

# **Growing sport through clubs:** Understanding and respecting the heterogeneity of club types

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# Structure

- Purpose of the research
- Context
- Theoretical considerations
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusion

# Purpose of the research

- To develop a measure of formality relating to the management practices of VSCs
- To analyse the extent to which a formal/informal divide exists in the management practices of VSCs
- To explore the realities of different club types, specifically in relation in policy implementation

# Context

Pre May 2010 (research design stage)

- Sustain and Grow targets
- NGB-led delivery
- The mainstreaming of the third sector (Kendall, 2000)
- Vastly changing economic landscape

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## Post May 2010 (data analysis stage)

- Conservative Plan for Sport
- Big Society (?)
- Austerity measures
- Limited progress against growth target

# Context

Sport	Baseline data (2008)	Overall Target (2012)	Difference	Progress (2010)
Athletics	1,612,000	1,750,000	138,000	214,700
Badminton	535,700	605,700	70,000	-700
Basketball	186,100	224,000	37,900	-1,800
Bowls	no published data			
Boxing	106,800	131,800	25,000	10,600
Canoeing	no published data			
Cricket	204,900	277,449	72,549	1,700
Cycling	1,767,200	1,892,200	125,000	113,600
Equestrian	no published data			
Fencing	no published data			
Football	2,144,700	2,294,700	150,000	1,400
Golf	948,000	1,023,000	75,000	-53,800
Gymnastics	89,200	94,300	5,100	-27,100
Hockey	no published data			
Mountaineering	86,100	103,700	17,600	-4,700
Netball	118,900	138,500	19,600	6,200
Rounders	25,900	39,680	13,780	-7,300
Rowing	55,000	65,000	10,000	-6,000
Rugby League	88,000	139,628	51,628	-14,700
Rugby Union	230,300	371,612	141,312	-27,100
Sailing	89,900	111,280	21,380	-9,900
Skiing	120,700	127,700	7,000	-10,300
Squash	293,900	349,185	55,285	-3,400
Swimming	3,244,400	3,514,400	270,000	-82,000
Table Tennis	75,700	92,200	16,500	9,900
Tennis	487,000	637,000	150,000	30,700
Volleyball	48,400	58,500	10,100	-8,100

Overall  $\uparrow$ =388,800

Overall  $\downarrow$ =315,500

Net growth (2010) = 73,300

Overall target (2012) =1,298,903

# Theoretical considerations

## Implementation literature

- Attention given to the disposition of the grassroots implementers (van Meter and van Horn, 1975; Lipksy, 1978; Hjern, 1982)

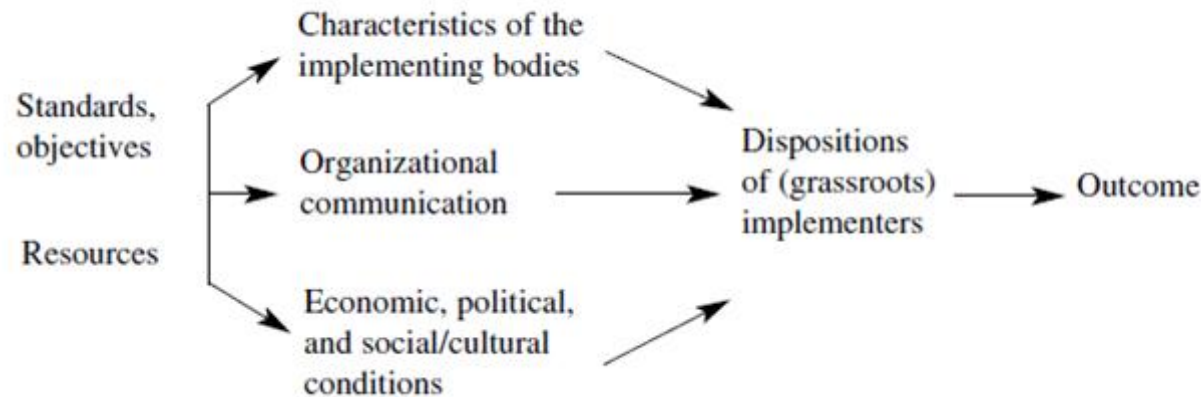


Figure 0.1 Policy implementation process (van Meter and van Horn, 1975)

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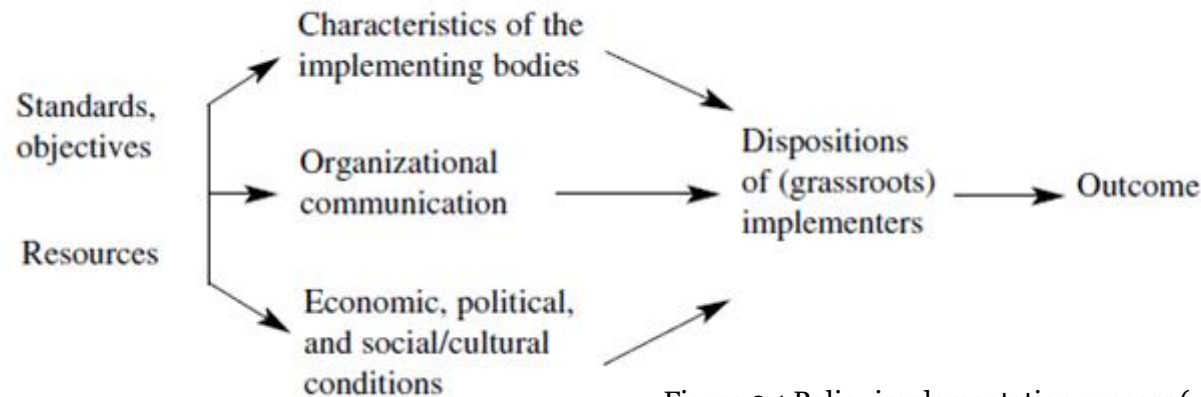


Figure 0.1 Policy implementation process (van Meter and van Horn, 1975)

## Sports volunteering research

- A tendency toward a formal/informal classification of club types (Taylor et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2007; Nichols and James, 2008)



# Methodological issues

- Retroductive research strategy
- Mixed methods approach—completed in two stages
- Research focussed in one suburban borough council with two-tier system of local government, population 99,000

# Methods: stage one

- Constructed a measure of formality of club management practices – developing on from ECB (2002) and Nichols and James (2008)
- Involved academic/industry experts in design
- Included 30 closed questions across 6 domains (administration, policies and standards, volunteers/workforce, partnerships, finances and marketing)
- Distributed to all VSCs (92) with 49% response ( $n=45$ )

# Measure of formality

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Questions</b>
Administration	Constitution, annual report, development plans, regular meetings, publish minutes
Policies/standards	Club accreditation, club handbook, welcome pack, written child protection policy
Workforce	Employ paid staff, training of volunteers/staff, guidelines for specific posts, selection criteria for posts, volunteer recruitment strategy
Partnerships	Part of local sports network, school club links, commercial partnership/ sponsorship
Financial issues	Awareness of grants, secured grants, financial accounts, annual budget
Marketing/promotion	Website, promotional literature, marketing activities

# Quantitative findings

- Three-group solution using cluster analysis
- Non parametric Mann-Whitney test was used to reveal sig. differences between the three clusters ( $p < 0.001$ )

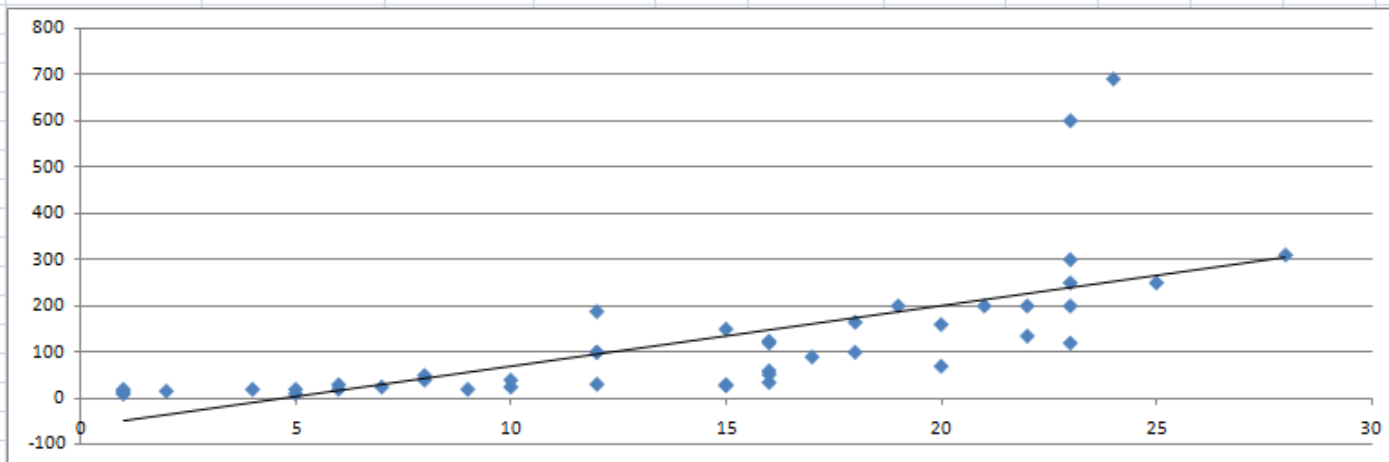
# Quantitative findings

Domains	Mean scores		
	Cluster 1 Informal	Cluster 2 Semi-formal	Cluster 3 Formal
<b>Administration (6)</b>	2.7	4.8	5.4
<b>Club policies (8)</b>	0.7	3.9	6.3
<b>Workforce (6)</b>	0.5	1.9	3.4
<b>Partnerships (3)</b>	0.3	0.9	1.7
<b>Club finances (4)</b>	1.0	2.4	3.4
<b>Marketing (3)</b>	1.2	2.2	2.5
<b>Total</b>	6.4	16.1	22.7

# Quantitative findings

	<b>Informal</b> ( <i>n</i> =17)	<b>Semi-formal</b> ( <i>n</i> =15)	<b>Formal</b> ( <i>n</i> =13)
Sports	Angling ( <i>n</i> =1) Athletics ( <i>n</i> =1) Badminton ( <i>n</i> =7) Football ( <i>n</i> =1) Gymnastics ( <i>n</i> =1) Hockey ( <i>n</i> =1) Swimming ( <i>n</i> =2) Tennis ( <i>n</i> =1) Table tennis ( <i>n</i> =1) Canoeing ( <i>n</i> =1)	Badminton ( <i>n</i> =1) Bowls ( <i>n</i> =3) Cricket ( <i>n</i> =1) Football ( <i>n</i> =4) Golf ( <i>n</i> =3) Sub aqua ( <i>n</i> =1) Rugby ( <i>n</i> =1) Tennis ( <i>n</i> =1)	Cricket ( <i>n</i> =3) Football ( <i>n</i> =4) Golf ( <i>n</i> =1) Hockey ( <i>n</i> =1) Rugby ( <i>n</i> =1) Swimming ( <i>n</i> =2) Tennis ( <i>n</i> =1)
Av. Membership	28	103	268
Av. Professionalisation Score	6.4	16.1	22.7

# Quantitative findings



## SUMMARY OUTPUT

### Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.684275134
R Square	0.468232458
Adjusted R Square	0.455571326
Standard Error	5.504552935
Observations	44

### ANOVA

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	1120.554764	1120.55476	36.9819	3.03435E-07
Residual	42	1272.604326	30.300103		
Total	43	2393.159091			

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	9.802502404	1.10119235	8.90171677	3.2E-11	7.580206298	12.0247985
X Variable 1	0.035749334	0.005878594	6.08127287	3E-07	0.023885852	0.04761282

$p < 0.001$

## Methods: stage 2

- Recorded semi-structured interviews, full note transcription ( $n=25$ )
  - Informal ( $n=9$ )
  - Semi-formal ( $n=6$ )
  - Formal clubs ( $n=10$ )
- Qualitative analysis focuses on aims, cognition of policy and direction of response to policy as per van Meter & van Horn (1975)



# Qualitative findings

## Informal clubs

Aims

**Socially orientated with aims relating to mutual enthusiasm**

*“It’s purely a recreational, socialising thing”*

*“We do not have a specific aim, the club just exists for recreational purposes”*

*“Aims, we do not really have any specific aims other than to have fun”*

# Qualitative findings

<b>Informal clubs</b>	
Aims	<b>Socially orientated with aims relating to survival or mutual enthusiasm</b>  <i>“It’s purely a recreational, socialising thing”</i> <i>“We do not have a specific aim, the club just exists for recreational purposes”</i> <i>“Aims, we do not really have any specific aims other than to have fun”</i>
Cognition	<b>Unaware of specific policy goals for community sport</b>  <i>“To be honest with you I have no idea”</i> <i>“I have not got a clue”</i> <i>“I didn’t realise there was a policy for sport”</i>

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Direction of response	<b>Resistant, reject role in policy implementation</b>  <i>“We are a small club and not interested in policy or anything like that”</i> <i>“We don’t need it, we don’t want new facilities or funding or anything like that”</i> <i>“Simply not interested”</i>

# Qualitative findings

## Semi formal clubs

Aims

**Seeking to develop as VSC**

*“Our aim is to keep the club vibrant and to get people to play competitive bowls”*  
*“We want to provide opportunities for all as well as develop the playing standard of the club”*

# Qualitative findings

<b>Semi formal clubs</b>	
Aims	<p><b>Seeking to develop as VSC</b></p> <p><i>“Our aim is to keep the club vibrant and to get people to play competitive bowls”</i></p> <p><i>“We want to provide opportunities for all as well as develop the playing standard of the club”</i></p>
Cognition	<p><b>Unaware of specific policy goals for community sport</b></p> <p><i>“No, I’m not aware of any specific policy for sport”</i></p> <p><i>“I am not familiar with it, it doesn't mean anything to me”</i></p>

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Cognition	<p><b>Unaware of specific policy goals for community sport</b></p> <p><i>“No, I’m not aware of any specific policy for sport”</i> <i>“I am not familiar with it, it doesn’t mean anything to me”</i></p>
Direction of response	<p><b>Potentially responsive to policy although facility and resource issues constrain full compliance</b></p> <p><i>“I feel the fact that we don’t have our own facility holds us back”</i> <i>“We are a little bit nomadic and without a base as such I do think we are a little bit restricted”</i> <i>“It is really a very difficult thing, we have simply not got the volunteers to do it”</i></p>

# Qualitative findings

<b>Formal clubs</b>	
Aims	<p><b>Development orientated with aims consistent with grow and sustain</b></p> <p><i>“We aim to provide sport for everyone”</i></p> <p><i>“The aim of the club is to provide opportunities for all to play sport at all levels”</i></p> <p><i>“Our main objective is to be as successful as possible”</i></p>

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Cognition	<p><b>Unclear about specific policy goals for community sport</b></p> <p><i>“I am not clear about it, I don't think that it seems to have filtered through like it should have done”</i> <i>“I'm not aware of the specific detail”</i> <i>“To be honest with you I haven't [been made aware of policy]”</i> <i>“The policies are about getting people involved..., it doesn't just stop there, we raise the awareness, and then it carries on from there. Whether its cricket, athletics or swimming, it's just healthy bodies, its saving the NHS money, healthier citizens....”</i></p>



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Cognition	<p><b>Majority are aware of broad policy commitment to sport but very few understand the specific policy objective and/or the place of VSCs within this</b></p> <p><i>“I am not clear about it, I don't think that it seems to have filtered through like it should have done”</i></p> <p><i>“I'm not aware of the specific detail”</i></p> <p><i>“To be honest with you I haven't [been made aware of policy]”</i></p> <p><i>“The policies are about getting people involved..., it doesn't just stop there, we raise the awareness, and then it carries on from there. Whether its cricket, athletics or swimming, it's just healthy bodies, its saving the NHS money, healthier citizens....”</i></p>
Direction of response	<p><b>Responsive to policy and proactively seek external assistance</b></p> <p><i>“Government policies are working in our favour, we want to work with schools and have our coaches in there”</i></p> <p><i>“In three years we have taken junior membership from zero to over 30, we want to continue to grow”</i></p> <p><i>“We produce development plans, in fact we are a little like a business nowadays”</i></p>

# Conclusion

- Move beyond the assumption of VSCs as policy implementers and recognise the diversity and independence of sports clubs
- Identify, locate and assess the size of the formal (& semi formal) market
- Raise awareness, secure buy-in and develop bottom-up strategies
- Be clear about any offer/support for informal clubs
- Assess the need for alternative approaches

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