from generalized belief systems that define how specific types of organizations are to conduct themselves, and similar sources. Whatever the source, organizations are rewarded for conforming to these rules or beliefs.

This is clearly more appropriate to the existence and operation of VSCs because the highly similar form of VSCs indicates the existence of a generalised belief about how a VSC should operate and organise itself. Thus it can be stated that the sports policy sector is institutionalised but has a simple structure in that there is not a high number of complex inter-organisational linkages within the sector. However, technical and institutional pressures are rarely mutually exclusive (Zucker, 1987; Slack and Hinings, 1994) and "admittedly, it is often difficult to distinguish empirically technical from institutional rules and procedures. This is because those who formulate institutional rules strive to make them appear technical in nature" (Scott and Meyer, 1991: p. 124) giving them greater credibility because institutional rules are essentially rational myths (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Thus some institutional pressures prescribing

acceptable and expected behaviour of VSCs may appear to be rooted in the rationalised technical demands of particular sports.

#### **4.2.5 Institutional pressures**

The sports policy sector comprises two forms of environment; the institutional and the technical each exerting their own pressures on organisations in the sector. According to Scott and Meyer's (1991) definitions of each respective environment, it is the institutional environment that is the primary influence on the sports policy sector. It is this environment that is the source of pressures that exert an influence on the structure and operation of its constituent organisations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott and Meyer, 1991) through the tight but simple inter-organisational linkages of the sector. Additional linkages created within the sector such as those created by Sport England's Lottery Fund are likely to increase an organisation's exposure to the institutional pressures of that sector. Therefore VSCs, which were previously not that inter-connected with the rest of the sector and have now received Lottery funding, are likely to have been exposed to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector to a greater extent than they ever were before. However, acquiescence to these pressures is not a foregone conclusion and more will be made of this issue in section 4.2.6.

There are three possible types of institutional pressure or mechanisms (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) acting within the sports policy sector; normative; mimetic; and coercive and in turn each of these pressures can emanate from three sources; culture; social structure; and routines (Jepperson, 1991; Scott, 1995b). Furthermore, each of the carriers can operate at different levels of analysis, for example the sector or the organisation. Each of these carriers or sources of institutional pressure is described

before returning to discuss each individual pressure. When discussing each pressure literature illustrating its potential source or carrier will be provided.

#### 4.2.5.1 Carriers and sources of institutional pressures

Cultural carriers constitute rules and procedures that have not been formalised or sanctioned by a central authority (Jepperson, 1991) and can therefore be specific to a particular organisation or have a very general and widespread existence depending on the level of analysis at which the research is taking place. Scott (1995b: p. 53) reminds us that whilst these carriers “exist... in the wider environment as widely held beliefs or as laws that organisational actors need to take into account [they also exist as] ideas or values in the heads of organisational actors”.

Instead of social structures, Jepperson (1991) uses the term regime. Regimes are essentially a carrier opposite in nature to culture and refer to explicitly coded and sanctioned rules that exist not in a formally constituted organisation but “in some central authority system [or] ...collective centre” (Jepperson, 1991: p. 150) that focuses on monitoring and sanctioning the behaviour of others. The use of the term centre is clearly a relative concept as what constitutes the centre depends on the location of the focal actor. Jepperson offers further clarification, defining a regime as a legal or constitutional system or a profession and this is supported by Scott (1995b: p. 53) who states that regimes or social structural carriers “rely on patterned expectations connected to networks of social positions: role systems”. In the case of VSCs then, it is clear that the agents responsible for the administration of sport, their professional body and the agent’s legal power to distribute Lottery funding derived from their role and position in the sector constitute a regime as they have the power to monitor and sanction action.



Jepperson's (1991) description of what he terms formal organisation is insufficient compared to Scott's (1995b) equivalent carrier of organisational routines. Routines are the day-to-day operations and activities that characterise the organisation and as routines they involve habitualised behaviour and patterned action requiring the unconscious use of tacit knowledge by actors. As Knudsen (1995) argues, routines are therefore the habitualised, repetitive behaviours that take place around or as a result of the task and technical functions of the organisation and are sometimes formally embodied as standard operating procedures. Routines present in VSCs may include the accounting practices used if the club operates as a limited company, monthly committee meetings, its coaching activities or adhering to the VSC's child protection policy.

It is these carriers that give rise to institutions through normative, coercive and cognitive mechanisms as illustrated by the following discussion of the studies listed in table 7. Each mechanism is discussed in turn giving examples of its potential sources and carriers.

**Table 7: Carriers as the source of institutional pressures**

Carrier	Coercive (Political)	Mechanism Normative (Social)	Cognitive (Ideological)
Cultures	<b>Rules, laws</b> e.g. Fogarty and Dirsmith (2001), Russo (2001), Ocasio (1999), Ahmadjian and Robinson (2001)	<b>Values, expectations</b> e.g. Fogarty and Dirsmith (2001), Ahmadjian and Robinson (2001), Russo (2001)	<b>Categories</b> e.g. Fogarty and Dirsmith (2001), Gooderham et al. (1999), Ocasio (1999)
Social structures	<b>Governance systems power systems</b> e.g. Westphal and Zajac (2001), D'Aunno et al. (2000).	<b>Regimes, authority systems</b> e.g. Hinings and Greenwood (1988), Lounsbury (2001), Westphal and Zajac (2001), D'Aunno et al. (2000).	<b>Structural isomorphism</b> e.g. Henisz and Delios (2001), D'Aunno et al. (2000).
Routines	<b>Protocols, standard procedures</b> e.g. Gooderham et al. (1999), Carpenter and Feroz (2001)	<b>Conformity, performance of duty</b> e.g. Carpenter and Feroz (2001)	<b>Performance programmes, scripts</b> e.g. Arndt and Bigelow (2000).

#### 4.2.5.2 Normative pressures

Normative pressures exist in an organisational sector as conventional and rationalised knowledge (DiMaggio, 1983) and are perceived as social expectations. Norms and values structure action by providing a prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory aspect to institutionalisation and stem primarily from the state and professional bodies in the sector (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott 1995b) such as the National Association of Sports Development. As expectations, norms define the goals of the sector and also the means of achieving these goals. This form of pressure is perhaps most evident in the values that determine the policy objectives of Sport England and the sports policy sector.

Normative pressures operate by attaining a rule-like status, which morally governs action in a societal sector. These norms or social rules are more than simply taken for granted structures or social facts but social constructions, or institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), acting upon the actors (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Actors are

therefore socially obliged to act in accordance with the normative pre and proscriptions that establish appropriate behaviour and by establishing appropriate behaviour normative pressures narrow the range of possible action for organisations in the sports policy sector. Due to the factitious nature of these pressures they are based upon a social realist ontology associated with old institutionalism.

Earlier, in section 4.2.4., it was suggested by White (2000) that the distribution of Lottery funding is heavily influenced by the culture and values of the distributing body. This research therefore needs to establish the norms and values upon which Sport England distributes its Lottery Fund and the way this affects VSCs that receive funding.

Literature that highlights culture (values and expectations) as the source of normative pressures includes Fogarty and Dirsmith (2001) and Ahmadjian and Robinson (2001). In particular, Russo (2001) demonstrates that policy makers, as institutional actors, can affect the rise and growth of organisations in a newly founded sector. They do this by regulating and setting the norms of exchange relations between organisations in the sector. This in turn establishes formal laws and rules and also informal rules in the form of expectations. Thus for Russo, institutions at the Federal and state levels guided behaviour in the newly established sector of independent or non-utility power production in the US by mediating or conditioning relationships between new entrants and existing organisations with which they must exchange resources. Due to the inter-dependence of resources and the values upon which they are distributed within the sector, coercive pressures are evident but intertwined with normative pressures. Donaldson (1995) notes that this kind of reciprocal and inter-dependent relationship between institutional pressures can make it very difficult to identify the types of pressure at work, for example where state funding or the legal framework reinforces

the normative power of professionals and also where professionals sit on funding panels.

By virtue of its central role in the sports policy sector and backed by the DCMS Sport England may constitute part of an authority system responsible for institutional pressures within the sector. Those focusing on social structure as the source of normative pressures include Hinings and Greenwood (1988) Westphal and Zajac (2001) and D'Aunno et al. (2000). Of greatest pertinence though is Lounsbury's (2001) study of how universities and colleges in the United States decided to staff recycling programmes. A national social movement organisation, the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC), was found to be responsible for promoting and distributing normative pressures within the sector. It did this by giving advice to local student environment groups about how to get their universities and colleges to adopt a recycling programme and it also gave them the resources to do this. Lounsbury (2001, p. 50) explains:

The SEAC helped local student environmental groups make effective claims about why their school should adopt recycling programs staffed with full-time, dedicated recycling co-ordinators. They... emphasized that it was normatively appropriate to create a full-time staff position since the creation and management of a recycling program required full-time attention and a set of skills that was orthogonal to that of managing garbage collection...

These normative pressures were carried through the social structure in which the pressures manifest themselves as homogeneous management approaches to educational based recycling schemes. Limited coercive pressures were also identified as originating from the state government but these only prescribed that educational organisations must implement recycling programmes and not the structure through which they should be managed.

To illustrate how organisational routines are responsible for carrying normative pressures Carpenter and Feroz's (2001) study is useful. Again, normative and coercive pressures were influential in the decisions of US state governments to adopt generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). In particular Carpenter and Feroz (2001) cite the influence of; (1) the participation of state government personnel in accounting professions; (2) states' dependency on credit markets for financial resources; (3) the potential of adopting GAAP to alter the power relations of elected officials; (4) organisational imprinting or the processes of accounting that were established with the inception of the organisation and; (5) whether a change in the political leadership of the state government took place.

The normative and/or coercive pressures emphasised by Russo (2001), Lounsbury (2001) and Carpenter and Feroz (2001) implies that these theorists subscribe to the existence of an objective reality and therefore the use of a social realist ontology most closely associated with old institutionalism. However, for Russo and Carpenter and Feroz there is a contradiction in that coercive and normative pressures are founded on conflicting theories of action. Their studies are also based on longitudinal quantitative investigations at the sector level, which is a method associated most closely with neo-institutionalism. Furthermore, Russo and Lounsbury adopt a neo-institutionalist, top down conceptualisation of institutionalisation which contradicts their emphasis on pressures identified with old institutionalism. Carpenter and Feroz present a combined top down and bottom up conceptualisation of institutionalisation.

#### 4.2.5.3 Coercive pressures

Sharing its ontological basis with the normative mechanism and also associated with old institutionalism is the coercive mechanism. Contrary to the normative mechanism coercion is based upon the assumption that organisational behaviour is motivated by rational self-interested decisions in order to achieve the optimum outcome for the

organisation rather than what is socially appropriate or expected. Rational choice is therefore the theory of action upon which coercive pressures are based rather than the logic of appropriateness. Coercive pressures are inextricably linked to power relations in the societal sector but this is something that has largely been ignored by institutional theorists (Perrow, 1986; Mizruchi and Fein, 1999; Stern and Barley, 1996). This deficiency is addressed in section 4.2.8.

Studies emphasising only coercive pressures are rare in institutional theory because of the emphasis this would place on rational action. It would also come close to conflating institutional theory with Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) resource dependency perspective (Donaldson, 1995; Zucker, 1991; Tolbert and Zucker, 1996) where organisations are constrained by those on who they depend for resources. Nevertheless, it has been used in combination with institutional theory (Oliver, 1997 and Tolbert, 1985). Where coercive pressures are identified they are more often than not associated with cognitive or normative pressures (e.g. Ocasio, 1999 and Carpenter and Feroz, 2001, respectively), or both (e.g. D'Aunno et al., 2000) despite the contradictions in ontologies and theories of action.

Coercive institutional pressures can be "both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: p. 150). Informally, coercion is applied through the use of shaming or shunning. In the case of formalised pressure a common legal framework enforced by specific actors such as the police, courts and monitoring agencies provides coercion. The state and its agents are therefore a prime source of coercive pressure as it has the capacity to establish rules in line with its normative pressures, inspect or review others conformity to them, and impose sanctions to influence behaviour.

Ocasio (1999) suggests that at the firm level political/regulative mechanisms along with executives' cognition were responsible for the choice of CEO succession. Both these mechanisms were found to operate through organisation's culture in the form of formal and informal rules or cognitively established categories of behaviour in response to particular situations. Russo (2001), referred to earlier, also found that culturally established laws and rules can give rise to informal coercive pressures. The subject of D'Aunno et al's. (2000) investigation was local, rural hospitals in the US but unlike Arndt and Bigelow (2000) who studied similar hospitals, they emphasise the role of social structure as the source of institutional pressures. The institutional forces that guided the structural change in these hospitals were to a large extent normative and cognitive but to a lesser extent regulative. Coercive or regulative measures in the form of laws passed by various Federal, state and local governments served to both restrict and increase competition for local hospitals but it was only when state funds were awarded directly to the hospitals that they were able to implement alternative templates thus changing their structure. This suggests that the use of financial resources by systems of governance rather than laws may be the most effective form of coercion to influence organisations operating in a institutional environments.

An example of coercive pressures originating from routines in an organisational sector is found in Carpenter and Feroz's (2001) study cited in section 4.2.5.2. Along with normative pressures each state's adoption of GAAP was affected by its dependence on credit markets for financial resources and the effect it would have on the power relations of elected officials. Gooderham et al.'s (1999) study is also a good example of formal coercive pressures carried through organisational routines as they found that regulative measures in the form of employment legislation at the national level primarily determined the variation in human resource management practices and routines across European countries.

In the sports policy sector coercion can be exerted by Sport England whose distribution and monitoring role is legally defined in the 1993 Lottery Act (DCMS, 1993) and can, after negotiation with the DCMS, establish the conditions under which Lottery funding is distributed in the sector. In this respect Lottery funding is viewed as a resource pressure supported by legal sanctions that is used by Sport England to coerce other organisations in the sector to conform to mimetic pressures and the normative prescriptions of the sector upon which the conditions of funding are based. Thus Lottery funding is used by Sport England to entice VSCs to behave in a way that is valued by and congruent with sports policy. Sport England is therefore viewed as part of the social structure or authority system of sports policy governing the distribution of Lottery funding and which is based on culturally established formal and informal rules, values and expectations (Houlihan, 1991; 1997).

#### 4.2.5.4 Cognitive pressures

The cognitive dimension of institutional theory is most closely associated with new institutionalism. Cognitive or mimetic pressures encourage imitation and exist in circumstances of environmental uncertainty. Cognitions are simply mind sets, beliefs, taken for granted social scripts, routines or behaviours in social action that minimise reflexivity. Like the normative mechanism, the cognitive mechanism emphasises the 'logic of appropriateness' in social action. Action is therefore guided by what is deemed acceptable and appropriate according to the socially constructed and taken for granted routines, scripts and categories of behaviour and not necessarily what is deemed rational in terms of an organisation's technical environment. Despite holding a similar theory of action the cognitive mechanism is based more on a social constructionist ontology as opposed to the social realism of the normative element.



In circumstances when the organisation is uncertain about the appropriate course of action new institutionalists (Arndt and Bigelow, 2000; Hennisz and Delios, 2001) argue that it will look to its societal sector for guidance. This will be found in the taken-for-granted behaviours that are produced by the shared cognitive framework in the sector and that provide legitimate and successful models to mimic. This mimetic isomorphism and can be highly unconscious (DiMaggio, 1983).

As cited earlier, Ocasio (1999) identified the role of executives' cognition at the firm level in CEO succession. By investigating institutional pressures at the firm level across a sample of 120 firms Ocasio draws influence from the methodologies associated with both old and new institutionalism. For Gooderham et al. (1999) the institutional determinant of variations in human resource management practice across Europe exists in the cognitive differences in organisational culture between the countries, although rational determinants in the form of employment legislation in each country were found to be more influential overall.

When local community hospitals switched from a unitary to diversified structure Arndt and Bigelow (2000) noted homogeneity in the way in that the changes were presented and rationalised in the hospitals' annual reports. Thus for Arndt and Bigelow (2000) the organisational routine of each hospital reporting yearly on its activities is the source of institutional pressures. From being a not-for-profit or charitable organisation with strong links to its community through fund raising, the use of volunteers as trustees, local doctors, the operation of public and educational health programmes and not least emotional ties (Arndt and Bigelow, 2000) the hospitals changed into a diversified organisation modelled on the private, for-profit sector which was synonymous with financial interests rather than those of the patients. Thus from being infused with value in the sense of old institutionalism and taken for granted, the hospitals' structure changed to one that was not taken for

granted and therefore required legitimating to external bodies and the local community through the use of impression management in the organisations' annual reports.

The narrow range of explanations used to excuse the change of structure in the hospitals' annual reports lead Arndt and Bigelow (2000, p. 514) to suggest that "even in the context of structural deviance, scripts and schemas that are taken for granted at the industry level determine how individual local organisations present such a change". This presents an apparent contradiction in institutional theory that even when bringing institutions into consciousness by acting against them (Jepperson, 1991) there exists other institutions that govern how organisations should behave in this instance. Thus the course and nature of behaviour that brings into question or deinstitutionalises an existing institution is, in fact institutionalised.

Henisz and Delios (2001) primarily emphasise the role of cognitive pressures in Japanese firms' decisions on international manufacturing plant location. Mimetic pressures carried by the structure of the market's policy making apparatus, the social structures of the inter-organisational environment along with firm specific uncertainty were key in 412 firms' decisions of where to locate international manufacturing plants. Mitigating these pressures was the policy uncertainty created by each nation state's political and economic decisions that affect such location decisions. Galaskiewicz and Wasserman's (1989) empirical verification of mimetic pressures also showed that the inter-organisational linkages between organisations in societal sector were crucial to mimetic processes. Not only did focal organisations mimic organisations considered to be successful but also organisations that they trusted. Similar findings by Fligstein (1991) and Orrú et al. (1991) confirm the role of cognition in organisational behaviour at the sector level. However, by only operationalising

mimetic pressures Galaskiewicz and Wasserman (1989) exclude the possibility that their findings may result from coercive and normative pressures as well.

Whilst prioritising mimeticism as an explanation for Japanese firms' subsequent and ongoing location decisions, Henisz and Delios (2001) cannot explain the behaviour of those firms that were early movers in locating to a country that had hitherto not been host to a Japanese firm's manufacturing plant. Similarly, Tolbert and Zucker (1983) found that whilst explaining the behaviour of later adoptors of civil service reforms mimeticism could not explain the behaviour of early adopters. Instead, early adoption was more the result of coercive pressures.

Belief systems and cultural frames are likely to exist in the sports policy sector and may be promoted by significant others, such as Sport England, to encourage the adoption of these systems and patterns of behaviour. For example organisations will try to imitate models of best practice provided by controlling organisations in their environment to gain legitimacy. In times of uncertainty organisations in the sports policy sector may look to Sport England as a legitimate and controlling actor for guidance as to the correct course of action. Any advice offered in the form of suggested means, goals or models of best practice encourages isomorphism through mimetic pressures.

Accompanying this vertical mimetic pressure there may also be horizontal mimetic pressure between similar organisations at the same sector level. So if a VSC is awarded Lottery funding it is more likely to be mimicked by other VSCs applying for Lottery funding because it is seen as more successful and legitimate and also because the applicants are unsure of Sport England's expectations.

The tripartite categorisation of institutional pressures perhaps gives the impression of three separate forces at work in the sports policy sector. However, this is not how institutional pressures operate (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999). It is more often the case that institutional pressures acting on an organisation are a combination of two or more types (Carpenter and Feroz, 2001; D'Aunno et al., 2000; Levitt and Nass, 1989; Ocasio, 1999; Russo, 2001; Westphal and Zajac, 2001). Similarly, Slack and Hinings (1994: p. 821) found that in the relationship between Sport Canada, an agent of the Canadian government, and Canadian NSOs "all three mechanisms of isomorphism, namely, coercive, mimetic and normative [were] at work to varying degrees. Indeed, they work[ed] to reinforce each other". In some cases distinguishing between the three mechanisms is difficult if not impossible as they overlap to such a degree as illustrated earlier by Donaldson (1995). A sport specific example of this is the Lottery Act (1993) that permitted sports administrators to distribute Lottery funding according to their norms. This difficulty is accentuated by a conceptual looseness in DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) seminal discussion of institutional mechanisms and which according to Donaldson (1995: p. 84) creates one of the many ambiguities in institutional theory:

DiMaggio and Powell offer no discussion of these overlaps nor their significance for the structure of theory, nor of how the distinctions they make between coercive, mimetic and normative types of isomorphism are to be maintained.

Despite the difficult task of disentangling the mechanisms some authors have emphasised one institutional mechanism or pressure over others. For example Arndt and Bigelow (2000), Brint and Karabel (1991), Fligstein (1991) and Lant and Baum (1995) all prioritise the role of cognition in institutionalism and subscribe to the cognitive structuralism of neo-institutionalism. Hinings and Greenwood (1987) found the normative mechanism to be of greater influence. State coercion was emphasised by Orrú et al. (1991), Russo (2001) and Tolbert and Zucker (1983) although it is rare to find literature just emphasising coercive pressures for the reasons already

mentioned. This situation is reflective of the ambiguities and contradictions existing in institutional theory.

The second research issue to be tackled is an identification of the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector to which VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding are exposed. Slack and Hinings (1987) demonstrate that receipt of resources whether they be human, physical, or in the case of Lottery funding, financial can affect the structure of an organisation. Studies by Hinings et al. (1996), Papadimitriou (1998) and Slack and Hinings (1994) indicate that an identification of the values operating in a sport organisation's environment can contribute significantly to an explanation of the structure of that organisation. Within the highly centralised sports sector in Greece institutional pressures do not direct NSOs to organise, professionalise and strive for efficiency as they did in Canada, because this is not the dominant set of beliefs at work within the sector. Rather, there is a preference for less structured, amateur operating procedures and a passive acceptance of state control (Papadimitriou, 1998). White (2000) has noted that the culture and values of the bodies distributing Lottery funding influence their distribution decisions. Therefore the identification of the norms and values upon which the distribution of Lottery funding by Sport England is based is highly important in explaining any structural changes in VSCs receiving such funding.

Additionally, an identification of the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector which are channelled at the VSCs through the Lottery Fund by Sport England is crucial to understanding individual VSC's responses to the award in terms of their structure. A natural extension of this second research issue requires an identification of how the VSC's structure is changing with the receipt of the Lottery funding. This is taken up in Chapter 5.

So far the theoretical discussion has been concerned with a structural account of inter-organisational relations. However, it now turns to a more dualistic account of these relations within the sports policy sector.

#### **4.2.6 Overcoming determinism**

“The institutional perspective has been increasingly criticised for its lack of attention to the role of organisational self-interest and active agency in organisational responses to institutional pressures and expectations” (Oliver, 1991: p. 145; see also DiMaggio, 1988; Hasselbladh and Kallinikos, 2000; Kikulis, 2000). Recognising this requires institutional theorists to acknowledge that organisations will respond differently to the same institutional pressures (Milliken et al., 1998). By considering that an organisation’s response to institutional pressures is not invariably passive and accepting that a range of responses can be hypothesised from acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, and defiance to manipulation, Oliver (1991) believes the problem of over-determinism can be mitigated. The full range of strategic responses and their associated tactics are listed in Table 8 in ascending order of active response. Acquiescence is therefore the least active and manipulation the most active response.

**Table 8: Strategic responses to institutional pressures**

Strategy	Tactics	Example
Acquiesce	Habit	Unconsciously following taken-for-granted norms
	Imitate	Mimicking successful organisations and models of best practice
Compromise	Comply	Consciously obeying rules and accepting norms
	Balance	Balancing the expectations of multiple constituents
	Pacify	Placating and accommodating institutional elements
Avoid	Bargain	Negotiating with institutional stakeholders
	Conceal	Disguising non-conformity
	Buffer	Loosening institutional attachments
Defy	Escape	Changing goals, activities or domains
	Dismiss	Ignoring explicit norms and values
	Challenge	Contesting rules and requirements
Manipulate	Control	Assaulting the sources of institutional pressure
	Co-opt	Importing influential constituents
	Influence	Shaping values and criteria
	Control	Dominating institutional constituents and processes

Source: Oliver (1991: p.152).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) acknowledged agency through the decoupling process. They propose that organisational structures and procedures may be established to comply with institutional pressures and satisfy external constituents but remain isolated and disconnected from the day-to-day operation and behaviour of the organisation. Institutionally prescribed structures are therefore adopted only ceremonially in order to convey the impression that the organisation is conforming hence making it more legitimate. The image of conformity is a hollow one though and the institutionally prescribed structures remain decoupled from the organisation's structure allowing it to avoid the full implications of whole heartedly adopting those structures. For example Westphal and Zajac (2001) found that the creation of share buyback policies by firms in the Fortune 500 had become institutionalised but the implementation of these policies was decoupled from organisational activity if the policy threatened the Chief Executive's power.

Meyer and Rowan are therefore proposing that the organisation shields its core operations from the institutional environment when the institutional environment

conflicts with the technical demands on the organisation. However, it has been argued here that VSCs' environment is primarily institutional. Thus with few technical demands or prescriptions as to their operation and structure, and therefore less opportunity for a conflict between their institutional and technical environments, VSCs may have less need to shield their core operations from their institutional environments. This is because their core operations are already institutionally prescribed. Levitt and Nass' (1989) empirical verification of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) institutional pressures in the publishing industry found exactly this. Without a highly prescribed technical operation the publishing houses opened their core operations to the institutional environment. Levitt and Nass (1989: p. 205):

are suggesting that in the case of the textbook-publishing industry, boundary-spanning roles, such as that of editor, import orderliness from the institutional environment to impose order on processes within the technical core.

So in this sense Levitt and Nass are suggesting that organisations consciously adopt institutional prescriptions to help them structure their tasks in weak technical environments. The voluntarism with which the institutional pressures were accepted suggests that acquiescence is not predetermined.

Giddens' (1984) structuration theory has been applied empirically by institutional theorists (Barley and Tolbert, 1997; Mouritsen and Skoerboek, 1995) to combine action and institution and combat criticisms of determinism. Scott (1995b) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) also identify several roles for structuration.

Under institutional theory the social structures or institutions which they act within influence actors. By acting within these structures actors are enacting their environment and therefore contributing to its social construction. Weick (1997: p. 401) states:



The term 'enactment' is used to preserve the central point that when people act, they bring events and structures into existence and set them in motion... Enactment involves both a process, enactment, and a product, an enacted environment... The product of enactment is not an accident, an afterthought, or a byproduct. Instead it is an orderly, material, social construction that is subject to multiple interpretations. Enacted environments contain real objects... The existence of these objects is not questioned, but their significance, meaning, and content is. These objects are inconsequential until they are acted upon and then incorporated retrospectively into events, situations, and explanations.

This brings us to a position parallel to that of Giddens' (1984) 'Duality of Structure'. Jary and Jary (1991: p. 76) succinctly describe this as being the idea that structure and action are not mutually exclusive, as pure theories of each would suggest, but inseparable and that structure is in fact "the 'medium and outcome' of social action". This amounts to what Giddens (1984: p. 331) is conveying here.

In order to 'bring off' the interaction the participants make use of their knowledge of the institutional order in which they are involved in such a way to render their interchange meaningful. However, by invoking the institutional order in this way - and there is no other way for participants in interaction to render what they do intelligible and coherent to one another - they thereby contribute to reproducing it.

Therefore institutional theorists cannot afford to neglect the importance and role of agency as actors clearly play a part in constructing and re-constructing the institutional order. Actors are not cultural dupes but conscious agents with their own interests. Unchallenged acceptance of institutional pressures is therefore not a foregone conclusion. Instead, organisations may respond by negotiating or rejecting the institutional pressures of a societal sector. This position rejects that of neo-institutionalists who emphasise the taken for granted and unreflexive nature of behaviour

Consequently, VSCs may not conform to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector and their administrative structures may not change as expected. For example, Slack and Hinings (1994) noted that NSOs in Canada were more protective

of their core values surrounding volunteer control as they rejected institutional pressures to professionalise decision making processes whilst accepting other pressures for change. The fourth research issue is therefore to establish the responses of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund using Oliver's (1991) strategic responses in Table 8.

#### **4.2.7 Responding to institutional pressures**

Acknowledging a role for agency in institutional theory suggests organisations will not respond uniformly to the same institutional pressure (Milliken et al., 1998) and in Table 8 Oliver (1991) presents five potential strategic responses by organisations to institutional pressures. Listed in ascending order of active response acquiescence is the least active and manipulation the most active response. Oliver provides ten hypotheses based on five predictors of response that aim to classify an organisation's reaction to institutional pressures as one of the strategic responses in Table 8. The five predictive elements are the:

- **cause**, purpose or rationale of institutional pressures
- **constituents** or organisations applying the institutional pressures
- **content** of the institutional pressures
- **control** or means through which institutional pressures are exerted
- **context** in which institutional pressures are exerted.

These predictors of response were empirically operationalised by Goodstein, (1994), Ingram and Simons (1995) and Milliken et al. (1998). However, Oliver's (1991) work has largely been applied to large commercial organisations and its relevance to small voluntary organisations is therefore unknown. Although this suggests that the robustness of Oliver's strategic responses cannot be confirmed in relation to small voluntary organisations, it does present an opportunity to make a contribution to knowledge on the subject. Hypotheses developed from these predictors of response by Oliver are stated in Table 9. Each predictor is discussed in turn following Table 9.

**Table 9: Predictors of organisational responses to institutional pressures**

Predictor	Hypotheses
Cause	The lower the degree of social legitimacy perceived to be attainable from conformity to institutional pressures, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
	The lower the degree of economic gain perceived to be attainable from conformity to institutional pressures, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
Constituent	The greater the degree of constituent multiplicity, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
	The lower the degree of external dependence on pressuring constituents, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
Content	The lower the degree of consistency of institutional norms or requirements with organisational goals, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
	The greater the degree of discretionary constraints imposed on the organisation by institutional pressures, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance.
Control	The lower the degree of legal coercion behind institutional norms and requirements, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
	The lower the degree of voluntary diffusion of institutional norms, values, or practices, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
Context	The lower the level of uncertainty in the organisation's environment, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.
	The lower the degree of interconnectedness in the institutional environment, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressures.

Source: Oliver (1991)

#### 4.2.7.1 Cause

The first predictor that Oliver identifies is the cause of the institutional pressures that the focal organisation is subject to. This "refers to the rationale, set of expectations, or intended objectives that underlie external pressures for conformity" (Oliver, 1991: p. 161). Oliver (1991) suggests there are two ways in which institutional pressures are justified in the sports policy sector. Firstly pressures are justified socially. Social fitness pressures mean that it is socially desirable to deliver certain products and services, or to alter the products and services so that they become more socially acceptable. A key concern for Sport England is that a new Lottery funded facility for a VSC will maximise community use and target particular groups in society such as the

young, ethnic minorities, women and those with special needs. Second, pressures justified economically concern the economic worthiness of an organisation. This is an important objective of many institutional pressures as state sponsors often put pressure on recipients to be more 'business-like' and economically accountable. Sport England may demand to see evidence of a business plan for a new facility and an explanation of how revenue funding will be generated by the VSC.

Here, the crucial factor in establishing the likelihood of an active strategic response is whether the purpose of the institutional pressures is valued, understood and shared by the focal organisation. Oliver (1991: p. 161-2) states:

When an organisation anticipates that conformity will enhance social or economic fitness, acquiescence will be the most probable response to institutional pressures... [But] the choice between acquiescence and more resistant strategies will depend on the degree to which the organization agrees with and values the intentions or objectives that institutional constituents are attempting to achieve in pressuring the organisation to be more socially or economically accountable.

If the VSC sees no social or economic benefit in complying or disagrees with the purpose of the pressures then the organisation is more likely to resist conformity. However, if the VSC anticipates a social or economic benefit in complying with the pressures it is more likely to observe the conditions of its Lottery funding.

The size of the organisation being exposed to institutional pressures may have an influence on the organisation's response. Goodstein (1994) and Ingram and Simons (1995) found that larger organisations were more susceptible to institutional pressures because they were more conspicuous in the societal sector. The converse of this would be that smaller organisations might be able to affect more resistant responses because they are less conspicuous. Thus individual VSCs might be able to resist the pressures of the sports policy sector to a greater extent than say NGBs because the latter are much larger and more prominent in their societal sector.

However, it may not only be the size of the organisation that is important in influencing the degree to which it is subject to institutional pressures but also the role that the organisation plays in the societal sector. For instance in the sports policy sector some NGBs, particularly in minor sports, are very small but are still likely to be subject to the same institutional pressures as NGBs of major sports because of the function that they perform in the sector. The difference between minor NGBs and VSCs is not so much their size but their role. Their independence and self-serving role means that VSCs are not directly accountable or tightly linked to actors in the sport policy sector except when entering into exchange relationships such as those constituted by the award of Lottery funding. The tighter resource (Houlihan, 1991) and social linkages between NGBs and other actors in the sports policy sector mean that NGBs are likely to be more accountable to external actors. Therefore the more accountable organisations are to external actors the more likely those organisations are to be subject to institutional pressures (Ingram and Simons, 1995). This returns us to the position advanced earlier by Scott and Meyer (1991) regarding the state of inter-organisational linkages in a societal sector.

#### 4.2.7.2 Constituents

The second predictor is the organisational actors or constituents of the societal sector that are pressuring the focal organisation to conform. The collective normative order of an organisation's societal sector is not always a unitary or coherent one. Organisations often confront multiple conflicting pressures that bound their ability to conform. This arises from institutional constituents imposing a variety of laws, regulations and expectations on the organisation. Again there are two dimensions to this predictor for the sports policy sector.

First, the multiplicity of pressuring constituents makes conformity to institutional pressures difficult because the satisfaction of one constituent's demands may

preclude conformity to those of another constituent. Oliver (1991: p. 163)

summarises:

Institutional predictions of preconscious and consensual acquiescence to the institutional environment are bounded by multiplicity for two reasons. Conflicting pressures preclude organisational conformity to the institutional environment in its entirety and multiplicity tends to fragment generalised belief systems and the intersubjective and shared definition of institutional reality to which institutional theorists attribute such causal force in bringing about conformity. In addition, organisations are... made more aware of an institutional expectation when it is incompatible with other institutional demands [or the organisation's goals and values].

If VSCs experience multiple conflicting institutional pressures in the sports policy sector then they are more likely to make a resistant response to one set of pressures because the demands of another set are much greater. Thus the likelihood of a resistant response to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector exerted through Sport England's Lottery Fund will also depend on the existence of conflicting pressures in the sector acting upon the VSC.

The second dimension to the constituent predictor is the degree of dependency by VSCs on the pressuring organisation(s). A focal organisation may be dependent on another organisation for legitimacy or for resources such as funding. The level of dependence may influence an organisation's response to institutional pressures. For instance, a VSC may be highly dependent on Sport England if it can only get the size of grant it needs to build its new facility from the Lottery Fund. Alternatively, a VSC will be less dependent on Sport England if it has sufficient funds of its own to build the new facility. Acquiescence is the most probable strategic response when organisational dependence on the source of the pressures is high (Oliver, 1991). Ingram and Simons (1995) confirmed this in finding that organisations acquiesced to pressures to provide childcare services for employees when the proportion of female managers in the workforce was high. Resistance to institutional pressures is

therefore more likely the less dependent the focal organisation is on the pressuring constituent.

It is argued in section 4.2.8 that dependence is rarely unidirectional or equal. A two-way unequal power relationship such as that between VSCs and Sport England may allow the former to compromise on its reaction to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund. Additionally, dependence may not constant over time. At the time of making a grant application a VSC's dependence on Sport England may be high. When the result of the application is known and the grant received the level of the VSCs dependence on Sport England may change. Hence the strategic response of a VSC may change over time with its change in dependence on Sport England's Lottery Funding.

#### 4.2.7.3 Content

In discussing the cause or purpose of institutional pressures it was noted that if the rationale behind the pressures was in conflict with the focal organisation's goals and values then the organisation was more likely to mount an active response. This is the focus of the first dimension to the content predictor. The second dimension is whether the organisation's autonomy is restricted.

VSCs will be more willing and able to acquiesce to institutional pressures when the pressures are consistent with their aims. Moderate strategic responses of compromise and avoidance are predicted to be most common when there is only moderate consistency between organisational goals and institutional expectations. Low consistency encourages a more active response.

Oliver (1991: p. 165) continues that "inconsistency reflects organizational interests at cross purposes with institutional objectives and provokes organizational doubts about

the validity or legitimacy of institutional expectations". A frequently cited study supporting this contention is that of Covalleski and Dirsmith (1988). They demonstrated how a university rejected an institutionalised budgetary process when the process became inconsistent with the goals and interests of the university. Ingram and Simons' (1995) study also provides empirical support for this proposition. Oliver cites Whetten (1978: p. 262) as stating, "nonprofit organizations may be more resistant to pressures for economic rationality because compliance with these pressures may be perceived as inconsistent with the goal of high quality social service delivery". Institutional pressures of the sports policy sector may interfere with a VSC's primary purpose of pursuing its sport for the benefit of its members. If so, this increases the likelihood of a resistant response. A dimension that Oliver fails to consider is the possibility that some of the organisation's objectives may be decoupled from its operation and structure. Thus it may appear that institutional objectives are congruent with organisational goals but in reality the organisation does not pursue its stated goals.

It is also important to recognise that despite good intentions organisations may lack the capacity or capital to comply with expectations thus forcing a more active response. This creates a distinction between those organisations that are willing and those that are able to comply with institutional expectations. For example, Table 10 shows four permutations produced by this distinction when considering a VSCs response to the institutional pressures of Sport England's Lottery Fund.

**Table 10: Willingness, ability and strategic response**

Willing to comply	Able to comply	Response
Yes	Yes	Acquiescence
Yes	No	Low-medium resistance
No	Yes	Low-medium resistance
No	No	High Resistance



The second dimension to the content predictor is that of the focal organisation's autonomy. The loss of organisational autonomy implied by conformity to institutional pressures is also hypothesised to predict the likelihood of organisational resistance or compliance to institutional pressures: Organisations will be expected to acquiesce more readily to pressures that do not constrain organisational decisions. As autonomy begins to be threatened, organisations may move to compromise or negotiate on the extent of their permitted decision making and it is these moves to retain control over processes, outputs and structures that impose limits on the willingness of an organisation to conform. The potential loss of discretion also explains, in part, why organisations engage in ceremonial conformity and related avoidance strategies i.e. de-coupling. VSCs in receipt of Lottery Funding may find their autonomy restricted in that their programming decisions for a new facility may be influenced by Sport England's emphasis on particular target groups or the particular conditions on which the money was awarded. Sport England may also request to see sports development and business plans drawn up as a condition of Lottery funding.

#### 4.2.7.4 Control

The fourth predictor of an organisation's response to institutional pressures is that of control. This concerns the means through which institutional pressures are conveyed and reinforced. Oliver proposes two ways in which this is achieved: legal coercion and voluntary diffusion.

Acquiescence best serves the organisation's interests when legal coercion is high, that is when the consequences of non-conformity are highly punitive and strictly enforced. When the degree of institutional enforcement, vigilance, and sanctions for non-compliance are more moderate, organisations often seek compromises on the scope or timing of their compliance. Active defiance and manipulation are most likely to occur when the degree of legal coercion is low because the anticipated

consequences of non-conforming behaviour may not constitute a sufficient deterrent to organisational resistance. So the strategic response of a VSC will also be influenced by how stringently the conditions of Lottery funding are enforced by Sport England and other actors in the sports policy sector, and also the degree to which the VSC views adhering to those conditions as a legal obligation.

The extent to which institutional expectations or practices have already diffused or spread voluntarily through the sports policy sector may predict the likelihood of conformity by VSCs to those to institutional pressures. Therefore, the more voluntarily diffused an institutional expectation or practice, the higher the likelihood that a VSC will conform to these expectations. By the same token, a VSC is more likely to resist a set of values, practices, or expectations, the less widespread they are.

Rules and norms that are very broadly diffused tend to preclude organisational resistance because they take on an unquestioned rule like status in social action (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). In the face of very widely shared and taken-for-granted understandings of what constitutes legitimate or rational behaviour, organisations will conform largely because it does not occur to them to do otherwise. Under moderate diffusion, organisations often compromise on conformity (e.g. adapting general expectations to fit local needs and interests), or attempt avoidance tactics such as de-coupling. The less widely diffused a set of norms, values, and practices, the greater the likelihood that they will be targets for defiance or manipulation.

#### 4.2.7.5 Context

The final predictor of a VSC's response to institutional pressures of the sports policy sector is the context within which institutional pressures are exerted on the VSC.

Uncertainty and inter-connectedness are predicted to be significant dimensions of context that affect an organisation's behaviour. Environmental uncertainty is defined as "the degree to which future states of the world cannot be anticipated and accurately predicted" (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978: p. 67). Interconnectedness refers to the density of inter-organisational relations among occupants of an organisational field (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

Uncertainty and inter-connectedness interact insofar as multiple, and perhaps conflicting, constituent pressures tend to exacerbate uncertainty. When uncertainty is high, acquiescence, compromise and avoidance strategies will be most common. In an uncertain context organisations are also more likely to imitate other organisations resulting in mimetic isomorphism. Thus when in the process of applying for Lottery funding VSCs experience a degree of uncertainty about whether they will receive any funding. This was particularly true before 1998 when the Lottery Act (DCMS, 1998) enabled a more strategic approach to the distribution of the Lottery Fund by Sport England. In this situation of uncertainty VSCs are likely to maximise their chances of obtaining funding by offering little resistance to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector conveyed through the Lottery Fund and take influence from any available legitimate and successful models of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding.

Once the award has been received the uncertainty of the environment diminishes, the need for security and predictability from institutionalised norms decreases and organisations grow more confident in their predictions about the acquisition of future resources and legitimacy. Under these conditions, a more active response by VSCs to institutional values and the constituents that express them is seen as a less risky means of achieving organisational goals.

Organisations are more likely to accede to the values or requirements of the institutional environment when it is highly inter-connected. Inter-connectedness facilitates the voluntary diffusion of norms, values and shared information because highly connected environments provide relational channels through which institutional norms can be diffused. This tends to create more implicit co-ordination and collectivisation in a given environment, increased consensus on diffused norms, and greater ubiquity of institutional effects (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1979). Environments that are highly fragmented or highly competitive impede the spread of institutional consensus and conformity. Therefore the consensual nature of the sports policy sector (Houlihan, 1991) and the centralised, unified and concentrated funding and programmatic decision making of the sports policy sector suggests that the sector is highly institutionalised. According to institutional theorists then VSCs are likely to comply with the institutional expectations of the Lottery Fund because the consensual, centralised, unified and concentrated nature of the sports policy sector.

It should be emphasised that although identified independently the predictors of response are highly inter-related. In order to establish a VSC's response to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector applied through the Lottery Fund the research needed to obtain information regarding these predictors relating to each VSC. The implications of this for the methodology used in the research will be discussed in the following chapter. A shortcoming of Oliver's theory is that it only predicts the likelihood of an active response and not the precise level of response. However, this is not a concern as the critical realist approach adopted in the methodology holds that causal laws are not achievable in the social world. Made necessary by the introduction of agency in to institutional theory, the discussion now turns to a consider power relations in the sports policy sector.

#### **4.2.8 Power in the societal sector**

The sociology of sport is criticised by Gruneau (1999) for adopting theoretical frameworks from sociology that pay scant attention to issues of power and domination. The same may be said of institutional theory (Perrow, 1986; Mizruchi and Fein, 1999; Stern and Barley, 1996). Despite the introduction of agency by Oliver, criticisms of institution theory still remain. It seems that institutional theorists pay little explicit regard to the role of power in organisation–sector relations with the structural nature of the theory only implying a unidirectional power relationship between the societal sector and the focal organisation. Identifying a role for agency in institutional theory therefore questions this unidirectional power relationship and necessitates a consideration of power. Consequently, a discussion of strategic responses is impossible without referring to power. Giddens (1976: p.113) agrees, suggesting that “‘what passes for social reality’ stands in immediate relation to the distribution of power; not only on the most mundane levels of everyday interaction, but also on the level of global cultures and ideologies”. Thus, one could argue that not to have an interest in power is to uncritically accept its distribution in society or indeed to fail to fully understand society itself.

According to structuration theory, power is present and reciprocal in all interactions and is generated in and through the reproduction of societal structures of domination and their resources (Giddens, 1979; 1984). No actor is therefore entirely powerless in the face of dominant structures as organisations may take advantage of the fact that their co-operation in a societal sector is necessary for the pressuring constituent to achieve its goals (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Ingram and Simons, 1995). This is evident in the inter-dependent relationship between Sport England and VSCs in that the latter’s co-operation is needed for Sport England to achieve its aims and Sport England controls a resource sought after by the VSCs.

Two kinds of resource constitute the structures of dominance. Allocative resources are the means of production such as capital. The ability to foster normative agreement, monitor other's actions and confer legitimacy can be considered as authoritative resources. Thus, both Sport England and VSCs utilise these resources to varying degrees when interacting with each other. Examples of the resources utilised in the relationship between Sport England and VSCs when applying for Lottery funding can be found in Table 11.

**Table 11: Allocative and authoritative resources**

	Allocative Resources	Authoritative Resources
Sport England	The ability to distribute capital funding from the Lottery Fund.	Position as the key actor in the centre of the sports policy sector.
VSCs	Collectively, VSCs provide a great proportion of the sports facilities and 80% of the voluntary labour that sports policy depends on in the UK (Gratton et al., 1997).	VSCs' important role in the sports policy sector as a provider of sporting opportunities at the base of the sports pyramid (Gratton and Taylor, 1991). VSCs can also provide opportunities for elite performers.

However, the inter-dependence of Sport England and VSCs may not be equal as the facticity of the institutional order is intimately and fundamentally linked to power. "For the 'acceptance-as-real' [of the institutional order] that is built into the mutually intelligible continuity of the interaction is the very foundation of... modes of domination (Giddens, 1984: p. 331-2). So the more real and objective the institution or social world the more powerful it becomes compared to the power available to the individual actors reproducing it. Therefore, because of its defining characteristics, the power of an institution is likely to be greater than the sum of the individuals' power interacting with it. Consequently, VSCs applying to Sport England's Lottery Fund will find themselves in a less powerful position than Sport England, but not powerless. This is because the institutional pressures conveyed through the Lottery Fund by Sport England are accepted as real by VSCs. Giddens (1984: p. 332) agrees:

As a system of power relations, 'acceptance-as-real' has much more far reaching implications than does the actual differential power that

the participating agents are able to bring to the interaction to make their particular views count.

If an institutional order achieves 'acceptance-as-real' then there is likely to be little doubt over its integrity and unity and by its very existence the sports policy sector has to be reasonably cohesive and consensual (Houlihan, 1991). At first this seems to indicate the absence of conflict and therefore no reason for the use of power. However, "the concept of power... does not logically imply the existence of conflict" (Giddens, 1976: p.122). Lukes presents three dimensions of power. His third illustrates Giddens' point when "political systems prevent demands from becoming political issues or even from being made" (Lukes, 1994: p.250). The ability to prevent conflict from arising by removing contentious decisions from the agenda before it reaches the policy sector is therefore the most insidious use of power.

This has parallels with the normative order established by an institution which, by its nature, directs action against other theoretically possible responses (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Agents perceive a set of choices about behaviour as being the only choices to be made, or in Giddens' words these accepted as real. However, the institution predetermines the agenda or range of choices as other physically and materially possible behaviours, that are deemed unacceptable, are removed because they lie outside of the normative order. Theoretically, Sport England is therefore able to heavily influence the content of sports policy, set the normative order and predetermine the range of strategic responses of other actors in the sports policy sector such as VSCs. Consequently, Oliver's (1991) strategic responses may not all be available as viable options to VSCs applying to Sport England's Lottery Fund because some responses may have been made non-issues or unthinkable by the existing normative order and the other institutional pressures. Of course, methodological problems exist in that it is extremely difficult to establish that

alternatives to the normative order exist but were removed from the agenda. Or, as Lukes (1994: p.250) describes it: "how can one study... what does not happen?"

#### **4.2.9 Conclusion and implications for research**

Institutional theorists examine the role of social influence and pressures for social conformity in shaping organisations' actions (Oliver, 1997). Sport England is therefore viewed as part of the social structure or authority system governing the distribution of Lottery funding based on culturally established values, expectations and formal and informal rules. In this sense VSCs are partial captives of social convention and successful VSCs are those that gain support by conforming to these social pressures conveyed through the resource pressures of Lottery funding. It is therefore necessary to identify the social pressures to which VSCs are exposed when applying to Sport England's Lottery Fund. This is the purpose of the second research objective of this study. It is also important to identify other organisations in the social structure or authority and governance system that exert these pressures as Sport England may not be the only pressuring actor. This is the purpose of the study's first research objective.

Institutional theorists also propose that conformity with social or institutional pressures when applying for and receiving Lottery funding encourages similarity in the actions and structure of VSCs and that VSCs' structures will become more complex and bureaucratic. The third research objective is therefore to identify any change in the structure of VSCs that have received Lottery funding. This requires the examination of organisational structures in VSCs that have received Lottery funding from Sport England and the establishment of ways to measure organisational structure. This is taken up in the following chapter by applying the concept of bureaucracy to VSCs.



However, conformity to institutional pressures is not a foregone conclusion and structural change is not inevitable. The fourth research objective therefore aims to categorise VSCs' responses to the institutional pressures of Sport England's Lottery Fund according to Oliver's (1991) range of strategic responses.

Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000) and Tolbert and Zucker (1996) criticise key institutional theorists for their lack of guidelines for empirical research. This originates from the contradictory and ambiguous nature of institutional theory identified in sections 4.1 and 4.2.5. Due to its realist ontology and its methodological approach (developed in chapter 6), and its tolerance of rational action and agency the institutional theory employed in this thesis borrows more from the old institutionalism than the new. Correspondingly, coercive and normative pressures are emphasised but this is not to deny the possible existence of mimetic pressures as the second objective of this research is to analyse any institutional pressures are present in the sports policy sector. Despite an approach that is more old than new institutionalist in nature a top down concept of institutionalisation is held.

Chapter 5 establishes the way in which the impact of institutional pressures exerted through Sport England's Lottery Fund can be identified on the structure of VSCs. The concept of bureaucracy is employed and operationalised through various structural indicators appropriate to the nature of VSCs. Chapter 6 then goes on to detail the methodological approach used in this research.

## **5 Organisational structure**

DiMaggio and Powell (1983: p. 147) contend “the engine of rationalization and bureaucratization has moved from the market place to the state and the professions”. Supporting this, Slack and Hinings (1994) found that greater state involvement in sports policy through centralised funding and programmatic decision making increased bureaucracy within sport organisations that were connected to the state via these funding and programme links. Combining this with the argument that Sport England’s Lottery Fund represents a centralisation of funding within the sports policy sector at the level of the nation state suggests the bureaucratisation of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding can be anticipated. Also, the increased structuring of the sports policy sector resulting from the additional inter-organisational linkages created by Sport England’s Lottery Fund further encourages the bureaucratisation of VSCs in receipt of funding. An understanding of bureaucracy is therefore needed as this concept allows the research to identify the impacts on a VSC’s structure of Lottery funding and of a more complex set of inter-relations with the sector.

### **5.1 Bureaucracy**

Weber’s work on bureaucracy (Gerth and Mills, 1991) is often credited as the origins of organisation theory (Rowlinson, 1997). The codification of sport during the late 1800s and early 1900s was inextricably linked to the industrialisation and urbanisation of society. However, the concept of bureaucracy was more commonly associated with the organisation of work which was seen as the antithesis of sport due to the latter having connotations of play and leisure. According to Frisby (1982: p. 53-54), Weber saw bureaucracy as “an efficient means of social organization and predicted that with the onset of modernity it would invade all facets of social life”. This was

because of bureaucracy's "superiority in dealing with the complexities and ever-changing conditions associated with industrialization and urbanization". This point is evinced by Slack's (1985) case study of the gradual bureaucratisation of the Alberta Section of the Canadian Amateur Swimming Association from 1927 to the late 1970s in response to the Association's evolving context.

It should be remembered though, that Weber developed his concept of bureaucracy as an alternative to the organisational practices that prevailed at the time. Weber wanted to make organisations function more efficiently and in society's best interests (Daft, 1992; 1998). Consequently, the ideal type bureaucracy and the organisational reality that faces us today are not the same. Hatch (1997: p. 171) states that:

for Weber, bureaucracy was not the ponderous, frustrating bastion of mediocre of public service that some people associate with this concept, but was a rationalized, moral alternative to common practice of nepotism and the abuses of power that were rampant in the feudal, pre-industrialized world from which the modern organization emerged.

It was not until the 1970s that the concept of bureaucracy was applied to sport organisations firstly by Ingham (1975) and then later by Frisby (1982). This may seem late but it was only in the 1960s that organisation theory started to make use of the concept of bureaucracy at all (see Hall, 1963, 1968; Hall and Tittle, 1966).

As an ideal type, Weber did not define bureaucracy but in lieu of a definition he offered its main characteristics summarised in Table 12. As these characteristics are indicative of a single condition – bureaucracy – they are highly inter-related with a change in one likely to affect another.

**Table 12: The main features of bureaucracy**

- Division of labour and high level of specialisation
- Clearly defined hierarchy
- Formally established rules and regulations to provide uniformity of decisions and actions. With a structure of authority this enables the co-ordination of organisational activities
- An impersonal work orientation when dealing with clients to aid uniform decision making
- Employment is based on technical qualifications and constitutes a career.
- Remuneration by fixed salaries

Source: Hatch (1997); Mullins (1999)

Now that bureaucracy's main features have been identified it is possible to review existing summative definitions of the concept. Frisby (1982: p. 54) describes bureaucracy as carrying out:

administrative functions according to a specialized division of labor of highly trained professional experts, an objective and impersonal work orientation, a clear cut hierarchy of authority, and a logical means–end approach to decision making.

For Macintosh and Whitson (1990: p. 11) bureaucracy makes "organizations more productive, and (refers) to a... reorganization of administration so that productivity can be measured and enhanced". Bureaucracy, then, refers to the design of an organisation's structure along rational means–end lines for the achievement of the organisation's goals or objectives. This allows the organisation's performance to be quantified to enable an assessment of its performance. Bureaucratisation is therefore the process of adopting these structures, or a change in the degree of those structures.

Given a greater understanding of the concept, it is logical to identify the organisational variables affected by bureaucracy. Blau (1974) suggests that the most commonly used indicators of bureaucracy include; organisational size, complexity, specialisation, professionalism, hierarchy of authority, relative size of the administration component to the rest of the organisation, formalisation of rules and procedures, the impersonality of work relations, career stability, and the degree of centralisation of decision making. Frisby (1982) used fewer indicators in her paper on

bureaucracy and the effectiveness of sport organisations. She opted for formalisation, centralisation of decision-making, the impersonality of work relations, professionalism, specialisation, career stability, organisational size, the number of administrative personnel as a proportion of all personnel, and the emphasis placed on sports science and technology. However, the organisations used in Frisby's study were voluntary NSOs. Although, all of these NSOs were run by voluntary executives and some of them developed from what were essentially 'kitchen table' operations, they are set apart from UK VSCs by their organisational characteristics; the former being much more bureaucratic than the latter. In the past, the study of bureaucracy has focused on larger organisations such as NGBs because they tend to be more bureaucratic but this does not preclude the application of bureaucracy to small organisations (Hall, 1963) such as VSCs. Further refinement of the indicators of bureaucracy is therefore needed in relation to VSCs.

Numerous indicators of bureaucracy can be operationalised in an investigation of the concept but not all will necessarily be used at once. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the type of organisation under investigation will influence the choice of variables or indicators. For instance measures of bureaucracy may vary according to which industry the organisation operates within, its purpose within that industry, and whether the organisation is a private, public or voluntary organisation. Secondly, the theoretical position which the researcher brings to the investigation regarding how an organisation functions will effect the measures used (Frisby, 1982). Views of how organisations function include organisations as; machines (Taylorism), organisms, cultures, political systems, and instruments of domination (Slack, 1997).

Given the conceptualisation of VSCs discussed earlier several of the above indicators can be eliminated from consideration. Firstly, the flat structure of VSCs (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985; Tomlinson, 1979) means that there is an extremely limited opportunity

for a hierarchy of authority. The only hierarchical distinction within a VSC is that between committee, sub-committee, and membership. Even within the committee there is likely to be very little hierarchy except for the most important positions being the Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman and/or President. The indicator of specialisation can be used to identify any change in the existing hierarchy of authority.

Secondly, because most sports do not require a high level of sports science and technical support to be played at the grass roots level there is relatively little distinction existing between the administrative and scientific operations of the organisation. In fact most VSCs would not have any sport science support functions as the NGB or the LA would normally provide any technical support where needed. The only distinction that could readily be drawn is that between the performance or coaching, administration and ground maintenance functions of the VSC.

Thirdly, this makes irrelevant the indicator measuring the size of the VSC's administration in relation to its other discernible functions because the organisation's key function is likely to be administration. That is, the administration of providing opportunities for the VSC's membership to pursue their interest in the VSC's sport.

Fourthly, as VSCs in the UK have an important social function (Hoggett and Bishop 1985; Tomlinson, 1979) the impersonal nature of the work relations as an indicator of bureaucracy is likely to be wholly inappropriate. Voluntary sports clubs are primarily vehicles through which a leisure activity is pursued and are therefore unlikely to contain 'work relations' per se. VSCs though, can provide the opportunity for career volunteerism or serious leisure (Stebbins, 1996) hence making volunteer work relations relevant but there is likely to be little opportunity for career stability in the way that Blau (1974) and Frisby (1982) intended. This is simply because VSCs are organised on voluntary labour and do not generally provide an environment for a

professional career, unlike NGBs. The only exception would be that of a professional sports coach. However, professional coaches are confined to certain types of VSCs, particularly tennis VSCs and even then only the wealthier ones, and sometimes one professional may coach at several VSCs. Nevertheless, professional careers and remuneration do not have to constitute relations between volunteers. Instead the formality of the work relations between volunteers may be just as apt. However, establishing the formality of inter-actions between volunteers presents methodological problems. Additionally, the formality of interactions between volunteers is likely to be operationalised more effectively by the indicator of formalisation. This is discussed shortly within this section.

We are then left with only a handful of relevant indicators of bureaucracy for UK VSCs. In fact the number of indicators have been reduced to a point where they constitute a limited series of elements of organisational structure rather than the overall level of bureaucracy in an organisation. From this point on the term indicators of structure will be used rather than indicators of bureaucracy. Confusion remains even with these few indicators of structure. Frisby (1982) and Blau (1974) consider complexity to be a separate indicator from specialisation whereas Hatch (1997) and Slack (1997) consider specialisation and complexity to be one and the same. Taking complexity and specialisation to be the same leaves five indicators of bureaucracy for VSCs. Table 13 lists these indicators. Hall (1963) suggests each of these indicators are relevant to small organisations and each will be discussed in turn. Suffice to note here that size is an important influence on these remaining indicators, and also that the indicators are often interdependent. Size will be discussed later in this section.

**Table 13: Indicators of structure applicable to voluntary sports clubs**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• organisational size</li><li>• centralisation of decision making</li><li>• specialisation</li><li>• formalisation</li><li>• professionalisation</li></ul>
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Daft (1992; 1998) believes that professionalism refers to the level of formal education and training of the organisation's members. Professionalisation would therefore be the process of increasing the level of education and training among the organisation's members. In the context of VSCs professionalisation would only apply to those in named voluntary roles and not the general membership. In referring to the professionalisation of Canadian NSOs Macintosh and Whitson (1990: p. 13-14) mean the:

evolution within provincial and national government departments and sport organizations of paid administrative and technical specialists. The function of these new 'professionals' is to pursue the development of their sport and their organization in more systematic and expert ways than was the case when these matters were in the hands of volunteer executive members of sport organizations.

Thibault et al. (1991) used this approach and discovered that the introduction of professional staff into voluntary sports organisations at the national level was associated with increases in measures of formalisation, specialisation, and the centralisation of decision making. However, decision making became decentralised over time. Only six organisations were examined in the study but it did have the advantage of being longitudinal.

There also exists another interpretation of the term professional. In the past voluntary organisations have, rightly or wrongly, been synonymous with enthusiastic amateurism (Handy, 1990). 'Professional' therefore became a dirty word as it was associated with employment and the bureaucracy of work with its rational means-end approach to tasks which was the antithesis of amateurism. However, Handy (1990: p. 9) suggests that within the context of voluntary organisations rather than



'professional' meaning the employment of paid administrators and technical specialists, it "means doing things well". Consequently, a volunteer in a named position within a VSC can have a professional attitude to their role yet remain a volunteer by not receiving payment. Earlier, Nichols (1998) suggested that voluntary roles in a VSC may be becoming professionalised in Handy's terms, due to higher expectations placed on a VSC's state of provision. These expectations may originate from the VSC's members and the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector.

There seems to be two ways in which professionalisation may occur in a VSC. It is not unimaginable that a VSC may employ the services of a professional either to administer the VSC on day-to-day basis or to provide coaching, technical or scientific services such as physiotherapy. This constitutes professionalisation in the sense of Macintosh and Whitson (1990) and Daft (1992; 1998). In the second sense, those occupying named voluntary roles within the VSC are expected or need to have a greater range of skills and perform better in those roles as there are greater expectations and demands placed them by society.

Specialisation or "complexity is concerned with the extent to which a sport organisation is differentiated. This differentiation may occur in three ways: horizontally, vertically, or spatially..." (Slack, 1997: p. 43). Spatial differentiation is of no relevance for VSCs as they are geographically specific. Horizontal complexity is increased through the differentiation of activities on one organisational level into task specific units, for instance creating individual positions for new tasks or splitting existing tasks. This might be apparent by an increase in the number of positions on a committee. An increase in the number of hierarchical levels in the organisation is characteristic of vertical differentiation. The introduction of a sub committee for example would represent vertical differentiation. An increase in either vertical or

horizontal differentiation may necessitate a greater degree of co-ordination and regulation throughout the organisation. This concerns formalisation.

Formalisation is “the extent to which mechanisms such as rules and regulations, job descriptions, and policies and procedures govern the operation of a sports organisation” (Slack, 1997: p. 49). Thibault et al. (1991) considered this to be the degree to which organisational tasks were performed in a regularised manner and specified in writing. For Daft (1992; 1998) formalisation concerns the amount of written documentation that dictates organisational behaviour and is often quantified by the amount of documentation within the organisation.

Studies measuring structural variables often use the variable of standardisation instead of formalisation (see Kikulis et al. 1995, 1989; Slack and Hinings, 1987; Theodoraki and Henry, 1994). Daft (1992) identifies standardisation as the extent to which similar practices are performed in a patterned and uniform manner. Formalisation then seems to be concerned with documenting policy and procedure where as standardisation is *the* prescribed behaviour. The two are obviously interrelated, but according to Blau (1974) and Frisby (1982) standardisation is not included as an indicator of bureaucracy and none of the studies using standardisation as a variable did so to measure bureaucracy (Kikulis et al. 1995, 1989; Slack and Hinings, 1987; and Theodoraki and Henry, 1994). Therefore, standardisation will not be used in this study as an indicator as it is more pertinent to individuals' behaviour than to organisational structure.

The centralisation of decision making was also used as a structural variable in those studies using standardisation. Slack and Hinings (1987: p. 188) refer to this as “the locus of authority within an organization for making decisions” (c.f. Thibault et al., 1991). This “determines the extent to which decision making is centralized at the top

of the organization or is decentralized to lower levels” (Kikulis, et al., 1995: p. 283). This is clearly related to the number of hierarchical levels within an organisation or vertical specialisation and is therefore included as an indicator of structure.

The size of an organisation has implications for the other indicators of structure within a VSC. The greater the size of the organisation, the more horizontal and vertical specialisation there is likely to be, along with formalisation and decentralisation (Pugh and Hinings, 1976, cited in Slack and Hinings, 1987).

Organisational size can feasibly be measured in several ways (Mullins, 1999). The most common measure is the number of members of an organisation (Hall et al., 1967; Mullins, 1999; Slack and Hinings, 1987). Daft (1992: p. 15, italics added) goes so far as to say that size “*is the organization’s magnitude as reflected in the number of people in the organization*”. Other measures of size relevant to VSCs might include, turnover, facilities or capital assets and floor space. However the indicator requiring greatest rationalisation and co-ordination, and therefore having the most direct link with organisational structure would be that of the number of members of the organisation.

One of the features of VSCs discussed in section 3.1.2 was that they did not have a highly formal structure. However, just like any organisation, the larger the VSC the more challenging the associated problems of co-ordination and regulation are likely to be and consequently relationships are likely to become more formal (Mullins, 1999). Hall (1963) and Hall et al. (1967) stated that there was little agreement on whether organisational size and specialisation or complexity were positively related, but what was clear was that the two concepts were quite distinct. Some studies placed great emphasis on size whilst others minimised its effects on structure. Hall et al. (1967) cite Hawley et al. (1965) and Haas et al. (1963) suggesting that the relationship

between size and structure may in fact be curvilinear. Thus, structure may increase disproportionately with size at first but then decrease with further organisational growth.

## **5.2 Conclusion and Implications for research**

The effects of being located within a societal sector subject to institutional pressures can be made apparent by using the concept of bureaucracy to elicit changes in an organisation's structure. Despite the concept of bureaucracy being associated with large organisations, a limited set of indicators of bureaucracy can be used to identify any change in the structure of VSCs associated with receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England. However, this select group of indicators is so limited that it represents a series of structural elements rather than the overall level of bureaucracy in an organisation.

The simple structure of VSCs limits the number of indicators that are useful in attempting to establish structural measures for these organisations. However, it is believed that five indicators can be of help. These are organisational size, centralisation of decision making, specialisation, formalisation, and professionalisation. A discussion of the methodology employed in the research and the operationalisation of the indicators relevant to VSCs continues in chapter 6.

## **6 Methodology**

The previous chapter outlined the theoretical framework within which the research objectives were established. However, the theory lacks definitive prescriptions about the methodological approach or tools to be used when investigating the research objectives. A popular but not exclusive approach within the theory is that of deduction. The deductive approach is normally associated with the realist ontology and objective epistemology of the positivist paradigm compared to the relativist ontology and subjective epistemology of the constructivist paradigm. The lack of methodological prescription is viewed more as an opportunity than a problem though. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to describe and evaluate the methodology used in addressing those research objectives.

The assumptions central to the version of institutional theory used here are implicit in the research objectives to be investigated and reflect the problem of adhering to neither the positivist or constructivist paradigm. The assumptions are that;

1. there is an exteriorised and objectified social reality separate from organisational actors in the social world, but we cannot know the social world independent of the ways we describe it because;
2. organisational actors have a role to play in exteriorising and objectifying the social world and thereby influencing its structure.

These assumptions have implications for the methodological, epistemological, and ontological assumptions of this investigation among others, but because these assumptions fall between the positivistic and constructivist paradigms they enable the researcher to shape the research in a way that he feels best addresses the research objectives. Consequently, the choice of paradigm for the research concerns finding a

philosophy that best accommodates the assumptions central to institutional theory and the research objectives established in the previous chapter.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) suggest that the positivist and constructivist research paradigms are best viewed not as disparate poles but as two ends of a continuum. Towards the centre of this continuum, “there are those... who have built bridges between the idea that there is a world out there independent of our interpretation of it (empiricism and positivism) and the need for researchers to understand the process by which people interpret [and construct] the world” (May, 1997; 1993: p. 7). Critical realism is a result of this bridge building. Reed (1997) believes there to be many theoretical positions consistent with critical realism and one of those who May (1993; 1997) suggests is building bridges is Giddens. Indeed, Pawson and Tilley (1997) and Reed (1997) believe that realist research should be based on a duality of structure, a concept propounded by Giddens (1976; 1979; 1984).

By introducing the concept of the duality of structure in section 4.2.6, Giddens’ theory of structuration (1976; 1979; 1984) was shown to be of use in mitigating institutional theorists’ tendency to adopt an over-deterministic position. But by building a bridge over the action structure divide structuration theory also leaves the researcher needing methodological guidance on how to conduct empirical research (Bryant and Jary 1991; Gayle, 1998; and Gregson, 1989). Giddens (1989) maintains that structuration theory is not intended to be imported wholesale into research but that its concepts and principles be employed selectively and that “research utilizing structuration theory should not be specified by methodological fiat” (Gayle, 1998: p. 67).

The researcher is then left unguided by structuration theory as to the prescribed methodological tools and approach to be used when investigating the research

objectives. However, critical realism, into which structuration theory fits (May, 1993; 1997), provides the required direction.

## **6.1 Critical realism**

Grounded in Bhaskar's (1978) realist theory of science, critical realism is a philosophy of social science that tempers positivists' attempts at applying the law like principles of natural science to social interaction with those of more constructivist philosophies believing that a single objective reality does not exist. Table 14 compares critical realism in relation to positivism and constructivism as the two extremes of Tashakkori and Teddlie's (1998) continuum of research paradigms. The methods used in this research will be justified according to a critical realist position when each method is introduced.

### **6.1.1 Ontology and epistemology**

Bhaskar's philosophy is based in the natural sciences and "specifies a general theory of natural necessity in which nature is presumed to exhibit real structures generating real necessities which can be transposed to the social realm" (Reed, 1997: p. 29). What is more, Bhaskar (1978: p. 13) suggests "that real structures exist independently of and are often out of phase with the actual patterns of events". Thus for Bhaskar structures pre-exist and operate independently of the social action they generate.

Bhaskar (1978) also distinguishes between the domain of empirically observable experiences of events influenced by structures and the domain of the real in which structures influencing social action reside. Social structures may produce observable experiences or inter-actions between agents in the empirical domain but the absence of observable experiences does not rule out the existence of underlying structures in

the real domain (Tsang and Kwan, 1999). Therefore we may never know of all structures in the social world if they have not resulted in empirically observable experiences. So there may always be things we don't know about the social world.

**Table 14: Critical realist, positivist and constructivist paradigms**

	Positivism	Critical realism	Constructivism
Methods	Quantitative.	<b>Quantitative and qualitative.</b>	Qualitative.
Logic	Deductive.	<b>Primarily deductive but also inductive.</b>	Inductive.
Epistemology	Objective point of view. Knower and known are separate.	<b>Objectivity and disengagement are encouraged despite the knower and known being linked. A single infallible truth is unachievable.</b>	Subjective point of view. Knower and known are inseparable.
Axiology	Inquiry is value free.	<b>As a single infallible truth is unachievable, a value judgement has to be made about what is the best understanding of a phenomenon.</b>	Inquiry is value bound.
Ontology	Naïve realism.	<b>Stratified nature of reality. Contextualised or embedded duality of structure.</b>	Relativism.
Causal linkages	Real causes temporally precedent to or simultaneous with effects.	<b>Causal outcomes result from pre-existing structures acting in context which are reproduced or transformed through action.</b>	All entities simultaneously shaping each other. Its impossible to distinguish causes from effects.

Adapted from Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998)

Society is not one large undifferentiated unit but consists of many layers of understanding. This is what "realists refer to [as] the embeddeness of all human action within a wider range of social processes" or "the *stratified nature of social*



*reality*" (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: p. 64, original italics). So whilst maintaining that reality in the social world is objective, realists believed it is also stratified. Therefore organisations in different positions within a societal sector will have different understandings of the same reality. Sport England's understanding of the reality upon which the sports policy sector is based may be different from the understanding held by VSCs. However, a researcher is in the privileged position of potentially achieving a greater understanding than those who inform his research as he is able to gain an understanding of each actor's view of reality. Thus, there exist various levels to our understanding of reality and it should be the aim of research to extend these layers of understanding in pursuit of the ultimate truth. However, critical realism holds that a single infallible truth is not achievable, instead research must aim to provide the best understanding available. This in itself is a contentious issue because the decision as to what constitutes the best possible understanding relies on a value judgement.

It has been established that like positivism, critical realism reaffirms the objectivity of the social world. Unlike positivism though, critical realism is sceptical of attempting objectivity where it involves the adoption of an impartial standpoint, independent of all perspectives and valid for all observers (Scott, 1998). This is because the stratified nature of reality creates differently positioned actors in terms of understanding and resources. Consequently, actors are likely to hold varying interpretations of reality according to their position within it.

Bhaskar's contention that mechanisms pre-exist action is understandable in natural science. However, when applied to social science it suggests that the prior emergence of relational properties and principles that inhere in social structures impinge on current actors as they unavoidably find themselves operating in pre-structured contexts and interests that shape the social struggles in which they are

implicated (Reed, 1997). Institutional theorists hold much the same position with their belief that norms and value systems structure action but have been criticised by DiMaggio (1988), Kikulis (2000) and Oliver (1991) for ignoring agency and interest.

Bhaskar's position is not held at the expense of agency though as he attributes causal power to agents in producing and transforming the structures or mechanisms of the social world through interaction. This would suggest, as Berger and Luckmann (1967) do, that the norms and value systems guiding action are social constructions.

Bhaskar (1978: p. 20) states:

that if science is to be possible the world must consist of enduring and transfactually active mechanisms; society must consist of an ensemble of powers irreducible to but present only in the internal actions of men; and men must be causal agents capable of acting self-consciously on the world.

Critical realism therefore insists that agency possesses its own causal powers that are evident in its interplay with structure (Reed, 1997). This brings us to structuration theory (Giddens, 1976; 1979; 1984) where, in a duality of structure, actors are able to use allocative and authoritative resources inherent in social structures to reproduce and modify those structures. However, it is unlikely that actors will have equal power to modify those structures as the resources required to do so are unequally distributed within the stratified nature of reality (Reed, 1997).

### **6.1.2 Causality**

The impossibility of attaining a single infallible truth of the social world precludes the establishment of invariable empirical laws as only tendencies can be identified. Structures are therefore only contingently related to empirically observable events (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Tsang and Kwan, 1999) which is why research may never discover all of the structures in society. In the sense that social science is based only on the structures that we have knowledge of through empirical investigation, and that

we understand the effect of these structures on action as tendencies and not laws, knowledge of these objective structures can only be a social product. This is evident in that our knowledge of the social world is gained through research but the structures that research uncovers independently pre-exist their discovery and that our understanding of the social world is constantly changing. So Collier (1994) suggests that it is important to distinguish between the transitive knowledge produced by social science, such as the shifting conceptual frameworks guiding research (Scott, 1998), and the intransitive object (reality) about which knowledge exists. Failure to recognise this encounters the 'epistemic fallacy' of reducing questions about 'what is' to questions of 'what we can know' (Collier, 1994).

The proposition that outcomes are contingent on structures implies that there are intervening influences that prevent the establishment of universal causality within society. Critical realists refer to this as the contextual conditioning of structure. Thus the context in which a structure operates can help to explain why the same structure is capable of producing different outcomes. Pawson and Tilley (1997: p. 70) expand, suggesting that:

it is the prior set of social rules, norms and values and interrelationships gathered in these places which sets limits on the efficacy of [structures]. It is thus futile for researchers to ignore and anonymize the contexts of their [research].

It is reasonable to add that context should also consider the agency of the individual in producing an outcome. The implication of this for institutional theory is that the resulting structure of organisations in a societal sector will not only be influenced by the institutional pressures of the sector but the context in which the institutional pressures are applied and the agency of the organisation. Additionally, it means that a direct cause and effect relationship between institutional pressures and organisational structure cannot be established.

### **6.1.3 Critical realism in the societal sector**

Despite having identified the complimentary nature of critical realism, structuration theory and institutional theory, methodological guidance is still lacking. Reed (1997: p. 33) relates critical realism to the study of organisations:

Organizational forms consist of relational structures into which people enter and pre-exist the people who enter into them, and whose activity reproduces or transforms them. They are structures by the virtue of the fact that they have spatially, temporally and socially enduring institutional properties that are irreducible to the activities of contemporary agents. Yet these same structures derive from the historical actions which generated them and which establish a structured context for current action.

From this view, Reed draws five implications of critical realism for organisational research. Firstly, he advocates deduction by suggesting that research into organisations must use theoretical frameworks that assign ontological importance to both structure and agency and their interplay. This has been achieved in this instance by introducing Oliver's (1991) concept of strategic responses to institutional theory. Secondly, it is necessary to recognise the ability of structures to constrain and enable action. Not only do institutional pressures in the societal sector proscribe organisational action but they also prescribe and enable it by providing the options of, motivations and reasons for action. Thirdly, social structures must be recognised as competing and sometimes contradictory. Because of the many institutional pressures in society there is inevitably some conflict between institutions within organisations and societal sectors. The varying content of institutional pressures in society may explain why some pressures are resisted and some are accepted by organisations. Fourthly, Reed (1997: p. 34) suggests that:

as a mediative concept that analytically identifies the point of contact between relational structures and social conduct, 'organisation' refers to configurations of position-practices that are struggled over by social actors in their attempt to defend or enhance their assets within enduring hierarchies of economic, political and social power.

Although Reed's fourth point concerns intra-organisation analysis, it can also be applied to inter-organisation analysis. To do this, instead of talking about individuals as actors we must talk of organisations as actors. All we have done is to move the level of analysis upwards. The point of contact between relational structures and social conduct for inter-organisation analysis becomes the position-practices between organisations such as Sport England and VSCs in the sports policy sector rather than the position-practices between individuals within organisations. Therefore Reed is essentially suggesting that if organisational research fails to consider the unequal distribution of power and the struggle of differently positioned actors in the sports policy sector to improve their legitimacy and position in social, economic and political hierarchies it cannot explain the nature of organisations.

Finally, Reed believes that Realist explanation and critique in organisation analysis is most likely to be advanced through in-depth analysis of the multiple mechanisms and tendencies that reproduce or transform particular organisational forms and the outcomes they produce for social actors. Thus an investigation of VSCs' structure in the sports policy sector cannot preclude all other influences besides the institutional pressures conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund. Instead the research must be designed in such a way as to be open to other possible influences on VSCs' structure. This provides an excellent justification for the use of qualitative in-depth case studies in this research as Yin (1994) identifies case studies as suitable for exploring 'how' and 'why' issues.

## **6.2 Research design**

At this stage it is useful to re-state the research objectives established in the previous chapter. The objectives of this research are to;

1. To identify the critical organisations for VSCs in receipt of Lottery sports funding from Sport England.
2. To analyse the institutional pressures conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund and of other critical organisations to which VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding are exposed.
3. To investigate how the structure of VSCs may be changing with receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England.
4. To establish the responses of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding to the institutional pressures of the Sport England's Lottery Fund using Oliver's (1991) strategic responses.

Although the philosophical debate between those favouring positivistic methods and those favouring interpretative methods has not been solved, a critical realist perspective allows quantitative and qualitative methods to be combined within a single study. The research was therefore carried out in three distinct phases using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods; qualitative interviews with Sport England informants, a telephone survey of VSCs receiving Lottery sports funding in the latter half of 1996, and six qualitative case studies of VSCs selected from the survey respondents. Table 15 summarises each of these phases.

**Table 15: Three phases of the research**

Phase	Description	Research objective addressed	Timetable
1	<b>Sport England Interviews</b> Semi-structured interviews with key informants from Sport England's Lottery Fund, Education and Training Programme and Volunteer Investment Programme.	1,2,3 and 4	December 1998– Mar 1999
2	<b>Telephone Survey</b> Quantitative survey of VSCs awarded Lottery sports funding in the second half of 1996 to establish whether structural change had taken place within those VSCs.	3	February and March 1999
3	<b>Case Studies</b> Six qualitative case studies of VSCs selected from phase two. Use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis to gain an understanding of structural change or inertia within the VSC. Also to identify any institutional pressures conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund and each VSC's response to these pressures.	1,2,3 and 4	August 1999– February 2000

### **6.3 Phase one: Sport England interviews**

Interviews were conducted with three representatives of Sport England – a Senior Monitoring Officer and Senior Case Officer from the Lottery Fund, and also the Education and Training Programme Manager responsible for the Volunteer Investment Programme (VIP). The interviews were conducted at the headquarters of Sport England in London between December 1998 and March 1999 and were of 40 – 50 minutes in length. The purpose of these interviews was to investigate all four research objectives of this thesis.

The Lottery Fund is administered from the head office of Sport England and so it was necessary to interview informants at this level rather than regional Sport England staff in the sector. These national level informants are closer to the origin of institutional pressures in the sector and so would have a better understanding of the existence, rationale and operation of policies and conditions constituting those institutional pressures. Two important procedures of Sport England's Lottery Fund are the assessment of applications and the monitoring of awards. It was logical to interview informants who were key personnel in these functions. Although not directly involved in the administration of the Lottery Fund, the Education and Training Programme Manager was selected for interview to inform the research of broader issues concerning the inter-relationship of the voluntary sector in sport, Sport England's policies, and its Lottery Fund.

Cassell and Symon (1994) explain that qualitative interviews can vary from a broad focus, such as that used in ethnographic studies, to a narrower focus on particular topics. The interviews used in this research clearly had to focus on a particular topic - the operation of Sport England's Lottery Fund. They also state that, although never

highly structured, interviews vary from being relatively spontaneous loosely structured discussions to being quite detailed, though still with flexible interview guides.

The exploratory nature of these interviews meant that a highly detailed or structured approach was unsuitable as the interview was directed towards learning about activities and processes that could not be observed directly (Taylor and Bogdan 1998) and of which the interviewer had relatively little knowledge. After all, it is difficult to ask detailed questions of a subject without having a prior and detailed knowledge of it. Instead, interviews were organised around key issues pertaining to the Lottery Fund and Sport England's relationship with VSCs to elicit the norms and values underpinning the application, award and monitoring processes of the Fund's Community Capital Project scheme. The key issues to be discussed were informed by a document analysis of Sport England's literature on its Lottery Fund. Appendix 1 shows the schedules for the three Sport England interviews. Table 16 shows how the questions in appendix 1 served to investigate each of the four research objectives.

**Table 16: Phase one interview questions by research objective**

Research objective	Interview question no. (appendix 1)
1	1,2,9,10,
2	3,4,5,16,17,18,19,20,23,24,25,26,30,31,38,41,44
3	12,14,18
4 Cause	19,20,39
Constituent	9,10,30
Content	3,4,10,11,19,20,23,24,28,38,41,42,43
Control	16,17,25,26,28,24
Context	25,26,30,41

According to critical realism, actors in differently positioned roles within a large organisation will bring a different perspective to the issues being discussed (Robinson, 1999; Veal 1997) because of the stratified nature of reality (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Therefore, a single schedule was not appropriate for all three informants. Instead schedules were developed according to each informant's role and any issues arising from any previous interviews, see appendix 1. Therefore



informants from different parts of Sport England could be interviewed on the same issues whilst bringing their own position-based perspective to the investigation. Such loosely structured interviews enabled the informant to answer questions within their own frame of reference (May, 1997) but this may have led to the informant responding in 'institutional speak' where the interviewee simply reiterates the official policy and justification of that position, especially when interviewed at work.

However, such 'institutional speak' is not necessarily a bad thing if it helps to identify the values and norms of Sport England as the central actor in the sports policy sector. Indeed Taylor and Bogdan (1998: p. 89) suggest that under this approach to interviewing interviewees are informants in the truest sense of the word.

They act as observers – eyes and ears in the field – for the researcher. The role of such informants is not just to reveal their own views, but to describe what happened and how others viewed it.

Full transcripts were made of the three interviews. The interviews were then analysed by identifying the normative, mimetic and coercive pressures of Sport England's Lottery Fund from the transcripts. These three types of institutional pressure were defined in the previous chapter. Finnegan (1996: p. 148, original emphasis) gives a cautionary note when identifying policy statements which constitute normative prescriptions. She states:

Explicitly normative statements (i.e. those which clearly state that something *ought* to be done) are relatively easy to recognize and criticize. But, in other cases, what are really normative statements about what *ought* to be are often expressed in language more suited to describing what it *is*. When it is a question of policy statements it is often hard to sort out just how far the statement is merely an empty ideal for propaganda purposes and how far a guiding principle for practice... However, difficult to answer as it is, this is often a question worth asking, and a researcher who seems not to have considered such issues could certainly be criticized as naïve.

Finnegan's point was kept in mind when analysing the transcripts and documents in this phase of the research but, as she suggests, it was difficult to differentiate

between policy rhetoric and policy guiding practice until the case studies were investigated in phase three.

Phase one of the research therefore identified what Sport England expected of a potentially successful applicant in terms of the content of its application and its operation, the norms and values underlying Sport England's policy generally and Lottery Fund in particular and the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector channelled through its Lottery Fund. This informed the development of the telephone survey in phase two and allowed the research in phase three to assess how each case study VSC had reacted to the pressures identified.

#### **6.4 Phase two: Telephone survey**

Survey methods in the social sciences are usually categorised into two broad types – descriptive and analytical (Robinson, 1999). Descriptive surveys are designed to establish the characteristics of individuals, groups or situations and the frequency of these within a given population (Robinson 1999), and also to provide some indication of the prevalence of a phenomenon (Yin 1994). Analytic surveys aim to test hypotheses about the relationship of two variables but can only establish an associational and not a causal relationship between the two. Maintaining critical realism's position that only in depth analysis of multiple influences will sufficiently explain the structure of an organisation in the sports policy sector, the purpose of the telephone survey was not to establish causality between receipt of Lottery funding and the structure of VSCs. Instead, a descriptive survey was an ideal way to (a) establish whether the organisational structures of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding had changed and, (b) quantify any change during the period under investigation. Quantifying any change in the structure of VSCs enabled the creation of a typology of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding which informed the selection of qualitative case

studies in phase three. Opinions or attitudes were not sought, rather factual information about changes to the VSCs' structures. The telephone survey therefore addressed the third research issue.

A survey comparing the structures of VSCs that had received Lottery funding with those that had not was not possible because of the absence of a sampling frame from which to draw a sample of VSCs without funding. This is a common problem with surveys of special populations (Frey, 1989). The fluid and elusive nature of VSCs would have made contacting them without a sampling frame even more difficult. Indeed even with a sampling frame VSCs proved difficult enough to contact. As a result a high number of non-contacts was achieved in the survey, see section 6.4.1.

In the interests of validity any survey must aim to maximise the number of responses. A telephone survey therefore had several advantages over other forms of survey. Firstly, Frey (1989) estimates that 40-50% is the maximum response rate for a telephone survey. Surveying a special population can produce a higher response rate because, as in this instance, the researcher is inquiring into a topic that is of interest and great concern to the respondent. The lower response rates and greater response times of postal surveys (Frey 1989) combined with the fluid and elusive nature of the VSC sector, seemed to make a telephone survey the only practical means of quickly contacting, and following up, a large number of geographically dispersed VSCs whilst minimising expenditure of time and money. Secondly, the cost of the telephone survey was negligible. The total cost of phone calls including follow up calls were probably significantly less than the total cost of producing and posting the initial survey, and then sending out reminders and duplicate copies.

The predicted lower response rate achieved through a postal survey should not be taken as the reluctance of respondents in VSCs to discuss their VSC's activities as most people involved in such an organisation are often keen to talk about *their* VSC. Therefore, and thirdly, it was thought likely that once contact had been made by telephone with a respondent they would be more than willing to co-operate. This is not to say that refusals were not anticipated, but that the response rate was likely to be higher than that produced using alternative means of conducting the survey. Chanan (1993) found that the more established and formalised groups were likely to respond to a survey because they were most able to provide the required information. Perhaps it is likely that a population of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding, on the whole, were likely to be more organised than VSCs in general and therefore produce a higher response rate.

Telephone surveys are not free of problems though. Frey (1989) notes that telephone surveys of special groups have been disadvantaged by the lack of a sampling frame or comprehensive list containing the telephone numbers of potential respondents. This problem presented itself when Sport England refused to release the telephone numbers of VSCs in the sampling frame. This will be expanded upon in section 6.4.1.

Telephone surveys may also have a negative image as they are often associated with market research or 'cold calling' sales pitches. This may affect the respondent's willingness to participate. In which case, the introductory statement about the research and its relevance to the potential respondent is all the more important. The absence of the interviewer in face-to-face contact meant that it was much easier for the respondent to refuse to participate in, or to terminate the survey (Frey, 1989). However, the ability of the researcher to explain and allay fears of the respondent is another benefit provided by the use of a telephone survey over postal surveys.

### **6.4.1 Sampling**

A sample can be defined as "a subset of the population that is used to gain information about the entire population" (Henry, 1990: p.11). In this case the population was all the VSCs that had been awarded by Sport England's Lottery Fund in the latter half of 1996. The sampling frame used was the Lottery Link Newsletter, produced by Sport England, listing all awards made from its Lottery Fund during the summer/autumn of 1996 (English Sports Council, 1996). A list of all awards made for the whole of 1996 was not available at the time of the investigation. This frame therefore included awards made to LAs and NGBs as well as VSCs, but it was only the latter which formed the sample. It was hoped at the outset to conduct a 100% sample of the population but this was quickly recognised as unachievable due to the implications of Sport England not being able to provide a list of the telephone numbers of VSCs in the sample for data protection reasons. The implications of this are expanded upon later in this section.

Selection of the frame was important for two reasons. It was thought that the full impact of the award might not materialise immediately after receipt. For this reason a significant amount of time needed to be left between the announcement of the award and the point of inquiry during which time the project would, it was thought, have been implemented and the impact become apparent. However, too great a period of time between these two points would hinder the respondent's recall of pre-lottery structures in the VSC. So the sampling frame had to be chosen carefully in the light of recall problems and also the emergence of the award's impact on the VSC.

Hence awards to VSCs announced in the Lottery Link Newsletter (English Sports Council, 1996) were taken as the sampling frame. The result was that 309 awards

were made to VSCs during the summer/autumn period of 1996 for which contact names and telephone numbers of any committee member or bid co-ordinator were sought. Of these 309, the constituents were lawn tennis clubs (n=66), cricket clubs (n=66), bowls clubs (n=47) and association football clubs (n=33), and others (n=97).

As mentioned earlier a major hurdle to obtaining contact names and numbers for these VSCs was Sport England's refusal to supply a list of contacts for data protection reasons. Contact numbers then had to be sought from LAs which presented several problems.

1. Respective LAs for each VSC were not listed in the Lottery Link Newsletter. This meant contacting county councils to find out within which LA's boundary the VSC resided. The dissolution of some county councils and the establishment of unitary authorities further complicated this task.
2. The above problem meant that it took longer than anticipated to obtain contact numbers for the VSCs.
3. The ability and willingness of LAs to provide the desired information was highly variable. Few LAs objected for data protection reasons. More frequently though, authorities were simply unable to provide the required information because they did not maintain a list of contact numbers for VSCs in their area. Of those that did maintain a list the information was highly variable and it had sometimes not been updated for several years, hence committee members and contact numbers had changed. In most cases the LA could not provide contact numbers of specific people the researcher wanted to contact, so the researcher had to contact a second representative of the VSC to contact the first. Occasionally, LAs who did maintain and update their records were unable to provide contact numbers because VSCs may have changed their name since the award was made. This is not to ignore those LAs that provided numerous contact names and numbers

quickly, and if not immediately available would often consult other sources for the researcher.

4. Contact names and numbers were requested from NGB's especially where large numbers of VSCs from one particular sport were awarded. In some cases, such as the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), NGBs refused to co-operate because of the time and effort involved. Where possible regional and county level governing bodies were contacted. NGBs proved more successful and accurate as a source of telephone numbers as they updated their records more frequently. However, even NGBs are not immune to the problem of securing accurate contact information about their VSCs as the LTA found in its recent survey of 350 tennis clubs (LTA, 2000). The LTA encountered the same problems experienced in this research with wrong numbers, clubs not being listed with directory enquiries and calls being continually met with answer phones. For the research in this thesis ninety-two VSCs out of the three hundred and nine sample could not be contacted for one or more of these reasons, see Table 19.

#### **6.4.2 Question development**

A thirty item questionnaire was developed to establish whether there had been a change in the structure of VSCs within the sample. In accordance with Frisby (1982), Slack and Hinings (1987, 1994), Kikulis et al. (1989) and Thibault et al. (1991) structures of specialisation and formalisation were tested, but centralisation of decision making was substituted with professionalisation. The flat and simple structure of VSCs (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985; Tomlinson, 1979) means that decision-making is normally already centralised and can only be decentralised to sub-committees within the organisation. Furthermore, Theodoraki and Henry (1994) note that measures of centralisation are unreliable and not suited to quantitative investigation. Instead, this indicator was investigated through qualitative means. Therefore, it was thought more relevant to investigate the change in the number of

paid professional staff within the VSC as professionalisation is another indicator of structure (Frisby, 1982). The content of the questions investigating specialisation and formalisation were also based on structures examined by Slack and Hinings (1987; 1994) and Thibault et al. (1991). See appendix 4 for a copy of the telephone questionnaire and Table 17 for the structural measures for which each question was intended to test. Definitions of specialisation and formalisation established in section 5.1.1 were employed in the survey. Two meanings of professionalisation were identified in section 5.1.1. In the telephone survey professionalisation was defined as the change in the total number of professionals in the VSC's structure. This covers both self-employed professionals such as some coaches and professionals employed directly by the VSC such as club managers.

Under section 5.1.1 it was noted that the degree of structure in an organisation was associated with the organisation's size as measured through the number of people. The number of members and the change in this number was therefore established by the survey to indicate the size of a VSC and to contribute to a calculation of its overall level of structure.

Absolute change in the level of structure rather than relative change was of interest. The questions examining the indicators of structure (size, specialisation, formalisation, and professionalisation) were designed with this in mind and facilitated pre-bid and post-award comparison of structures. However, it is not just the questions asked in a questionnaire that determine its effectiveness.



**Table 17: Size, formalisation, specialisation and profesionalisation survey questions**

Question number in survey (see appendix 4)	Structural indicator (see appendix 4 for coding of survey questions)
	<b>Size</b>
7	What is the number of members in the club at present, including junior, senior and social members?
8	What was the number of members in the club before the lottery bid, including junior, senior and social members?
	<b>Formalisation</b>
3	Was a constitution for the club developed as part of the Lottery bid?
13	Do job descriptions exist for non-committee volunteers at present?
14	Did job descriptions exist for non-committee volunteers pre-bid?
20	Do job descriptions exist for committee members at present?
21	Did job descriptions exist for committee members pre-bid?
	<b>Specialisation</b>
5	Was a specialist junior coach appointed after the award?
9	What is the number of non-committee volunteers in the club at present?
10	What was the number of non-committee volunteers before deciding to apply for Lottery funding?
11	Do non-committee volunteers receive training at present?
12	Did non-committee volunteers receive training pre-bid?
16	Number of committee positions at present?
17	Number of committee positions pre-bid?
18	Is training given to committee members at present?
19	Was training given to committee members pre-bid?
	<b>Professionalisation</b>
23	Number of paid professional positions pre-bid?
24	What were these paid professional positions?
25	Number of paid professional positions dissolved as a result of being awarded Lottery funding?
26	What were these paid professional positions that were dissolved?
27	Number of paid positions at present?
28	What are these present paid professional positions?
29	Number of paid professional positions created as a result of applying for and being awarded Lottery funding?
30	What were these positions that were created as a result of applying for and being awarded Lottery funding?

### **6.4.3 Determinants of response**

Oppenheim (1992) suggests that the way in which the potential respondents are to be approached and managed is crucial in securing their co-operation as refusals for telephone surveys usually occur during the introductory comments made by the interviewer or around the first question (Frey, 1989). Therefore the interviewer's introduction to a survey is crucial. According to Oppenheim (1992) there are three

determinants of response in surveys; intrinsic, extrinsic and situational factors. Table 18 explains these determinants in relation to telephone questionnaires.

Intrinsic factors include the topic under investigation, the length of the survey, and the rapport between the interviewer and respondent. As already mentioned the topic of this survey concerned a subject that was likely to be of central interest to the respondents. This probably helped to minimise refusal rates, if not increase responses. It would seem common sense that the longer the survey, the more likely the respondents are to drop out midway through the survey. However, Frey (1989) cites several studies (Colombotos, 1969; Rogers, 1976; Dillman, 1978; and Jordan et al., 1980) as using telephone surveys of twenty to fifty minutes in length, without any unusual problems, excessive refusals or terminations. Nevertheless, the length of the survey was kept to a minimum duration of about 7-10 minutes, although in extreme cases respondent verbosity resulted in interviews lasting just under 50 minutes.

**Table 18: Determinants of response to the telephone survey**

Determinant of response	Example	Mitigating Strategy
Intrinsic influence	The research topic, survey length, and researcher–respondent rapport.	Maintain effectiveness of the survey whilst minimising its length. Good verbal self-presentation.
Extrinsic influence	How the respondent was selected for the survey, organisations sponsoring the research, and issues of anonymity and confidentiality.	Inform the respondent how their telephone number was obtained. Explain how the information gathered will be used. Guarantee confidentiality and anonymity. Assure that Sport England or their NGB did not sponsor the research.
Situational influence	Respondents being uncontactable, contact being made at an inconvenient time, or the researcher being given an incorrect number.	Four call back attempts made for each possible contact. Arrange a more convenient time to call back. Cross check telephone numbers with two sources (i.e. LA and NGB) if possible.

The absence of face-to-face contact meant that physical presentation was of no concern, but good verbal self-presentation was critical in order to establish some kind

of rapport with the respondent. The lack of face-to-face contact can inhibit this due to the absence of body language such as facial expressions and gestures, leaving only tone of voice, verbal expressions, speed of diction, and the content of the interviewer's speech with which to convey an image of the interviewer and the research. The absence of face-to-face contact meant that it was much easier for the respondent to refuse to participate in or terminate the survey (Frey, 1989).

The extrinsic influences on a respondent's participation include an explanation of how the respondent was selected and contacted for interview, any sponsoring organisations, and assurances of confidentiality. It was important in this instance to state to the respondent that their telephone number was not obtained from Sport England, that the overall results of the survey would be anonymous and all responses would be confidential. It was also important to highlight that the survey was independent and not sponsored by Sport England or any NGB because the respondent might have exaggerated their responses to indicate that the VSC has been successful and complied with its funding conditions. For instance it might have lead to an exaggerated figure for the number of members the VSC had attracted since realising its Lottery project. It would also have been unethical to let the respondent assume that the survey was being carried out for Sport England or a NGB. Indeed, one respondent was heard to cover the phone and say to another "It's the Lottery, they're doing a check up".

The third and final determinant of response was situational factors. Where contact could not be made with a potential informant, four attempts at calling back were made in line with Frey's (1989) suggestion. When contact was made at an inconvenient time, a call back time was arranged. Following up initial non-contacts could be made more frequently and quickly with a telephone survey than with a postal survey, thus

saving cost and time. When an incorrect number was obtained, the number was cross-checked with LA and NGB sources where possible.

#### **6.4.4 Piloting**

Piloting is a fundamental process in the administration of a survey (Lavrakas 1993). Potential problems with procedures and questions can be teased out, along with the level of interviewer productivity (i.e. number of interviews per hour) and the maximum, minimum and average time taken to conduct each survey (Lavrakas, 1993). Respondents too, can be asked about questions that may have posed difficulties (Frey, 1989). However, piloting cannot remove or predict all the problems likely to be encountered (Moser and Kalton, 1971).

The questionnaire was piloted on twenty-five VSCs in line with Frey's (1989) recommendation of 20-30 respondents being satisfactory for a pilot. There were several non-contacts due to incorrect numbers, but no refusals. These pilot surveys were included in the sample from which the case studies were selected. None of the VSCs contacted in the pilot stage were selected as a case study though.

A total of seven minor alterations were made to the questionnaire. See appendix 4 for the final questionnaire and appendix 5 for a copy of the pilot questionnaire. The first change made was to the introductory speech read to the respondent before embarking on the questionnaire. Reassurances about the independence of the research from Sport England were added and information about questionnaire procedures dropped because it was felt that they were unnecessary and mostly forgotten by respondents after the first question. Other adjustments involved adding questions 15 and 22 to the final questionnaire regarding whether the demands on committee and non-committee volunteers had changed or remained the same since

receiving Lottery funding. Additional answer options of 'NGB' and 'FSA' (Foundation for Sport and the Arts) were inserted into question 1 and the option of 'disabled access' into question 4 to incorporate those frequently mentioned by respondents. Appendix 5 shows these changes.

Four observations about the survey were made during the piloting phase and a further two at the end of the survey.

1. The time taken to conduct the questionnaire with each respondent was much greater than at first assumed. Initially it was hoped to conduct six or seven surveys an hour but the actual rate achieved was only three an hour at best. The shortest time noted for the completion of a survey was seven minutes and the longest just less than fifty minutes. In addition to the time taken to conduct the questionnaire, each questionnaire had to be administered and the database updated to record the researcher's comments and to show a completed survey or reasons for an unsuccessful attempt.
2. Difficulties were encountered in controlling the respondents which increased the contact time with them. Respondents were sometimes verbose on a subject that was close to their heart, they often contextualised their answers and frequently drifted from the focus of the question offering opinions on the National Lottery, Sport England and the general state of their VSC. Consequently, the anticipated time of just less than ten minutes to complete a survey was in reality more like 20-30 minutes. In some ways this was a positive problem as it added to the researcher's tacit understanding of VSCs and Sport England's Lottery Fund. In other ways it clouded the purpose of each questionnaire with the respondent and it slowed the time taken to conduct phase two, putting the research behind schedule.
3. The insensitivity of the survey to the heterogeneity of what is often termed 'the voluntary sector' (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985) became apparent. For example,

many VSCs had all their volunteers incorporated on to the main committee, others were run by a one-man committee with no formally named positions. There seemed to be a great variation in the title and function of committee positions with one member often occupying more than one position. The degree of formality surrounding each VSC varied and occasionally VSCs awarded funding were part of larger multi-sport, social, working men's, or workplace clubs. One VSC was even registered as a limited company meaning that its committee members were not just volunteers but directors of a company.

4. Respondents encountered problems when quantifying the number of non-committee volunteers pre-bid and post-award. Respondents would often ask "it depends what you mean by a volunteer?" This problem was anticipated however, and the definition of volunteering used by the National Survey of Volunteering (Davis Smith, 1998) was adapted to help the respondent. A volunteer is then someone who spends time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the VSC.
5. After the pilot phase, two observations were made. Firstly, using Oppenheim's (1992) determinants of response, it is evident that all non-responses were the result of situational factors. For instance contact numbers were often wrong or 'number unobtainable'. Often respondents were simply unobtainable because they were rarely at home or calls were continually met by answerphones. Secondly, the VSC's situation meant that sometimes respondents were unable to participate in the survey. Several were in fact unable to participate because they had not drawn on their Lottery funding for various reasons. Projects had not been started or remained unfinished at the time of inquiry, terms and conditions could not be agreed between stakeholders, two VSCs had temporarily gone out of existence due to fires and another had been created as a result of receiving funding. The latter VSC therefore had no pre-bid history, which prevented pre-bid and post-award comparisons of organisational structure.

6. Intrinsically, respondents were willing to participate. There were no drop-outs and no refusals. Table 19 gives a breakdown of the reasons for non-response.

**Table 19: Telephone survey responses and non-responses**

<b>Total sample size</b>		<b>309</b>
Bowls	47	
Cricket	66	
Football	33	
Lawn tennis	67	
Others	96	
<b>Non-responses</b>		<b>121</b>
No telephone number obtained for VSC	92	
VSCs for which numbers were obtained		
Contact couldn't be made	17	
Contact made but VSC ineligible	12	
Refusals/drop outs	0	
<b>Number of VSCs contacted</b>		<b>100</b>
Bowls	30	
Cricket	16	
Football	10	
Lawn tennis	23	
Others	21	
<b>Clubs not contacted</b>		<b>88</b>

Contact numbers for a total of 92 VSCs in the sample could not be obtained. This reduced the maximum possible response from 309 to 217. In the course of obtaining 100 responses it was found that 17 VSCs could not be contacted because of incorrect telephone numbers. Cross checking between the Yellow Pages, NGB and LA sources proved fruitless. The LTA reported exactly the same problems with its survey of 350 tennis clubs (LTA, 2000) and the LTA was in a better position than most to access the telephone numbers of its clubs. The maximum possible response for this survey was therefore reduced to 200. When contacted, a further 12 VSCs were not eligible to participate in the survey for the reasons identified in point five above. This left a maximum possible response of 188 VSCs. With the likelihood of encountering more incorrect numbers and ineligible VSCs while attempting to obtain these 188 responses, with each questionnaire taking longer than originally expected and with the telephone survey already behind schedule it was decided to stop the survey after 100 responses had been obtained. Thus a trade-off was made between the

representativeness of the survey and the timetabling of the research in favour of the latter. Nevertheless, at 100 responses the survey achieved a 46% response rate of all possible responses (n=217) which falls within Frey's suggestion of 40-50% as the maximum response for a telephone survey. It also exceeds the 36% response rate to Allison's (2000) postal survey of VSCs.

The percentage of all bowls clubs surveyed from the sample (64%) was higher than the other sports because bowls clubs were easier to contact. Committee members of bowls clubs are perhaps more likely to be retired and available during the day. Also the seasonal nature of sport meant that the time of year at which the survey was conducted was not the outdoor bowls season. The contacts were therefore likely to be more available in the winter, although this is not to ignore the playing of indoor bowls. The same could also be said for tennis clubs, which were the second highest percentage of surveyed clubs at 34%.

#### **6.4.5 Typology construction**

Miller and Friesen (1984) suggest two ways to identify the changing structure of organisations. The first of these is based on conceptual distinctions such as Weber's ideal type bureaucracy (see Table 12). The obvious problem with this approach is that the distinctions are not empirically derived. Consequently, Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy may not reflect any changes taking place within VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding.

The second approach considered by Miller and Friesen is that of empirically established taxonomies of organisational forms. This method overcomes the problem of the conceptual approach in that it would reflect actual changes taking place within the VSCs in question. Slack and Hinings (1994) employed this method in their longitudinal research. They measured indicators of organisational structure in



Canadian NSOs in 1984 and again in 1986/7. The aim was to ascertain the degree of change that had taken place as a consequence of the introduction of a four year funding cycle of NSOs by the Canadian government in 1983, with the obligation that each NSO would produce a four year plan for their sport. Taxonomies of organisational forms in 1984 and in 1986/7 were then developed using cluster analysis. This allowed the research to identify whether the organisational forms of NSOs had become more or less homogeneous over time.

Although this method is perhaps more useful than the conceptual approach, it is by no means faultless. The distinction between one cluster of organisational forms and another is largely open to interpretation though as "most cluster analysis methods are heuristics (simple 'rules of thumb'). They are little more than plausible algorithms that can be used to create clusters of cases" (Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1984: p. 14). This leads Aldenderfer and Blashfield to conclude that different clustering methods can and do generate different solutions to the same data set. The fact that the clusters are identified through the method's interpretation of the data set suggests that cluster analysis imposes artificially created distinctions on the data. Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1984: p. 16) make this exact point:

The strategy of cluster analysis is structure-seeking although its operation is structure-imposing. That is, clustering methods are used to discover structure in data that is not readily apparent by visual inspection or by appeal to other authority... A clustering method will always place objects into groups, and these groups may be radically different in composition when different clustering methods are used. The key to using cluster analysis is knowing when these groups are 'real' and not merely imposed on the data by the method.

Moreover, Slack and Hining's (1994) approach was not suited to the purposes of this thesis. The third research objective of this study only required that the structure of VSCs be investigated in the light of receiving Lottery funding and not that any increase or decrease in the homogeneity of these structures be identified in the sample. Nevertheless, an empirically derived but broad taxonomic approach was

used in the current research to identify those VSCs that had experienced increased or reduced structural complexity, or no change in their structure since receiving Lottery funding. This allowed a natural and more 'real' taxonomy of the organisations to emerge from the results rather than a taxonomy being imposed by the method.

Besides quantifying structural change, the purpose of the telephone survey was therefore to produce a typology of VSCs awarded Lottery funding in the summer/autumn 1996. Selection of the case studies, through which the impact of the award on VSCs would be investigated using qualitative means, was based on this typology. The typology was based on results from 100 responses and holds the assumption that receipt of Lottery funding means that the VSCs have been subjected to the generic institutional pressures exerted by the Lottery Fund. It is recognised that Sport England attaches more specific conditions to Lottery funding in response to the particulars of each VSC. The pattern of the 100 responses to the survey can be seen in Table 19.

The degree of change in each VSC's structure was quantified by calculating a structural score. Positive scores indicated an increase in structural complexity, negative scores a reduction, and a score of zero meant no change. However, this does not indicate a causal link between receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England and structural change in the receiving VSC. Instead, the precise reasons for structural change were elicited through qualitative case studies. This was thought to be the best way of understanding the reasons for structural change or inertia in the VSCs that had received Lottery funding as it would enable potentially multiple causes of structural change or inertia to be identified. This is consistent with critical realism's proposition that only in-depth analysis of multiple mechanisms can produce a

sufficient explanation of a phenomenon or causality within the stratified nature of reality.

Structural scores were calculated by summing the changes in the size of the organisation and in the level of professionalisation, specialisation, and formalisation. Questions in the survey that were used to calculate structural scores are listed in Table 20. Questions 9 and 10 from Table 17, concerning the change in the number of non-committee volunteers, were excluded from this calculation because it was felt that an increase in the number of non-specialised volunteers did not constitute an increase in the specialisation of a VSC. However, where non-committee volunteers received training (questions 11 and 12) or where job descriptions existed governing their roles (questions 13 and 14), this was considered to represent specialisation and formalisation respectively and was included in the calculation of the structural scores. Questions 24, 26, 28 and 30 concerning professionalisation were also excluded from the calculation of structural scores because they had no bearing on the change in the level of professionalisation within a VSC. These questions concerned whether the professional positions being created or removed were committee or non-committee positions. Remaining were those questions (23, 25, 27 and 29) that investigated the change in the number of professional personnel and which contributed to the structural scores.

**Table 20: Questions contributing to structural scores**

Question number in survey (see appendix 4)	Question	Contribution to structural score
	<b>Size</b>	
7	What is the number of members in the club at present, including junior, senior and social members?	1-50=1 51-100=2 101-150=3
8	What was the number of members in the club before the lottery bid, including junior, senior and social members?	151-200=4 and so on
	<b>Formalisation</b>	
3	Was a constitution for the club developed as part of the Lottery bid?	0=No 1=Altered 2=Developed
	<b>Specialisation</b>	
5	Was a specialist junior coach appointed after the award?	0=No 1=Yes
	<b>Formalisation</b>	
13	Do job descriptions exist for non-committee volunteers at present?	0=No 1=For some but not all
14	Did job descriptions exist for non-committee volunteers pre-bid?	2=Yes
20	Do job descriptions exist for committee members at present?	
21	Did job descriptions exist for committee members pre-bid?	
	<b>Specialisation</b>	
11	Do non-committee volunteers receive training at present?	
12	Did non-committee volunteers receive training pre-bid?	
18	Is training given to committee members at present?	
19	Was training given to committee members pre-bid?	
	<b>Specialisation</b>	
16	Number of committee positions at present?	Score 1 for each position
17	Number of committee positions pre-bid?	
	<b>Professionalisation</b>	
23	Number of paid professional positions pre-bid?	
25	Number of paid professional positions dissolved as a result of being awarded Lottery funding?	
27	Number of paid positions at present?	
29	Number of paid professional positions created as a result of applying for and being awarded Lottery funding?	

Besides showing the questions used to operationalise the indicators of organisational structure, Table 20 also shows how the indicators were quantified. Individual scores for professionalisation were produced by scoring 1 for each professional position pre-

bid and post-award. Specialisation questions (16 and 17) concerning the number of committee positions pre-bid and post-award were scored in the same manner. The size of a VSC, pre-bid (question 8) and post-award (question 7), was coded into groups of 50 in SPSS i.e. 1-50 members coded as 1, 51-100 members coded as 2, and so on. These questions therefore quantified the difference between pre-bid and post-award structures with a limitless value.

The provision of training for committee positions and non-committee volunteers pre-bid (questions 11 and 18) and post-award (questions 12 and 19) also constituted specialisation and each question was scored 0 for no training, 1 if training was available for some but not all positions and 2 if training was given to all positions. Formalisation questions concerning job descriptions for non-committee volunteers and committee positions, pre-bid (questions 13 and 20) and post-award (questions 14 and 21), were scored in exactly the same manner. Although these questions also quantified the difference between pre-bid and post-award structures there was a limit on the value used to quantify any difference.

Two questions did not involve pre-bid and post-award comparisons. Question 3, regarding the formalisation of a VSC's constitution, was scored 0 if no change had been made, 1 if it had been altered in some way due to the Lottery award and 2 if the constitution had been created as a result of applying for Lottery funding. The appointment of a specific junior coach (question 5) contributed to the specialisation of a VSC and was scored 1 if such a position was created and 0 if not. Without any pre-bid, post-award comparisons these questions produced absolute scores rather than difference scores and were also limited in their maximum and minimum values.

All indicators were therefore measured using difference scores derived from pre-bid and post-award comparisons. Along with the difference scores, two absolute scores

(questions 3 and 5) were also used to help measure formalisation and specialisation, pre-bid and post-award. This is summarised in Table 21 along with the maximum and minimum possible score for each indicator.

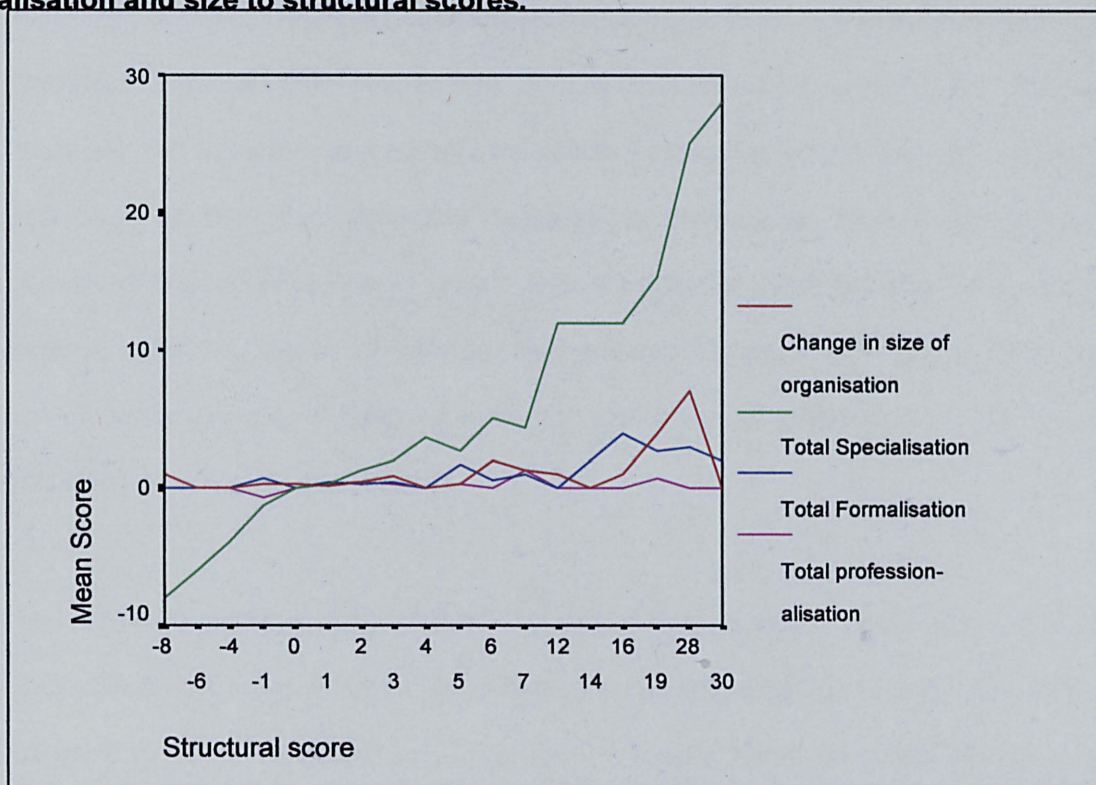
**Table 21: Maximum and minimum indicator scores**

Indicator	Type of scores used to calculator value of indicator	Maximum and minimum value of indicator
Size	1 difference score	Max=limitless Min=negative and limitless
Formalisation	1 absolute and 2 difference scores	Max=6 Min=0
Specialisation	1 absolute score and 3 difference scores	Max=limitless Min=negative and limitless
Professionalisation	2 difference scores	Max=limitless Min=negative and limitless

For each indicator, total pre-bid and total post-award scores were calculated. The pre-bid score was subtracted from the post-award score to quantify the change in each indicator, giving total formalisation, total specialisation, total professionalisation and the change in the size of the organisation. The scores from questions 3 and 5, which did not have pre-bid and post-award comparisons, were added to the total formalisation and total specialisation scores respectively.

The four indicators did not all work in the same direction for each of the VSCs surveyed. That is, not all the indicators comprising each VSC's structural score were either positive, negative or neutral. For instance, specialisation may have produced a negative score, while size and formalisation produced a positive score and a professionalisation a neutral score. This is illustrated by Figure 7, which shows the contribution of each indicator to specific structural scores. Scores quantifying the change in the size of the organisation, total formalisation, total specialisation and total professionalisation were then summed to give a structural score that quantified the direction and amount of structural change for each VSC. The results for the telephone survey will be given under section 7.2.

**Figure 7: The contribution of total specialisation, formalisation, professionalisation and size to structural scores.**



VSCs were then divided into groups of 'increased complexity' (positive structural scores), 'no change' (structural score = zero), and 'reduced complexity' (negative structural scores). The VSCs were then divided again by sport. The purpose of this was to match one VSC that had become increasingly structured, with another of the same sport that had not experienced the same change in structure, achieving a zero or negative B score. This was done to allow for any variation by sport there might be in the relationship between VSCs and their NGBs. The size of the Lottery grant received by each VSC in the pair was also kept as similar as possible.

### **6.5 Phase three: Case studies**

The final phase of the research aimed to gain a greater understanding of how and why the structures of VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding from Sport England had changed, if at all. In gaining such an understanding, the research also aimed to

establish how the organisations had responded to the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund. It was also important to identify the critical organisations for VSCs in receipt of Lottery funding to determine whether they had a role to play in influencing each VSC's strategic response and to identify any specific institutional pressures each VSC was subject to. The case studies were therefore designed to address all four of the research objectives and satisfied Reed's (1997) appeal for realist explanation to be advanced through in-depth analysis of multiple mechanisms. By doing this, phase three was complimentary to and developed further the understanding gained through phases one and two of the research.

Hakim (1987) and Yin (1994) both note the ease with which case studies can be prefixed with a survey, the latter providing an excellent sampling frame for the former, followed by an understanding of the survey results being provided by the case studies. This is exactly what was achieved in this investigation.

According to Yin (1994: p. 13) a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". To this can be added that case studies frequently rely on multiple sources of evidence and because of this they benefit from being informed and driven by theory (Robson 1993; Yin 1994; Burton, 2000), therefore taking a primarily deductive logic in accordance with critical realism. The use of theory to focus the investigation on specific objectives, to direct the researcher's attention to important sources of information, to make appropriate certain methods of collecting information and to guide the interpretation of that information can prevent a case study investigation from overwhelming the researcher due to the potentially numerous sources of information.



The presence of multiple sources requires the use of multiple methods of inquiry. In fact two general strengths of case studies are that they are highly flexible in design and that they can incorporate any number of research methods, whether qualitative or quantitative, under the guise of a single overarching vehicle creating an ability to deal with a full variety of evidence (Hakim 1987; Robson 1993; Yin 1994). This enables triangulation, which helps to increase validity. The case studies within this research therefore made use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis to investigate the research objectives. These methods will be discussed under sections 6.5.3 and 6.5.4 respectively.

The incorporation of multiple methods also poses one of the challenges of case study research. That is, the researcher has to master the full range of data collection and analysis methods being used in the case study (Yin, 1994). A further challenge is that of writing up results from triangulated sources. However, the converse of this problem is that it makes understanding the data easier by providing complimentary and sometimes conflicting data that projects a fuller picture of the phenomena under investigation.

Case studies have also been criticised for their poor level of generalisability as they focus on specific instances of a phenomenon. However, the aim of case study research is not to make generalisations about a population. Instead findings are generalisable to theoretical positions (Burton, 2000) which Yin (1994) terms analytic generalisation. That is, to build, expand and generalise to theory rather than statistical generalisation which enumerates frequencies.

### **6.5.1 Case study design**

Moving onto the design of case based methodology Yin (1994) proposes two variables; single versus multiple, and holistic versus embedded cases. These are illustrated in Figure 8. Single case design has formed the basis of much case study research and is used for testing and formulating theory, piloting, or where only unique cases exist. However, with single case designs there is the real possibility of flawed inference and poor validity (Robinson, 1999; Burton, 2000).

**Figure 8: Single/multiple and holistic/embedded case study designs**

	Single	Multiple
Holistic		
Embedded		

Source Yin (1994)

The disadvantages of single case design are overcome through the use of multiple cases. The ability to replicate means that evidence is more convincing and a greater degree of validity can be achieved. However, Yin's (1994) logic of replication is thought to be restrictive and difficult to achieve by Rose (1991). Instead Rose suggests using the logic of comparison where, guided by theory, information on the same issues is collected across all cases, which helps to focus the research.

The holistic/embedded distinction concerns the number of units of evidence to be analysed in each case study. Holistic cases use just one source probably because it is difficult to identify sub units of analysis. From this, holistic cases aim to generate conclusions on the phenomena under investigation but are clearly limited by questions of their validity due to the absence of triangulation.

Embedded designs investigate issues across a number of identified sub-units or groups. This research makes use of evidence from a number units or organisations within each case study that breach the organisational boundary of the VSC forming the focus of the case study. For instance interviews were conducted with key informants in different positions within VSCs and their critical organisations. Using focused information from numerous cases would mean that it becomes difficult for the researcher to generalise to the wider picture but this is avoided when generalising analytically to theoretical positions. On balance, embedded case study design offers strengths in terms of increased evidence, research focus, enhanced validity, and triangulation (Robinson 1999; Burton, 2000): A multiple embedded design using the logic of comparison was therefore used for the case studies in this investigation.

### **6.5.2 Case selection**

Any number of cases from 2-12 is considered the norm for a multiple embedded design (Yin, 1994). It was initially anticipated to select eight cases, two from each of the four most frequently awarded sports identified in Table 3 (Bowls, Cricket, Football and Lawn Tennis). Analysis of the telephone survey suggested that this was not feasible though because the B scores obtained from Bowls clubs were not of a sufficient range to allow a comparison of those VSCs which had become more structured with those that had not changed or had reduced their level of structure. Therefore two cases were selected from each of the three remaining sports (cricket, football and lawn tennis). Table 22 summarises the characteristics of the VSCs selected as case studies<sup>2</sup>.

One of each pair from the same sport had increased their level of structure, the other had either reduced or maintained their level. Organisational size (number of members

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<sup>2</sup> The names used for the case studies are pseudonyms to prevent the VSCs and respondents being identified as anonymity was guaranteed.

and increase in membership) was held constant between the two VSCs over the period of investigation because of its relationship with structure (Hall et al., 1967; Blau, 1974; Frisby, 1982). The size of the Lottery grant was also kept as similar as possible between the two VSCs. Two VSCs from each of the three sports were selected to control for the influence that NGBs may have had on the effects of Lottery funding on VSCs. Another reason for this was to control for NGBs' possible influence on the responses of VSCs to the institutional pressures conveyed through Sport England's Lottery Fund. Although the case studies are presented in pairs by sport no direct comparison between each pair is made because each case is too varied to do so.

**Table 22: Characteristics of the selected case studies**

	Football		Cricket		Lawn Tennis	
	Increased complexity	No change/ Reduced complexity	Increased complexity	No change/ Reduced complexity	Increased complexity	No change/ Reduced complexity
VSC	Sandown White Star	Ascot Lads	Newbury	Goodwood	Aintree	Doncaster
Project cost £	101,231	14,903	9,988	14,969	42,700	771,011
structural score	19	0	19	-4	30	-1

The cases were selected on the basis of their relevance to the research objectives and theoretical position. Selection therefore took the form of what Silverman (2000) calls theoretical sampling. Another feature of this type of sampling for qualitative studies is the selection of deviant cases. This was achieved through the investigation of VSCs that had demonstrated no change or a reduced level of structure in the telephone survey, as institutional theorists suggested an increase in structural complexity could be expected. The investigation of cases that are deviant in relation to theory also contributes to the validity and reliability of a study (Silverman, 2000) and will be discussed further in section 6.5.5.

### **6.5.3 Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used to strike a balance between the rigidity of following a highly structured interview schedule ensuring that all the necessary questions were asked but restricting the conversation to only those questions, and an unstructured interview schedule permitting the pursuit of interesting leads but which may not have covered all the necessary issues. The more specific nature of the investigation in phase three of the research meant that a more structured interview could be used than in phase one. As a result semi-structured interviews were developed around the four research objectives paying particular attention to Oliver's (1991) categories of strategic response. However, the course of interviews was not driven just by the structure of the schedule but also by the respondent and the order in which they brought up relevant issues.

When interviewing organisational representatives it is essential to acknowledge that "the experience, knowledge and role that an individual has within their organisation will... shape their responses to interview questions, underlining the inherent subjectivity of this research method" (Robinson, 1999: p. 80). This emphasises the

stratified nature of reality consisting of differently positioned actors proposed by critical realism. Consequently, it is essential that in the pursuit of a higher strata of knowledge the researcher overcomes the influence of the interviewee's personal experience through triangulation with other sources and methods of data collection.

Interviews were conducted with at least two informants from each VSC. One of these two was the person responsible for putting the VSC's Lottery bid together. The other interviewees were key members of the VSC's committee and were selected for their knowledge of the VSC's operation. These respondents coincided with the committee positions that Gratton et al. (1997) considered to be the most demanding in terms of time and skills, these being the Secretary, Chairman, Treasurer and Fixture Secretary. Coaches, where available and if not already covered by one of the above positions, were also interviewed. If different from the respondent to the telephone survey in phase two, potential interviewees were contacted through the survey respondent. Members of each VSC's committee tended to have been in position for a number of years and were therefore ideal informants as they were able to give pre-bid and post-award comparisons of the VSCs structure and operation. Interviews typically lasted between 40-60 minutes and were tape recorded. Table 23 lists the internal and external interviews conducted for each VSC used as a case study. Appendices 2 and 3 respectively show the internal and external case study interview schedules.

**Table 23: Internal and external case study interviewees**

VSC	Internal interviewees	External interviewees from critical organisations
Sandown White Star Football Club	Chairman Secretary Treasurer	Secretary, County Football Association. Secretary, CPFA, and County Council Leisure Officer
Ascot Lads' Club	President Secretary	Chief Executive, GMFCYP
Newbury Cricket Club	President Fixture Secretary	County Development Officer, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)
Goodwood Cricket Club	Secretary Treasurer Junior coach/Club Steward	County Development Officer, ECB. Sports Development Officer, LA. Secretary, CPFA, and County Council Leisure Officer
Aintree Lawn Tennis Club	President Secretary Junior Organiser Coach	Local Access Officer, County Council Sport Facilities Officer, County Council
Doncaster Tennis Club	Chairman Coach/Club Manager	Sports Development Officer, LA Secretary, CPFA, and County Council Leisure Officer

In order to address the first research issue of this study, VSC respondents were asked to identify any organisations that had been critical to their Lottery bid. Organisations identified included LAs, NGBs, advisory bodies, funding bodies, and Sport England. Interviews were then sought with informants from these critical organisations to identify further the institutional pressures exerted on each VSC and to establish what influence these bodies had on the strategic response of each VSC to the institutional pressures of Sport England's Lottery Fund. External interviews also lasted about 40-60 minutes and were tape recorded. However, a technical problem meant that the interview with Newbury's County Development Officer (CDO) did not record so as much as possible had to be recovered from memory and interview notes immediately after the interview. Refusals to participate in interviews were received from two LTA CDOs and from staff at the LTA's headquarters in London. Also, the appropriate LA representative for Aintree LTC did not respond to requests to be interviewed.



Interview questions addressing the third research objective were contained only in the internal interview schedule as it was thought that the external informant would be unable to explain cause of structural change within the VSC of interest. Questions investigating Oliver's (1991) predictors of strategic response for objective four were present in both the internal and external interview schedules. Table 24 presents the interview questions from appendices 2 and 3 used to investigate each of the four research objectives.

**Table 24: Phase three interview questions by research objective**

Research objective	Internal interview questions (appendix 2)	External interview questions (appendix 3)
1	3,7,8,15,16,17,20,21,22,23,24	11
2	9,16,17	2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,14
3	1,2,25,26	
4 Cause	5,6	8,9,11,12,13,14
Constituents	3,4,5,6,7,21,22,23,24	4,5,7,14,15,16
Content	1,2,13,18	4,5
Control	4,13,18,19,20,21,23	9,10,11,12,13,14
Context	3,7,8,10,12,15,16,17,21,22,23,24	3,6,12,13

#### **6.5.4 Document analysis**

To enable the triangulation of interview data the following range of documents were requested from the case study VSCs:

- VSC's bid to Sport England's Lottery Fund
- Award letter from Sport England detailing the conditions of the award.
- VSC constitution pre-bid and post-award.
- Any monitoring literature from Sport England.
- Copies of any correspondence between Sport England and the VSC.
- Organisation chart pre and post-award.
- Committee meeting minutes regarding the bid to the Lottery Fund.
- Annual General Meeting minutes.
- Committee job descriptions pre-bid and post-award.

However, the availability of documentary sources was inconsistent across the case studies and the actual range and utility of documents obtained was much broader and erratic than originally anticipated. Therefore the analysis could not be standardised

across all the documents. The informant's ability and willingness to provide the requested information largely influenced the range and utility of the documents gathered. A Secretary of one case study VSC agreed to send all the documents requested of him after the interview but three telephone calls later the documents had still not arrived. In contrast, another committee member of the same VSC provided everything requested without being reminded. Obviously the personal circumstances of the informant and whether they were generally an organised person affected the availability and presentation of the documentation. It was not unusual to be handed a wallet stuffed full of crumpled loose leaf papers with the comment 'everything you want should be in there somewhere'. This was surprising given that these VSCs had applied for Lottery funding and presumably had to be reasonably organised to do so. Appendix 6 lists the documents obtained from each case study VSC and its respective critical organisations. The obtained documents were checked for evidence relating to all four of the research objectives and triangulated with existing data concerning these objectives.

Documentary sources are often mistakenly assumed to be objective, presenting accurate 'facts' about past events or behaviour. However, documents are created by humans and as such are social constructions. Just as actors are positioned differently in the socially stratified nature of reality (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Robinson, 1999; Veal, 1997) so too are documents. Documents are therefore reflections of actors' social reality and far from objective. Thus the production of documents is also embedded within wider social processes, which affects the document's purpose, content and meaning. Finnegan (1996: p 147, original emphasis) summarises and explains the implications of this for analysis:

*All human formulations are inevitably shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which they are created, and by the individuals or collectivities who create them. It does not follow that they are necessarily 'false' in some simplified sense, nor that they are*

valueless. But it does mean that interpretation, rather than an automatic 'reading off' of the results, is needed.

The content of documents should not be taken as hard objective fact then. Instead questioning the content of the document within the context and circumstances in which it was produced is likely to prevent naïve inferences.

Many of the documents requested from the case study VSCs were generated for the VSC's own internal use and so may not be so concerned with projecting a particular image of the VSC. Nevertheless, selective reporting of the VSC's actions may still be contained in the documents. Documents intended for an external audience such as Sport England when applying for Lottery funding are likely to present the VSC in a favourable light. Therefore the documents produced by the VSCs when applying for Lottery funding may have been manipulated in an attempt to increase their chances of securing funding. The reality presented in documentation may therefore not reflect actual behaviour or events because the range of documents or the documents themselves can be fragmented, subjective, incomplete (Forster, 1994) and inaccurate. As a result documentation was used as an aid to triangulation.

There were also several advantages to using documents in this research. Firstly, the documents were created without an awareness of the research, which avoids the problems of interviewer effects and biases inherent in interview procedures. Secondly, the permanency of documents created at the time of the event allowed them to be consulted at any time in the future. This also helped to mitigate the problems of respondent recall of a process that took place in 1996. Finally, and undoubtedly, its greatest strength is that documentary analysis enabled triangulation and this was the very purpose for which it was employed in this study.

### **6.5.5 Principles of data collection**

By designing the investigation in the way described above, using multiple methods, maintaining the collected data in a form that is accessible to any other researcher if required and then presenting the evidence in a cumulative and logical fashion, the research adhered to Yin's (1994) three principles of data collection. Adherence to the three principles helps to deal with issues of construct validity and reliability. Although Yin applies the three principles to case study research there seems no reason why they cannot be applied more broadly to all research methods both quantitative and qualitative. The three principles were therefore observed in relation to the entire study and not just the case study research.

The first principle is that of collecting data from more than one source for the purposes of triangulation. This helps with problems of construct validity "because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide measures of the same phenomenon" (Yin, 1994: p. 92). Stake (1995) and Patton (1987), following Denzin (1984), suggest four ways to triangulate that go beyond simply collecting data from multiple sources.

1. Data source triangulation is an effort to see if what was observed and reported carries the same meaning when found under different circumstances. This is achieved by investigating the same objectives through the same methods, but by collecting data from another source e.g. multiple interviewees. At a broad level Data source triangulation took place across all three phases of the research design with data from the Sport England interviews, the telephone survey and the case study interviews. All three phases investigated overlapping issues concerning the research. At a more specific level data source triangulation took place in phase one by pursuing the same research objectives in interviews with personnel occupying different roles within Sport England. Within the case study

VSCs at least two respondents were interviewed occupying different roles in the VSC. Also informants from each VSC's critical organisations were interviewed.

2. Methodological triangulation is one of the most recognised and commonly used means of triangulation. The use of multiple approaches within a single study increases the likelihood of illuminating or nullifying extraneous influences. Methodological triangulation was achieved by the collection of supplementary data through telephone survey, qualitative interviews and document analysis. The use of documents gave the opportunity to cross check information obtained through interviews and the telephone survey with relevant documentary evidence.
3. Investigator triangulation involves getting other researchers to take a look at the same phenomena or interview data. Supervisory arrangements ensured that some form of investigator and theory triangulation took place. The research supervisors were able to benefit from their distance from the research and hence were able to view the data through untainted lenses. Conference papers (Garrett, 2000b, 1999a, 1999b) also served the same purpose. By presenting work-in-progress reports and results the author invited the critical scrutiny and alternative interpretation of the data from his peers.
4. Theory triangulation (Denzin, 1989) involves subjecting the data to alternative theoretical positions. Theory triangulation was achieved when writing up the data as this process encouraged the author to reflect critically about the chosen framework and to consider the utility of alternative theories.

Silverman (2000: p. 177) though is critical of the use of triangulation in qualitative research because "many of the models that underlie qualitative research are simply not compatible with the assumption that 'true' fixes on 'reality' can be obtained separately from particular ways of looking at it". Thus constructivist paradigms traditionally associated with qualitative research do not advocate the achievability of a single objective truth derived from alternative sources. However, Silverman's

criticism of triangulation is less relevant when critical realism's proposition that an objective social world exists is applied to qualitative research. Nevertheless, there is little harm in heeding some of Silverman's (2000) suggestions as to how to increase the validity of qualitative research beyond triangulation when utilising critical realism in qualitative research.

Firstly, there is the refutability principle where researchers should attempt to falsify their theory and assumed relations between phenomena by paying regard to contrary evidence. "Then," Silverman (2000: p. 178) suggests "only if we cannot refute the existence of a certain relationship are we in a position to speak about 'objective' knowledge". Critical realism would accept this as far as the existence of objective knowledge of the social world goes but would urge caution if it was suggested that such objective knowledge constituted the truth as empirically observable events are only contingently related to social structures. The principle of refutability is related to the second of Silverman's suggestions concerning validity in qualitative studies. This is that deviant cases be identified and studied. It has already been noted that this principle was applied in the process of case selection.

Returning to Yin's (1994) principles of data collection, his second principle is that of creating a case study database. He states "that every case study project should strive to develop a formal, presentable database, so that, in principle, other investigators can review the evidence directly and not be limited to written reports" (1994: p. 95). By doing this, the reliability of the case studies is improved.

By following Yin's third principle of data collection the reliability and construct validity of the research were further enhanced. The research was written up in such a manner as to allow the reader "to follow the derivation of any evidence from the initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions" (Yin, 1994: p. 98). The

research objectives or questions developed at the start of this investigation are grounded in the literature and backed by a theoretical framework. Evidence was collected pertaining to these objectives and presented in a coherent and convincing way. Thus what Yin calls a 'chain of evidence' was established.

#### **6.5.6 Template analysis**

A fundamental tension in qualitative research is between the need to be open to the data and the need to impose some shape and structure on the analytical process. Too much openness and the product is likely to be chaotic and incoherent; too much structure and the researcher can be left with all the drawbacks of quantitative research but none of its advantages (King, 1998). There are, however, more influences on the method of data analysis than simply the openness/structured dichotomy. For instance the experience of the researcher and the researcher's own preference, the amount of data collected and the different formats that the data was collected in. Choosing a method of qualitative data analysis is therefore a compromise between a number of factors. There are several recognised approaches to analysing qualitative data.

Perhaps the most famous analytic strategy is that of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Another is that of content analysis (Weber, 1985). However each of these has their own distinct features which make them suitable for particular types of research. Content analysis, because it attempts to objectively quantify the content of qualitative communication, is perhaps the most structured means of qualitative analysis. It is therefore easy to use for the novice researcher but it verges on being quantitative in nature and lacks openness to the data. Grounded theory is the converse of this. Unlike content analysis a predetermined structure for analysis is not imposed on the data as the structure and theory are developed from the data as the analysis progresses. It is therefore very open to new issues that arise in the data but

its lack of structure may give rise to a feeling of anomie; something that a novice researcher may be uncomfortable with. A lesser-known position between these two approaches is that of Template Analysis (King, 1998), which was employed in this research.

The essence of this approach is that the researcher produces a list of codes or a 'template' corresponding with themes identified in the textual data. Some of these themes are established a priori from the literature, others emerge from the data as analysis progresses. Each code was clearly defined and its pertinence to the research objectives understood. As the analysis progressed codes were inevitably added, deleted and modified as the researcher read and re-read the data. Sections of text were then labelled with the codes if they were relevant to the themes of interest established through the research objectives. The objectives of this research heavily influenced the interview schedules and also the codes established a priori. The close relation between the interview schedule and coding template (see appendix 7) made the mechanics of analysing the data easier.

Both hierarchical and parallel coding was used in this research. This is evident from the final template constructed to code the interview and documentary data see appendix 8. Hierarchical coding allowed the sub-division of a broad category or theme such as Oliver's (1991) predictors of response to institutional pressures. The higher order codes allowed course grained analysis and the lower codes a finer grained analysis. Other codes such as the normative, mimetic and coercive institutional pressures and the indicators of structure did not require any sub-codes. In the initial template (see appendix 9) the critical organisations were sub-divided into two levels. Level one identified whether the organisation was critical for the conferment of legitimacy or the provision of resources. Level two simply identified the organisation. This proved too fragmented producing an unnecessarily complex



picture. The level two codes were consequently dissolved allowing organisations to be coded as critical for either their resources or their legitimating influence or both (see appendix 8). The fact that some organisations provided both legitimacy and resources demanded the use of parallel coding. Hence the same piece of text could be coded as many times as necessary. This is something that is difficult in more quantitative approaches (King, 1998).

The flexibility of template analysis is one of its benefits allowing the researcher to adapt it to the needs of their research. The hazard of template analysis is the 'coding trap'. Here the researcher can get carried away with excessive coding of the data into meaningless categories. This results in over-complexity leading to opaque analysis, which is not the aim of template analysis. A template is only considered final and adequate when all the text relevant to the research objectives has been coded. It was at this point that the coding of data ceased.

To aid the process of coding and analysing the data the computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) Nudist N-vivo was used. Within this software the template was developed and adjusted easily using the programme's unique free node facility.

#### **6.5.7 Nudist N-vivo**

N-vivo is a development of the various Nudist CAQDAS packages. The main difference between N-vivo and the earlier versions of Nudist is that it allows for the creation of 'free nodes', which are essentially codes that are not hierarchically organised. Thus a relationship is not imposed on the textual data that is coded under a free node. The data is recognised as relevant to the research objectives but no predetermined relationship is assumed as this is left until the coded data is analysed. The introduction of free nodes into the coding template in this research is evident

from a comparison of appendices 8 and 9. Where a hierarchical relationship exists between higher level one codes and lower level two codes these are called 'tree nodes'.

One of the benefits of using CAQDAS is that all codes can be merged for a coarser analysis, or split for a finer analysis any number of times without changing the original coding of the data. This facility helps to liven and speed up the coding and analysis processes allowing the researcher to interpret the data in numerous ways which can only aid theory development (Barry, 1998; Seale, 2000). Seale (2000) also suggests that CAQDAS can improve the rigour of analysis by providing counts of phenomena or coded data. However, the frequency with which of a theme or code occurred in the interview data was of no interest here as it is tantamount to content analysis and inconsistent with the approach of template analysis. This is not to suggest that rigour was sacrificed as it can be measured in a number of ways such as the constant reading and re-reading of transcripts and of data coded in themes across the transcripts.

Of course, there are potential disadvantages in using CAQDAS. The main worries are that using software distances the researcher from the data, that it quantifies qualitative analysis and that the software hi-jacks the analysis producing inferences irrelevant to the research objectives. Quantifying or listing the occurrence of certain codes in the data results in a form of content analysis. This path can be avoided by realising that differences in the frequencies of codes do not correspond to meaningful differences in the qualitative data (King, 1998). Having used the software, it is not possible to analyse the data without first reading, re-reading and being very familiar with it. Continuing analysis is pointless without continually reading the coded data, and then re-reading the complete transcript and supporting notes to contextualise the coded data. The researcher took what he needed from the software and

supplemented it with non-computerised methods rather than be confined to the limits of computer aided qualitative analysis. Richards and Richards (1994: p. 461) support this view of avoiding the de-humanising of qualitative data analysis (QDA):

The problem and the excitement is that QDA is probably the most subtle and intuitive of human epistemological enterprises, and therefore likely to be the last to achieve satisfactory computerization.

The research design implemented in this research with phases one and three using interviews with informants from Sport England, VSCs and critical organisations is reasonably complex. This, combined with the status of a novice researcher requiring a degree of structure to his analysis, makes Nudist N-vivo the most appropriate choice as it provided a tool with which to manage the data but manage it in a way that suited the research and the researcher. Lee and Fielding (1995) liken the use of CAQDAS in this study to an electronic filing cabinet where researchers code and retrieve their text. Nudist N-vivo is therefore appropriate for a researcher who requires more structure to their analysis and who may find the initial mass of data daunting. The more structured approach to analysis offered by Nudist encourages the researcher to be more rigorous than would other less structured data analysis tools.

## **6.6 Evaluation of methodology**

As very few, if any, research designs and methodologies are perfect, most can be criticised in some way. This research is no different.

A significant problem that hampered the telephone survey in phase two was that it relied heavily on the retrospective reports of respondents over a three to four year period. The respondents' ability to recall detailed information about their VSC was therefore hindered by this period of time.

In the infancy of the Lottery Fund it is possible that when they applied, those VSCs that received awards were those that already complied most closely with the institutional prescriptions of how a VSC should operate. This possibility would mean that the VSCs could be expected to change but not necessarily for reasons of institutional pressure associated with their Lottery funding from Sport England.

Additionally, the survey was designed to highlight evidence of absolute structural change and therefore could not take account of the varied positions from which the VSCs entered the Lottery Fund's application process. So in some instances no change would have taken place because the VSC was already conforming to the sports development model of how a VSC should be run. In this situation the research was not directed to the institutional effects of the sports policy sector as they may have occurred before applying to the Fund in the course of the VSC's interactions with the sports policy sector.

The telephone survey was not sensitive enough to differentiate between structural changes occurring as a result of institutional pressures and those occurring as a result of other pressures from inside the VSC or its environment. As a result, selection of the case studies was made on the basis of overall change in the VSC's structure, regardless of the cause of this change. The extent to which structural change was caused by the institutional pressures of the sports policy sector conveyed through Lottery funding, if at all, was subsequently established through the qualitative case studies.

The nature of the coding in the survey meant that specialisation was the dominant structural indicator contributing to VSCs' structural scores. This was illustrated by Figure 7. Many VSCs had altered the number of positions on their committees or even introduced new sub-committees. Survey questions 16 and 17 concerning this

(see Table 20) were scored one for every position existing pre-bid and post-award. The difference between the pre-bid and post-award score quantified any change taking place. Questions 23, 25 and 29 regarding professionalisation were coded in the same manner. The value of these difference scores, and those investigating change in size (questions 7 and 8), was therefore limitless, see Table 21.

This is in contrast to other survey questions that produced absolute difference scores. For instance, questions such as 20 and 21 investigating whether job descriptions existed pre-bid and post-award for committee positions were scored 0 if no job descriptions had been introduced, 1 if they had been introduced for some committee positions and 2 for all positions. Therefore, a discrepancy existed between the way limitless difference scores produced by questions 7, 8, 16, 17, 23, 25 and 29 were calculated and the absolute difference scores produced by questions 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 21 investigating specialisation and formalisation. As a result, formalisation was the only indicator whose total score was calculated without the use of limitless difference scores. This restricted or limited the contribution of formalisation to structural scores but exaggerated the contribution of specialisation. Thus specialisation appeared to be the indicator that experienced most change and contributed most to VSCs' structural scores, see Figure 7. However, professionalisation and size did not contribute significantly to VSCs' structural scores despite being scored in the same way as questions 16 and 17 for specialisation. This issue was not highlighted in the piloting process.

A potential solution to this issue would have been to insert additional formalisation questions quantifying the precise number of committee and non-committee volunteer positions for which job descriptions existed and insert specialisation questions determining the number of positions that received training pre-bid and post-award. Similarly, the number of junior coaches appointed after receiving Lottery funding

should have been quantified. These measures would have allowed a more accurate reflection of the contribution made by each of the four indicators of structure to each VSC's structural score. However, this approach was not adopted because in the pre-piloting phase of the survey it was judged that too many questions may reduce the response rate, especially if those questions were of a quantitative nature, bearing in mind the time period over which respondents were asked to recall information.

Membership numbers for each VSC were coded into groups of fifty in SPSS (i.e. 1-50 members coded as 1, 51-100 members coded as 2). Therefore any change in the number of members that took place within the coded groups of fifty was not recorded as an increase in organisational size (i.e. an increase from 51-99 would not register as a change in organisational size). Only those increases that crossed a coding boundary were recorded as a change in organisational size. The coding of membership numbers was therefore not sensitive enough to the type of organisations being examined and any future research into VSCs should clearly code membership numbers into smaller units. If anything, the survey under emphasised the change in size of VSCs after receiving Lottery funding.

These methodological issues meant that the six case studies selected were selected predominantly, but not wholly, on their total specialisation score. Figure 7 demonstrates the close relationship between total specialisation scores and structural scores. Professionalisation did not contribute significantly to structural scores and formalisation only occurred when structural scores were high. Organisational size exhibited a similar pattern to formalisation.

A greater number of survey responses are also required if less tentative inferences are to be permitted. This would suggest that a larger sample of the population should

have been surveyed. A greater number of VSCs surveyed would have produced a larger population from which to select case study VSCs.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has identified the three phases of research through which the four research objectives of this thesis were investigated. The methods employed in each of the three phases were justified by their utility to investigating the objectives and by their suitability to a critical realist philosophy. The critical realist philosophy and the assumptions central to institutional theory were also shown to be complimentary. Both view social structures as objectified and exteriorised being independent of social actors but accept that actors have a role to play in constructing and objectifying those structures. Unlike the approach normally taken by philosophies emphasising objectivity and the distinct dualism of structure and action, critical realism values in-depth analysis by emphasising the multiple influences or structures acting in context to bring about an event. Thus a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods can be used within a single study. However, research findings cannot be stated as causal laws because they only represent the contingent and two-way relations between structure and action. A three-phase methodology consisting of qualitative interviews (phase one), a quantitative telephone survey (phase two), and in-depth case studies of VSCs and their critical organisations (phase three) was therefore implemented.

The following chapter reports findings from phases one and two of the research and chapter 8 contains the case study reports from the six VSCs selected in phase three. The results are structured in this manner to allow a logical accumulation of findings with which to inform the case study reports. In recognition of the fact that this represents a disparate reporting of the findings, chapter 8 presents cross-case conclusions.