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**Local Government, 'Race' and Sports Policy Implementation:  
Demystifying Equal Opportunities in Local Government.**

**Kevin Hylton**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of Leeds  
Metropolitan University for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2003**

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Demystifying Equal Opportunities in Local Government.**

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## **Local Government, ‘Race’ and Sports Policy Implementation: Demystifying Equal Opportunities in Local Government.**

**Kevin Hylton**, *Leeds Metropolitan University.*

**ABSTRACT** *This thesis takes as its starting point the position that equal opportunities as a concept and practice have been conceptualised and operationalised inconsistently in local government (Nanton 1989, Young 1990, 1992, Bagilhole 1997). As a result the PhD investigated the appreciative contexts and ideologies that underpinned the assumptive worlds of those who influence policy and practice in sport in three local authorities in Northshire. Operationalising a critical ‘race’ standpoint (CRT) the study critically examined the views of senior officers and councillors in local authority sport utilising Young’s (1977, 1979) assumptive worlds framework.*

*This research was based upon a two-phase investigation. The first phase involved a multi-site case study, which took place in North City, West Town and South City between 1996 and 1998. In a similar fashion to Stone’s (1988) single case study investigation into local authority equal opportunities strategies for women employees, they were intended to clarify and crystallise the everyday pressures and assumptions underpinning equal opportunities and ‘race’ within local authority sport. The agenda for the multi-site case study was to interrogate the values and assumptions that underpinned equal opportunities and race-equality for fifteen senior officers and nine councillors.*

*In tandem with the local government case studies the second phase was an ethnography that involved an observation and analysis of the black sports pressure group VBES. The group was followed from its inception in 1996 until it became a significant agent within the sports policy network in Northshire in 2000. VBES contributed the black perspective from outside the local authorities. Consequently, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport’s links and associations over the years were a clear barometer of how effective equalities work was developing in specific authorities across the region.*

*Three dominant themes emerged out of the study of the local authorities and evidence of them found expression in the activities of VBES. These themes were the conceptual confusion surrounding equal opportunities and race-equality, the policy tensions caused by individual appreciations and interpretations of policy, and the colour blindness that ignores wider issues of 'race'. The themes aggregated to represent the core processes that affect each authority's ability to effectively tackle race-equality in sport. Conceptual confusions, policy tensions and colour-blindness, that enwrapped the assumptive worlds of each authority, effectively led to policy implementation gaps between their promise and practice. The marginalisation of 'race' from mainstream provision has resulted in the ambiguity that Young (1990, 1992) warned against and in the lack of leadership that was the focus of Ouseley's (1990) analysis. Ultimately there are issues that need to be managed in local government about how race-equality in sport is to be translated from policy to practice.*

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **A Personal Rationale**

When people set off on a long trip they would normally have a clear idea about how they are going to get there, which vehicle will carry them, and most importantly what the destination will look like when they arrive. Local government sport provision and sport policy have been a feature of my life since 1983 when I started my first degree. It was in this environment that I realised a series of anomalies. I was the only black person on my degree. Further, I was one of the handful of black students in the whole university, thus we gave each other a supportive nod as we passed each other in the corridor. However as I went to a multi-racial school, it was a novelty to stand out because of my blackness, and it was not until later on in the degree that I realised that I, and others like me, were not represented in the key sport and leisure literature through positive images, research, or adequately theorised. As a result when asked what my dissertation would focus upon I had a strong steer towards exploring issues connected with 'race' and sport. The most persuasive argument was 'If you don't do something on this no one else will...' It was at this stage that I realised that I was 21 years old and, up to that point, I had never had a black teacher, or lecturer, apart from two guest lectures from a very eminent practitioner who remains a mentor to this day. Thus, if I did not go on to contribute anything to the field, there were only a few academics writing tangentially in the area, and the field was likely to remain under-explored for some time to come.

Having graduated, I was offered two full time positions, I refused the opportunity to become a finance accountant in favour of sports development in North City. Again I went through the process of going to conferences and meetings with peers in local government, national governing bodies and quango sports development where I was the only black sports development officer. This was also in the period of high profile Action Sport development where there was a positive emphasis on 'inner city' sports development that loosely translated to working with and for marginalised groups, including minority ethnic groups. This was my experience throughout the period of my work inside and outside the city council. It was also in this period that I started an MA in Leisure that was to help me to articulate these thoughts and reflections on my working context. It was also important for me to engage with complex concepts

popularised by the cultural studies tradition that explained subtle dualisms of structure and agency that enabled a clearer understanding of power processes and institutional racism (Gramsci 1971, Williams 1981, Bocoock 1986, Hall and Jefferson 1975, Hargreaves 1986, Gilroy 1987, Miles 1989). As feelings of exclusion heightened and my expectations were raised, I changed my career path and moved into FE teaching with a development responsibility for the Prince's Trust Volunteers. In this position I felt more able to empower others like me through building their capacity to understand and manage issues of 'race' and racism in sport and leisure, both black and white. I have never doubted that this was the right move. Especially after one of my soon to be black students who on being told that I was in the gym asked me where Kevin Hylton the lecturer was (I was the only person in the gym!).

The MA was an opportunity for me to analyse in some depth the processes surrounding 'race' and leisure in the context of black leisure managers. In this research the black managers I interviewed, like myself, had to look beyond their local authority for a black mentor, they recognised prejudice and discrimination in their authority, internalised the effects of racism and struggled to confront these issues. The study confirmed as well as challenged many of the ideas that had been taxing my mind for a number of years. In 1997 I officially started this PhD having been told six years earlier that it was too big a topic for my Masters dissertation. I wanted to interrogate equal opportunities in local government sports provision because my experience of these institutions demonstrated that it was not an issue high on their agenda. The hypocrisy and denial of inefficiency was one that needed further deliberation and exposure to policy makers, practitioners and academia. This is my journey.

### **An Academic Rationale**

Before this chapter maps out the aims of the thesis and a summary of chapters it considers some of the empirical and theoretical studies that have engaged with policy in local government. Their foci vary from equal opportunities, racial equality, to sport and leisure policy development. An application of Giddens' (1995) ideas illustrates the need to recognise that to understand organisations there must be an acknowledgement that the individual social actors that constitute them are inextricably linked with the developing organisation. So much so, that he offers the concept of the 'duality of structure' to embody the processes that form and inform these symbiotic practices. The notion of

duality in local government efforts gives an insight into how institutional patterns, practices and assumptions are routinised and reproduced over time. Hence what unites these studies is the understanding that policy development and implementation in local government are human processes and therefore must be interpreted in a way that reflects this. As a result the work that comes out of studies like this one, where sports policymakers and practitioners act at the same time as rationalising their actions, must critically frame and examine their analyses accordingly. Layder (1994:134) clarifies this position by stating of the duality of structure that,

Social practices reflect the ability of humans to modify the circumstances in which they find themselves, while simultaneously recreating the social conditions (practices, knowledge, resources) which they inherit from the past.

### **Local Government Studies**

A number of studies have engaged with issues of policymaking in local government leisure policy (Henry and Bramham 1986, Henry 1987, Henry 1993, Houlihan 1991 and Yule 1995), or equal opportunities in local government leisure provision (Carrol 1993 and Horne 1995). Others have focused on corporate equal opportunities developments (Ben-Tovim 1986, Jewson and Mason 1992, Clarke and Speeden 2000) and some have focused on specific aspects of equal opportunities such as women in employment (Stone 1988), and values/assumptions in the policy process (Rosenberg 1989, Young 1992). Very few studies have focused on 'race' and equal opportunities (Jenkins and Solomos 1989, Braham et al. 1992) although a few have rationalised their lack of centrality or exclusion (Henry 1993, Yule 1995). However, each of these studies concludes that policy actors in local government leisure or equal opportunities policy development can be attributed with specific values, assumptions and ideologies through their analysis of the outcomes of discursive, reflexive or everyday activities. Everyday pressures, assumptions and local contexts are crucial factors that affect why these writers are wary that the complexities of critical thinking on equality will always struggle to capture its full reality (Stoker 1991, Braham 1992). Each of these studies have enabled an informed reading of local government as a site of struggle susceptible to personal, professional and political values. The dynamic, value-laden, haphazardness of localised government

policy implementation (Gibbon 1989) has been a major feature of these studies. Just as the contradictions and intricacies of local government equality work have continued to tax their efforts.

### **Values in Local Government**

An intriguing problematic has emerged from the equal opportunities literature. There are issues that require a critical focus to deconstruct taken-for-granted assumptions that underpin the behaviour of local government policy makers and practitioners. Chapter four examines the assumptive worlds of local government as a precursor to the analysis of three local authorities in chapter five. There are conditions that exist in local government that require further attention and deliberation before the processes and outcomes that privilege and that reinforce values can be understood. Henry's (1987:124) study of a northern industrial city, like Yule's (1995), develops typologies of relationships between councillors and officers, which clearly show that neutral professional detachment gives way to personal and political values. Henry identified the 'quasi-political relationship' as one such function, which illuminated the idea of values dictating agendas. In particular, a series of alternative functions were illustrated to emphasise the changing roles of officers and politicians in the 1980s. The 'neo-traditional' model emphasised the shift away from the ideal of officer as implementer and politician as policymaker ideal. The 'partnership model' emphasised the overlap between administrative activity and political activity between officers and politicians and two advisor roles, 'political adviser' and 'policy adviser', showed that it was not enough to take a detached rational approach to local government. To understand policy processes further, Yule's (1995) work added to the study by Stone (1988) where the structural and attitudinal mechanisms that oppress women through the range of discourses and ideologies in local government were clearly identified. What was crucially important in Henry's (1987) and Yule's (1995) research and is significant in this PhD is the time spent listening to officers and politicians so as to gain a consistent understanding of the contexts and assumptions that underpin policy decisions and implementation.

Jewson and Mason (1986) in particular have offered a framework to understand equal opportunities processes and outcomes, enabling a critical appreciation of the dominant activities within local government policy implementation. Two positions were consistently observed in local authority equal opportunities policy implementation, Liberal and Radical. Both types of activity had advantages and disadvantages. For example Solomos and Ball (1990: 222) argue that radical equality activity is inherently difficult for local authorities to implement as central government is often unsympathetic, so as a result, strategic decisions were made by policy makers and practitioners to associate with liberal activity when they were attempting something more radical. Similarly slower moving 'liberal' activities were couched in radical terms to give the local community and politicians political capital to work with. The pressure of politics for officers and councillors wanting to be 'seen to be doing the right thing' for their multiple publics and diverse stakeholders is just one aspect of the vagaries behind why local expectations are raised as often less is delivered.

An outline of a 'liberal' authority was described as one that followed procedures and regulation strictly but did no more than was needed. Many of the local authority sports divisions evaluated by Ellis (1994) and Escott (1996) followed such a model. These authorities lacked political drive and commitment and made claims to radicalism based upon their efficient, often bureaucratic, nature. However, these claims to being radical were based upon their need to demonstrate quicker progress than they had actually managed. Simultaneously the wish to demonstrate they had not taken any risks that might cause the local community, especially the dominant white population, to feel as though they were having resources taken away from them was a major imperative (Ouseley 1990). The principles typical of such an approach stem from classic liberalism (Friedman 1962, Hayek 1976, see Henry 1993: 28). Liberal approaches to equality have been targeted as one of the least progressive ways in which to enable change. A liberalist viewpoint is one that, at the same time as recognising the need to regulate behaviour in the interests of fairness and equity, refuses to consider structural and historical privileging (see Young and Connelly 1981). The neo-liberalist forces of Thatcherism caused a clear rift between those local authorities who attempted radical change in the 1980s and the public perception of fairness to compete. Their New Right ideology that introduced market liberalism into local government undertook to ensure a

project of equality of opportunity through attempting to maximise the economic potential and personal stake in government (Stoker 1991: 151).

Liberal approaches ensure a minimal position from which to tackle inequality. However, this minimalist state intervention fails to actively reduce the gap between those who are advantaged by the system and those who are not. Cunningham (1992) supports this view that holders of a minimalist ideology base equality on merit and the removal of barriers to achievement. Here the market offers individuals the chance to compete to be unequal, procedure-led policies are adopted which are 'race' and gender blind, and rewards are awarded on merit alone. Jewson and Mason (1986, 1992) aligned the minimalist view with New Right ideologies and Conservative politics. Jewson and Mason's (1992) conception of a radical approach involves an increased role for the state from a regulator to a facilitator. The views expressed by Gilroy (1987), Solomos (1989), Anthias and Yuval Davis (1993), Edwards (1995), Jones (1996) and Mason (2000) that we are living in an unequal racist society mean for radicals that direct intervention is required by the state to contest the traditional way resources have been distributed in relation to outcomes. The liberalist ideal of the market as the arbiter of moral values and equality is called into question by the more radical view that members of society are not in a position to know who is privileged or underprivileged due to their inability to ascertain starting points. Organisations like the GLC and Lambeth are high profile examples of this radical, highly politicised stance towards equality in local government provision. In summary, aspects of liberalism in this context exacerbate inequality. Radicals further argue that inequality must be challenged on any agenda and so must any emphasis on a reduced role for the state in such matters (Henry 1993).

### **The State, 'Race' and Equal Opportunities**

Equality of opportunity implies that all citizens regardless of their background should be given equal access to the same facilities, services, employment and other social conditions. Romantically Banton (1994: 136) suggests that 'the best protection against discrimination are those in the hearts of people who believe discrimination to be wrong'. The state has attempted to regulate social relations through various statutes such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 (and its



amendment in 2000), and Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and all legislation which makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, facilities and services. McRudden (1991) describes these Acts as an unequivocal statement of public policy that gives support to those who wish to resist social pressure to discriminate. Significant conditions of the amended Race Relations Act (1976) involve instructing public organisations that it is unlawful for them to discriminate against anyone on racial grounds. It stated that all public bodies should have a specific duty to work for the elimination of racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race-relations. In addition part of this duty includes the following four points, public bodies should; 1) consider the implications for racial equality of all their policies or actions, 2) include equality terms in their external agreements, 3) monitor both employment and service delivery, by ethnic group, and 4) report annually on how they have to fulfil their racial equality duties<sup>i</sup>.

Each Act now considers that discrimination occurs at the level of the personal (individual), organisational (institutional) and societal (structural). Ironically, nearly a decade after Ouseley's (1990) concerns were raised about the level of racism in British institutions, the 1999 Macpherson report summarised this issue with a definition of racism that is still endemic in public services.

Racism' in general terms consists of conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form, it is as damaging as in its overt form.  
(Macpherson, 1999: 6.4)

The duty on public authorities to promote racial equality through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is the culmination of a less than effective process of leadership from central government (Ouseley 1990, Young 1992). The duty asserts that public authorities need to *(a) eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and (b) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups*. However what the 2000 Act has given the CRE for the first time is the power to serve compliance orders and to take statutory organisations to court where necessary.

After years of competing visions and actions about equality ranging from assimilation to integration and multiculturalism, the 1980s established some consensus between the major political parties acknowledging with central and local government that there needed to be a more focused approach on racial equality. One of the major catalysts for this were the instances of civil disobedience in the early 1980s often referred to as riots that caused the public sector response to at least agree that something needed to be done to, on one level, pacify the dysfunctional [black] youths, at the same time as recognising that this was a symptom of deeper more destructive social ills (Cashmore and Troyna 1982, Young 1990).

In sport the consensus was often translated into different practices at a local level, which had a necessary impact on the accessibility and quality of sport to local communities. The liberal central state-sponsored approach as adopted by the Conservative New Right was often at odds with more radical urban-left or municipal socialist authorities (Stoker 1991, Jewson and Mason 1992, Rattansi 1992). London boroughs such as Lambeth, Haringey and ultimately the GLC often typified the radical approaches whereas in the north municipal socialist authorities like Sheffield were engaged in a more traditional paternalistic welfare project. Further, the contradictions concerning public sector racial equality abound, for whilst the central government mandate to local government was determined to reduce public spending on social welfare, as exemplified in its inception of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (C.C.T.) in 1988 it was still itself involved in large scale developments to regenerate the inner cities, which typically included sport (Rigg 1986, DoE 1989). C.C.T. forced sport and leisure policy makers and practitioners into reconsidering the basis of their provision for a more market centred, competitive perspective. Houlihan (1997) argues that it is at this stage of managerial ‘innovation’ where much sports development activity dissipated in favour of activities that returned a bigger investment on initial outlays (Sports Council 1993). It is also at such times where the central–local tensions are heightened as the central imposition of regulation caused sport and leisure professionals to resolutely fix their gaze on the ‘bottom-line’, on income generation and economics rather than quality of life community issues (Clarke 1994). This period led commentators on sport to surmise the death of ‘sport for all’ McDonald (1995) or to simply wave community recreation ‘goodbye’ (Lentell 1994).

This PhD builds upon the studies of Henry (1987, 1993), Yule (1995) and Young (1989), which conclude that administrators' activities are clouded with ambiguity, assumptions and identifiable values (Young 1989: 95). They are some of the reasons why it is relatively easy for local authorities to write equal opportunities statements and to make commitments to race-equality without fully implementing them (Carrol 1993, Horne 1995, Clarke and Speeden 2000). An opportunity to unpack these issues with a clear focus on 'race' is a key reason why I felt it necessary to complete this PhD.

### **The Aim of this PhD is to:-**

- ❖ Demystify the practice of equal opportunities in local government sports policy implementation.

### **Objectives**

- ❖ To identify the core processes that shape the appreciative contexts and assumptive worlds of local authority providers.
- ❖ To challenge the assumptions of policymakers and officers in local authorities with views from outside these systems.
- ❖ To utilise a critical black perspective deriving from critical 'race' theory (CRT) that clearly positions the political black perspective that informs this work.

### **Overview of the Chapters**

Chapter **Two** positions the ontological premise that underpins this work. The study draws upon critical black theory that stems from critical theory (Gramsci 1971, Habermas 1987, Ohri and Faruqi 1988, West 1989), and North American critical 'race' theory (CRT) (Delgado 1995a, Nebeker 1998 Parker 1999, Delgado and Stefancic 2000) literature rooted in American critical legal studies. The urgent call from Birrell (1989), Stanfield II (1993), Goldberg (1993), and Gramann and Allison (1999) to centralise the perspective and 'voice' of black people in academia is outlined. The need to position the ('raced') researcher within the research process is a practice that is particularly well rehearsed by feminist writers and a significant point to restate here (Lather 1991, Naples 1997, Reinharz 1997). The study also recognises how power is

exercised epistemologically in the dual practices of naming and evaluating. This CRT position starts the process of focusing the theoretical lens so that where leisure theory, policy and equality have been colour blind (Young and Connelly 1981) and 'race'-neutral (Delgado 1995a, Solorzano and Yosso 2001) this work engages a critical black consciousness to centre it (Goldberg 1993: 150).

Chapter **Three** explores the way 'equal opportunities' has been debated conceptualised and operationalised by both theorists and practitioners. The ambiguity surrounding equal opportunities often makes it less transparent, or achievable in much of the literature (Gibbon 1989). The first section gives a theoretical overview of the range of positions that have been taken by writers on what equal opportunities means. Although the term 'Equality of Opportunity' is mostly used politically to embrace all equality approaches (Bagilhole 1997:32) this and the more specific descriptive terminology are part of the reason for policy-makers' inability to understand the implications of this type of policy commitment (Jewson and Mason 1986, Ellis 1994, Clarke and Speeden 2000). The connection between 'race' and equality acts as a backdrop to the questions in the following sections 'what is equal opportunities?' and 'what is the value of equal opportunities in local authorities?'

Chapter **Four** outlines the methodology used to investigate traditional views from inside three local authorities. They are normalised views in that it is understood that these perspectives are based on the interviewees' interpretations of everyday practices in each authority. The views of equal opportunities in the form of case studies concentrates on a relatively small group of policymakers and professionals often termed as the joint or dominant elite (Stoker 1991: 92). Young's (1977, 1981, 1989, 1992) assumptive worlds framework is utilised here to permit a critical reading of the officer and policymaker responses to racial equality in sport. The cluster of images, beliefs and values that underline the daily decisions of the joint elite help to clarify the everyday assumptions or appreciative context of individuals. This builds into an overall understanding of an aggregate 'assumptive world' in each authority in the analysis of the local authority data in chapter **Five** (Rosenberg 1989, Young 1992). It is at this stage that the implications of the local authorities' findings are articulated and draws together the issues emerging from the assumptive worlds of the three authorities.

These assumptions are challenged indirectly by a different view of the world emerging from a black pressure group outside the local authorities in chapter **Six**. This group could be described as end-user clients or proximate policymakers in terms of their ability to comment on local government provision and public sector policymaking. Their position in the regional sports policy network is established using the policy network framework made popular by Marsh and Rhodes (1992) and others (Kickert et. al. 1997, Blom-Hansen 1997, Marsh 1998). As the emergence of this group is tracked in an ethnographic study, reflections on the black experience of ‘the system’ surface, and challenges the orthodoxy of the institutional response.

In the final chapter **Seven** the assumptive world themes are outlined further as the processes that underpin them are examined. The advantages of using such a methodology are discussed just as the value of alternative perspectives are illuminated. The concluding remarks advocate a more liberatory, ‘race’-biased sports policy and practice. It offers an agenda for change that utilises a critical ‘race’ consciousness that encourages black activism in academia and in policy implementation that is no longer seen as ‘radical’ (Jewson and Mason 1986, Birrell 1989, Goldberg 1993, Delgado 1995) but more as common sense. This allows the reader the opportunity to further consider what may seem like a chaotic semantic, and value-laden morass so that they may understand why ‘race’-equality is still a distant target in local government sports provision. It is at this point the journey really begins.

## **CHAPTER 2: CRITICAL ‘RACE’ THEORY**

The intention of this chapter is to present and explore a critical ‘race’ perspective as the ontological starting point for this thesis. Giddens’ (1995) view of transformation through social practices clearly offers an insight into the process of change that occurs when new research challenges epistemologies dominated by an elitist and hegemonic Eurocentric social science. Challenging research agendas as a consequence of new theoretical perspectives results in critical reflections on the passive reproduction of established practices, knowledge and resources, that make up these social conditions (Cassells 1993, Layder 1994). Mainstream agendas and epistemologies are therefore simultaneously transformed. There are three sections to this chapter that conclude with a call to sport and leisure policymakers and theorists to centralise ‘race’, racism, and race-equality in their everyday considerations. Section one introduces a critical black ontology that has many supporters in the study of sport such as Henderson (1988), Hemingway (1999) and Scraton (2001), although few active in advancing theoretical viewpoints in which to challenge dominant paradigms and epistemologies in the study of sport or related areas such as Birrell (1989), and Anthias (1998). This section maps out the parallel developments of critical theory in sport and leisure sociology and the more advanced critical legal studies experience, which gives us an insight into what can be achieved when writers develop a critical ‘race’-centred approach in an emergent academic area. After sketching out these theoretical links the implications for the study of race-equality in sport and leisure are spelled out. More importantly, critical race theory (CRT) is advanced as a worthy theoretical framework in which to interrogate issues of ‘race’, and to refocus the theoretical lens onto race-equality and related areas in sport and leisure studies.

Birrell’s (1989) optimistic view of the sociology of sport as a field of study moving purposefully to a more critical theoretical position is one worthy of further consideration. Her argument that a black ontology would center the experience of black people, where before it had been at the margins of such work in sport and leisure, has merit. This would ultimately result in black people’s location and relations to be viewed in a different light. That is, as purposive actors in their own ‘real worlds’ as opposed to passive ‘victims’ in increasingly pathologised stories. This is accomplished by ensuring

the experiences of marginalised groups come through clearly in the stories disseminated to the research and policy communities. A critical black theoretical standpoint challenges social scientists to (re)interpret the black experience in the study of 'race' and race-equality therefore generating a more liberating and emancipatory discourse. The 'race' biased knowledge of white social science would be far more difficult to maintain where emergent themes, ideas and perspectives reflecting black experiences in sport are evident (Goldberg 1993, Gramann and Allison 1999). Collins (1990) exemplified this debate as she accused white social science of struggling to maintain the mantle of the vehicle in which to study 'race' and black spaces in society as she urges black writers to search for ways to reflect the experiences of black people without borrowing passively from white social science.

Social researchers are the same as workers in other social structures that have to engage with the 'race' laden vocabulary, and world view of society (Stanfield II 1993). Similarly, Goldberg (1993) recognises how discourse is racialised and has the ability to normalise the vocabulary of difference in isolation from diversity and identity. At the same time it marginalises or 'others' less conspicuous viewpoints, he states that,

...power is exercised epistemologically in the dual practices of naming and evaluating .....existence is recognised or refused, significance assigned or ignored, beings elevated or rendered invisible.  
(Goldberg 1993: 150)

Stanfield II's (1994) thesis concentrates on black researchers and writers and their need to urgently centralise 'race' and ethnicity as core factors in the study of social relations. Such actions improve and enhance the bodies of knowledge pertinent to 'race' and 'race-relations'. This would have the effect of challenging everyday assumptions about socially constructed groups that often become the foundation for myth and folklore e.g. identity, homogeneity. Stanfield II's challenge is that we should establish new lines of inquiry whilst criticising traditional epistemologies, rather than acquiescing to the hegemony of established epistemologies i.e. the research community's response to less political mainstream topics.

## **‘Race’ and Race-Equality: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues**

This thesis holds that the spectre and discourse of ‘race’ is so powerful that when it is the point of debate in public policy the starting point often becomes an unproblematic notion of ‘race’ that implies a clear association with ethnicity. This is often articulated in a black/white binary<sup>ii</sup>. The use of a critical ‘race’ perspective does not imply that ‘race’ is being applied without some tensions in its application. In addition there is no attempt to deny difference, individuality or identity in this thesis by not consistently referring to ethnicity, as it is recognised here that black people experience ‘race’ and racism(s) in different ways and so it would be fallacious to talk of a common experience, and monolithic phenomenon of ‘race’, racism or even blackness. But rather, in theoretical analyses, writers sometimes have to acknowledge that these debates are ensuing and at the same time must establish a theoretical frame from which to move if inequality and racism in society are to be the ultimate focus of our energies. Hence this study’s predilection for ‘race’, especially as its power as a social category is still persuasive for many others (Husband 1984, Cornell and Hartmann 1998, Lewis 1998). Similarly, blackness as a core signifier of political unity is utilised strategically here, and its shortcomings as a tool to include those who suffer discrimination, due to their colour (blackness), are briefly discussed below.

‘Race’ is constructed and transformed using everyday assumptions, and it is viewed as the most powerful and persistent group boundary by Cornell and Hartmann (1998), hence the general tendency for politicians and public sector workers to take it seriously, and to organise policy and practice accordingly. It is on the basis of a controversial, but well documented, debate based upon genotype and phenotype differences that discourses of ‘race’ are perpetuated, and ‘race’-equality no longer raises any eyebrows. Miles’ (1989) view that the idea of ‘race’ was derived from nineteenth century scientific theories has much support (Husband 1984, Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1993, Guillaumin 1995, Haney-Lopez 1995, Solomos 1995). Gates’ (1986) observation that ‘race’ is the ultimate trope of difference because it is so arbitrary in application supports constructionist views of the concept, even though it is well documented that ‘race’ is socially constructed (UNESCO 1964). The fiction and fallacy of ‘race’ as a cultural construct has been the source of much controversy (Husband 1984, Gates 1986, Miles 1989, Terkel 1992, Montagu 1997). Goldberg (1993) describes how racialised



discourses emerge as ideological and conceptual conditions conflate over time. However, clearly articulated positions that have illustrated the spurious position of racial differences in society and emphasised the ‘othering’ discourse of black and white, are still unable to halt the flow of folk concepts and definitions that maintain these fundamentally racist ideologies. In the slipstream of these essentialist conceptual and theoretical claims from which racism is propagated, it is perpetuated and remains a cancerous aspect of British social life. Racism by definition reinforces human differences and privileges some over others. These racialised processes in wider society consequently find their way into the public sphere of local authorities (Ben-Tovim 1986, Verma and Darby 1994, Parker 1998, Macpherson 1999).

### **‘Race’ and the Public Sector**

Society maintains the habit of reifying ‘race’ in its institutions and a critical analysis of ‘race’ and therefore race-equality needs to challenge any ‘race’ schema, commonsense views, and other hegemonic impositions (Outlaw 1990). The state, as a major sponsor of the notion of ‘race’, regularly endorses its value as a social and political boundary between groups. Local authorities take cognisance of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amended 2000). Race equality standards (CRE 1995, 1999) are followed in the public sector and related governing bodies. The recent reports by Cattle (2002) and Ouseley (2001) on the disturbance in Bradford, Oldham, Burnley, Leicester, Southall and Birmingham were all heavily tinged with racial overtones and the subsequent reports spoke in particular of communities differentiated by ‘race’. The discourse of ‘race’ is also used extensively in the context of race-relations in the social, political and biological sciences (Miles 1989). Miles supports the idea that through a process of signification the utilisation of ‘race’ attributes social groups with physical and cultural characteristics and meanings. This racial differentiation between ‘black’ and ‘white’ is common and not unusual in everyday public sector discourses. This ‘commonsenseness’ is what Miles (1989) finds unhelpful as ‘race’ is reified and given the status of a scientific concept.

## **Assimilation, Integration and Multi-Culturalism**

Best Value indicators highlighted by the Home Office (2000) focus on how well local authorities demonstrate that they have taken into account racial and ethnic group issues within their service delivery. Key indicators are the CRE standards for local government (CRE 1995, 1999). Similarly Home Secretary Jack Straw (2000), stated that if,

Local service providers are to interact effectively with their local communities and are to provide a service which meets local needs and priorities, then such services should reflect the ethnicity of the local community that they serve.  
(Home Office 2000: 42)

Central government has had a well documented recent history of trying to manage race-relations and equality that stem predominantly from their sponsored work programmes encouraging workers from the New Commonwealth with the 1948 British Nationality Act (see Parekh 2000:69). This must be juxtaposed with immigration policies to control further black immigration such as the 1971 Immigration Act. These policies led to assimilationist, and integrationist ideologies in the fifties and sixties, demonstrated by ethnocentric education policies that can be traced to dominant racialised ideologies today (Solomos 1988). The assimilation of black children in 1965 was more focused on allaying the fears of white society threatened with 'losing their heritage' than respecting the cultural background of black and white people. As a consequence of this black children were forced to adjust to the cultural values of the white educational system rather than experiencing 'race' centred policies that celebrated black identity (Flagg 1997). In rejecting this notion of assimilation due to its failure in achieving the 'melting pot' ideology it engenders, Brown (1970) went as far as to argue, in his text 'The Unmelting Pot', that towns were sites of stratification due to the pathologising of immigrant groups and their subsequent problems of settling in and clearly this would impact upon accessing public sport services and provision. Similarly, cultural diversity was singled out as one of the main causes of social stratification in sixties Britain by Home Secretary Roy Jenkins. He put particular pressure on the integration of culturally diverse groups. Therefore to Jenkins racism was not a matter of racial oppression and exploitation of 'race' and class but of cultural differences and their acceptability. The

public confusion on 'race' and racism was exaggerated through dominant racist discourses emphasised by senior politicians such as Enoch Powell in the sixties and Margaret Thatcher in the eighties. In fact, the year before Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1978 she claimed that Britain was being 'swamped' by immigrants from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan, thus symbolising the contradictions, racial prejudice and institutional inequality amongst public sector policymakers.

It was not just the Conservative party that made capital out of the politics of 'race', between the 1960s and 1980s both the Conservative and Labour parties 'exploited the fears raised by the immigration of Blacks and Asians' (Gilroy 1987, Holmes 1991). At this point the messages sent to local government and their communities over racial acceptance and toleration lacked direction and coherence. By the late 1980s the Race Relations Act (1976) was almost fifteen years old, cultural pluralism had developed into versions of multi-culturalism and had become institutionalised in an ideology that asserted that the tackling of cultural diversity was a problem for black people in the country and it was not an issue of institutionalised racism, unlike the stark conclusions reached by Macpherson (1999) and Ouseley (2001) in more recent times (CCCS 1982, Hall 2001).

Still, these issues surrounding the public sector response to new communities, racism and equality, found their most potent expression of struggle in mainly labour controlled local government often as a response to Conservative party policy in the 1980s. It was in the 1980s when at least some consensus was established between the major political parties and central and local government that there needed to be a more focused approach to racial equality. One of the major catalysts for this was the civil disobedience in the early 1980s often referred to as riots that caused the public sector response to, on one level, pacify the dysfunctional [black] youths, at the same time as recognising that this was a symptom of deeper more destructive social ills (Scarman 1982: 209, Solomos 1988, Young 1990).

Although a continuing discourse of political equality developed over this period at national government level the consensus was often translated into practice that did not reflect the central government ethos at local level. As noted in chapter one, this had an impact on the accessibility and the quality of sport offered to local communities as state

sponsored welfarist sport projects gave way to liberal minimalist provision, as adopted by the Conservative New Right in the early 1990s (Ravenscroft 1992, McDonald 1995). It was noticeable at this time that a new-managerialism was gaining popularity in the public sector. The same framework that promoted economy, efficiency and effectiveness was the one that ignored equity (Clarke 1994, Hylton and Totten 2001). One of the major drawbacks of the contracting process as a result of the Local Government Act (1988) is that social objectives or equality targets did not have to be tied into contracts. Equality targets in the political climate around 1988 were seen as non-commercial anti-competitive considerations. The Sports Council's National Information Survey (1993) evaluating the first round of C.C.T. bares testimony to this. It was established that out of many local authorities only a few incorporated social objectives into the clauses for contracts that went out to tender (Ellis 1994, Escott 1996). It is not unreasonable to suggest that where it came to 'race' equality and social objectives things actually deteriorated under C.C.T. (Clarke 1994), yet now under a new Labour Government there is the next phase of local government regulation to contend with, Best Value. Best Value can also be seen as 'colour-blind' and unclear on equality but the Local Government Act (1999) has ensured that it covers all local government functions from early 2000. This can give added impetus for local authorities to reduce expenditure by becoming more strategic and innovative, or it can be another menu from which a diet of excuses can be read about racial equality in sport (Thomas and Piccolo 2000). It is under this ever-changing landscape of national regulation and local implementation that local authorities have to tailor their activities to their local communities.

### **'Race', Ethnicity and Blackness**

Just as 'race' is a social often-ideological construct, ethnicity is socially constituted and draws upon the linguistic and cultural practices in local government sport that Harvey (1990) suggests generates practices that produce a dynamic sense of collective identity (see LGA 2001: 7)<sup>iii</sup>. 'Race' however is often the primary social category for Harvey (1990) as it always implies ethnicity; ethnicity becomes racialised in social or cultural terms,

Either by reducing linguistic or cultural identity to biology, or by naturalising linguistic or cultural identity within a fixed hierarchy of 'social traits'.  
(Harvey 1990: 157)

Cornell and Hartmann's (1998) analysis of the overlaps between ethnicity and 'race' offers some explanation as to why one is often used as a shorthand for the other, and 'other' by the state and influential institutions. The result of the exclusion of racial and ethnic groups due to their status as the 'other' initiates similar responses to their experiences. Responses to material differences, political activity, and conceptual deliberations of these alienating processes have mutual ground. There is a 'naturalness' attributed to socially constructed, sometimes shared categories that sets up arbitrary boundaries. This 'race-thinking' is what oppositionist writers work to demystify and to resist (see Wallman 1988). The conflation of ethnicity and 'race' continues as both concepts are often used to differentiate the white British community from others. These differences are often designated as a mix of phenotype, and culture and act as significant boundaries between those labelled as minority ethnic/black and 'white' (Mason 2000).

### **Black Constructionism**

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1993) also use a constructionist perspective on blackness as it is used as a signifier of the targets of racial discrimination. These superficial inherited characteristics draw the prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage that often preclude the politics of assimilation or integration into mainstream society. Therefore due to these oppressive racialised processes this signifier is used to unite individuals with common social experiences and needs. The concept 'black' is no stranger to ambiguity. There have been many battles over the names that suitably describe groups of individuals in society. Over the past few years however, race equality professionals have come to the general conclusion that the term 'black' should be used to describe all those who because of their colour are unfavourably treated. For the purpose of this work the premise for the identification of 'black' people is used in the same way as the Commission for Racial Equality 1988 (see C.R.E. – *New Community* 1988). The C.R.E. use the term 'black' as it provides a means of affecting unity between otherwise very diverse powerless minorities. (See Modood's 1988 and 1994 responses to the use

of 'blackness' as a political term to include Asians). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1993: 142) have explored how black has been used in two main ways I) black people sharing a common origin and culture and, II) black people sharing a common experience (destiny) of racism. Jarvie (1991a, 1991 b), like Gramann and Allison (1999), and Modood (1988, 1994), is sceptical about any uncritical usage of the term black as it can itself obscure cultural identities through their consequent relegation and negation. More importantly though, he suggests that these conceptual discussions should not act as obstacles in the pursuit of the analysis of racism(s). Hall (1982) supports this view as he reiterates that a positive connotation of the word black could only be so if there was some form of black-consciousness resulting in an organised struggle and resistance to subjugation and oppression in society. In agreement with Hall (1982), Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1993), and Jarvie and Reid (1997), writers have stated that the 'other' in a racialised discourse may adopt its content to identify itself positively as this. So they accept that they are at least socially 'raced', 'black', 'minority ethnic' and so changing an evaluative content from a negative to a positive. So the discourse is subverted and made oppositional (Miles 1989).

### **'Race' Theory and Critical Studies**

'Race' as ideology and theories of 'race' are useful theoretical explanations for its use in critical studies (Guillaumin 1995). However, to acknowledge the social and physical differences that make up these 'races', as critical writers on 'race' do, is not the same as agreeing that they essentially determine intellectual, social or physical attributes (Lewis 1998). Chong-Soon Lee (1995) warns writers that 'race' is defined not by its inherent content but by the social relations that construct it. The meaning of 'race' changes over context and time, therefore the opportunity for 'race' to be redeployed to assert the power of social groups is one worth taking. Using the term 'race' is to use a powerful metaphor and to reject it out of hand is to deny a potential political vehicle (see also Haney-Lopez 1995). Chong-Soon Lee's pragmatics argue for a critical navigation of the definitions of 'race' and a focus on its related social processes rather than becoming stymied by their oppressive outcomes. A critical application of these conceptual and theoretical debates need to be in operation in the discourse of equal opportunities where, as noted earlier, there has been a history of folk concepts and definitions in operation in

public sector contexts (Race Relations Act 1976, Sports Council 1994, CRE 1995, Blackstone 1998, LGA 2001, Cantle 2002).

Haney-Lopez (2000) describes the process that occurs around race-relations and race-equality where a 'kind of racial etiquette exists', a set of interpretive codes and racial meanings operate in the interactions of daily life. These assumptions and value positions are examined further in the methodology. For Gilroy (1992), the difficulties in generating an inclusive political discourse is possible using the terms 'black', 'race' 'British' or even 'European'. However unless the critical contingent nature of this discourse is preserved, terminology is likely to continue excluding, alienating and be problematic which is not the intention of this study. In supporting Gilroy's analysis, Goldberg (1993) reiterates how the success of any standpoints on 'race' and racism must depend on its ability to offer resistance to racism(s). To conclude this section, Chong-Soon Lee (1995) proposes that writers should navigate the various meanings of racialised discourses but should bias their efforts toward the effects of these accounts rather than determining solely whether definitions are oppressive or otherwise.

### **Leisure and Sports Studies: Reflections on Critical Theory**

There have been a number of recent criticisms and debates amongst leisure and sports studies writers that criticise their focus of study as narrow and myopic (Deem 1999, Coalter 2000a, Hemingway and Parr 2000). Their concern has been the limited research agenda, incidentally in which 'race' issues have been peripheral, where specific concerns were seen to have been played out too often both here and in the U.S.

Leisure studies would benefit from a wider debate about some of the 'domain assumptions', a greater plurality of perspectives and greater clarity in the meaning and relevance of certain widely used terms.  
(Coalter 2000: 38)

Clearly an agenda for change is being advanced by Coalter (2000a). Just as Deem (1999), Gramman and Allison (1999) and Hemingway (1999) are supporting a carefully constructed agenda that does not marginalise equity and issues of inclusion. Deem

(1999) in reflecting upon gender and leisure studies, a relatively well documented body of knowledge to 'race' and equality issues, complained of a 'ghettoisation' of gender by other leisure researchers in their analyses. Deem's (1999) argument to locate gender in the mainstream is a question a long way off the slowly developing interests in the analysis of 'race' in the context of sport and leisure in the UK. This systematic neglect of 'race' is of some concern (Floyd 1998, Stodolska 2000, Carrington and MacDonald 2001, Scraton 2001).

The few writers to engage with 'race' in informing leisure and sport research have been intent on working towards 'race' centred approaches that would progress a critical theoretical understanding of epistemological approaches in sport and leisure (Floyd 1998, Gramman and Allison 1999, Scraton 2001). Some writers have been successful in raising the profile of 'race' frameworks in understanding sport and leisure contexts to the point where the efficacy of established paradigms are being challenged (Jarvie and Reid 1997, Floyd 1998, Henderson 1998, Gramman and Allison 1999, Carrington and McDonald 2001, Long and Hylton 2002). However, in attempting to engage a critical theoretical viewpoint leisure and sport writers in the U.K. and the U.S. have reached the stage that critical legal scholars reached in the U.S. in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This has been exemplified by the recent work of Hemingway (1999) and Hemingway and Parr's (2000) argument for critical theory to be adopted to challenge the pseudo-scientism of established paradigms in sport and leisure studies. This recent movement towards critical theory encourages writers in the area to do a number of things in different ways. Critical theory, as will be seen later in this chapter, challenges leisure and sport writers to make their research political rather than neutral, transformatory rather than mere critique. They also urge writers to reject paradigms as dogma for more plurivocal epistemologies and methodologies. However it was critical race theorists that enabled a centring of 'race' ultimately defining a new paradigm for legal scholars. This could be the next step for leisure and sport studies in the UK.

Where Henderson (1988) Anthias (1998), and Birrell (1998) are agitating for change, and where Hemingway's (1999, 2000) work needs further reconsideration, is for leisure and sports studies to develop a meaningful theoretical framework for 'race' and race-equality. They must centralise 'race' and racism in their analyses and research agendas. Where 'race' has been ignored, include it, where it has been marginalised, centre it, and



where it has been problematised, theorise it. ‘Race’ is not centred in Hemingway’s analyses although curiously this stage in the development of a critical theory of ‘race’ in leisure and sport does mirror the emergence of critical race theory (CRT), which developed out of the critical legal studies literature, and it is to this that we now turn.

### **Critical Theory: Implications for Leisure and Sports Studies in the Analysis of Race-Equality**

Critical theory has the capacity to make a substantive contribution to our understanding of society (Kellner 1989). Kellner’s belief is that critical theory has as its fundamental underpinnings a critique of domination, and a liberatory focus. He is keen to recognise that under the umbrella of ‘critical theory’ there are different versions, which have been adapted and transformed by social and historical events. These phenomena are manifest amongst other things in the shape of research, social problems, and intellectual insight and challenges. Harvey (1990) concurs that a critical approach is particularly concerned with attempting to make links between important social issues and wider structural and power relations. Such an agenda facilitates clearer connections with, and conclusions about, oppressive structural relationships.

Critical social theorists have made the connection between critical perspectives and their use in research (Gramsci 1971, Habermas 1987, Ohri and Faruqi 1988, West 1989 and Thomas 1993). That is, the experience and interests of the researcher/writer informing and being overtly part of the process of political liberation and emancipation. Forst’s (1996) comments reinforce this and offer an endorsement to this realm of social research. He links the technique of critique with the ability for purposive actors to unravel the ambiguities of a constructed society with the ‘actual’ experiences of marginalised voices that offer up a story from a more gritty existence.

This research focuses on the assumptions and values of policymakers and senior officers whose views tend to be more positivistic or instrumental rather than process oriented (Mason 1990, Jewson and Mason 1992, White and Adams 1994). This has been reflected in the research and theoretical work conducted under the umbrella of local government, ‘race’ and sports policy that will be discussed more fully in chapter

four (see Allison 1988). However, this work adopts a critical [black] perspective which Apple (1996) feels should ‘work to unearth and transform ideological and institutional arrangements’. That is, the basic standpoint that we live in an unequal society, where resources and power are unevenly distributed are key aspects of a critical theorist’s perspective on society. The need to demystify these social arrangements is a clear aim of critical theorists (Lenzo 1995). Apple’s (1996) interest with critical theory leads him to surmise that critical social researchers are likely to have similar concerns and principles when conducting critical investigations. He argues that critical social researchers are likely to take issue with the realities of certain communities in a society. In effect Apple supports an ‘activist’ perspective (Fine 1994; cited Carspecken 1996) which he urges is most likely to be taken by critical theorists as it centres around writers being able to openly politicise their research agenda at the same time as advancing their own intellectual challenge to the academy.

For critical black theorists Carspecken’s (1996: 3) position that we should all be concerned with positive social change, and processes concerning structure, agency and power is a source of agreement (Essed and Goldberg 2002). The critical element of this type of research engages political ideas that without them would render work tame, and therefore unable to influence mainstream agendas. He argues that critical researchers should be engaged in social and cultural criticism, that there should be recognition of inequality in society, that oppressive dominant forces should be laid bare and challenged, that oppression has to be tackled on more than one front, and significantly, that mainstream epistemologies and research agendas make up part of the forces of oppression. The principles of a critical race theory approach are an essential framework in which to position this study. Below it will be seen how research and writing that falls into this category have been considered to be at the cutting edge of emergent critical black and cultural studies research (Stanfield II 1993, West 1995, Parekh 2000).

### **Critical Theory and Postmodernism**

West (1989), and Kincheloe and McLaren’s (1994, 1998) views on postmodernism encapsulate the tensions of mainstream standpoints and their usefulness in theorising ‘race’ and race-equality. West considers postmodernists’ debates with a wary eye due to the way they have devalued the collective experience of the exploited and oppressed,

which is so important in an understanding of ‘race’ and racism(s) in society. He struggles to put any confidence in postmodernism as a perspective to fully understand the cultural practices, mores and norms of black people. At the same time they argue that black people’s experiences actually embody the postmodernists’ themes of ‘otherness’ and symbolic marginality. This takes the more constructive aspects of postmodernist ideas at the same time as keeping a strong focus on the universal/political aspects of black people’s experience that CRT writers endorse (Crenshaw et al. 1995, Nebeker 1998, Parker 1998, Delgado and Stefancic 2000). Kincheloe and McLaren have their reservations about jettisoning key aspects of a postmodern approach but what they do add to this debate is a *critical* postmodern turn that when utilised in tandem with critical theory can afford postmodernists a theoretical position for social resistance rather than a nihilistic ‘ludic’ perspective.

Boyne and Rattansi (1990; cited Anthias 1998) also struggle with the idea suggested by postmodernists that there are no universal stratifying forces or processes uniting people. Given this situation there remains no firm position for anti-racists, or others using black perspectives to understand or resist the disempowering and marginalising networks in society. The ability of activists to get involved in resistive action is reduced to the level of ad hoc individual activity. Thomas (1993) refers to postmodernists as ‘armchair radicals’ as they regularly rehearse arguments that challenge traditional, established, modernist, structuralist ways of perceiving things, of which research is one aspect. Their challenge to established grand theory is explicit and has ramifications for critical ‘race’ theorists who propose oppositionist views to structural racism. However, the ‘ludic’ and ‘resistance’ postmodernism used in discussion by Kincheloe and McLaren is useful in extricating its key contributions to critical theory and black studies that have made Cornel West wary and other critical social theorists equally suspicious (Goldberg 1993, Thomas 1993).

I do not displace myself from the postmodernism debate,  
I simply try to keep my distance from its parochialism  
and view it as a symptom of our present cultural crisis.  
(West 1989: 92)

Ludic postmodernism can be aligned to the negative, Eurocentric, perspectives that have been criticised by social theorists. The propensity for ludic theorists to leave current

epistemological, social and historical issues politically unchallenged has not helped to lend their ideas to exploring and understanding 'race' and race-equality. Unlike West, Kincheloe and McLaren wish to retain sympathy with postmodernism even though they clearly do not offer traditional postmodernist views. On the other hand, postmodernists do not wholly alienate critical black writers. The stance taken that challenges traditional epistemological perspectives as narrow and only partially reflective of the diversity in society is one that critical black theorists embrace. Where postmodernists conflict with critical black theoretical debates is where they,

....carry a potentially nihilistic message of distrust of Enlightenment beliefs in social progress and the possibility of establishing universal values, which are central to contemporary critical thinking.  
(Habermas 1984, cited Thomas 1993: 25)

Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) advocate a more 'critique-al' postmodern theory to fully extend the more limited ludic postmodernism. Resistance postmodernism accounts for social and historical signifiers 'in a matrix of historically possible or suspended signifieds' (Ebert 1994; cited Kincheloe and McLaren 1998:272). This crisis is evidenced by West who recognised the inability of mainstream social scientists to adequately theorise the interconnections between 'race' and other social phenomena such as class and gender. The need to demonstrate a consideration of structural power relations and contentious views of history and knowledge are imperative for those expressing a critical perspective and/or a resistance postmodernist view.

### **Critical Race Theory (CRT) and 'Race' in Leisure and Sports Studies**

Stanfield II (1993) encapsulates the need for writers to engage with 'race', ethnicity, equality, and policy in sport, when he wrote, "There is a great need to begin to treat racial and ethnic studies as a serious area of inquiry, worthy of epistemological and theoretical reflections and innovation" (Stanfield II 1993: 6). It has been generally agreed that critical 'race' theory (CRT) is a critical theoretical perspective that has emerged from the writing predominantly of black scholars in North America (Delgado 1995, Parker 1998, Nebeker 1998). CRT has come out of a particular struggle by black

legal scholars who in challenging one of the most symbolic bastions of white privilege and power, the legal system, have developed a transdisciplinary tool in which to oppose the hegemonic forces of the white establishment. The legal system embodies a conspicuous site of struggle that says as much about who has power and who is privileged in society as who has not. It is also in this arena where battles are fought that have a massive effect upon the way black and white people engage with social systems on an individual and collective basis. Further, not only does CRT shape the discourses of minds closed to 'race' centred perspectives they also wish to influence the lethargy in liberal critiques of those debates. CRT writers argue that,

.....racism has been ingrained through historical consciousness and events, and that racist ideologies have directly shaped the law, racial categories, and racial privilege.  
(Parker 1998:45)

Haney Lopez (1995) emphasised the role the legal system plays in constructing the notion of 'race' and racial identities and why a critical 'race' consciousness is necessary to uncover the assumptions and presumptions implicit and explicit in the way structures in society work. Sport, just like the law, can be observed as a key tool in the subjugation of black people and the magnification of the place of 'race' as a major mediating factor within society. Ladson-Billings (1998) goes further to make a crucial distinction between critical legal studies (CLS), and for that matter critical theory, and CRT. Although she has acknowledged that CLS and by default CRT are ostensibly grounded in critical theory, she argues constructively that critical [legal] theorists have identified the processes and contradictions within institutions that reinforce oppressive social situations, for example discourses, ideologies and related other practices. The use of Gramscian principles to challenge oppressive power relations also highlights the way structures function to reproduce the privileging of some members of society over others in sport. However, she is critical of two aspects in particular that dilute critical [legal] theory as a source for transformative action. The first point is that CLS, like Hemingway's (1999, 2000) critical theory, fails to centralise 'race' and racism as a starting point of its critique of social systems. CLS signifies that structures are inequitable however the political 'race' focus, the emancipatory edge for black people, is not the starting point, and this is a crucial element of CRT. The second point relates to

strategies for transformation. CRT's aim is to give voice to black people, and to make them heard in the system where presently in sport they hold a marginal position. They wish to move beyond slow and painful gains as witnessed in the recent Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and local government 'race' standards (CRE 1995, 1999, LGA 2001) to more sweeping radical action. In the UK as in the US there is a long history of human and civil rights gains, but for many the pace of change negates any meaningful transformations.

CLS writers' criticism that social power is mediated through the law is a central moral issue for them. In addition they feel that the law and the legal system need to acknowledge that it is because the law purports to be neutral, rational and apolitical. As a result, powerful inequalities are reproduced through these social practices that recreate the social conditions for colour-blindness, as one example, to continue (Crenshaw et al. 1995). The targets for CLS activists was not just the conservative right but also the liberal left who put their trust in a system with the vain hope that it will somehow ensure fairness. According to West (1995), CRT challenges both liberals and conservatives whose assumptions are such that they reconstruct white privilege. Also those seen as radicals who have marginalised or stayed silent on 'race' and racism in society are prime targets. This has serious implications for local authority sport providers who refuse to accept a collectivist perspective on race equality. In fact CLS writers and activists were concerned that the historical inequities and power differentials were continually being reproduced. In addition, people from similar privileged backgrounds were reconstituting those making the key decisions. However, as Ladson-Billings (1998) argues, CRT emerged out of these critical ideas due to the feeling that CLS, which came out of a group predominantly made up of white writers, did not have enough of a focus on 'race'. CRT writers felt it significant enough to centralise 'race' and racism in their challenge to the way hegemonic power relations are constituted. This shifted 'race' from the margins to the centre and enabled a notable demarcation between itself and CLS. It is this shift that Henderson (1988), Birrell (1989), Gramman and Allison (1999) and others are advocating if sport and leisure studies are to adequately accommodate 'race' in their analyses.

In summary, CRT has the potential to challenge the institutions in society through its advocates' fundamental belief in its transformative capacity. When debating CRT's relationship with the law West (1995) adds that,

CRT engages with the most explosive issue in [U.S]. civilisation which happens to be the complicity of the [legal] system in the oppression of black people and the maintenance of white privilege.  
(West 1995: xi)

CRT can be used effectively to generate a useful theoretical vocabulary for the practice of progressive racial politics in sport and leisure theory and practice, in addition to understanding the essential formations of racial power and ideologies. Critical Race Theory rejects orthodoxies as a challenge to mainstream paradigms. In the study of race equality in local government sport it can be used to discard the notion of neutral objective detachment from issues for more personal political perspectives. Crenshaw et al. (1995) considers writing about 'race' and in this case race-equality as a site where racial power can be reconstructed and therefore it is an arena in which paradigms can be challenged. CRT facilitates any analysis of 'race' equality and racism from a starting point that is 'race' conscious. That is for example, where policy has had integrationist, assimilation, multicultural or colour-blind viewpoints, CRT shifts those paradigms to a 'race' centred one.

### **The Five Precepts of Critical Race Theory**

Solorzano and Yosso (2001) offer a breakdown of five significant points that draw out the main ideas from a critical 'race' perspective. The first involves centralising 'race' and racism at the same time as recognising their connection with other forms of subordination and oppression (Gordon, Miller and Rollock 1990, Ladson-Billings 1998, Parker 1998). For example, class cannot be theorised in isolation from 'race', as Marxists might wish, as 'race' must be central to the theorising of class relations from a CRT viewpoint (Nebeker 1998). Anthias (1998) has further argued that although there is some recognition amongst writers and researchers that 'race' and ethnicity or 'ethnos' is a significant focus of study, they have done little more than acknowledge this as they

wander onto more familiar theoretical terrain. Stanfield II (1993) also asks researchers to consider less so the question of methodology but more the notion of an epistemology that gives a more accurate picture of black people in society.

Underlying the development of equal opportunities policies since the 1950s has been a worldview that draws its reasoning from a racialised, race-biased discourse (Nanton 1989). This discourse has as its basic principle an oversimplified reductionist tenet that reinforces biological arguments, homogeneity and universalism. Gordon, Miller and Rollock (1990) give this process the label 'communicentric'. In leisure policy this communicentrism, or marginalisation of 'race' is manifest in the lexicon of policy makers who have propagated a vocabulary that legitimates rather than challenges the notion of 'race', monolithic racial identities and the black 'other' (Gilroy 1987, Cross and Keith 1993, Goldberg 1993, Thomas 2000). Cross and Keith (1993) go so far as to suggest that the changing experiences of culturally diverse communities in cities were the scenes of Eurocentric, elitist, culturally monolithic social theory. For example, Nanton (1989) identified five policy themes that reflected the mainstream approach to the racialised other; ethnic record keeping, and monitoring, 'race' training, the appointment of specialist staff, minority group consultation, and positive action. The outcome of such practices and processes is an institutional willingness by all levels of government to recreate crude racial identities through their own use of racial categorization and ethnic record keeping. In agreeing with Nanton, Stanfield II (1993) suggests that researchers need to make their concepts and their consideration of them more relevant and reflective of real people in the real world. He recommends that researchers do not blindly reproduce jaundiced methodologies but to make them more relevant.

Secondly, CRT challenges traditional dominant ideologies around objectivity, meritocracy, colour-blindness, race-neutrality and equal opportunity (Nebeker 1998, Solorzano and Yosso 2001). Nebeker's (1998) recommendation to those in education that a CRT perspective would allow a powerful dismantling of colour-blind and race-neutral policies is an invitation that could be easily extended to those who write and make policy in sport and leisure. The challenge to mainstream writers and practitioners is that for too long they have hidden behind these discourses as black people have waited, hoped and fought for change and now it is time for the orthodoxies to be



contested further and in a more sustained way than they have been in the past. The implications for sport policy and practice is immense although the reality is, as Nebeker (1998: 26) insightfully stated, 'difficult to apply as it is based on addressing the concerns of people of colour, yet people of colour do not comprise the popular majority of educators, administrators or policymakers'. In addition a CRT lens turned upon the mainstream writing of sport and leisure studies opens up a more restrictive domain that traditionally reflects the power and knowledge interests of white social science.

Solorzano and Yosso's (2001) third tenet is that CRT has a clear commitment to social justice that incorporates elements of liberation and transformation. A critical ontology ensures that where a writer/researcher is conscious of the crucial social processes that structure his/her world they take those ideas forward as their starting point. That is, where racism and the distribution of power and resources disproportionately marginalises black people's position in society, sport, local government and any other major social structures then they will ensure that those issues stay at the centre of their investigations or 'lens' rather than 'at the comfortable rim'. West's (1989) starting point is that black consciousness should be a focus for a challenge to Eurocentric, patriarchal (homophobic) agendas. So, for example, as a critical black theorist he looked earlier at postmodernist debates not so much for their emancipatory content but more to find out the context, actors and location of these arguments as an opportunity to position 'black opposition to the hierarchies of power'.

It is this centralising of the marginalised voice that is often tabled as a significant contributory aspect of CRT and is the fourth principle outlined by the two writers. Storytelling and counter-storytelling methodologies are seen as 'race' centred research that can effectively voice the experiences of black people in a bid to offer different or competing versions of the 'truth' that is often the prerogative of white social scientists (Delgado 1995). Leisure writers such as Henderson (1988) have attempted to draw upon more traditional critical theory that finds its roots in the writings of Habermas and Horkheimer at the same time as incorporating complimentary elements of CRT. Henderson offered a post-positivist critical framework to be utilised by feminists, or writers with other social agendas, to explore the meaning of leisure from the perspective of Other individuals in the social system (see Aitchison 2000). That is, to centralise the experiences of women or black people in such a way that any engagement with

marginalised or alienated groups becomes a political one. Authors therefore embrace the researched and researchers grounded values that are frowned upon in positivist research. The notion that the personal, professional and political should be tied into methodological processes is one that is emphasised in the methodology chapter four. Henderson and others also support this as a major thrust of enlightened meaningful research (Ben-Tovim 1986, Frankenberg 1993, Apple 1996, Carspecken 1996). A critical theoretical viewpoint (CRT) allows the researcher to get a clearer understanding of the major structures involved in the organisation of leisure and sport which is crucial when racial-equality is the ultimate target of the research. A focus on power processes, white hegemony, racism and equality, accounts for some of the contemporary concerns that have perplexed black people, at the same time as being consistently ignored by mainstream theorists such as Houlihan 1991, Henry 1993, Elcock 1994, and Parsons 1995.

The fifth element posited by Solorzano and Yosso (2001) is the transdisciplinary nature of CRT. CRT writers do not locate themselves in a multidisciplinary straitjacket that might constrain them in explaining modern (or historical) phenomena. They also avoid the ambivalence of postmodern perspectives by adopting a critical theoretical position on 'race' and stratifying structures at the same time that they stress there are no canons, dogma or methodologies that embrace all CRT scholars. They will attempt to use the necessary theoretical devices at their disposal to reinforce their challenge to the privileging mechanisms and accepted orthodoxies in place. This Nebeker (1998) outlines in an overview of disciplinary areas that inform CRT. These include ethnic and women's studies, cultural nationalism, critical legal studies, Marxism/Neo-Marxism, Latino/a feminism Asian and white critiques. The need for this PhD to focus on multi-disciplinary areas like sport and leisure studies gives a further indication of the diversity of contested spaces in society. They will further use this transdisciplinary approach to problematise social constructions of 'race' and the assumptions implicit within them. When applied to organisational contexts critiques of dominant assumptions surrounding equality, inclusion/exclusion, and 'race' are likely to be part of an emancipatory agenda.

To conclude, this research progresses from the standpoint that we live in a fundamentally racialised and unequal society where processes systematically disenfranchise black people. We therefore have a racist society, which impinges on all

aspects of our lives (Macpherson 1999, Parekh 2000). The academy is one such network that is affected by naturalised systems of order, often where research practice is flawed due to epistemological (in)consistencies that make claims to the nature and order of things. Delgado and Stefancic (1995: 206) refer to this as a DNA like process as knowledge bases have a tendency to endlessly, easily, and painlessly replicate themselves. Knowledge being one of those areas that is regularly modified and recreated through the hegemony of mainstream agendas which have neglected and negated new and emergent forms of thinking, writing and researching. An emancipatory stance throughout research informs the development of a critical theoretical viewpoint in practice. There is urgency now for sport and leisure writers to conduct critical black perspective research to inform race-equality in sport.

The following chapter critiques 'equal opportunities' as we see manifest in local government. Conceptually there is a proliferation of hazy definitions that require some deliberation (Gibbon 1992). Paradigmatically the liberal assumptions that pose the many challenges to critical race theorists underpin the very nature of equality of opportunity in local government and are given special attention. As a result chapter three aims to draw out the ways equal opportunities is conceptualised, and used politically and strategically in implementation, across a local government sector with a uniform duty to provide equality for all.

### **CHAPTER 3: 'EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES'; A POINT OF CLARIFICATION**

Much of the literature on 'equal opportunities' has as its base a focus on the various inequalities in employment and service delivery. Those that write on equality however recognise that we live in an unequal society and that there is a justification one way or the other, for those who can, to either work towards eradicating it, maintaining it or to augmenting the 'natural' socio-economic differences. Equality is a principle which changes over time (Jewson and Mason 1986) is fundamental to most people's idea of citizenship (Moore 1993:260) but not universally accepted (Friedman 1962, Plant 1984, Clarke 1994, Hayek 1997, Coalter 1998). A number of authors (Rawls 1971, Jencks 1988, Desai 1995, Mithaug 1996) have tried to articulate this evasive concept which consistently provides thinkers with a kaleidoscope of choices as to its constituency, and subsequent eventual achievement. Bagilhole (1997:7) prefers to use equal opportunities only in inverted commas as it is such a contested concept and subject to superficially shared and often tangentially related ideas. Regardless of the competing views on the worth of 'equal opportunities' in service delivery and employment its significance can be emphasised by the interest and body of knowledge in this area (Collins 1992:4).

Many questions have been raised regarding the need for equal opportunities policies in organisations or even equality principles in our day-to-day lives. However, the weight of this literature in general is compelling and, as Blakemore and Drake (1996) would suggest, explanations of discrimination and racism give practitioners ideas about how best to tackle these issues. They would argue that;

Just as theories of disease shape our ideas about appropriate treatment, so theories about the nature and causes of discrimination lead to competing ideas about what the best anti-discrimination or equal opportunities strategies might be.

(Blakemore and Drake 1996:9)

#### **What is 'Equal Opportunities'?**

Cheung-Judge and Henley (1994:4) asked the question 'what is equal opportunities?' their response was simply that,

Equal opportunities means ensuring that an organisation's policies and practices do not result in any individual or group receiving less favourable treatment on grounds that are not material; namely 'race', colour, creed, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, religious belief, class, disability or sexuality.

Other writers have been unable to settle quite so comfortably on a definition of equal opportunities. This in itself hints at the complexity of the concept and therefore the problem that organisations may have in trying to act upon an agreed course of action. The question becomes more complex when the issue of equity is considered. The idea of fairness or equity is a term that is often used interchangeably with equality, however, equality has a more descriptive component. The looseness of this terminology is commonplace. The Government (1997) through its sport strategy implemented by Sport England use equity and equality in this manner. They advocate sports 'equity' and have sports 'equity' trainers involved in working with national governing organisations and local authorities. Equity is a more arbitrary concept in that the individual or organisational view of 'fairness' is paramount rather than a universal view of equality (Bagilhole 1993). These trainers promote 'equal opportunities'. At the same time Sport England has initiated a project in partnership with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) promoting racial equality in sport for black and ethnic minority groups called 'Sporting Equals'. Here is an example of one organisation whose lack of clarity in this area compounds the historical confusion in the sport and recreation development arena. It is important to note that equality does not necessarily imply equity as equality may be advocated for reasons other than equity as we will see later in this chapter. Still, clarity in this area must be reached if people in sport intend to work towards equality and inclusion, as positive outcomes.

Jencks (1988) argues that no significant group says that equal opportunities is a bad thing. Forbes (1991) like Jencks (1988) agrees with the idea of this 'commonsenseness' of equality. It is the power of the implied principles that he argues is so persuasive for most people. He suggests that equality for some is a sign of a moral belief, a rational precept, an a priori principle, a right, a means to an end, or an end in itself. For him such a clustering of competing interests around one concept explains why confusion is maximised. One of the major concerns amongst critical writers on equality is that it has so much commonsense value and social capital that it is rarely problematised. Just as

statements like working for good, the community, and social care are used in popular public sector discourses, it becomes a barrier to the effective interpretation of equal opportunities. It is not only in local government where these problems are manifest. Spencer (2000) cites Tony Blair at the Labour Party conference in 1999 who urged his members to work towards,

True equality: equal worth, an equal chance of fulfilment,  
equal rights, equal responsibilities. The class war is over. But  
the struggle for true equality has only just begun.

The Prime Minister lurches here from support for the work of people like Ball and Solomos (1990), Forbes (1991), Delgado (1995), and Bagilhole (1997) and others who advocate the politics of equality and social change which in itself involves a radical transformation of the way society operates, to more liberal views. Further, for Tony Blair to be arguing for 'true equality' he is by implication committing a government on a global as well as a national project. At the same time as he is urging his Party forwards he is making reference to a number of ambiguous claims. He makes reference to basic rights of citizenship and a moral imperative towards active citizenship which in themselves are minimalist libertarian positions occupied by Friedman, Hayek and other conservative critics. In the same moment he is radical and liberal, global and local, collectivist and individualist. Similar mixed messages are identifiable in the appreciative context and discourse of the officers and councillors interviewed. This common coalescing of random positions are often the result of an uncritical use of important concepts.

Discussions with the officers and councillors in this research have illustrated the difficulties they face in talking clearly and with consistency about equality. However, what they were all conscious of was that equal opportunities was something that their authorities were committed to, and as a key member of the organisation they had to make some contribution to their authority's aims and objectives through sport and recreation policy and practice. When reflecting on their evaluation of the way local authorities adopted and implemented the 1995 CRE standards, Clarke and Speeden (2000) proposed of the standards that they were an attempt of the CRE to centralise racial equality work as a quality issue in fighting discrimination rather than a law enforcement one. The inexactness of such standards was reflected in the varying local

authority assessments and their questionable validity against the levels. The problem, according to Clarke and Speeden (2000) was that,

The qualitative responses given by the authorities in the questionnaires and the case study interviews revealed that very few had carried out a thorough audit, demonstrating difficulties with both consistency of interpretation and adequate verification systems.  
(Clarke and Speeden 2000: 16)

There was also some debate about what local authorities understood by a comprehensive equal opportunities policy as 72% said they did understand what one was whilst only a third had a racial equality policy statement, and even fewer had monitoring procedures in place. In fact only ten percent of the authorities had comprehensive performance management systems that Clarke and Speeden suggest 'mainstreamed' racial equality. Similarly Ratcliffe's (1995:629) earlier survey of English local authorities' equal opportunities policies revealed a similar picture that although the majority had policies in place only 25% had policies that addressed equality in service delivery. Ratcliffe disputed the idea that financial cutbacks should be the reason for such a low concern for these important issues. Those authorities that did not have policies in place gave the reasons that there were only a few minority ethnic groups, or that they did not have a 'race problem here'. Some authorities that stated that they had a policy did not have anything in writing because they were not required to have one by the politicians in their authority. These acts were however made less remarkable by Gibbon's (1992) findings that even though an organisation states that it is an equal opportunities employer it does not necessarily follow that it has an equal opportunities policy.

### **Policy Discourses and Equal Opportunities**

In taking into account the often contested conceptual ground that is called equal opportunities it is worth considering how different positions and responses may fall into competing discourses. These discourses share the 'flag of convenience' that is equal opportunities at the same time constructing a tension that at times are polar opposite in their focus and goals. Young (1989) highlighted three categories of policy discourse, distributive, regulative and redistributive, that give comprehension to the way equal

opportunities is understood and implemented. The first two discourses distributive and regulative, equate with what Jewson and Mason (1986) identified as liberal institutional discourses. Distributive discourses tend to view equality in terms of increases in resources such as jobs, low inflation increased pay or new sports co-ordinators in schools that have a trickle down effect on everyone and therefore everyone benefits. It does not discriminate in any way and there are no obvious 'losers' where these resources are being distributed. However, where inequalities are apparent, in any resource allocation exercise and they are ignored, then the exercise consequently perpetuates those differences, which is why regulatory systems are necessary in any society.

Regulative discourses are not concerned with distributing resources but more, the conformity of systems and behaviour to an acceptable level. Thus challenging institutional discrimination, discrimination in the workplace, and the training of staff to increase their capacity to ensure awareness, are three modes of regulating behaviour. This type of policy is largely accepted by institutions as it often rubber stamps, at least symbolically, what it is they are supposed to be doing (Young 1989). This mode of response is typified in the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000). However, the least popular or common form of equal opportunities policy is that which redistributes resources. Redistributive discourses are often seen, as described by Jewson and Mason (1986, 1992), as more radical ways to operationalise equal opportunities policies. They are seen as ways to target marginalised populations in communities and are often measured in quantitative terms unlike regulatory policies. For example employment is often a way to redistribute key resources in a bid to ensure sensitive provision and is often expressed in 'representative of the local community' terms.

In her research into 'Middleshire County Council' (MCC) Bagilhole (1993) theorised the approaches used by the authority in its implementation of equal opportunities in the 1980s. She outlined two key phases of activity, which encapsulated their move towards equality. The first phase drew on Jewson and Mason's (1986, 1992) Liberal approach, Bagilhole referred to multiculturalism in MCC as the 'Samosas, Saris and Steel Drums' approach to race-relations. In tandem with the tenets of critical race theory as posited by Solorzano and Yosso (2001), Webb and Liff (1988) referred to universalistic liberal approaches as idealistic and in danger of ignoring the realities of everyday management



pressures such as the outcome of cutbacks which has been a recent fact of life in local government sport, for disenfranchised communities (Lentell 1993, Clarke 1994). The varying impacts of exclusionary forces through organisational contexts must be a consideration in the way equality policies are put into practice and it seems as though liberal policies do not do this effectively. To compound matters in Middleshire, the fact of blackness was seen as a determinant of disadvantage in the authority therefore weakening its own approach to racial inequality. The outcome of such a position ignores the more harmful structural inequalities in society and instead concentrates on the 'problems' of black communities. Middleshire's view of cultural diversity was also seen as a myopic approach that ignored the institutional inequalities whilst engaging in a policy of *empowering* black people to be self-sustaining and independent of the authority.

Services may be unused or under-used by the community for many reasons which will have less to do with cultural appropriateness and more to do with institutional racism.  
(Bagilhole 1993: 165)

Middleshire's second phase drew on a more radical approach. Equality of outcome was a strong focus of this period as redistributive positive action policies were implemented. Regulative liberal changes also made a positive intervention, however the pace, depth and breadth of the more radical approaches made fundamental gains using the earlier solid foundation.

As an adjunct to the work of Bagilhole (1997) and other writers attempting to clarify what equal opportunities means, Turner (1986) argues that defining equality is as difficult as achieving it politically. He, unlike Cheung-Judge and Henley came up with four common descriptions of equality practice which he labelled ontological equality, equality of opportunity, equality of condition and equality of outcome. Turner's first form of equality Ontological has similarities with Dworkin's (1998) ethical individualism which draws upon notions of active citizenship, where he proposes two principles. The first principle which challenges common integrationist and assimilationist ideals states that all individuals have equal value and that no one should be devalued because of their background and traditions. The second principle reinforces this by suggesting that each individual should take responsibility for his/her own

actions. Banton (1987:135) also believes in the concept of 'public good' as helping to define the objective of public policy in the realm of race-relations. Just as racial discrimination can be seen as a 'public bad' corresponding to atmospheric pollution "in neither case are the overall consequences evenly distributed". The overall effect of both is to reduce the welfare of the society, as a whole clean air is...an absence of discrimination. Dworkin (1998) however, due to the philosophical nature of his thesis, does not venture beyond the rhetorical and therefore this aspect of his work leads to assumptions having to be made about what he actually means by equality, which in itself becomes problematic.

### **Equality of Opportunity, Condition and Outcome**

Turner's suggestion that equality of opportunity and equality of condition are the most common form of equality practice has a great deal of support in the literature in this area (Heywood 1994, Blakemore and Drake 1996, Bagilhole 1997). Working towards equality in different contexts can take interesting turns depending on the strategy(ies) employed by those implementing it. Equality of opportunity, equality of condition, and equality of outcome, are three significant approaches to practice on the journey towards understanding equality processes in local authority sport and recreation. Equality of Opportunity is often seen as the initial stage of a commitment to equality working for many organisations. Although the term 'Equality of Opportunity' is mostly used politically to embrace all equality approaches (Bagilhole 1997: 32) the descriptive term is used in a similar way to the fair treatment approach. Here individual behaviour is the focus for attention. Direct discrimination by individuals or organisations is subject to punitive measures with the law and professional codes of conduct underpinning these actions. As stated earlier, this type of approach has however been heavily criticised for the way it reinforces disadvantage by refusing to tackle past discrimination and unfair advantages gained over time (Baker 1990, Rees 1998). Rees (1998) criticises this approach from a feminist perspective where her main thrust is to balk at actions that do not take into account patriarchal relations in the public and private spheres. Further, this approach fails to adequately challenge indirect discrimination (Coussey and Jackson in Blakemore and Drake 1996:10). The outcome of such activity (or inactivity) ultimately means, for Rees, that women will never have equality with men in employment or service delivery. Indeed as CRT writers are constantly arguing, a lack of consideration

of 'race', and racism will have a similar impact on black people in sport and recreation provision in local government. Rees (1998) suggests this approach would not engage,

...the systematic domination of some groups by others in organisational institutions systems and structures.  
(Rees 1998:30)

An equality of condition approach considers the weaknesses of fair treatment or equal access by considering that some people have material and cultural disadvantages and therefore do not have the same starting point when accessing services, facilities and employment. So personal conditions become less difficult for those previously disadvantaged to access local authority provision. Equality of outcome (or Result) is often seen as the most challenging approach, where the strengths of equality of condition are reinforced by the outcomes of this approach. Positive action (or affirmative action) strategies are often operated alongside this approach. The fundamental difference between equality of condition and equality of outcome is that the result of equality of outcome involves more than access and opportunity it is also about redressing disparities that have developed as a result of discrimination and disadvantage over time (Flagg 1997). Positive action, due to the statutes mentioned earlier, could also be applied to recruiting people to work in those areas of provision where they are under-represented, as well as managing provision in a similar redistributive way. This configuration of basic regulation and redistribution of resources is something that has been recognised as an essential aspect of progressive equality policies.

Delgado (1995b) has some doubts about positive (affirmative) action as it can imply that past inequalities are being systematically corrected, to the point that history is trivialised. In effect he argues that the ability of institutions to offer numerical values as proof that things are 'better now' is a smokescreen to the reality of a racially stratified society. The irony in some local authorities of positive action however is when they conclude that there is no further need for it, or that it is ultimately penalising white people (Young and Connelly 1981, Gordon and Rosenberg 1989, Ouseley 1990 and Alibhai-Brown 1998:114). It is at these points when policymakers and practitioners, the media and other institutions lack of comprehension of racial equality are most manifest. Turner (1986:36) urges that equality of opportunity must work in tandem with equality

of condition. Here cultural and educational differences are evened out so that advantages that may come through for example class, ethnicity, gender are seriously considered in the way goods, facilities and services are offered. On the other hand Parekh (cited Bagilhole 1997:33) counters that in spite of the limitations of the equality of result/outcome strategy it is one of the few policy tools capable of breaking through the self-perpetuating cycle of deeply entrenched inequalities. However, this is a basic starting position for critical race theorists as 'race' is critically centred in policy. For critical race theorists this is a bare minimum if the transformation of key institutions is to be successful (Crenshaw 1995, Delgado and Stefancic 2000).

### **A Competing Discourse: Libertarians Agree to Disagree**

There is a clear middle ground that is inhabited by those who utilise the concept equal opportunities, hence its propensity to be ambiguous. But just as those who favour interventionist equalities policies from the central and local state, Friedman and Friedman's (1990) libertarian values propose that obstacles placed in the way of individuals should be removed to ensure that they can compete or pursue their own objectives. For them to intervene in markets or public provision to ensure that individuals should be compensated for historical, social, economic or cultural differences, is a step too far. Friedman (1962), Friedman and Friedman (1990) and Hayek's (1993, 1997) view is that equality of opportunity *only* means equality before the law.

Chapter five considers the local authorities in this study and the mutual ground that they all share in their acceptance of equal opportunities. However it will be seen later how assumptions about the common meaning of equal opportunities do not necessarily follow in the shape of consistent practice. For example the equality that Friedman and Hayek talk about is a starting point that recognises that inequality is a natural result of market forces and competition. It is also a core principle of Hayek's (1993) that all people should be treated the same despite their racial or ethnic differences thus ignoring social and historical inequalities and processes. The need to free thinkers from the 'belief in factual equality' is important in challenging the futile equal opportunities agenda and to maintain the freedom of the individual to compete unequally for resources (Hayek 1993: 86). Friedman and Friedman's (1990:132) dislike of equal

opportunities stems from the idea that true equality is unreliable and ‘fairness’, which is often used to rationalise it is too much of a subjective or normative judgement. *Who is to make that judgement?* In the context of sport Friedman (1962, 1990, 1997) would see that state interventions in sport would take away the incentive for private organisations to compete in the market. Similarly the incentive for sports consumers to work hard to pay for their leisure could be taken away by public displays of compensation. It is this imposition of redistributive social justice that Friedman and Friedman rail against.

For Hayek (1993: 100) the mere introduction of redistributive justice through state intervention is the beginning of the end for the liberty and freedom of the economy and individuals in society. Clearly Friedman (1962) does not see the stratifying effects of ‘race’ and the institutional nature of prejudice and discrimination. He is more concerned with the needs of the majority (in this case white) at the expense of the minority (black). He is fundamentally pro-market, anti-state-intervention, and particularly ‘colour-blind’ to expedite these claims (Friedman 1962: 115). Friedman’s (1990) inability to recognise the privileging aspects of ‘race’ and racism is symbolic of more modern manifestations of conservatism and more recent New Right ideologies. Here ‘race’ is decentred in favour of class stratification, and it ignores the implications of such actions. Hayek’s (1997) view of inequality is also rationalised through his confidence in the market being impersonal, thus not *deliberately* discriminating on account of ‘race’.

Plant (1984) is also unhappy about state intervention to equalise opportunities when he suggests that there are those like Friedman and Hayek who have reasons for arguing not to have equality as an objective of economic organisations. He raises four reasons for this, *impracticality, inappropriateness, immorality, and illusion*. Working towards equality according to Plant is impractical partly because of the lack of consensus raised in the conceptual debates earlier, definition of equality seems impossible. It is too complex a task and further more this task is made difficult because each definition involves value judgements. This Plant sees as inappropriate as it is not then possible to measure or analyse accurately (Hayek 1993: 94). The politics of envy shroud the third issue from Plant when he argues that some people’s only concern for equality comes from them being jealous of what other people have got in greater abundance than themselves (immoral). It is at these junctures that a clearer understanding is developed of agencies that fail to engage with redistributive equality practices. It is organisations

that display characteristics like these that are most likely to stay within the minimum performance bands where state regulatory mechanisms are concerned. Heywood (1994) aligns this argument with those concerned with formal equality in its purest sense. His suggestion is that this aspect of equality has no supporters from the political left or right because people are born to different lives but want to be in a position to 'compete' equally for the rewards that are potentially theirs. This is indefensible to Plant as Heywood attempts to give greater meaning to a 'meaningless concept' - equality. This illusion only purports to have any reasonable content and should not be given the respect that people afford it. For Friedman the end result means that individual liberty is being eroded at the expense of an unachievable ideal. For Friedman and Friedman (1990) equality of outcome initiatives are distasteful and untenable in the pursuit of liberty.

### **To Libertarians: A Rejoinder**

Where Edwards (1990) suggests that equal opportunities are in effect equal opportunities to compete for rewards, and hence to be unequal, Forbes (1991) takes it a stage further when she considers the transformative dimension of equal opportunities. She argues that equal opportunities confirms inequality in society and that it has the ability to reverse equality or inequality. This is why she carefully suggests that equal opportunities should only be pursued where certain conditions are recognised. The complexity of the task facing those individuals pursuing equal opportunities, that the libertarians argue is impossible, is described by Forbes (1991: 21) who argues that,

S/he has to show how difference may and may not amount to inequality, and must demonstrate: that the good pursued is general, non-trivial and attainable; that opportunity exists to get it; that scarcity requires distributive justice; that redistributive action is justified; that some individuals will have a less equal chance to gain the good; and that this diminution of chance stems from impediments of an historical, social or political nature outside of that person's (community's) control.

Edwards and Forbes are not the only ones unhappy with the principles of classical liberalism, Baker (1990) is also critical of the views expressed by Plant (1984) Hayek (1993) and Friedman (1997). Where such views are aired, Baker states that the actor

who evokes them is no longer criticising the philosophies of equality but the person who is forwarding these views. This argument, he says, should be more to do with those for and against the fundamentals of equality than a superficial position taken by individuals who may or may not have some feelings to come to terms with due to the negative baggage associated with inequality and difference. Even if an individual is envious of another, the arguments for equality do not disappear.

Formal equality pays attention to the status people enjoy as human beings or in the eyes of the law; it does not address their 'opportunities', the circumstances in which they live and the chances of prospects available to them. Equality of opportunity is concerned principally with initial conditions, with the starting point of life.  
Heywood (1994:230)

### **The Value of Equal Opportunities in Local Authorities**

There is a growing recognition of the value of setting standards in public sector organisations by making them more accountable (CRE 1995, 1997, Home Office 2000). In the area of race-relations it is another example of a regulative approach which has value and puts in place systems that are subject to external auditing. Again this regulation of public services and recruitment can act as a justification for forward thinking local authorities' equal opportunities policies. Similarly they give authorities, who do not see the value of equality working, a chance to gain from the positive benefits of inclusive recruitment and service delivery. Arguments in favour of equal opportunities are not all based on moral or social justice issues. The ability of organisations to use their workforce effectively, therefore maximising their human resources is high on the agenda for many people (Collier 1998). The other side to this, is one of wasteful and inefficient management. Further, public sector organisations charged with providing social services have an added dimension to their work, and that is to provide for a wide range of customers and clients than those in the private sector.

Collins (1992) suggests that an equal opportunities policy is the best way to work towards being effective. However, Collier (1998) emphasises the possible conceptual confusion that can become apparent if workers take a narrow view of equal opportunities as 'just a personal issue' or 'about being colour blind'.

By incorporating equal opportunities principles an organisation should be able to reach a wider public, respond to varied needs and offer satisfaction to a more diverse group of customers.  
(Collier 1998:14)

The ethical case for equal opportunities is a persuasive component for its inclusion as a policy in any organisation. However, this has been a limiting element of its ability to be 'owned' and implemented. The resistance to equal opportunities for many people has been where there is a feeling of external downward pressure on them to conform to the demands of more senior colleagues. In support of this view Taylor (1994) advocates the use of equal opportunities policies in any industry, not from a moral perspective (although there is an element of that), but from a business perspective as well (see Etzioni 1961, CRE 1995, EOC 1996, Coalter 1998, Speeden and Clarke 2000). This is a position supported by Ros and Schneider (1992) whose overwhelming claim for equal opportunities comes through a need to establish a business case for its acceptance and implementation.

### **Success and Failure in Local Government**

Herman Ouseley (1990) proposes five reasons why local authorities are limited in implementing race equality programmes. He calls their attempts; pathetic, the support they get from the CRE is not enough because it is under-resourced, political opposition is powerless and cowardly in power, media hostility to anti-racist strategies and race equality programmes are low down the priority list in local government due to constant reorganisation. Taking Ouseley's ideas a step further, Vince (1994 cited Vince and Booth 1997:10) argues that the difference between those authorities that do well when it comes to implementing equal opportunities lies not just with whether reasonable systems are in place but it is more down to the everyday management of equality as an aspect of organisational change. Documented experiences of sport and recreation organisations' inability to work consistently towards equality lead writers and practitioners to look in more detail at the reasons for this lack of success. Carrol (1993) and Horne (1995) have concluded from their research into local government that there is a policy implementation gap between the formulation and implementation of equal



opportunities strategies. This in itself has implications for the prospects of success in any organisation. Horne in particular developed three classic types of local authority provider and labelled them from the least effective gestural, reactive and proactive. As in the study by Clarke and Speeden (2000) only a few organisations were placed in the proactive category, most tended to be reactive to their local community and staff needs rather than plan ahead. Gibbon's work (1989), as supported by Young and Connelly's earlier research (1981), went a stage further in Sheffield in his summary of employment practices. He argued that employers in Sheffield "possessed hazy ill-defined or contradictory goals [on equality] and that they were inadequately implemented".

To conclude, 'Equal Opportunities' remains ambiguous and subject to competing interpretations, utility values and socio-economic welfare projects. The reflections on policy and practice throw some light on the conceptual and operational difficulties presented to policymakers and practitioners on a day-to-day basis. Their ability to find mutual conceptual ground and yet express its implementation and constituency in different ways is typical of the haziness of which Gibbon (1989) speaks. These interpretations demonstrate in practice assumptions that characterise the formation of the discourses illustrated above. These discourses are not only typified by the polemics of libertarians and radicals in favour of equal opportunities but also there are conflicting discourses within the pro-equalities camp as emphasised by Young (1989). The following chapter (four) aims to explore how officer and councillor assumptive worlds framework can be theorised as part of a critical methodology that is sensitive to the conceptual problematics outlined here. Chapter two also outlined how a critical black framework is fundamental to this methodological exercise. It is through this interplay of the structuring of assumptive worlds, gathering information about them and their subsequent analysis, that leads to the demystifying of equal opportunities in local government sports policy.

## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This has been an emergent PhD that started out as a comparative study of three local authorities. The thesis endeavoured to highlight the policy implementation gaps in equal opportunities/sport as a result of the institutional apathy or marginalisation/exclusion that has been identified as racism in local government (Ouseley 1981). Following traditional modes of inquiry the researcher planned to gather data from influential actors in a position to open a window on assumptive worlds in local authorities. In its early stages, although considering marginalised issues, the study was following a recognised conventional pattern. It risked, as Stanfield (1993) and others have remarked, reproducing the mistakes of previous studies that have given voice to the predominantly white institutions, their reality and experiences without offering an alternative black perspective. As a result an alternative discourse was included in the form of an emergent black sports pressure group (Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport - VBES). The study would have been devoid of a black counter-story and, in a way, it gives a right to reply. It was at this stage in the research process that the researcher began the passage to critical theory, and ultimately critical 'race' theory, which gave a clear political frame to the study. CRT complemented a traditional exploration into sports policy implementation processes with a political 'race' consciousness that set a liberatory agenda, enhancing the initial academic investigation (see chapter two).

### **Developing Research Agendas**

Emergence is a theme that has shaped this research in a number of ways, the journey to critical 'race' theory, the emergence of the 'real world assumptions' of policymakers and senior officers and the emergence of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport - VBES in a sports policy network. The development of the author also follows this theme, for just as Denzin (1994: 506) contends that there is no permanent *telling* of a story this brief outline of the development of the research illustrates that there is no permanent *teller* of a story either – time passes, ideas change, people move on. In essence the study grounds a critique of 'core' local state sports provision and its claims of working towards

equality, with a contrasting ‘peripheral’ voice from the outside. This grounding of critique and alternative experiences presents the opportunity for a competing discourse championed by black studies writers to challenge those normally heard in the policy literature (Ladson Billings 1998, Delgado and Stefancic 2000, Essed and Goldberg 2002).

All critical research involves an interpretation of data. Data are mediated by the researcher who in attempting to breathe life into the gathered information will imbue the work with a theoretical starting point. The researcher offers a story on the fieldwork that enables a reading of the data. The starting point for this research, as outlined above, embraces a paradigm that draws on critical ‘race’ theory. It utilises the methodological resources of the social sciences but with an agenda that is rarely centred or given primacy in sport and leisure policy research. The juxtaposition of a multiple-site case study of local authorities and an ethnography of a black sports pressure group sets up a tension that allows the study to explore the major processes and assumptions that reinforce and challenge race-equality in local government sports provision.

### **Trends in Sport and Leisure Policy Research**

Sports policy discussions have emerged out of the leisure policy debates over the past few decades. These debates have taken three major turns, a focus on theories of state intervention in sport and leisure (Henry and Bramham 1986, Allison 1988, Henry 1993, Fleming et. al. 1995), a comparative/international perspective on sport and leisure policy (Houlihan 1994, 1997, Mommas et al. 1996), and issue focused literature that relate to gender (Wimbush and Talbot 1988, Yule 1995), ‘race’ (Lyons 1991, Verma and Darby 1994), ‘the city’ (Bramham 2001, Gratton and Henry 2001), and related areas (Coalter 2000). Much of this work has taken a social science perspective to policy analysis even though sports policy in this relatively narrow field has been criticised as an under-researched and under-theorised area (Chalip 1996). Chalip (1995, 1996) complains that sports policy analysis needs to challenge the dominant ideals that maintain the social inequities that we see symbolised in policies, and that this challenge should, at the very least, question the assumptions that are the focus of this study and the foundation for defining policy problems. Similarly, policy inconsistencies need to be

illuminated and corrected, and racial equality improved as a result of changes in local government and the research community. As a piece of qualitative research this work draws upon a number of techniques and methods to frame and clarify these concerns around racial equality in the sports policy implementation process.

This qualitative methodology draws its influences from critical theoretical studies in fields related to critical black studies. Devine (1995) acknowledges the marginal contribution made by qualitative research in the study of policy domains where positivism is popular. She proposes that one of the reasons for this is the inability of researchers to focus clearly and 'get at' sensitive topics (See White and Adams 1994). This gives a backdrop to the epistemological tensions that arise from conducting research into an under-theorised and marginalised area of study (Henderson 1988, Birrell 1989, Goldberg 1993). The call to policy studies is to consider the use of heuristic, interpretive techniques for analyses to enable a more grounded understanding of the values, beliefs and assumptions implicit within the organisation, attribution and legitimation of policy decisions concerning equality in local government. But in particular the use of a critical perspective to challenge norms and assumptions in mainstream sport offers the potential to improve on the organisation and provision of sport in local government for black people.

Dye (cited in Ham and Hill 1993:4) asked the question, what do governments do? In the context of this study, local government providers try to do what they say they are going to do and have also commented on what they actually did. His second of three questions adds more depth to his probing, when he enquires why governments do what they do. Similarly Dye's third question underpins many of the concerns of this research, and that is, what differences do their actions make? The results of local government sports policies have consistently excluded black people in local communities (Lyons 1991, Sports Council 1994a, Verma and Darby 1994). Women and black people in particular have experienced the fall out of local government recruitment and provision (Talbot 1988, Cross and Keith 1993). The starting points to interrogate policy processes vary for each policy analyst, so do the lenses taken to each public policy issue. However the simplicity of Dye's three questions belie the complexity of the tools of inquiry needed, where the multiple points of entry into the field and the specific historical, geographical, economic and related local authority contexts are concerned.

## **Positivism and Values in Local Government Research**

I chose to ask the guardians of policy and provision questions about equal opportunities in local government because my experience of local government and related literature tells me to expect an informed narrative (Ben-Tovim 1986, Henry 1993, Yule 1995). This discourse offers the rationale for their actions. It is often at this point that policy assumptions are uncovered as ways to understand policy-making and implementation. It is through the use of Young's (1977, 1979) assumptive world framework that this research interrogates these details (Rosenberg 1989, Young 1992). Saggart (1992) supports the argument that the policy studies literature has not reflected issues of 'race' and ethnicity. This he puts down to the area being over-looked or to the underestimation of sociological change in the last three or four decades. White and Adams (1994) give a further reason to the debate surrounding the paucity of academic interest concerning 'race' and ethnicity in policy studies as officer and policymaker values are examined further. They are of the mind that research into public administration per se is generally focused upon using positivistic explanatory research. The positivist techniques adopted by many involved in policy studies, that exclude or marginalise issues concerning 'race' and ethnicity, are used as a result of the dominant need for predictability and rational logic. There is a perception that the intricacy of issues surrounding equality are often so complex that emphatic, clear cut solutions are unlikely due to practical or political expediency (Mason 1990, Jewson and Mason 1992). This tendency to try and predict solutions in the absence of a wider consideration of explicit community aspirations and needs is likely to result in misplaced resources and missed opportunities for black people, thus reinforcing their disadvantaged position in sport.

Criticism in this area has suggested that policy analysts draw upon a limited range of methodologies to inform decisions where issues have not been fully understood or crystallized (Chalip 1995). The link between sport and society (and therefore politics) should be clearly established here, as it has been by many writers who argue for the maintenance of this basic axiom in the provision and control of sport (Henry 1993, Chalip 1995, Houlihan 1997, Bramham 2001). For Chalip the challenge is not to continue to develop a science of pseudo-logic, but to identify points of logic and illogic so as to examine the values and assumptions implicit within, and excluded from, policy

debates. Good policy analysis concerns itself with social values and the welfare of others (Weimer and Vining 1999). This indeed echoes and amplifies points raised by Ben-Tovim et al. (1986), Saggar (1992), Cross and Keith (1993) and others that there is a clear tradition of research in the policy sciences that at the same time as including a range of ideas has excluded many issue based critical and theoretical concerns that would have enhanced the study of 'race' and ethnicity in policy contexts.

The epistemological links in policy research with other forms of approaches, such as interpretive and critical traditions seem to have less currency in the study of matters political because of their link with 'non-rational' or 'irrational' social sciences (White and Adams 1994). Chalip (1996) goes a step further in suggesting that as policy analysis is normally conducted for the people who wield power, critical policy analysis has not yet established itself nor been embraced by policy analysts as it ultimately challenges the social order and the status quo. This, and the tension between established forms of positivist logic and the more critical, interpretive sciences gives a backdrop to why some bodies of knowledge are more acceptable in the study of local government and policy while others are not (White and Adams 1994, Curtner-Smith 2002). To date research and theoretical studies of 'race' and ethnicity have relied upon the use of interpretive research studies and the critical theoretical application of this body of knowledge in the social sciences (Harvey 1990, Goldberg 1993, Cross and Keith 1993, Small 1994). Therefore the relegation of these perspectives in policy studies itself leads to a logical conclusion for the dearth of theory and research on these important issues. Healy (1986) sees an interpretive methodology as a way of balancing the inadequacies of the traditional received view of policy analysis. He is convinced that the traditional view of policymaking,

Embodies the tenets that policy goals can be best attained by the manipulation of causal variables in the social environment (social engineering) and that the most efficient means of attaining these goals can be (scientifically) determined by an ends-means analysis (instrumental rationality).  
(1986:383)

Torgerson (1986) supports Healy's views on the received approach coming from policy analysts. He agrees that an interpretive approach presents policy analysts with an

opportunity to consider policy from the inside out rather than imposing change from the outside in. That is, they enable policymakers to see themselves as part of a wider policy context as social beings rather than from a narrower personal or local context. A critical approach to policy studies offers clearer opportunities and suggests an approach for policymakers to work with that supports a more inclusive agenda. In fact, an agenda which is more likely to consider aspects of inclusion/exclusion, just as it is more likely to encourage policy analysts to ground the deductive logic of more traditional approaches in a more considered social context (Mead 1985).

### **A Qualitative Research Methodology**

A number of writers have been cautious in their description of what qualitative research like this involves. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) attempt to define qualitative research with the proviso that over the last four decades it has meant different things to different people due to the shift in academic focus. They argue that the present time is typified by a questioning of previous worldviews, universal theories, methods and discourses. These positions, as seen in chapter two, are not shared equally across academia. In fact it is argued here that the catalysts for these dominant hegemonic positions have systematically excluded other more marginal perspectives. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (1998:3) have argued that qualitative research focuses on things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. What makes the work 'qualitative' stems from descriptions of such research that incorporates the following characteristics: interpretive, flexible, rich, reflexive, context/settings (Mason 1996:4), and process, theoretically driven, challenge common assumptions, emic (Silverman 1993:29). Case studies, ethnography and critical 'race' theory in particular enable this methodology to challenge common assumptions made about equality in local government and generate, critique and analyse, original data that clearly do not have an established empirical or theoretical foundation in sport or leisure studies.

## Research Overview

This research was based upon a two-phase investigation. The first phase involved three case studies, which took place in North City, West Town and South City between 1996 and 1998. In a similar fashion to Stone's (1988) single case study investigation into local authority equal opportunities strategies for women employees, they were intended to clarify and crystallise the everyday pressures and assumptions underpinning equal opportunities and 'race' within local authority sport. The agenda for the case studies was to interrogate the values and assumptions, that underpin equal opportunities and race-equality, of senior officers and councillors. The three geographical areas are recognised as having a significant black population. So much so that the issues around equal opportunities in sport were conspicuous and therefore of significance to the policy-makers, officers and local community in each area. The local authority case studies allowed the researcher to frame the policy context and practice of each local authority's sports provision. In each case the respondents were able to give an informed view on their history and progress when it came to providing equal opportunities for black people in sport. Only senior councillors were approached which meant that they were the chairs or vice chairs of sport, leisure or equalities related committees. Views were solicited from the officers and councillors who also supplied historical, policy and practice related documents where available to enable a triangulation and contextualisation of the interviews. This aggregated into their 'assumptive worlds' and will be developed later in this chapter.

In tandem with the local government case studies the second phase was an ethnography that involved an observation and analysis of the black sports pressure group VBES. The group was followed from its inception in 1996 until it became a significant agent within the sports policy network in Northshire in 2000. VBES contributed the black perspective from outside the local authorities which came as a result of its relationship with them, and Sport England-Northshire. Consequently, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's links and associations over the years were a clear barometer of how effective equalities work was developing in specific authorities, and the region. Further, the cumulative effect of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's priorities, in terms of their action plans and concerns, were symbolic in identifying where problems and progress



lay. These data are invaluable in triangulating the assumptions and reflections emerging from inside the local authorities.

### **Local Authorities**

As in the research by Clarke and Speeden (2000) into local authorities' adherence to the CRE racial equality standards (1995) this study focused upon three authorities that had equal opportunities as part of their core business or principles. As the largest employer in the area employing over 37,000 people, North City is trying to work towards employing a workforce that is representative of the communities it serves, especially in a city where the black population is 6% of 750,000. The number of residents in ethnic groups 'other than white' in West Town is reported to be 11% of which over 74% are Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi in its 400,000 strong community (Census 1991). The black population in this authority is twice the national average and it also has a higher regional and national average of residents from the Indian sub-continent. According to the 1991 Census, 5% of the South City population of 500,000 is made up of residents in ethnic groups 'other than white'. This figure is more than three percent higher than the four cities in its immediate vicinity. The highest proportion of this group come mainly from the 'black' (31%) and Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (45%) categories. The tools used to investigate this study have been selected with a view to ensuring that the respondents were conscious of the research focus. Each authority's sample was given the opportunity to discuss at length the impact of their work on processes, policies and practices, which eventually became the measure for their success.

### **Access to Local Authorities**

The case study examining the three local authorities' dominant elite was an involved and complex task. The officers and councillors were contacted by letter (see Appendix 1) initially and then with a follow-up telephone call a week later. As I still have contacts from working in local authority sport in one of the authorities, and currently other roles in sports development, I was able to gain access through my own contacts calling peers first, or through getting their permission to 'name-drop' so that I was not cold calling.

Fifteen senior officers and nine councillors made up the interview group. This group was self-selecting as those who make up the joint elite came from a very limited range of people, so there was great relief that all three authorities' contacts found the study of interest. The in-depth interviews were conducted in the interviewees' offices and lasted between one and two hours (Appendix 2). In each case permission was granted to record the interview, which was then transcribed and QSR.NUDIST used for analysis. In most cases the interviewees provided documentary evidence that supported the position of their authority. This evidence ranged from specific documents, to sport and equal opportunities employment statistics, officer reports and council minutes. In a few cases, after analysis, an additional request was raised for further information and in each case the documents were received in a reasonable time (Appendix 3).

### **Core-Periphery**

Each of the three local authorities have gradually found themselves in a national culture of reduced state intervention and an increased dependence on community networks in an attempt to fall in line with reduced public expenditure and a creeping hegemonic New Right managerialist philosophy (Henry 1989, Stoker 1991, Ravenscroft 1992, Gratton and Henry 2001: 4). This 'hollowing out' of the local state has resulted in its fragmentation through the devolution of responsibility for many traditional services and facilities. The way these peripheral actors have been manoeuvred into closer relationships with the 'core' local state through the will of central government has meant that community groups are in an improved political situation today. This means that black-led organisations are now 'closer' to the inside where in the past black people have not (Home Office 2001a, 2001b). Being 'closer' to influential networks allows an organisation to reflect more sensitively and realistically upon progress and outcomes with a much deeper understanding of the processes involved. It is this backdrop to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport-VBES, as an agent on the periphery of local authority policymaking, that establishes it as a significant contributor to the 'felt' progress of North City, West Town and South City.

## **Working From The Periphery: The Outsider Pressure Group**

The reliability of VBES' experiences as a suitable yardstick of local authority progress can be emphasised here as we establish its place within the sports policy network in the region. The aims of the original Sports Council-Northshire sub-committee charged to focus on racial equality was quite simple. They were to bring together 'black and ethnic minority'<sup>iv</sup> representatives, sports development officers and other interested parties to share the experiences of black communities when accessing (or not) sports facilities, services and opportunities. They wanted also to examine the sports 'equity' strategies in operation amongst the region's sport and recreation providers aimed at removing the barriers to sports participation and job opportunities. As one of the few representative black regional forums of its type recognised by local authorities and Sport England since 1996, the actions of its members and its priorities are a clear marker of what is at issue regarding racial equality in sport in the region. Consequently Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was the only regional black sports forum in a position to act as a valid and reliable gauge of local authority race-equality activity in the region.

Polsby (1963:4) asked three questions (i) who participates in decision making? (2) who gains and who loses from alternative possible outcomes? and (3) who prevails in decision making? Given the literature concerning 'race' and sports administration it is generally not black professionals who decide and not black people who generally gain from the ultimate outcomes (WMCSR 1990). Consequently, ROTA (Race on the Agenda 2001) confirm that due to the levels of inequality and racism in many areas in England it is necessary to recognise and fund independent black-led organisations as they are well placed to provide culturally sensitive services to their community. Generally voluntary groups concentrate on the interests of their users and members, although in many cases black-led groups have been set up as a result of social injustice (Solomos and Back 1995, Torkildsen 1999, Home Office 2001a). In support McLeod et al. (2001) argue that the earliest documented forms of black self-help in England came as a result of black people recognising that mainstream services were unable to provide adequately for their needs. This included housing, health, education, community and advocacy services. Sport and leisure were also factors addressed through black self-help and even in 1996 problems in the provision and control of sport were the reason for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to be formed in Northshire.

The necessity for groups like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to come into existence can be demonstrated through research by Sport England (Sport England 2000: 4) which showed clearly for the first time that there are more unmet needs amongst minority ethnic groups in comparison to their white peers. For instance, 54% of Pakistanis to 81% for the 'Black Other' categories wished to take up a sport that they do not participate in which was above the norm for the study. Curiously the survey only 'touched upon' experiences of racial discrimination even though in some categories one in five experienced racism (p.6). This 'silence' on racism is symptomatic of the institutional response to such issues and emphasises the earlier tensions in the development of a national sports policy as the positivist headline findings ignored the 'race' dimension. Even in the midst of such groundbreaking research on ethnicity the hegemonic values and assumptions underpinning public sector sport can be unpacked and criticised. Similarly in 1999 Sport England conducted research into its own activities and products only to find that minority ethnic communities in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham did not have equal access to them. To counter this problem they identified a need for greater coordination of sports opportunities, a need for community groups to work together, and a need for racial equality support for local governing bodies of sport/sports clubs (Wheeler 2000). This recognition of race-equality support in these recent experimental active communities projects is an indicator of emergent ideas on the need to oppose racism in sport. At a more political level the DCMS, in fulfilling the social inclusion strategy of the Government, has developed a strategy that draws on the discourse of valuing diversity, active communities, partnership and devolution (DCMS 2001). On many levels the voice of organised black voluntary groups is being courted as providing knowledgeable points of reference for public bodies. It is this key element that satisfied the researcher of the value of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as a valid and legitimate commentator on the work of local authorities in the area.

The Home Office recognise that policy analysts and policy makers need to consider more fully the structural constraints and power dynamics pressing upon black groups and black participation in society. An area for concern for the Home Office (2001a) was a need to recognise that there needs to be a 'race'-centred approach to policy, as a 'colour-blind' approach only reinforces racial disadvantage in policy formulation.

Otherwise marginalising 'race' and ethnicity causes inconsistencies and fragmentation in service delivery (Gardiner and Welch 2001). This has been underlined by the emphasis placed upon the importance of working with black communities by the Home Office (2001b) and ROTA (2001). Paul Boateng, the Home Office Minister of State, said of his compact with the black and minority ethnic voluntary sector,

The black and minority ethnic voluntary sector has a role to play in achieving our aim of a fair, more inclusive society. By empowering black and minority ethnic groups, we can work in partnership to tackle the social exclusion experienced by too many black and ethnic communities.  
(Home Office 2001b: 2)

**Writers go on to argue that relatively little is known about the background, motivation and focus of these groups as there has been an assumption in the socio-political literature that these groups were not important enough. Smith (1993) suggests that the historical, ideological and structural context of groups needs to be taken into any account of their influence on the policy process. The marginalisation of black-led groups in the discussions of sports policy can only continue to reinforce black people as victims rather than strong, free-thinking decision makers. This underlines the need to locate 'race' at the centre of these discussions given the inability of the literature to develop a body of knowledge that begins to understand the experiences of black people in the policy implementation process (Solomos 1989, Solomos and Back 1995).**

### **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport- (VBES) Access**

Access to VBES relied upon my position as a member of the Sport England-Northshire Black and Ethnic Minority Regional Advisory group. This group advised Sport England-Northshire, governing bodies and related public bodies on issues relating to 'race' and ethnicity. The group drew predominantly upon experienced black and white sports development professionals. I was the only academic on this committee however my invitation was based upon my academic credentials as a senior lecturer in sport and recreation development, my links with Carnegie at LMU, and also as an ex-sports development officer in the region. Politically it strengthened Sport England-

Northshire's hand when bargaining for resources that I and other black members contributed to the committee. It was in this committee that the first ideas were mooted to form an independent black sports forum. Strategically it made sense for the black members on the regional group to act as a critical mass to ensure that it became a reality. As a result when I discussed my request to 'do research and track Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's development' with my main contact, who at the time was the regional sports officer for Black and Ethnic Minorities for Sport England-Northshire, he was happy to support me. In addition he was helpful in describing me as an advocate for the forum rather than someone who only had selfish reasons for getting involved. I was conscious that from then on I was treated as 'another member', 'an insider'. Whilst in the field for me to remain effective I had to ensure that I considered the tensions of conducting a critical ethnography and the demands of the PhD outcomes, and it is to the positioning of the researcher that we now turn.

### **Positioning The Black Researcher**

Hunter (1995) advocates that a researcher should attempt to utilise the natural advantages that he/she may have as a result of their past or present experiences and knowledge. The ability of a researcher to blend into a research setting is more likely to be successful when there is a logical reason or 'fit' between the researched and the researcher. Crompton and Jones (1988) used their research team to engage male and female respondents with male and female researchers. They suggested that 'man talk' and 'woman talk' allowed them to gain informal access to information, which they would not have achieved had they not planned their research accordingly. This dimension of Crompton and Jones' work can be applied to the black pressure group context to follow, as 'black-talk' was generated and interpreted by a black researcher. Taking this principle to its logical conclusion researchers are being encouraged to close the distance between them and the community under investigation without manipulating the environment. This belief was illustrated as Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members took the opportunity to share their experiences of engaging with what Ouseley called 'the system' and the *simpatico* that comes with people from similar backgrounds. The shared experiences of black people in local government and voluntary sector settings were ones that few researchers could effectively identify or engage with without

being seen as an outsider. I felt that Hunter's suggestion that there is such a thing as a 'natural participant' suited me in this setting.

### **Fitting In: Researcher Identity(s) and the Research Settings**

As Garfinkel (1967) urges, an ethnographer needs to 'know' the terrain where most of the activity is to take place. An ability to flesh out and give detail to relatively superficial actions or non-actions is the job of a reflexive ethnographer. When Reinharz (1997) reflected upon her research in a Kibbutz she identified three major ways in which she was able to categorise the identities that she took on at times in her work. It was this identification with herself as researcher and subject that enabled her to understand how as a 'tool of the fieldwork' she was able to operate effectively. Her multiple-identities helped her to know when she was in a good position to get access to information and also when she might be better to take a different tack with respondents. Her use of her 'three selves' developed the idea of a 'research based self', a 'brought self' and a 'situationally created self'. In the context of this research Reinharz's three selves are translated into the following:- **Research Based Self** – Researcher, sounding Board, Source of information. **Brought Self** - Black, Male, 38 years old, sports development/equalities background, local government/regional links, academic. **Situationally Created Self** – Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport member, Advisory Group Colleague, Consultant, Advocate, trainer/tutor, Co-optee. These multiple-selves help to explain how dimensions of the 'research tool' (the researcher) can be displayed strategically to ensure the most appropriate persona for a situation or task.

In the context of the local authority case studies it has been argued that there are more opportunities for black people to systematically observe white people, and therefore generally be more skilled than their white counterparts (Naples 1997, Roediger 1998). Within a racially disaggregated society where black people are more likely to be outsiders looking in at institutions and power elites, this is more likely to be the case. The black researcher's ability to conduct interactive fieldwork with elite groups in local government relies on his/her skill and knowledge of the group under study. This perspective opens the way to the debate on whether black people can do research in/on white institutions by clearly articulating the black researcher's position as one who not

only understands white institutions but is also able to blend in, or even ‘play the game’ (Webb and Liff 1988). This is further supported in the work of Frankenberg (1993) and others whose critiques of whiteness establish that the dominant paradigm or ‘norm’ in society for most people is a white one and we learn to see things from this perspective first - as my undergraduate experiences from chapter one will confirm (Goldberg 1993, Parker 1998).

Riggins’ (1997) critique of whiteness concludes that the discursive power that is embodied through the ‘discourse of othering’ causes whiteness to be ‘inside’, ‘included’, ‘powerful’, the ‘we’, the ‘us’, the ‘answer’ as opposed to the problem, and most important of all unspoken. Gabriel (1998) suggests a series of discursive techniques are employed that includes the power not to be named, ‘exnomination’ and ‘naturalisation’ where only whiteness can make sense of an issue. Long and Hylton (2002) posit that the universalism of whiteness contributes to understanding norms in society as it makes sense of *our* news, *our* television, important dates in *our* calendar, and *our* sport. Consequently my experience of local government and other such bureaucracies assists me in recognising modes of behaviour, value systems, mores, power relations and other hegemonic forces, which not only enables me to fit in but is pivotal to an examination of assumptive worlds.

In addition to a researcher’s ability to fit into a research context, a consequence of utilising these respondents was that they are professional communicators and are used to justifying themselves under pressure. Although a great deal of experience may have ‘guided’ some of the claims they made, as they are still skilled politicians, both councillors and senior officers. In these circumstances in a sensitive topic area the skill of the researcher is often about getting at what is not said rather than what is said. The sub-text of each discussion, and each local authority is where the critical researcher must turn to fully examine and demystify equal opportunities and ‘race’ in local government sport.

### **The Politics of Research**

Frankenberg’s (1993) assertion that the ‘blank faced’ neutral interviewer is never really neutral was also a point of principle for Crompton and Jones (1988) who maintained the



critical element of their work through keeping all of their consciousness ‘switched on’ rather than falsely ‘switched off’. A black consciousness was a guiding element throughout this work. Clearly the sensitivity of equal opportunities, which has historically caused much consternation amongst public sector organisations, is an emotive area. The link also with ‘race’ adds another dimension to it, which Raymond (1995) would consider a sensitive research topic. A black researcher’s thesis taking a critical lens to equal opportunities is not likely to fall into the ‘neutral’ category. In reality why would any researcher be neutral in an investigation, never mind one that focuses on these key areas? Ben Tovim et al. (1986) have argued that any research is political, in particular research concerning ‘race’,

The tendency to divorce research from its would-be political context and to abstain from research based interventions in politics has only served to sanction the political status quo and in some instances no doubt to actually exacerbate inequalities themselves.

(Ben-Tovim et al. 1986: cited Harvey 1990: 179)

In the field, Frankenberg’s use of feminist principles which involves a sharing of experiences, researcher-subject interaction and an overt attachment by the researcher to the fieldwork, was more conspicuous in the ethnography of the pressure group than the local authority case studies. The strategic use of these critical theoretical principles are outlined in the discussion on ethnography to follow later. Birrell (1989) clearly outlines the advantages of taking a black perspective to empirical studies. The ability of black researchers to get inside and comfortable with black people is the added value or ‘substance’ that gives the black researcher the edge over white counterparts. However, it must be noted that interactions with white institutions for black researchers, whatever their experience, can sometimes offer constraints and barriers that would not be encountered where a white counterpart was involved. Raymond (1995: 4) identified this might occur where research investigates the vested interests of powerful persons or institutions. This may be because the black researcher was examining their performance, policies and actions as well as their past and future potential on issues that might directly concern him or people like him.

Thus no matter how people of colour define themselves, there are still the more powerful stereotypes embedded in

public culture that define their status and identities within the  
cosmos of the dominant.  
(Stanfield II 1994: 182)

Still 'insiderness' and outsiderness is a starting point and an opportunity for the researcher to take advantage of (Kennedy 1995). Given that there were relationships to be developed between black researcher/academic and white interviewees a strategy was employed to make the questions and topics less threatening. Each respondent was given a brief overview of the research inquiry before the interview although aspects of the focus were less explicit than others due to the sensitivity of some of the issues. The need to be careful about elements of the research question can be explained with reference to the ability of some of the research topics to be sensitive enough to make councillors and officers more guarded about their responses to them. Young (1990) suggests that this is because of the political sensitivity of equal opportunities. So to get at these issues the interviewees were allowed to talk about their authority, their performance, their reflections on them thus offering rich data from which to understand their appreciative context. In addition equality and racial equality were used interchangeably as a tactic according to the background or 'feel' that the researcher had for each interviewee. Often equality was used as a catchall discussion topic with racial equality work confirmed as the same or different where appropriate. Another logical cause for most of the respondents being defensive and less open was the fact that only one of them was black, and this reflected the ethnic imbalance across and inside each of the local authorities. Their recent aggregate context was one of failure in achieving the aims of their equalities work; therefore there was also the added embarrassment when the results of basic ethnic record keeping were made public. In addition it was not lost upon the interviewees or the interviewer that in all but one case it was a white respondent telling the stories of struggle in sport for black people to a black person. Thus the researcher found it even more important to ensure that the process of triangulation took place across the spoken word within each authority, the written word from documents and also critical voices from outside of each authority (Denzin 1989).

### **Case Study Methodologies**

Macpherson et al. (2000) consider case studies as a four-part research tool made up of a purpose, place, process and product. Each component contributes in a systematic way to

our understanding of the efficacy of this method of conducting qualitative research. For instance, this case study of local authorities has the purpose of demystifying equal opportunities in local government through a critical analysis of the assumptive worlds of senior officers and councillors. This is the purpose of the case study research and without it there would be no point in conducting one. Each case study has a site, or multiple sites in this case, linked with a theoretical purpose and opportunities in which to test ideas and highlight issues, or as Stake (1995) provocatively suggests 'petit generalisations'. An overview of each place, as in this research, is often completed through the use of narrative/thick-description and analysis. Whilst the process aspects pertaining to validity, reliability and rigour emerge out of the methodology, the data and analysis reveal the significant processes in assumptive worlds. The product is a combination of these points that is, how the ideas are constructed in the final thesis for its intended audience and its reception by peers.

Advocates of the case study methodology have attempted to strengthen their own position by considering and responding to the critiques of their favoured method. Stoecker (1991) considers two threats to the rigour of this method, bias and its impact on internal validity. It has been argued that the lack of 'scientific' controls in the way case studies are carried out allows for a personal level of involvement to the point that this bias might skew data in each case. The deficiency in overt controls in the case study method has caused critics to question how productive it could be. The second aspect, that has cast some doubt on the case study method, is the questioned ability of case study researchers to generalise their findings. This query about the external validity of the method has given grounds for critics to engage caution in the use of case studies, and at best only to use them as exploratory vehicles for other more 'reliable' methods. The case study approach has been criticised as a method that does not allow for generalisation due to the specialist nature of the technique. Generalisation from a single case study has on occasion been seen as contentious due to the interpretation of findings that may not have a meaning beyond the focus study. The nature of equal opportunities in each authority differs due to time and space factors that include social, economic and political differences, hence making generalisations difficult. However, the practices that structure equality processes in North City, West Town and South City are comparable as they transcend specific regulative frameworks and time, and do not require direct comparisons of specific policy outcomes. In each case actors interpret and evaluate a

racialised world that they inhabit, what differs is their context (Wolman and Cook Ford III 1996). Thus making subsequent conclusions applicable, in the very least, to the three authorities with understandable implications for other local authorities. In addition, verification of themes from multiple sources, as with this study, can give the research a level of rigor and validity to enable a robust and reliable application to other local authority contexts (Huberman and Miles 1994, Stake 1995).

Stoecker (1991) further outlines a response to these criticisms on the internal validity of case study research. Most of them involve processes of triangulation that allow findings from the data to be strengthened through the inclusion of other sources of both primary and secondary data (see Ben-Tovim et al. 1986, Crompton and Jones 1988, Holly 1998, Long et al. 2000). Another response was to consider the sources for the criticism levelled at the case study to find that they were coming from writers steeped in a positivist tradition. Given this viewpoint there are weaknesses worth identifying in positivist research, which illustrates that there is a constant struggle by researchers to ensure that rigour is maintained even in areas where research methods are meant to be the most 'scientific'. The three aspects of the scientific model identified as superior to the case study method have also been questioned as the standard for researchers who wish to take an in-depth look at cultural and sub-cultural processes and practices in society. These were the probability sample, the notion of researcher bias and survey research to understand applied sociological questions. Stoecker (1991) urges writers to consider that although probability sampling might enable them to hypothesise and construct theoretical explanations for why phenomena might occur, the case study enables the research to actually identify why phenomena have occurred.

Process is both historical and idiosyncratic, and statistical analysis is unable to capture either of those. In fact it is the case study's ability to explain the idiosyncrasies which make up the unexplained variance' which is the source of its strength.

(Stoecker 1991: 94)

So, the ability to understand and explore processes and patterns rather than simple patterns give case study methodologies distinct advantages over more statistical counterparts (Dower et al. 1981). The value of this type of approach for researchers investigating policy processes is that they are able to see at close quarters processes of

racial discrimination in local government. Their analyses of Wolverhampton and Liverpool by Ben-Tovim et. al. (1986) helped them to elaborate on how they could see the state as a site of struggle by demonstrating how racism was manifest at different levels. Positive emancipatory outcomes involved them being able to identify barriers, gatekeepers, and more importantly examples of good practice that could be adopted in similar environments. Thus the ability of scientific researchers to predict outcomes always leaves some doubt as to what actually happens and to what degree. The fact that choices are made where methods and rationales are adopted or discounted has a direct impact on the nature of the data and the theoretical outcomes that emerge out of this process. The case study's ability to shift away from universal remedies to specific transformations enables a more sensitive approach to social change in contrasting contexts. Similarly to deny the personal connection between the researcher and the subject is to deny a natural phenomenon that occurs whether the researcher has a positivist attitude or otherwise (Thomas 1993).

Bhopal's (2000) ideas mirror principles in this methodology that focus on the outcomes of assumptions in local-state structures. In her work on South Asian women Bhopal (2000) outlined three guiding themes for her methodology. They came from her alignment with feminist research principles that share a critical emancipatory project. Feminist research also has a clear application to the study of 'race' and black perspectives, especially as both perspectives have been struggling to develop methodologies within the constraints of a white, male research agenda. Bhopal's first two themes involved centering the subject. That is making significant the experiences of women in her research where previously their views had not been sought or have been subsumed in other mainstream agendas. In addition there should be an acknowledgment by the research community that the research about women (or black people) is not just 'on women' but also 'for women'. But it is Bhopal's third point that reinforces Ben-Tovim et al. (1986) and Stoecker (1991) in that the researcher should be part of the research process and that their reasons for doing the research should not just be implicit in the work. The self-reflexive aspect of her work was emphasised as a crucial element of work on and for women (and of course black people). Here these three principles allowed Bhopal to,

...examine and question the differences and similarities (in terms of gender and 'race') which exist between the researcher and the researched and how this affects access, the influence of personal experience and power.  
(Bhopal 2000: 70)

Similarly Holly's (1998) work into the 'glass ceiling' for women managers in local government led her to the conclusion that work concerning equalities should be about testing the praxis of discourse and challenging power relations. Her conclusion ensured that the patriarchal status quo should be a target for this type of research otherwise change will be slow in coming. In this study the centring of 'race' and racism in local government advances just as important a social project.

### **Local Authorities' Case Studies; Accounts from the Core**

Stake's (1994) use of the 'instrumental' category in his typology of case studies helps to explain in this research the point of using three comparative cases as part of a research methodology. His 'intrinsic' case studies are generally studies used as illustrations of a specific, often unique, case in its own right. The work by Verma and Darby (1994) on black and ethnic minority experiences of sport and Cashmore and Troyna's (1982) seminal work 'black youth in crisis' both raised awareness of issues and groups that had been systematically marginalised and their experiences ignored. Both studies were able to give a fresh perspective on under-researched and under-theorised areas, which justified the studies in their own right. Thick description and an emic perspective meant that the research was not about generating theory but more about welcoming the academic and policy community into the lives of previously ignored communities.

An 'instrumental' study is an attempt to refine or build theory in the way that Henry (1993) and Yule (1995) conducted their research into policy processes in local government. Henry developed typologies to explain policy contexts and Yule utilised a feminist perspective in local government policy. Multiple instrumental studies are characterised by Stake's 'collective study'. As a heuristic tool the collective study enables the generation of theoretical findings, as the data is being coded, retrieved and analysed across each case. There are other examples where the case study method has been used to research 'race' and the politics of 'race' in a variety of settings.

Carrington's (1998) study of 'race' and ethnicity in cricket and football through case studies enabled him to examine the politics of identity, masculinity and whiteness in an otherwise marginalised area of study. Also, the five year study by Ben-Tovim et. al. (1986) into the politics of 'race' in Wolverhampton and Liverpool gave them the opportunity to investigate institutionalised racism and to feed their results back to the policy-makers and practitioners in each setting. They relied on a stepped approach as they identified three key phases to their study. Stage one involved interviews with central government officials and an analysis of policy documents, stage two was a survey of local politicians in the two local authorities who significantly have sizable black and ethnic minority communities and the third stage was to focus the study on local community organisations.

### **Sampling Considerations**

The three case studies in this research are intended to illuminate the values and assumptions of officers and councillors relating to equal opportunities in sport and recreation within the local authority context, and to see how they were implemented and what the policy outcomes were. As mentioned earlier, the black population in each authority ensured that the issues around equal opportunities were conspicuous and relevant to the residents, councillors and officers involved in sport and recreation (Clarke and Speeden 2000). Significant influential factors in local government were the status and background of the councillors or council officers who steer matters of equality in sport. The respondents in this PhD were all senior officers or councillors who had a significant bearing on the direction that equal opportunities took in each organisation. Therefore officers in sports and leisure divisions with responsibilities for equal opportunities work in their area were also included. These sub-groups have particularly powerful and sometimes antagonistic relationships where they can both exert a lot of pressure on practitioners and members of the public (Houlihan 1991: 64). These are prime movers within local government where policy formulation and implementation are concerned. Indeed these officers needed to be close to the 'ear' of councillors to be sure that they could influence policy decisions through action (or inaction).

The interviewees were all interested in the research and understood why they were chosen. In each case the same starting points were accepted as rational, these were that 1) the authority was one with a significant multi-ethnic/black population. 2) each authority had a clear position on working towards equal opportunities 3) Aspects of good practice were raised as areas of interest. Councillors who chaired equal opportunities committees contributed as well as those who chaired sport and leisure committees. Therefore they had a direct, formal, impact on the political direction of sport in each authority. The councillors and senior officers are drawn from what Stoker (1991:92) would call the ‘joint elite’ who are a,

...small group of leading councillors and officers.....but is likely to be drawn from committee chairs and vice-chairs together with chief officers and their deputies.

This joint elite had to be considered in this analysis which enabled an understanding of the policy implementation process surrounding ‘equal opportunities’ in local government sport. Two principal purposes of the interviews were to obtain the description and interpretations of the officers and councillors about equal opportunities in their authority (Stake 1995). The dynamics of each group within and across authorities clearly allowed strong themes to develop to increase the understanding of their assumptive worlds. The officers and councillors in each authority were made up of the following:-

**Table 1: Local Authority Interviewees**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Senior Officers</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
North City	Chief Officer for Sport Principal Sports Development Officer Senior Sports Development Officer ex-Director of Sport ex-Principal Sports Development Officer	Chair of Recreation Services Committee Chair of Cultural Services Committee Chair of Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee
West Town	Senior Sports Development Officer (promoted to Leisure Development Manager) Director of Leisure Senior Equal Opportunities Officer (Leisure) Leading Leisure Officer (DSO) Senior Officer (Area Manager)	Chair of Cultural and Leisure Services and Chair of the Equality Advisory Committee Chair of the Race Equality Sub-Committee



South City	Director of Leisure Services Assistant Director of Leisure & Head of Sport and Community Recreation Sports Development Officer (Disability - Promoted to overall Equality Officer) also the Asst. SDO Black and Ethnic Minorities.	Chair of Cultural and Leisure Services Committee Chair of Equality Services Sub-Committee Chair - Regeneration and Partnerships/ex-Chair of Cultural and Leisure services Deputy Chair - Leisure Directorate/Chair - Parks and Open Spaces
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I was confident that each contributor could reflect upon practices across their authority because rarely is an individual in local government able to develop a substantive position on council business without first being satisfied that there are others in the organisation who share these ideas. Further, Elcock (1994:101) suggests that it is important for the chairs of council committees to develop a close relationship with the chief officer and his or her immediate lieutenants and, the chair “will seek to discover what ideas are being floated and what debates are going on further down the departmental hierarchy”. Lindblom’s (1993) work described this process as partisan mutual adjustment which involves actor negotiation, compromise and change as part of the decision making process on a daily basis. Lindblom’s work reflects the more complex and pragmatic principles of working in a bureaucratic organisation and emphasises the relational aspect of Young’s (1977, 1979) assumptive world framework (below). However the local government environment is one where bureaucrats and politicians have to work together, sometimes with competing agendas and perspectives. It is this process which generates both the problems and solutions that engage policy analysts in local government, and impact on the ability of officials to successfully develop and implement equality work.

### **Theorising The Local Authority Accounts: Duality and Assumptive Worlds**

Ouseley (1981) offers a setting for local government policymaking that incorporates the dynamics of race-relations. Through his analysis of policymaking in local government, Ouseley accused local authorities of being overly bureaucratic with their creeping incrementalism that stratifies and disempowers black people. His use of the term ‘the system’ sought to illustrate the way bureaucracies like local authorities allocate

resources, services, facilities and employment, to people who fall under their jurisdiction. One of Ouseley's key concerns is that black people are absent in the crucial decision making/policymaking positions, so he does not consider this a suitable context for his academic focus. There are two issues here, one debate is an academic exercise that continues to inform the understanding of mainstream policy debates, whilst the second is a more critical, political stance that challenges the status quo in local government. It acts as a signpost to those working in more established areas of political study, that there are important social issues that need to be drawn into discussions about policymaking such as 'race' centred policies and equality outside of their general discussions about wider social relations (Ouseley 1981, Solomos 1989, Parker 1998).

Given the tendency of the policy sciences to marginalise issues of 'race', equality and ethnicity within public organisations, to understand these organisations there needs to be an acknowledgement that the individual social actors that constitute them are inextricably linked with the way the organisation develops (Giddens 1995). The concept of the 'duality of structure' is a useful conceptual device in which to comprehend the processes that inform actor and organisational values and assumptions. The notion of duality gives an insight into how institutional patterns, practices and assumptions are routinised and reproduced over time. Layder (1994:134) clarifies this position by stating of the duality of structure that,

Social practices reflect the ability of humans to modify the circumstances in which they find themselves, while simultaneously recreating the social conditions (practices, knowledge, resources) which they inherit from the past.

In a Lindblomian sense, Giddens suggests that knowledge is bounded by the individuals and structures that they work within, thus causing intended, as well as unintended, consequences that will often go unacknowledged. But still these actions can be rationalised and normalised by individuals through their everyday behaviour or 'practical consciousness' just as they can through their 'discursive consciousness' (Giddens 1995). Discursive consciousness describes the ability of individuals in local authority elites to articulate what they do on a daily basis in the workplace. Another more complex form of feedback is possible through a more considered response to the questions about what people do, why they do it and what difference their work makes,

Giddens terms this the ‘reflexive monitoring’ of behaviour within structures. Each of these responses help to further our understanding of local government sport policy contexts, which includes knowledge of the practical and discursive aspects of structures as well as more philosophical perspectives on organisational practices and processes. Cassells (1993:123) concludes that all action exists in continuity with the past, giving strength to Giddens’ thesis that we can gather a comprehensive understanding of social processes where we consider the actions of individuals and the practices of their structures simultaneously.

### **Assumptive Worlds**

In addition to interpretive theoretical views offered by writers like Giddens, Layder and Cassells, a more holistic framework for the critical analysis of racial equality in local government sport has been offered by Young (1977, 1981, 1989, 1992) and Rosenberg (1989) to challenge the more positivistic assumptions offered by mainstream policy studies. Unlike literature incorporating issues which engage corporate culture as its focus Rosenberg (1989) advocates the ‘assumptive world’ perspective as an under-utilised analytical tool for management scientists. The term assumptive world was borrowed from a study of bereavement by Parkes (1971) who himself suggested that an individual’s assumptive world allows him/her to recognise and rehearse cues and act accordingly within it (Young 1977:6). To be able to begin to understand the forces, which challenge, constitute and reconstitute the hegemony of inequality within each authority, it allows the researcher critically to explain the praxis of local government sports policy processes and their impact on ‘race’ and equal opportunities. In a rather theatrical evaluation of his assumptive world thesis, Young (1977:5) stated that ‘the assumptive world provides political actors not just with their audience, backcloth, and other props, but also the stage directions, lines and cues’.

### **Appreciative Contexts**

Young (1977, 1979) recognised that there was a constellation of images, beliefs, judgements and values that are often found in organisations which he calls the ‘appreciative context’ (1990, 1992). The appreciative context is a particular policy area of a local authority such as a sports division, equal opportunities department or social

work. These appreciative contexts are often constituted and distinguished by different political or professional ideologies that often occur within a policy area (see Henry 1993:117). Young (1990, 1992) added that often where politicians and managers disagree on what is valued in a policy or how to best implement policy there appears to be an appreciative gap within that policy area. Those factors that constitute an appreciative context found in significant numbers or through commonly held views within an organisation across its main actors enable Young to define them on aggregate as an 'assumptive world'. Young argues that when a group or individual are analysed, the value and existential elements are so intertwined that it is a very complex process to articulate in terms of intentional acts, perceptions of acts and reflective evaluation of acts as they are 'blended in the overall picture of experience' they possess (Young 1979: 32). An understanding of the basic behaviour of actors becomes enwrapped in an analysis of their everyday assumptions. Assumptive world analysis then becomes the ability to gain a sound grasp, and to make sense of, actors in their own domain and relationships, moving in a dynamic and complex environment.

Young (1977, 1979) posits that as social objects we must relate to things in our world. The cathetic element of our assumptive worlds, that is the relational aspect of the framework, does not have to be clear, hard aspects of reality, rather they can be simplified symbolic aspects. So there are aspects of the world we relate to, commit to and are positive towards just as there are those things we do not relate to, do not commit to, and are negative towards. As social actors interact within their assumptive worlds they do so as the four aspects of the assumptive world cohere. That is, I) the cognitive aspect provides us with all of the knowledge we have about the local authority and ourselves and are set down as 'the facts' 'our intelligence'. This represents the world to social actors. II) Our relationships assist us to prioritise aspects of our world and seriously consider the more important factors. Thus the strength of our cathexis (relationships) helps us to order the significant from the insignificant. III) Our evaluation of the social world we inhabit brings its own pressures. Within structures we exercise levels of agency that considers stressors around us like organisational culture and peer pressure. IV) How we act in relation to the image we have of the world, our relationship within it and our evaluative faculties all depends upon the demands as we see them at the time.

The cognitive, relational, affective (evaluative) and directive (action) aspects of assumptive worlds are so closely woven that they are only likely to be seen as separate under a critical lens. However Young argues that these elements are organised hierarchically rather than through coincidence. Our assumptive worlds are organised using three main factors that offer actors three levels of generalisability about their social world; 1) ideology, 2) attitudes and 3) opinions. Our opinions are negotiated and adapted daily in an ad hoc way and occur relatively easily, attitude change is the next level of generalisability. Attitudes help officers and councillors to organise the concrete world around them, however the next level, ideology, is less negotiable and only likely to change if the immediate world around the social actor changes. The culture shock of C.C.T. in the 1980s is an interesting example of this. It is this type of challenge to everyday custom and practice where a fundamental challenge to the assumptive world of individuals becomes apparent.

### **Constructing Assumptive Worlds**

The assumptive world is a construction of actors' interactions within their environment. Like Giddens the notion of an actor acting on his/her world and at the same time being acted upon by his/her world describes a duality that leads to structuring processes. Young's use of the assumptive world framework enabled him to reconsider equal opportunities policy processes in local authorities. These local authority processes were clearly in need of further scrutiny for Young who consistently found a gap between what local authorities promised and what they delivered. Young's (1989, 1992) analysis of assumptive worlds led him to the conclusion that there is likely to be an 'appreciative gap' between key actors within a policy implementation process as he identified three possible reasons for variation in a local authority 1) variance in views on procedures to tackle discrimination. This also involves the variation in the degree of commitment and resources needed to work towards equality 2) variance in the substance or focus of the policy. Young asks the question 'equal opportunities for whom?' as this is a question which is not often thought through by local authorities, hence confused or 'colour-blind' practices (Ben-Tovim et. al. 1986). So the emphasis of the interpretation of policy in the implementation phase could be another cause of variance. 3) The third possible cause of variance involves the lack of consensus on the form the processes of change should

take. More specifically the question is about who the main drivers will be behind any change in the organisation. Quandaries that organisations find themselves in, that are often ignored, are that they do not consider whether the whole of the mainstream services are involved in a mutual agenda of implementation on an issue, or if individuals within sport or even equal opportunities units, councillors or senior officers have the responsibility.

Rosenberg (1989) explored the 'assumptive world' of local government officials through his analysis of their total 'story' or plot. As in this study the story was told to him by senior officers and councillors across a number of local authorities in the UK. Rosenberg argues that attempts to understand the real world context of key players in the policy and management process are invaluable if the multiple realities of the major actors in the political systems of local government are to be understood. These three causes of variance, commitment and resources, focus, and the implementation process, together give an indication of how a local authority's ability to achieve success around equality is fraught with complex decisions and processes. They need to be considered as part of an all-embracing holistic vision rather than in ways that have reflected the less coherent approaches of reported studies (Gibbon 1989, Young 1992, Clarke and Speeden 2000). Marshall's (2001) analysis of the assumptive world of educators resulted in observations that uncovered implementation gaps between policymakers and practitioners. This was a consequence of the lack of policymaker understanding of the real world pressures of educators. Marshall (2001) emphasised Solomos and Back's (1995) problems in Birmingham as they identified competing views and perceptions about racial discrimination and what needs to be done to counter it. Conflicts, in Marshall's work (2001) came from inappropriate policies and difficult to implement practices that caused tensions between the two key parties. Marshall's view that policy actors become socialised into the culture of an organisation emphasises the structuring processes of assumptive worlds and the recursive nature of dominant practices (Cassells 1993, Giddens 1995). This goes some way to explaining how values are tacitly agreed within local government sport.

When policy does not fit with the cognitive value systems of those receiving the directive the policy may be ignored.  
(Marshall 2001: 101)

These social actors learn to operate within organisational constraints that reflect the values that Young (1977, 1979) and Rosenberg (1989) were keen to unpack in their analysis of assumptive worlds. Research that Marshall and Mitchell (1991) conducted that considered equity in America, revealed how influential actors who took an alternative view that emphasised choice or equity were in fact articulating a less popular view and worse still violating the assumptive world that they occupied. Thus actions in these assumptive worlds are constrained unless actors are prepared to risk their position/status within it. In local government terms this tension is likely to be evidenced in more redistributive/distributive discourses that veer towards more radical policy implementation. More radical activity is not likely to be the norm in the public sector due to its penchant for 'safety' and non-controversial practices (Ouseley 1981, Cross and Keith 1993, Solomos and Back 1996).

In their analysis of racial equality in local government Solomos and Back (1995) established that race-equality makes little sense outside of the culture and everyday machinations and silences that characterise the policy implementation process. They present an assumptive world of conflicting values, beliefs and ideologies. A world created by its social context, allowing outsiders an insight into the contested nature of, and perspectives on, equality in local government. Perspectives that themselves begin to demystify the gesture politics that form around local authority core objectives and mission statements. The notion of gestural and 'real' equality discourses emerging out of Solomos and Back's (1995) work have been similarly raised earlier in the thesis by Young and Connelly (1981), Gibbon (1989), Young (1992) and Horne (1995). The assumptive worlds created under these tensions is likely to reveal the ambiguities and inconsistencies in each local authority's equality processes as the social, cognitive, evaluative and directive factors that make up appreciative contexts are revealed.

The use of research that frames policy implementation processes realistically is likely to result in informative practical and theoretical research that reflects accurately the tensions in the way policy is developed and implemented. It has a more accurate focus on processes in specific institutional areas that will lend an authority to subsequent policy and practice based on the perceptions of those charged with managing them. Consequently the chasm that Marshall (2001) believes is a true problem between policymakers and implementers has more chance of widening and less chance of

shrinking. Solomos and Back's (1995) study of dominant processes in local government signals the efficacy of this assumptive world framework. Using Young's assumptive world framework as a heuristic tool offers a chance to consider policy definitions and legitimations in a different way to the received view that White and Adams (1994) and Chalip (1996) were so critical of in policy studies and sport. The heuristic techniques that support such analysis contribute to the analysts' overall understanding of appreciative contexts and assumptive worlds. At the same time an interpretive analysis of the policy activity within these assumptive worlds should give an indication of how attributions are drawn to policy problems. Further, this analysis will allow for a rationalisation of how policies are legitimated. The critical policy analysis advocated by White and Adams (1994) and Chalip (1995, 1996) is where the social order and status quo are challenged to consider inequality, exclusion, disadvantage, power and 'race'. It is at this stage where the received view purported by Nathan (1985) is confronted and the complexities of sustainable social change occur.

### **Changing Times**

**Due to the lengthy time-frame of this part-time PhD schedule many changes occurred in the way each of the local authorities framed their sports provision. This had the effect of extending many research tasks and processes due to the researcher's inability to get into the field due to other commitments. Time triangulation was not part of the original research plan but as a result of the limitations of other activities the benefits of this augmented aspect of the research process revealed them gradually. These benefits were experienced in two specific ways 1) more time in which to compare local authority environments 2) changing regulatory contexts. What the specific differences between each authority over the period of the fieldwork emphasised was the nature, and the natural dynamic of change within local government. So as each authority implemented policies, old or new, the implementation of those policies allowed the researcher to gauge the priorities within them. Change in local government, as in other bureaucratic structures, is inevitable. However the processes and systems in place to ensure equality within those bureaucracies worked in ways that reflected their intended, and unintended, core values and assumptive worlds.**



The multi-site case study of North City, West Town and South City had an added dimension as the factor of maturation occurred in each authority over the research period. The time when the fieldwork took place was one of transformation for each authority in different ways. Some of the changes were national like the New Labour Government succeeding a Conservative one. There were local policy shifts as a result of national imperatives like Compulsory Competitive Tendering (C.C.T.) and Best Value (BV). Policy shifts occurred also in the development of Trusts in local authorities, in particular South City, that added another layer of provision into the already complicated 'contract culture' inherited from the years of Conservative government. To a lesser extent changes in the focus of public resourcing and spending directly and indirectly affected the way practitioners and politicians viewed contributory factors of social exclusion (e.g. equal opportunities) especially in the light of central government establishing a Social Exclusion Policy Unit in 1997. This had the impact of moving equal opportunities from the periphery to a more central position on national policy agendas. However the terminology was used loosely and discussions concerning social inclusion or social exclusion are often in effect relating specifically to equal opportunities rather than the wider social policy domain (Ratcliffe 1999).

Furthermore, the ongoing incremental changes within each authority have contributed to case studies that make like-for-like comparisons unnecessary in terms of the impact of C.C.T., Best Value or Trusts on each authority. These issues took on a separate level of significance for each local authority whereas how they managed their service, whatever framework they were part of, remained significant for this research. For example the first authority North City was in the throes of considering becoming a Best Value pilot authority whilst implementing C.C.T. The second authority West Town had a much clearer understanding of Best Value and its principles due to the wider awareness of its implications in professional circles. Further, by the time the snapshot of South City, the last authority, had occurred they had taken on board the principles of Best Value and were implementing them at the same time as developing the status of Trusts in the city. Trusts at this stage had started to become more popular in local government circles due to the savings made in the spending on resources within their core services (a principle of Best Value). Each authority's commitment to equal opportunities, the processes which they monitor and rationalise, that also include the policy systems, implementation

and outcomes of their work, were all therefore viewed through the same lens but in rapidly changing contexts. A metaphor which describes this process is that in each local authority there was a partial turning of a kaleidoscope where some ideas came into sharper focus whilst others became less visible.

**This had the effect on the research of demonstrating that although these are dynamic environments there are perennial problematics in need of regular maintenance as they present year-on-year challenges to each authority. Equal opportunities, ‘sport for all’, and social inclusion are discourses that are commonly used interchangeably in local authority sports provision (Sport England 1999, Coalter 2000). The instrumental social policy elements of sport and the taken for granted ‘goodness’ (Glyptis 1989) of its value to society has caused policymakers to strive to use sport as ‘the great equaliser’. A significant outcome of this ideology is that equity in provision across all social groups becomes, at least symbolically, a starting point and integral to local authority provision.**

### **Data Analysis Precepts**

In the analysis of these interview data it was found to be more fruitful to organise the data around processes, which were seen to have longevity beyond that of specific initiatives even though initiatives were often used to frame the analysis. This way the transferability or comparability of initiatives or policies was less problematic across authorities due to the inconsistencies in each context. Consequently dominant processes and themes were much more apparent across the authorities. Lipsky’s (1980, 1993) position that inconsistencies are inevitable in public policy implementation is useful here. He refers to the equivalent of an appreciative context that individual actors use as a device in their everyday settings. These devices allow them to manage the uncertainties and pressures so that in the end these routines effectively become the public policy. However, rather than accepting Lipsky’s premise uncritically this is an opportunity to consider issues and also to remind the reader of the blinkered fashion in which policy analysis has consistently ignored the presence of ‘race’ and taken a path that does not offer systematic explanations of behaviour using ‘race’ as a central

organising concept. On this topic Ben-Tovim (1992: 202) introduced the notion of ‘race’ policies as being neither good nor bad but,

Rather as resources whose outcomes depend on the mobilisation of forces for and against racial equality.

The reason for adopting such a view here is that it is not necessary to follow a specific equal opportunities policy or initiative that is particular to each authority. Although these policies symbolise a significant outward commitment to equality they ultimately distract the gaze of the policy analyst away from how local authorities operate on a daily basis. In effect the policy is an outcome of essential processes that shed a stronger light on the policy disposition of key actors in each authority. It also exemplifies local government sport as a racialised structured domain with its own tensions and power relations in which policies and practices, in regard to resourcing, employment, provision, and management, serve to reinforce or perhaps challenge racial inequalities (Pote-Hunt 1987, Blakemore and Drake 1996, Delgado and Stefancic 2000, Parekh 2000, Essed and Goldberg 2002). The work of Ben-Tovim et. al. (1986, 1992) is one of the clearest examples of this happening in local government. This focus on processes enhances a sensitivity and awareness to ideologies, attitudes, beliefs and values without the pretence of trying to establish the exact impact of one equality initiative. What we do get is a deeper understanding of the real world contexts of those who exercise significant influence upon the quality, coherence and consistency of race–equality in local government sport. A metaphor to illustrate the symbiosis of agency and structure that form these processes is operationalised by Clandinin and Connelly (1994:416), possibly borrowed from Young (1979), who describe how,

...scene or place is where the action occurs [local authorities] where characters are formed and live out their stories [councillors and senior officers] and where cultural and social context play constraining and enabling roles [institutional and individual ideologies, attitudes, opinions]. *My additions in brackets.*

The study critically considers the assumptions that underpin race-equality policies and practices in local government. Solomos and Jenkins (1989:6) and others (Young 1979, Young and Connelly 1981, Jewson and Mason 1986, Birrell 1989, Mason 1990,

Solomos and Back 1995, Parker 1998) wonder if institutional and organisational responses to 'race' and racism, discrimination and inequality are reflective of the power processes that cause these social circumstances. They go on to offer a rationale and further support for research like this when they say,

We can not decide.....whether or not equality of opportunity' is being achieved until the assumptions on which this concept is based are clarified and made public.

(Solomos and Jenkins 1989: 6)

**This study based upon a multi-site case study was structured to allow themes to emerge within, as well as across, each local authority. A brief methodological example might help to illustrate this from a study of four schools in the Midlands. Burgess et al. (1994) used a similar strategy to this one and as a result the aggregate case study generated a spread of data that sharpened the focus on their specific school issue. What united each school in the sample was their commitment to an aspect of policy but at the same time each individual school context and therefore approach to the issue was different. For Burgess et. al. a comparative element was ensured rather than a direct comparison across each site. This was still possible across the schools but specific differences were also significant within each case. In North City, West Town and South City the multi-site design meant that the concentration on the issue of equal opportunities gave an opportunity to see how each context affected the way this problematic concept and policy was interpreted and implemented. At the same time the value of themes were not promoted or relegated if more or less than two local authorities were similar in approach. Although this had the effect of reinforcing issues the author's emergent reflexivity and theoretical sensitivity, that Mason (1996: 5) and Marcus (1998: 314) argue is a crucial part of the analysis process, ensured that a pseudo-positivistic stance did not become a fallback position as single case issues were also seen as significant. At this stage it might be worth reinforcing the anti-positivist defence of the case study methodology earlier. Each authority is a case in its own right so what is important here is how each context affects the process and impact of working towards equal opportunities in local government sports.**

## **Ethnographies**

Many writers have considered the use of ethnographic accounts for research purposes in sociology (Thomas 1993, Carspecken 1996, Bains and Johal 1998, Mienczakowski 2000). These studies have ranged from ethnography to assist pedagogy, to writing that has informed the mainstream understanding of the Asian experience of football, and community arts. Thomas (1993) found it necessary to distinguish between critical and conventional ethnography to depict a more insightful theoretical mode (critical ethnography) from a thicker more descriptive mode (conventional ethnography). He goes on to add force to studies like this to go on and use ethnographic methods to,

...celebrate their normative and political position as a means  
of invoking social consciousness and political change.  
(Thomas 1993: 4)

Critical ethnographies enable a reworking of mainstream views on matters to do with 'race' as there is a move from thick description to critical interpretation. Conventional ethnographies and other research, which describe the dynamics of 'race' without further elaboration, may be unwittingly reinforcing the accepted narrow views of 'race' and related issues in a number of ways. One way is to reinforce stereotypes especially where behaviour occasionally conforms to them. Another way would be to reinforce prejudices and difference between black and white people. Again a pure description of the work of VBES could wrongly show them as being anti-white and prone to articulating problems solely to racism. This has sometimes been referred to in tabloid newspapers as 'playing the race card', this often reflects the politics of the accusers rather than the pressure group. The critical approach allows the views of the subjects to be identified and elaborated, therefore giving the work an emancipatory and collaborative approach 'on' and 'for' the subjects (Mason 1990).

There are many ontological perspectives of critical theory and research as outlined in chapter two that range from a critical ‘race’-centred approach to Thomas’ (1993: 33) general observations that,

Critical ethnography begins from the premise that the structure and content of culture make life unnecessarily more nasty, brutish, and short for some people.

Spradley (1980) feels that ethnography means learning about people. He asks the question ‘ethnography for what?’ In the case of this pressure group research there are a number of reasons. One consequence of doing such research is that the common sense views of the system that black people in sport may carry are being challenged at the same time as they are being reinforced. That is, as West (1989: 93) suggested ‘black people can not *not* know their own realities’. In the context of this research what could that mean....? It could mean that this group of people have seen how the system has treated black people and they themselves have their own theoretical perspectives on why the system reconstitutes itself (it’s not what you know...), they have views on why black people are under-represented in positions of influence in sport (it’s down to prejudice/racism) and they also have views on why they almost expect this inequitable treatment in sport (it’s the same whatever you do, employment...education....). So VBES under a critical lens could ultimately view the results of such an investigation as a confirmation of their experiences. Support for their position may afford them some leverage once accepted as verified evidence of inequity and disparity in the system. Where others have seen one dimension of ‘their world’ this research is able to fill a knowledge gap for those in more privileged positions, and illuminates the struggles and tensions that are uncovered as a result of this analysis.

Altheide and Johnson (1994) have attempted to be rigorous in the way they view the validity of ethnographic accounts. Ethnography can take various forms, foci, contexts, and as a result the process that the research has been through must be deliberated over before the findings can be seen as valid or acceptable to an academic community;

- 1) The relationship between what is observed and the wider context (e.g. organizational, cultural) in which it is observed,
- 2) The relationship between the researcher, the observed and the setting,
- 3) The perspective offered by the researchers or the observed,

- 4) The audience for the work,
- 5) Style of reporting e.g. descriptive, rhetorical to explain the interpretation.

One meaning of reflexivity is that the scientific observer is part and parcel of the setting, context and culture he or she is trying to understand and represent.  
(Altheide and Johnson 1994:486)

The process must be seen in its entirety and judged accordingly by the standards and rigour of any academic community. Altheide and Johnson as an incentive offered this ethnographic ethic to ethnographers, questioning the validity of research that relied so much on personal interpretation of social phenomena. It is recommended that this 'ethnographic ethic' be supplemented by a reflexive account of the researcher as part of the process. In addition the reflexive account needs to be more than an explanation of the closeness that he/she got to the focus group but a more structured overview of contexts, activities and key events, key members, timescales, hierarchies, views of members, and social rules. This they offer as a framework for ethnographers which rather than strait jacketing them is a pragmatic point of information and useful instruction, this will be developed later.

### **Positioning Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport-VBES: Policy Network Theory**

Policy network analysis alerts the researcher to the *informal contacts* between *organisations* which are often the means whereby bargains are struck and 'real' decisions made...  
[My emphasis].  
(John and Cole 1995: 305)

Wilson and Stoker (1991) stated that pressure groups that reinforced the values and culture of political systems tended to be seen as insider groups. These insiders were seen as influential and successful, whilst the less successful, less influential outsiders had aims that were counter to the dominant policy system/network. Clearly a consideration of 'race' and ethnicity, equality and inclusion using a backdrop of this insider/outsider debate would bring some of these discussions into a current, more socially relevant light. Pressure groups like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport are unusual in that they are unconventional, marginal, and likely to challenge the status quo where sports policy is concerned. Using interpretive network theory it is useful in this

case to see how well, through the eyes of an outsider, racial equality gets onto local authority agendas.

Rhodes (1997) uses a critique of the once dominant pluralist model of interest group relations in a bid to establish network theory as a sound proposition in the analysis of policy actors in public sector decision-making. Dunleavy and O’Leary (1990) earlier reinforced Rhodes’ notion that pluralists fundamentally reduce collective action to the level of individual choice. That is, if there is resistance to policy decisions or change, then it will come from interest groups and these expressed interests will be satisfied by the public sector. Of pluralists, Dunleavy and O’Leary point out the unrealistic position they find themselves in.

The possibility that individuals have interests which they have not expressed as preferences is ruled out of order.  
(Dunleavy and O’Leary 1990: 19)

The Parekh Report’s (2000) view of a pluralist society is a hopeful vision of the future, and one that Parekh (1998) views as an ideal model. He argues that if society is to be successful it needs to balance the ideals of liberalism and communitarianism. He is not so hopeful that there will be this synergy given the ‘legacy and current realities of racism – or more accurately racisms’ (Parekh 2000: 105). Dunleavy and O’Leary, like Smith (1995), reflect upon pluralism as an unrealistic perspective where pluralists suggest that no single group in society can dominate. This recognition of diversity is limiting in the analysis of ‘race’ and ethnicity, and ignoring this dimension would only prove to reinforce oppressive power relations in society. Further, this point does not consider that invariably those who have not expressed an interest in the way sport and local services are developed have been systematically disenfranchised. Thus one of the reasons why academics and professionals have noted with dismay the unequal distribution of resources in sport is precisely because there are differences amongst those who are advantaged in the way sport is resourced and those who are not.

John and Cole (1995) point out that due to the way local state decision-making has become more fragmented, the emergence of the practice of extended governance has caused them to use network theory at a local level to illustrate and explain the relationships between policy actors and the dynamic behind policy decisions. For John



and Cole networks involve a resource dependency between key decision-making actors in what is commonly seen as a horizontal relationship. The phenomena, in recent times, that have caused John and Cole to emphasise the prominence of governance and fragmentation, revolve around the contract culture in local government. C.C.T., Best Value and Trusts have been engendered via the new managerialist discourse initiated in the 1980s and continuing into the New Labour Agenda in the 2000s. The cumulative effect of such developments have symbolised the rolling back of state provision and the outsourcing of peripheral public sector activities (Clarke 1994). In addition New Labour's active citizenship agenda has reified the core-periphery split in public services, as local communities are encouraged into taking responsibility for their own needs rather than through more normative bureau-professional models of provision.

Marsh and Rhodes (1992) and Rhodes (1997) have developed and utilised the policy communities and issue networks concepts in a bid to augment the emerging discourse around policy networks and governance.

Policy network analysis develops the notion of insiders and outsiders by examining the mechanisms used for inclusion and exclusion and the impact they have on policy.  
(Smith 1993:3)

Marsh and Rhodes developed the idea of policy networks having adapted the policy networks continuum from an original typology offered by Rhodes (1981). Writers in this area have attempted to maintain a clear distinction between more established networks (policy communities) and less established networks (issue networks), (Marin and Mayntz 1991, Jordan and Schubert 1992, John and Cole 1995). Marsh and Rhodes however use the term policy network in an all-embracing manner to include both policy communities and issue networks. Simply, the end points on a policy network continuum are constituted by policy communities that represent networks with stability, limited actors, and restricted access, as opposed to an issue network that would represent an ideal of instability, multiple actors and relatively easy access. As with any dynamic situation, networks are likely to change their state as relationships, resource dependencies and proximities to influential positions and control shift over time. In establishing the validity and reliability of VBES as a critical outsider voice in this research, it is worth considering some of the issues raised by Marsh and Rhodes who

have clearly raised critical questions in their deliberations over the concepts. Principally they ask if the concepts are useful in enhancing an understanding of policy making? Do interpersonal links have an impact on institutional ones? and does the existence of a network affect policy outcomes?

Is the theory useful in enhancing an understanding of policy making? Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997) believe so as they build upon the idea of network models as windows on the world of policy relationships. As a result public policy making is seen as a network of actors (individuals, coalitions, organisations, pressure groups) often with different rationales and interests. Blom-Hansen (1997) also considers policy networks as a very useful analytical concept. Networks are seen by him to be evolved institutional responses to complex social problems. These responses involve a high degree of coordination due to the multiplicity of actors involved. Policy network analysis then, contributes a less rigid view of policy systems and what might seem to be institutional arrangements than earlier ones like pluralism or corporatism. Here the key links and relationships beyond set decision making systems are emphasised in what some might see as a more realistic reflection on the way 'things happen' in sport. The use of network analysis in investigations enables researchers to recognise that even on a sub-national, regional level there are a myriad of actors who may influence the nature of racial equality in sport. At the same time it can be used as a simple heuristic, theory-building tool to illustrate the major dynamics of organising racial equality in sport from an outsider's perspective.

It is worth considering Marsh and Rhodes' second two questions at the same time here. The link between the individual and the organisation, or institution will be emphasised in this section (Blom-Hansen 1997). Do interpersonal links have an impact on institutional ones? and, does the existence of a network affect policy outcomes? Marsh and Rhodes (1992) suggest in particular that the more established policy communities are likely to have a degree of control and influence over policy direction. They also emphasise the ability of policy networks to resist change and/or to ensure continuity of position or discourse on certain issues. Marsh and Rhodes (1992: 264) continue to suggest that due to the presence of policy networks the pattern of policy making is essentially elitist. This may go some way to explaining Schaap and van Twist's (1997) view that closedness in networks is an essential characteristic for them to be able to

operate effectively. This closedness has been seen to operate as a result of either individuals excluding others, seen by Schaap and van Twist as closure **Within** networks, similarly, exclusion can be seen to operate as a result of the way the network operates, seen as exclusion **Of** the network.

Two specific types of closedness can be identified using Schaap and van Twist's concept of closedness. Cognitive closedness is often associated with actors' inability to comprehend the task at hand in working towards equality in sport. Cause was attributed by Schaap and van Twist as an inability to perceive (indirect) and an unwillingness to perceive (direct), which can equate to unintended and intended outcomes. Sports policy networks have been seen to operate with a noticeable inability to include others from an ethnically diverse background, thus reinforcing the marginalisation and power differentials black people face in other social arenas. This has become particularly emphasised by the emerging literature on 'race' and sport (Lyons 1991, Verma and Darby 1994, Long et al. 2000, Carrington and McDonald 2001). Marsh (1998) raises a point about exclusion and inclusion in policy networks and in the interest group literature that is rarely considered, when he argues that many interest groups are excluded from networks and,

In my view, the membership of policy networks usually reflects the pattern of structured inequality in society and the activities of the networks reflects the interests of that membership.  
(Marsh 1998:189)

### **Policy Networks; A New Institutional Perspective**

Blom-Hansen argues that he would struggle to understand crucial aspects of policy continuities and changes without a policy network framework. Indeed without it the framing of a policy network process would be more likely to be normative than descriptive or critical. Marsh and Rhodes clearly raise important questions as they underpin an alternative view of policy processes that considers the primacy of the agents within the network rather than relegating their effect to that of the power of the neutral 'objective' process. Recognising that actors within the decision-making process

occupy relative positions of advantage becomes more reflective of the policy process than the more traditional pluralistic views of the policy process. The notion of policy networks as a contested space within the sports policy making process was briefly emphasised by Houlihan (1987) whose illustrative attempts at encapsulating a policy response to hooliganism emphasised the differential positioning of agents within sports policy networks. However, Blom-Hansen went further to recommend the use of a ‘new institutional’ perspective to supplement the policy network framework to allow policy network theorists to move beyond, what he argues, are their difficulties in moving beyond describing and being more critical of policy changes. Blom-Hansen viewed networks as institutions due to the way informal rules govern them, and as a result was able to offer a framework in which these rules and deviations from them could be explained. He offered Table 2 ‘policy networks as institutions’ to illustrate this point. Adapting a framework by Ostrom (1986) Blom-Hansen was able to outline how policy networks operated through a set of informal rules at the same time as considering how actors within this ‘action arena’ strategically adapted to the rules of the game. These rules Van Waarden (1992) posited are constituted by factors such as attitudes, interests, social and intellectual backgrounds of actors and help to regulate the process of exchange that Rhodes (1981) was describing in his earlier work.

On this basis, it is possible to start the interesting question of how the situation works to produce outcomes.  
(Blom-Hansen 1997: 677)

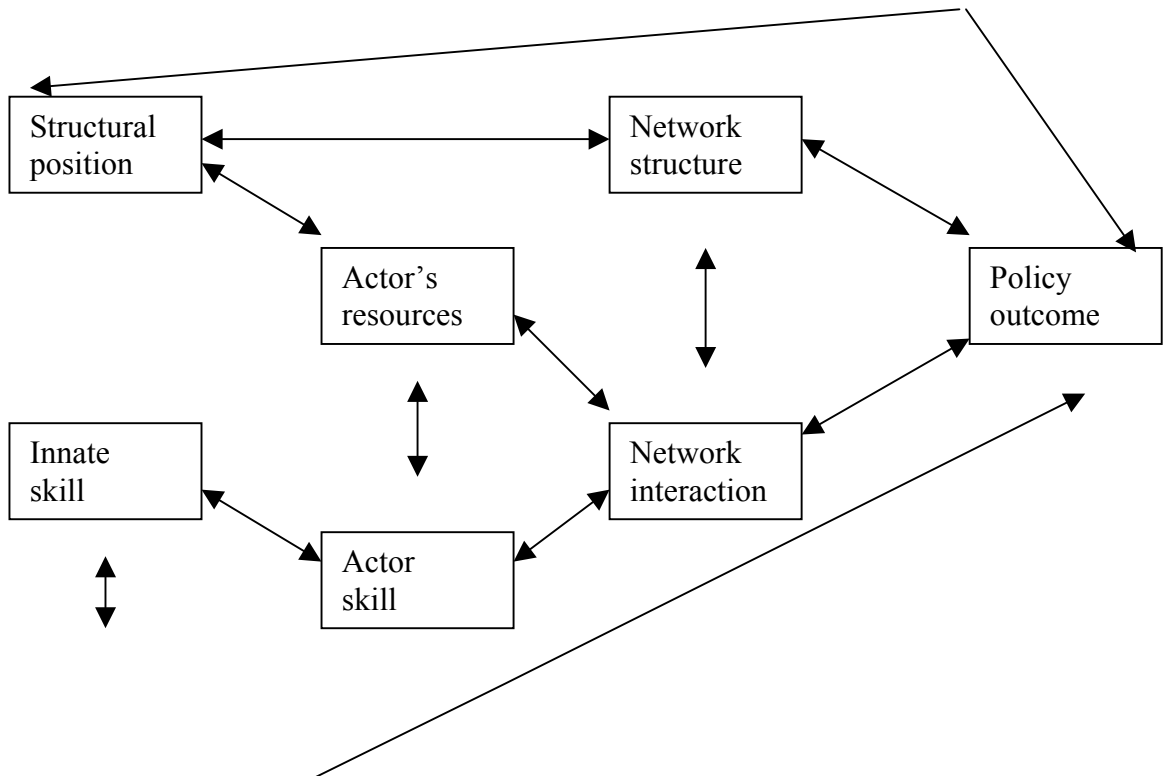
Table 2: Policy Networks As Institutions		
	<b>Policy Communities</b>	<b>Issue Networks</b>
<b>Position Rule</b>	Members	Affected interests
Boundary Rule	Mutual Recognition	Free entry / exit
Scope Rule	Policy	Policy
Authority Rule	Co-operation	Intrusion
Aggregate Rule	Unanimity	Unilateral decisions by dominant actors
Information Rule	Exchange of expertise and judgements	Expressions of opinion
Pay off Rule	Influence	Being heard

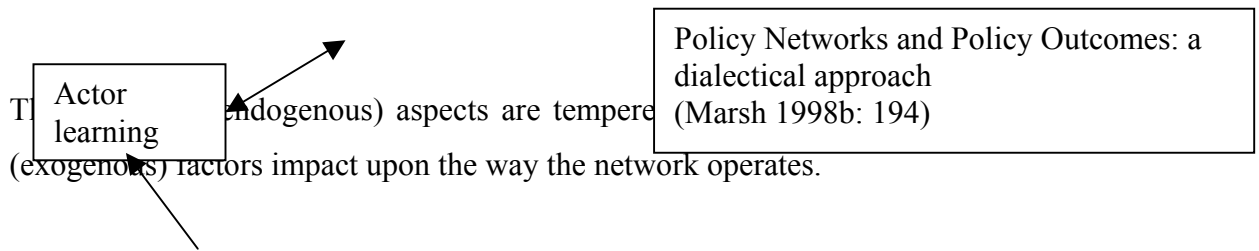
What was important to Blom-Hansen was that although policy network theory is useful in describing policy processes it needs to be reinforced with an analysis of the

underlying rules of networks at the same time as analysing the strategies operated by what he terms ‘composite individuals’. He uses this term to describe those actors who, as representatives of organisations, can act to bind others strategically into the requirements of their organisation. So they operate as an individual at the same time as being bound up as a representative of an agency/institution. Blom-Hansen argues for ‘policy network theory with a micro-foundation anchored at the composite level’. With this in mind he strongly urges analysts to use policy network theory to criticise and explain how policy outcomes are produced.

Like Hay (1998), Blom-Hansen (1997) wishes to pursue a critical theoretical stance on policy networks that recognises actors, strategies, agendas, the practice and process of networking such as the nature of network transformation, depletions, open and closedness. However, Marsh (1998b) considers a dialectical model of policy network analysis that does this by incorporating knowledge of the internal and external influence on networks in a dynamic model that incorporates the impact that actors, the structures and policy outcomes have upon the way the network develops and transforms itself. It is only at this stage that Marsh clearly recognises that actors’ membership of a group or network are affected by their structural position in society that,

While membership of a policy network may give them structural privilege, other structural positions, for example based upon class, gender or ethnicity, may be both more important generally and reflected in policy network membership.  
(Marsh 1998b: 195)





### Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS)

The use of QSR.NUDIST, was useful in assisting theory building at each stage of the research process. Lee and Fielding (1996) and Kelle (1997:7) have remarked on how the new qualitative data information management software has helped this part of the research process. Others are wary of the potential of CAQDAS to the researcher's ability to organise his/her thoughts freely. Coffey et al. (1996:5) for example warn of an orthodoxy or similarity of approach developing in qualitative research partially as a result of CAQDAS. They adopt this position after concluding that researchers may rely upon the coding of data and the computers functions rather than keeping confidence with their own hunches and intuitive interpretation. In a way they are arguing against the linearity of the software and more for the tangential and more lateral links that a researcher's mind could make. In contrast Buston's (1997) use of NUDIST in a study on young people enabled a clearer and more efficient identification and retrieval of data. Buston was also complimentary about the way it allowed the development of theoretical patterns during and after the collection of data. So in this research it became important to generate searches connected with the 'contract culture' in local government that moved from the discourse of C.C.T. to Best Value and Trusts (see Appendix 4). Had the interviews been conducted more recently concepts like social exclusion, community development and neighbourhood renewal might have taken a more prominent position in local government discourse(s).

The major misunderstanding about computer assisted qualitative data analysis software is that they generate theory when in fact what they really do, as Richards and Richards (1994, Lee and Fielding (1996), and Kelle (1997) are attempting to establish, is that they manage the data that the researcher inputs. The textual data are coded according to the categories that the researcher decides, which is different in many ways to misconceptions that the computer does the work for the researcher. Researchers

generate theory and need a methodological underpinning for the collation and analysis to take shape and make sense (Kelle 1997). CAQDAS can help to manage this process in slightly more sophisticated ways than more traditional manual methods. Coffey et. al. (1996) are realistic about the possibilities for CAQDAS as they concede that the advantages that NUDIST and other CAQDAS add to research over more manual techniques is that they add a level of rigour into the management of the data. They go on to say,

The computer [software] does not search the data file until it comes up with the first example that will 'do'...nor will it stop after it has found one.....it can cope with multiple and overlapping codes.....it can conduct multiple searches.  
(Coffey et. al. 1996: 5)

Richards and Richards (1994), developers of NUDIST, went a step further in highlighting that any CAQDAS needs to support 'insight and discovery'. Without this basic facility a researcher will need to conduct the analysis in a more traditional way. The notion of CAQDAS knitting theory emergence into a fabric of theory construction might be deemed more realistic in the data coding and analysis process. Where the textual management and the researchers conceptual linkages make up the main processes of qualitative data analysis it offers a clear rationale for the success of programmes like NUDIST.

At each stage the researcher uses expectations, prior theories, hunches, experience, and a good education.  
(Richards and Richards 1994)

NUDIST was helpful in organising themes and experimental searches. These themes/categories were ratified as more data came in and the same searches revealed similar significant passages of text. Each theme that was developed incorporated the statements taken from the officers and the councillors. As each respondent constitutes part of the 'joint elite' most of the statements could have stood alone as significant and substantive. However in the next chapter each narrative account chosen was used to reinforce a general theme that came through in one of four ways. These were:-

Intra-group - same authority (e.g. across councillors)

Inter-group - same authority (e.g. across councillors and senior officers)

Intra-group [External]- across authorities (e.g. across officer groups)

Inter-group [External]- across authorities (e.g. across councillor and senior officer groups)

The three case studies generated data across the different sub groups amongst the dominant elite in each authority, as outlined above. The case studies generated data patterns between the subgroups within each local authority, which also acted as a verifying factor. Themes, which came through strongly, were developed as they were reiterated or challenged by peers. They were then compared with views that came through from other authorities. As a result the findings across the authorities became less the result of local idiosyncrasies and more the systematic outcomes of local authority behaviour.

The three authorities having been through the same research process acted as useful comparative foci in clarifying issues and phenomena. An essential point to illustrate this case would be in getting an overview of the 'policy-frames' and disposition of elected members across geographical, and organisational culture boundaries. I would support Dower et. al. (1981) when they suggested that the processes and issues which come out of studies involving this type of case work as being far more persuasive than those which concentrate on simple trends and patterns. One of the advantages of this strategy of investigation is the development of converging lines of enquiry through a process of data triangulation so any reasonable conclusion was more convincing and accurate (Denzin 1989).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Fetterman's (1989) consideration of ethnographers as advocates is worthy of some attention at this point. The idea that ethnographers can or even should be advocates for their research comes out of the ongoing debate between those who support critical ethnography and those who may support other more traditional, less political '*objective*' research methodologies. As an advocate ethnographer the aim is to further the cause of those under the investigative lens at the same time as recognising the political capital



that is being acquired as the research develops over time. Fetterman aligns this aspect of a research programme closely with the ontological starting point of the researcher. In effect he suggests that research of this nature is *not 'just research'* it becomes a stage of the life of the researcher and as a result there is an investment in the work which is professional, political and personal.

Advocate ethnographers allow participants to define their reality, consider their view about the ideal solution to their problems, and then take an active role in making social change happen. These ethnographers serve as advocates for the group. They write in public forums to change public opinion, embarrass power brokers, and provide relevant information about a situation at opportune moments in the policy decision-making forum.

(Fetterman 1989: 126)

Similarly, Dockery's (2000) view of conventional approaches to research supports the argument that the notion of absolute truths, neutrality and objectivity leads to discriminatory, and exclusionary practices. Participatory approaches like these foster empowerment and a challenge to those in positions of power in society. For example, the local government equity standards that were adopted across Northshire by policy makers in the county represent one example of how the work that I did as an active member of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport and the work that I did as a member of the black sports policy network also linked in with my professional role as consultant with the University. The 'Fair Sporting Chance standards enabled Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to put local authorities under some pressure to provide evidence of their plans and actions to date and then to give VBES and other interested parties a mandate to challenge them over another three years. At the same time as writing the plans for the document, I was able to log the dynamics in the field in relation to this one document to see how local authorities were able to incorporate this work into their plans. Indeed I was also conscious that this was an opportunity to gauge the levels of resistance across the local authorities where it was apparent that the plans were not as quick to take shape. This was only one example, as the lottery road shows, regional advisory meetings, publications in academic and professional journals were all regular opportunities to engage in advocate ethnographic research where action, and reflexion, were key aspects of this stage of the research.

Dockery is not afraid to say that he feels it is necessary to 'take sides' where power and status is stacked against those groups that have been marginalised but could gain some advantage from his research process. His aim to reduce practices that exacerbate inequality are in step with the ontological perspective taken by critical black researcher. The challenge to local authorities, national governing organisations and voluntary agencies exerts a resistive pressure upon them from new and emergent communities, which forces them to reconsider policies and practices at different levels, and to varying degrees. Though Dockery's focus was radical participatory research he did make the point that the level of participation in the research process by the focus community varied from tokenism on one level to his own. It was evident from some of the activities of this research presented in the following chapters that various processes could be plotted on this continuum.

The dangers of conducting an emancipatory agenda however must be considered. Just because there is emancipatory intent does not mean that this will be the final result of rigorous research. As Humphries (2000) states we need to be constantly reflective upon our own interpretation of, and actions in, events in case as researchers we become more central to the cause than the alienated or marginalised groups the research is supposed to work with. This may result in reinforcing their marginality by perpetuating their distance from positions where they can instigate change on their own terms.

## **SUMMARY**

The chapter argues strongly that the tools of this study enable a demystification of equal opportunities in local government as it builds upon the ontological and epistemological premises of chapter two. The opportunity to gather data to reveal the opinions, attitudes and ideologies of the key actors within a local authority context is one taken only by a limited number of critical policy analysts (Stone 1988, Saggar 1992, Young 1992, Henry 1993, Yule 1995). Each writer has revealed the nature of dominant discourses and ideologies on the development and implementation of policy in local government although even here 'race' and equality have been a marginal focus. The methodology enables a critical interpretation of processes and trends that aggregate into the assumptive worlds, this makes possible a reading of policy developments that

traditionally would tax the resources of more positivistic policy scientists (Torgerson 1986, White and Adams 1994, Chalip 1995). Given the bureaucratic nature of local authorities, the case studies are useful examples of how competing views can occur regarding the values and strategies necessary for the successful implementation of equal opportunities policies.

It must be restated that the research draws upon a critical 'race' paradigm that encourages writers and researchers to challenge normative traditions in academia. Here views from the system can be tested by others outside of these institutions through ethnographic research as the outcomes of policy and practice are lived and experienced by target communities (Ben Tovim 1986, 1992, Thomas 1993). Seeing the impact of cumulative policies and practices through the eyes of those who, as a result of continual racism in various forms, have had to develop their sporting opportunities in an ad hoc way is a revelation in sport and leisure research. Further, the familiar normative account emanating from mainstream practitioners and policymakers has been given a less familiar treatment. Views from the ethnography challenge normative accounts of what is happening and what is important. The pressure group enables the case study data to move beyond the rhetorical turn of equal opportunities in sport to give an alternative discourse (Allison 1988, Goldberg 1993, Matsuda 1995). In addition these experiences act as a barometer of the success or otherwise of equality work pertaining to sport in Northshire that are difficult to ignore

Those involved in decision-making in local government sport should find this process useful, if not liberating, as it challenges worldviews in terms of our understanding of key policy processes. The consequent benefit of this process for policy-makers and analysts is that the study of policy is being viewed from a fresh if not marginalised lens. This lens is also concentrated upon race-(in)equality, rather than normative evaluations of equity. This has the effect of considering 'race' where in the past more mainstream topics might have been the safer option.

## **CHAPTER 5: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPORT; ASSUMPTIVE WORLDS**

*Why conduct a study into 'race', sport and equal opportunities?* As this study progressed it became clear that what we actually need is a clearer articulation of how theory relates to practice in local government sport when we talk about race-equality. This study allows room for an unpacking of policy, practice and rhetoric, which in itself is a complex undertaking. Social institutions are often the site of multiple perspectives and it is no different in this study. Young (1992) suggests that opposing viewpoints can circulate in local government about the importance of equality practice, in this chapter processes are revealed that emphasise the point. This chapter also illustrates how at the same time that there is consensus from the same actors on its significance there are also competing views on how to interpret and implement policy. Ratcliffe (1999: 152) urges social scientists to use concepts that clarify rather than obscure their object of study. This study engages with Ratcliffe's discourse of clarity to lay bare the contested and confusing nature of equality in local government sport. The chapter charts how the appreciative contexts and the assumptive worlds within and across local authorities diverge and converge around equal opportunities. The inclusive and exclusionary processes that structure social relations are highlighted, especially where 'race' and equality are in focus. The place of power and the discourse around equal opportunities and sport are themes that emerge here and establish themselves as core concerns in the development of equal opportunities in the three authorities.

This chapter presents an examination of equal opportunities in local government sport as it emerges from the accounts of those actors closest to it. The data gathered in the form of connected stories of personal experiences in the workplace are organised in such a fashion as to allow the key themes to emerge as part of the process. Narratives are used to illustrate key issues from the appreciative context of individual actors and each of these accounts are interpreted and attributed meaning through the lens of the researcher. As a result of policy studies' marginalisation of 'race' and related social issues this study illustrates the significance of the often-overlooked aspect of 'why things are not done' in addition to 'why things are done' in local government sport (Marinetto 1999: 3). The opinions, attitudes and ideologies that underpin the appreciative context of those inside local authorities allows this study to get close to the

reasons behind why equality in local government sport is dynamic, unpredictable and reliant upon more than just having a statement or a policy on equal opportunities (see Ball and Solomos 1990, Solomos and Back 1995, Bagilhole 1997, and more recently Clarke and Speeden 2000).

As a result the study opens a window on those conditions that underpin the dominant processes that constitute the nature of equality in local government sport. For this reason it is worth reiterating how the appreciative context of the joint elites' manifested themselves during the course of the research. Each interviewee in responding to discussion questions was looking inward, outward, backward, and forward in a bid to articulate an understanding of their appreciative context (Clandinin and Connelly 1994); They looked inward at themselves as they considered what their individual responses were to their outer environment. The researcher heard their stories as the councillors and senior officers looked backwards at the past and forwards at the future. This visual metaphor is useful when making sense of the narrative selected in this chapter. Serious consideration is given here to ideas articulated by authors such as Giddens (1995) and Cassells (1993) that emphasise the duality of agency and structure, and Young (1977, 1979) the inextricable link between the individual and his/her assumptive world. However the relevance of this material comes from sensitivity to data that contributes an insightful commentary on the context of actors in institutions talking about their everyday world. The coherence of this material comes from being sensitive to the significance of these data and how reflections upon the past, present, future and self are simultaneously significant in demystifying equal opportunities in local government sport.

### **Observations on Getting Inside: 'Commonsense' Assumptions**

The three authorities have very different backgrounds, contexts and histories. Their positions on equal opportunities are conspicuous and adhere to what is viewed as good practice by the CRE (1995) in publicising their intentions. I found that when going into each authority there was an acceptance, confirmed in the initial contact, that the researcher had chosen each one because there was something special/positive about the way they had managed equal opportunity or race-equality. No-one from any of the authorities suggested in the interviews that perhaps the researcher was there because

they were unsuccessful where it came to their performance in equal opportunities in sport. Rather, in each case the introductory letter sent to each interviewee was never questioned from the point of view of inaccuracies or uninformed assumptions (see Appendix 1). This in itself gave an indication of imbalances in the theory and practice of what they did, or the discursive and practical consciousness of the actors consulted (Cassells, 1993, Giddens 1976, 1995, Layder 1994). The matter-of-fact way in which my access was negotiated and accepted caused me to reflect upon the assumed (mis)understandings of the concept 'equal opportunities'. This resulted in actors with competing philosophies mistakenly agreeing that they were talking about the same thing, therefore perpetuating its ambiguity as they implement their own versions of the corporate policy (Gibbon 1992, Young 1989, 1990, 1992, Clarke and Speeden 2000).

How do their actions reflect their explanations? Layder (1994) refers to practical consciousness as the skills and knowledge officers and councillors employ to ensure that their everyday behaviour automatically reproduces acceptable ways of acting. That is, as an actor's appreciative context forms around their understanding of their assumptive world. This 'knowledge' does not necessarily find a voice, as actors cannot sometimes articulate what they *'just do'*. Hence when these actors come to rationally articulate what they do, they often find themselves less critical of their own and their institution's behaviour. Repetitive actions in effect give a much clearer indication of the values, beliefs and in particular ideologies, of the joint elite in each local authority. The recursivity of their actions then facilitates the reproduction of their local authority's practices. Although the actors may engage in the reflexive monitoring that Giddens (1995) suggests, it does not follow that this results in a critical reflexivity necessary to rationalise the actions of each institution in regards to equal opportunities. Where processes are part of the mundane everyday reality of actors they can often be overlooked due to the embedded nature of institutional practices. It could be argued that this lack of discursive reflexivity is a result of the public awareness of each authorities commitment to equal opportunities and therefore their acceptance of a simplified, fair, symbolic world that they are prepared to believe is working and are willing to loyally defend (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Goffman 1990, Mason 1990 Young 1992). In identifying this as the gap between gestural and real politics Solomos and Back (1995) also wandered onto one of the inconsistencies in the implementation of race-equality in sport.

## What is 'Equal Opportunities'? Policymakers and Officers Talking

At this stage it is useful to offer an insight into some of the conceptual and ideological assumptions that are held by these influential actors. The practitioners and policymakers in the case study authorities exemplified the differing interpretations of equal opportunities when they were asked to deliberate upon the subject. Their views on equal opportunities focused upon:-

1) Employment Recruitment and Training

*but equal opps. is not simply about sports participation.... It's about training, training staff, about recruiting staff, and our clients will monitor unit performance and collective performance and will have to report back to the appropriate committee.*

(Senior Officer - Area Manager, West Town);

2) Moral and Ethical Positions...

*for equal opportunities, in every respect whether it be age, or youth or colour or whatever, It's an act like breathing, if you don't believe in it then you're a bastard in my view.*

(Chair of Cultural Services Committee, North City);

3) Political Positions

*I mean, my preference is for integration, integrated provision, but that's an aim to be worked for, it can't be achieved overnight.*

(Deputy Chair - Leisure Directorate/Chair - Parks and Open Spaces, South City);

4) Universalist Positions

*So again, it's not a straightforward answer but the application of an umbrella policy is an understanding of what the authority is determined it would like to do, and then in the most practical and pragmatic and responsive way, try to meet those ideals.*

(Director of Leisure, West Town)

5) Reflective Positions

*So there is a fairly formal structure that says, equal opportunities for example can set a city wide policy, but it can't necessarily tell Recreation Services what it must do.*

(Principal Sports Development Officer, North City)

However, when asked what equal opportunities meant to the authority or to themselves there was clear consensus that each authority was committed to equal opportunities. Comments on the commitment from each authority are represented by the following officers,

*one clear political message that I received when I started here, was about delivering equal opportunity for all*

(Chief Sports Officer, North City),

*and we had a strategy which is geared to the Council's corporate priorities just to repeat them, but quality and equality are one of the seven threads of our leisure and recreation strategy, which can be applied to any of the activities that we run*

(Director of Leisure Services, West Town).

Councillors were also unanimous in their acceptance of equal opportunities,

*Well, yes for all the reasons I've said because the whole of the Council has accepted Equal Opps*

(Chair of Cultural and Leisure Services and Chair of the Equality Advisory Committee, West Town),

The Chair of Cultural and Leisure Services in South City stated authoritatively that,

*most officers understand that [equal opportunities] as being one of the core principles that they'll need to satisfy the Council about in the delivery of service*

This was clearly replicated across the other local authorities who accepted the general concept and purpose of equal opportunities. Here is the symbolic corporate commitment to equal opportunities and all that that entails for the diverse body of policy actors in each authority. Clarke and Speeden's (2000) work for the CRE reaffirmed the spectre of complacency and ambiguity where there was reported an assumed understanding and



consensus in local authorities. Similarly, these narratives illustrated the confidence that officers and politicians had in their authorities' having a clear policy direction when it came to equal opportunities. These tensions are demystified and experienced over the course of this chapter, however Young's (1989: 93) earlier work framed these issues competently as he attempted to signal the errors concerning equality that were being replicated across large organisations. He argued that the,

Success of equal opportunity policies depends on them achieving greater clarity, explicitness and coherence in policy arguments than has so far been seen in local authorities.

### **Background to Local Authority Commitments**

In North City the Equal Opportunities Unit (1992) stated that the Council is committed to ensuring that all of its citizens have equal rights to full participation in the life of the city. It goes on to argue that equality matters cannot be left out of the equation, which includes value for money, efficiency and quality. The leader of the Council welcomes his authority's stance on working towards quality with equality in the provision of facilities and services for the local populace. One of the main reasons for this focus is due to North City's black population of 6%. North City is also conscious of its Vision statement, which states that 'black people are disadvantaged in the local labour market'. The Council is also keen to try to give its citizens good quality and accessible services. One of the major considerations in the Council's 'Vision' (1999/2000) report was entitled 'Access to Opportunities'. The Council argued in the document that 'there would be equal access to all [these] opportunities, irrespective of race, religion, gender or disability. There will be social and cultural cohesion, and minimal exclusion. Diversity will be valued, and there will be a low level of toleration for social division or discrimination' (North City Council 1998: 6).

In a similar vein West Town and South City follow suit, for example in addition to its significant black community West Town was chosen because it had a very prominent pro-equality stance to its provision. This commitment came through clearly in its 'Vision' document, which sets out the main aims of the authority in the medium to long

term. It can be seen that there is a desire that comes from the top of the organisation to provide a quality all-round service for the whole of the community. The Chief Executive in 'Our Vision for West Town' (1994) reminded the people of West Town that the Council 'remain committed throughout our services, to the core values of quality and equality'. South City also talks of 'core values' which have become part of the public sector discourse in recent times and there are examples within the Council where equal opportunities is acknowledged as being part of the Council's work (South City Revenue Budget Report 1998/99).

Each authority and its agents have to operate within a regulatory framework of policies and practices that constitute them as organisations. Each of the joint elite has then to make sense of the direct and indirect pressures upon them to act accordingly. These are the pressures that the reflective actors spoke of that shape their assumptive worlds. They themselves on a daily basis organise their disaggregated assumptive world according to that cluster of images, beliefs, judgements and values that make up individual appreciative contexts (Young 1977, 1979, 1989, 1992). In effect what is presented in this analysis is the problematic of policy intention and implementation that policy analysts have discussed at some length (Young 1989, Ham and Hill 1993, Elcock 1994, Bagilhole 1997).

### **Officers and Councillors Talk About Influence**

Each authority was identified as having a dominant influential group who are quite homogenous in their constitution. Both councillors and senior officers have been part of the local public sector for approximately fifteen years. There was one senior black respondent who is a black female councillor, but significantly the rest of the respondents were white and predominantly male across the three authorities. Within each authority a hegemony of white domination exists that does not reflect the equal opportunities philosophy of each respondent's authority. Neither are they representative of any of the authorities' black population. Clarke and Speeden (2000) came to similar conclusions and are also concerned that the dearth of senior black staff in local authorities is likely to lead to a de-racialisation or marginalisation of 'race' issues in local government. In their view, concerns about 'race' are rarely discussed as part of the

policy implementation process. What is also reflected is the status of black administrators and managers in sport and leisure management (Pote-Hunt 1987, Lyons 1991, Hylton 2001). Further, it is a crude indicator of two other points: - 1) the power that whiteness privileges specific groups due to the recursive nature of this process. 2) the racial constituency of the hegemonic group that drives equality work in each authority. There were no black senior officers in any of the three local authorities. Their exclusion was a constant source of irritation for many of the respondents because since the Race Relations Act (1976) one of the most popular ways that the public sector and their critics have identified successes in equality terms has been through their recruitment and employment indicators (O'Donnell 1991, Blakemore and Drake 1996, Skellington 1996) <sup>v</sup>.

Elcock (1994) points toward the lack of agreement in policy studies in terms of whether councillors or senior officers are the most influential. Henry (1987, 1993) and Yule's (1995) empirical work paint a more pragmatic picture of 'politicians' found amongst the senior officer ranks as well as among the councillors. It emerged in each authority that there were divergent ideas about who makes policy as the appreciative context of many of these actors saw themselves in some cases with more power and influence than would be expected in a textbook model of rational decision making (Hill 1993, Parsons 1995). However, how they appreciate their own context comes from how they experience their assumptive world and see their own place within it. Each assumptive world embraced the appearance of a white domain. Thus my consideration of who influenced sport policy and practice most effectively between officers and councillors would have been incomplete without asserting that, whatever conclusion I came to, 'race' would be a key factor. It was so striking and yet so 'normal' that I had to keep reminding myself that these observations needed to be articulated and not left undocumented (see Frankenberg 1993, Delgado and Stefancic 1997). The need to further discuss this everyday manifestation of whiteness was the focus of a research paper that was one of the outcomes of research in the Centre for Leisure and Sport Research LMU that had remained untheorised (Long and Hylton 2002).

The view that elected council members decide policy is a formally accepted one in most authorities. Nevertheless, professionals in North City show in their day-to-day dealings that skilled operators can achieve their objectives through understanding people and

systems. These professionals are paid officers whose role involves planning and implementing simultaneously and presenting elected members with the information to make decisions. Therefore it might be a surprise for some councillors, if not for others, to hear a Principal Sports Officer in North City suggest that,

*.....it might be a bit cynical, but it might be realistic to say that a lot of politicians have no idea of what sort of policy they would like to see in place and they rely on senior managers to provide a focus for the development of policy.*

There was no consensus from senior officers and elected members across the three authorities on the way the policy implementation process worked especially as individuals mediate it with their own views on the process, and on how they see others engage with it. In addition, to suggest that the complexities of the policy implementation process could be reduced to one perspective would be false and limiting. Suffice to say that the views observed in the authorities ranged from the theoretical to the prescriptive. However, the clustering of descriptive accounts gives a clearer understanding of what happens on a day-to-day basis, allowing an intellectual colouring of the real context to develop. Interrogating local government elites involves an analysis of the individual opinions, attitudes and ideologies of each major actor just as processes, actions and outcomes piece together a complex picture of them. The social relational processes that cause one actor's view to be modified by others offers an insight into the parameters in which people operate. Decisions are made and actions are taken within these institutional constraints. Knowledge too is constructed and perpetuated by those who have the power to do so and ensure that discourses are central or peripheral, accepted or negated, 'raced' or otherwise.

### **The Pragmatics of Policy Implementation in North City**

Policy in North City (see Appendix 5), as with other authorities, is the remit of a limited few actors. In North City the distinction between who advises on policy and who makes policy is not always clear across councillors when they consider the key actors in the policy making process. The Chair of the Recreation Services committee illustrates the

differences between the Widdicombe (1986) recommendations and what actually happens in this authority when he argued that,

*A lot of our policy you know comes from officers, as it should do, because they're paid people and they should be making suggestions all of the time.*

In this case it seems as though the control of the politicians has been compromised in such a way that a major part of their role has been conceded to professionals within the organisation. This point is reinforced by another councillor who suggested that,

*The theory says it's the politicians who have the ideas of policy and the officers are administrators who put that policy into place the truth is it's much more of a mixture.*  
(Chair of Cultural Services)

It seems as though in this case the officers set the major items for the policy agenda and pragmatic politicians reinforce it. Senior officer views echo this point strongly in terms of how much power they have over the policy making process. Policy in North City was developed through the committee structure, so sports development is part of the sport division and the sport division is one element within leisure services, and leisure services sits within three strands of the City Council Development Services. So, according to the Principal Sports Development Officer,

*...Policy is formulated within that environment [structure above]. Policy tends to be developed by officers within that construction and then communicated and modified and agreed by politicians, within the political structure, which follows our recreation services. So strategy comes from there.*

### **The Pragmatics of Policy Implementation in West Town**

There was however, less ambiguity in considering who made policy in West Town. Whereas in some authorities there are debates about who the dominant group are in the authority, in West Town those discussions were not as pronounced. Amongst the councillors and senior officers who make up the joint elite in West Town, the councillors were seen as the people who make policy. The Head of Leisure Services in

reinforcing this point wholeheartedly supported the Chair of the Leisure Services Committee,

*... The officers as I say, can generate items for business, I meet with the officers fortnightly before the agenda goes round and we look at the agenda and knock it about and decide what goes on the agenda, the Chair can bring things forward at policy board, so they can come from all sorts of directions.*  
(Chair of Leisure Services)

*...But officers themselves actually don't make policy, but they do help to push it along.*  
(Head of Leisure Services)

The interviewees in West Town were generally clear about the structure of the authority, who contributes to policy and who made policy. There was a strong feeling of a purposeful policy-led organisation, which had goals concentrating on the authority's vision. Examples of this clarity and purpose in which the hierarchy in West Town is defined was shown by the Principal Equal Opportunities Officer and the Lead Sports Development Officer who offered a description of policymaking in West Town sport,

*Now the way that we operate as a council... We have an executive board which is almost like executive directors in charge of a number of services in an area, and the whole idea behind that is that they drive through the policies, so they are not managing on a day-to-day basis, like leisure services or education or whatever, they are very much more a corporate thing.*

Similarly the Lead SDO commented,

*And then we have a thing called the policy board, which isn't a formal committee of the council, but its all the senior Labour politicians ... they're sort of like the opposite side of the Exec. Board, they are clearly looking in a broad direction at where we want to go on policy. So when it goes to council there's a very strong policy-led organisation in terms of opportunities and they have a policy manual and each of the services have to write its clear policies down and all that sort of thing.*

This could be viewed as a possible benefit of having a smaller institution than North City, or alternatively it could be seen as West Town having more focused policymakers.

The Principal Equal Opportunities Officer did however argue that these important and influential committees themselves exercised a certain degree of closure in terms of who manages to gain access to sit on them. Her point was that where individuals are less reflective of their own structuring processes and power there is always the possibility that one result of their actions is to reproduce inequality no matter how well meaning they seek to be. Although the outcomes of these actions could be viewed as unintentional they are still a part of the organisations everyday structuring processes. These outcomes could also be seen as intentional where an actor(s) is knowledgeable and is able to mobilise influence for these consequences not to happen (Giddens 1976).

The concerns and views of black people are less likely to be shared where the dominant views and voices are white and male. Difficulties arise as a result of these inequalities. The significance of organisations not reflexively monitoring such actions is amplified by Collier (1998: 23) who argues that,

If the culture of an organisation makes employees feel ignored, isolated, marginalised and undervalued, it will inevitably affect the service delivery to customers.

### **The Pragmatics of Policy Implementation in South City**

The culture of an organisation sets the boundaries within which discussions are framed and decisions taken. Collier's fear which is shared by others (Young 1992, Solomos and Back 1995), is that the knock-on effect of an institution that ignores diversity is that it is likely to find these values, beliefs and perceptions edging their way into the policy implementation process. The consequences affecting the organisations capacity to react to community needs and change (Ross and Schneider 1992). The Equalities Officer in West Town reinforced this by stating,

*The powerful ones [committees] still go to the white men, not the white women, because the white women get things like Early Years sub committee of the Social Service, community development, you know all these caring things that women get. So in amongst that there are issues of racism and sexism ... it's about power and who's got that power, and if people have got power they don't give it up. If you've got power, do you give it up - you find ways of*

*keeping that power, so the political structure ... mirrors the work as a structure... [.....] So the power structure is there, and that's why I think that it's [equal opportunities] going to be a slow..... [process].*

On this policy making level it is anticipated, indeed expected, for there to be institutional and personal differences due to politics. However, for this particular officer to be suggesting unfair work practices and forecasting a slow rate of change in West Town's equality work, a different outlook is placed on the narrative fabric of these discussions. In North City the discussion revolved around the internal culture of the institution and those closest to the networks of power. A logical conclusion to the statement above could be that West Town, with its bold claims for change and national recognition may not be as systematic, proactive and as forward thinking as it seems initially to be. When the detail of daily discussions with interviewees are investigated further a more complex picture of the institution is revealed which is a closer reflection of the organisation that has to act for the Council and make decisions for its community on a daily basis. This sentiment was also echoed in North City by the Ex-Principal Sports Officer, and in South City by the Disability Officer (promoted to Sports Equality Officer) that North City and South City were in a similar position where positions of influence in the authority are concerned. In North City the senior officer stated that,

*... Well it is still very very white middle class dominated in the whole of the local authority, I hesitate to say that its male middle class.....*

In South City after a similar question the Disability Officer pointed out,

*.....Well, the answer's no. There's no one (Senior Black Officer) at my level or even near my level, within this part of the city council.*

This was confirmed by the Chair - Regeneration and Partnerships/ex-Chair of Cultural and Leisure services (South City) who in being apologetic for such a state of affairs in the authority reinforced the position of black workers in sport in the authority as being at a low level and with relatively little hope of progress,



*..... I think where we have failed is probably in making any serious impact on to the level of unemployment in minority and ethnic groups and I think that's something that we have to seriously tackle, although I mean, at a grass roots level, in the authority, and certainly in community recreation we have a number of black officers.*

In South City a consideration of the influential Trust Boards changes the power dynamic between councillors, senior officers and their relationship with local people. One version of how policy decisions are made in South City sport as part of the constant negotiation and renegotiation of relationships between members and senior officers comes from the Chair of the Regeneration and Partnership Service Development Committee. This politician is seen by those who know him as a person who embodies the 'old' and 'new' South City. He suggests that senior officers advise members and would not be able to get any resources if not for the enthusiastic politician to drive through new ideas. Jones (1995) goes beyond what he terms the 'overhead democracy' model, which is a one-dimensional view of 'who controls' in local politics. He argues that an 'adaptive systems' model reflects the real world circumstances of political and bureaucratic interventions and seems to describe the South City context quite accurately. But then the Chair agreed with Jones' sentiments when he suggested that the 'politician' could easily be an officer or other 'powerful person' who knew how to get elected representatives interested. On the other hand, it has been written that skilled senior officers can 'manage' elected members into ratifying what they want to do in the first instance (Henry 1993, Elcock 1994). Theoretically senior officers in an authority should be advising members on policy issues which would then lead to policy decisions by members at various levels in the policy making process. Each authority,, depending on scale and local context, has a slightly different view of this theory and in South City there are a few variations. The Assistant Head of Leisure likened the process of controlling decisions to selling shoes, where a customer's ability to process information could lead to them being overloaded,

*I use to sell shoes years ago when I was at school, and one of the things you don't do when you're selling shoes - you can get to a point when you show people so many shoes that they just walk out because they've got too many choices. So as you show a case, you withdraw on other choices - you have to manage that process.*

How these choices are justified in terms of this paternal view on managing elected members suggests that members are not making choices from a full set of bounded solutions to a problem or opportunity. It could be seen that they are getting what seems a more diluted, de-politicised set of options in some cases which reflect the senior officers views on what is, or is not, significant. Taken to a natural conclusion this begs the point made earlier of whether a race-limited senior management structure might reflect only the limited needs of the local community. Whereas the same senior officer went on to argue that,

*The more choices you give to members from committee papers then the more politicised and the more opportunities you open up for political conflict. Now, ultimately at one level that's very healthy for local democracy but at another level in terms of actually pushing things through that you think are important, then you might want to close down choices.*

The choices and decisions made by the Assistant Head of Leisure come about as a result of a sophisticated balancing and evaluation (affective) of the issues, which involves a consideration of his knowledge and experience of the institution (cognitive) tempered by his beliefs/values in it (opinion, attitude, ideology), as well as the proximate influential others (relational). This process occurs daily as decisions are made and appreciative contexts/assumptive worlds are modified.

### **Extended Governance and Contract Culture in Local Authorities**

The policy implementation process in South City has become more complex through the 1990s due to a number of its services gaining Trust status. The initial use of Trusts was to act as a mechanism to pay for high profile sports facility developments, which the then Conservative Government would not allow due to its system of spending controls. It was able to build international class sports facilities as a result of creative management and a desperate vision, as with a number of other authorities, to regenerate its industry through sports and leisure as a spearhead (Gratton et. al. 2001, Gratton and Henry 2001). The Trusts in South City have been seen to be an essential part of its portfolio at the same time as being problematic for implementation. The Trust was initially assembled in a convoluted contract which involved a Council bank role, Trust

facilities (bought through Council finance), the Trust contracting the Council to staff the facilities and the client side of the council monitoring the Trust which is made up of councillors and other nominated representatives. This arrangement allowed the newer prestige facilities to be managed using a new corporate vision to increase the national awareness of South City as a top sporting city,

*The authority has had a growing view about the use of Trusts in the management of its services, particularly in Leisure.*  
(Director of Leisure Services)

*So decisions there about provision are not just in the hands of the city council, you know we have to work in partnership with the Trust.*  
(Chair of the Equality Committee)

The case for the development of Trusts is a compelling topic for many in South City. The Trust members are nominated and elected by a small group of peers who themselves in the main are not elected by the local community. Whereas for others there is concern at the lack of accountability to the electorate by such bodies,

*... My main worry on that sort of thing is that councillors are elected to run their local council, elected at the ballot box, and if people don't like what they're doing they can vote for somebody else. We're now reaching a situation in certain areas where unelected representatives are running large areas of the sports facilities. We have to underwrite them by the way, and they have no electoral responsibilities to the people who use the ballot box, and that upsets me greatly.*  
(Chair of Parks and Open Spaces)

The policy implementation process in South City then incorporates a third influential tier which adds an extra element when considering who influences the quality of the equality policies and their implementation in the authority. The notion of governance is one that South City has taken seriously at the same time as trying to manage the tensions that introducing influential others into its work will bring. Many see this way of working as the way forward and the future,

*...Some people still feel uncomfortable that that's not as neat and tidy as having something that is democratically accountable through elected members. I can't wholly meet those concerns, but*

*we are in a sense trying to develop processes and systems that do actually make sure that that's sustained  
(The Director of Leisure).*

The Chair of the Equality Committee supported this opinion when she argued that,

*.....In South City obviously there's a decision making process that's broadening out ..... really South City Leisure, to my mind, is at the cutting edge of new ways of working in local government.*

These tensions highlight the excesses of contracting services out which all three authorities have had to do. It also demonstrates how ideologies can form around an issue that can cause a fundamental clash of perspectives on how equality can be ensured in sport. Clearly the Chair of Parks and Open Spaces does not share the optimism of the Chair of the Equality Committee due to her perception of the marginal status of the local community, although at this point in the fieldwork my evaluation of the dominant view across the influential members and officers was that Trusts were seen as a positive development therefore rendering the alternative voice a residual one. Given this dominant view there is no escaping the caveats of writers who have warned policy actors of the difficulties that contracting out has caused in sustaining an equal opportunities ethos due to the problems of policing new policy actors.

*There are some very real doubters on the majority group about Trusts. I don't think I know anybody who would deny that. But I think on balance because we have lived with Trusts really since 1989 now., we've seen how they've worked.  
(Director of Leisure)*

Further tensions are played out across the three authorities below as we turn to one of the standard mainstream foci of the measurement of success in equal opportunities, recruitment and retention.

### **Recruitment, Retention and 'Race' in Local Authority Sport**

The North City Equality Unit's statistics show quite clearly that their public face is different to the private one given that the senior officers are all white males. There are no black senior officers in North City sports division. One of the problems that North

City has encountered is that their recruitment strategy in this area remains a disappointment to them. They have struggled to recruit and retain black staff so that they progress from the lower ranks through to more influential positions. The Ex-Director of Sport bore this out when he reflected on how the power relations within his organisation were regularly reinforced,

*The question was always there, about the way we look at equal opportunities, not about ethnic minorities solely, very often it was to do with women, because there was this feeling around that people within the leisure environment, the paid salary employment of the authority, that there was a bias towards white males, particularly in positions of power, and there was, it was one of those things which in a way, had occurred over a number of years, and I suppose had become embedded as part of the culture I suppose.*

This account gives some insight into how problems are compounded in bureaucracies. Organisational cultures develop through a series of intended and unintended actions as here the focus on the gender imbalance in North City meant that issues of 'race' and ethnicity in recruitment and retention were relegated in priority thus causing an impact on access for black people, promotion for current employees and the consequent detachment from local community needs reinforcing the criticism of Ross and Schneider (1992) noted earlier. There is also recognition that other local authorities have similar problems and are not alone in this concern. The Chief Sports Officer commented that,

*.... The inequity in our employment of people from ethnic groups is glaring, and I know there are various initiatives that we take, you know positive action and training, and those sorts of initiatives, but the facts are there for people to see and I don't think that's unique to North City.*

This indeed is not unique to North City as West Town found itself in a similar position. There are no black staff in West Town sport provision who are senior officers. The Chair of Leisure Services who disappointingly remarked that echoed this concern,

*.....there is still a great deal of concern about our recruitment, coming in at the bottom as well. We're not recruiting enough ethnic minorities. It's something that does get discussed*

*regularly, certainly annually because you get the annual report, which is flagging up that we just don't recruit enough from the ethnic minorities.*

This was a similar concern for one of the senior managers who also pointed to the fact that,

*.....In terms of employment we still are nowhere near the percentage of numbers that we should be at [black people in the organisation]. You know, for this local area, we should be round about 7 and a half per cent, we're probably touching between 4 and 5, so we've got a long way to go, so that clearly indicates that something is not right.*  
(Senior Officer - Area Manager).

The use of the percentages here hides the point that although they are statistically short of their target, West Town are qualitatively even shorter given the absence of any senior black officers. With the exception of a few minority ethnic groups there is enough evidence to show that black people do proportionally less well in the employment market/work place than their white counterparts (Haynes 1983, Ohri and Faruqi 1988, Blakemore and Drake 1996). Due to the differences between black groups, as well as between black and white, a comparison between black and white groups is likely to hide as much as it reveals (Jones 1996, Parekh 2000). Due to this diversity where according to Modood (1998) there is likely to be ethnic disadvantage in the order of African-Asians and Chinese (confined to top jobs) Indian African or Caribbean (relative disadvantage), Pakistani or Bangladeshi (severe disadvantage), there are still questions which remain that have been asked time and again by professionals in sport about how such disparities can arise in large authorities with significant black populations? (Pote-Hunt 1987, LGTB 1990, Lyons 1991 Sports Council 1990; 1994a, Verma and Darby 1994). Modood (1998: 70) went on to argue that the commonality between all of these ethnic groups is that 'they are all less likely than white people to be at the top'. The Chair of the Race Equality Sub-Committee offered at least one substantive reason for these problems as he outlined their inadequate candidate selection procedure,

*Also, the selection procedure. That has been questioned, and I know that the Director and leading officers are actually formulating a new procedure with regard to selection, so that it can be seen to be fair to everybody, no matter what colour, creed, sex, whatever, the person is. Everybody should be treated on an equal basis.*

## **Recruitment and Retention: Institutional or Social Problem?**

One of the respondents in South City attempted to deflect their responsibility for the outcome of their recruitment strategy over the years just as in North City, where they emphasised their *common local authority problem*. The Chair of Leisure Services in South City blamed the ethnic imbalance in her authority's ranks as a result of the 'downsizing' exercise they have been part of which itself has caused them to protect their existing staff (status quo) rather than to recruit more widely. The sport and community recreation department in South City is downsizing its core workforce as part of a bigger leisure services plan. This helps to enable a strategy of core-periphery working which the Director of Leisure Services wishes to endorse. He was proud to announce how the outsourcing of council services has meant that his original staffing compliment has been reduced from one thousand to, soon to be, four hundred and fifty. The Chair of Cultural and Leisure Services Committee took a more critical perhaps less self-congratulatory view of the previous years' employment practices when she argued that,

*I think that that paramount desire to protect existing jobs has closed our eyes to a number of other issues, so I'm not absolutely sure on how we've used our abilities, as you say, to put in equal opps. issues in that, and we've been very slow as an authority I think, in a number of areas that I'm now becoming aware of, of not being very good at writing into bigger contracts, you know things like local labour clauses and things, and although our ability to do that is limited, some authorities have apparently found a way round it, that we're only just discovering.*

The Assistant Director of Leisure in South City goes on to justify the composition of the workforce further by saying that,

*I think it's a question of under representation. Its just not to do with black people, it's to do with people with disabilities, that sort of thing you know.....*

It can be detected here that there is a willingness in at least two of these authorities, in the case of an Assistant Director of Leisure and a Chief Sports Officer, to offer reasons or perhaps excuses for why they have not been more successful. Their reasoning points

to a national problem of implementing equal opportunities whether it is specific to 'race' or to other high profile political issues such as gender or disability, that is implicitly 'beyond the control of' each institution, even though there are viewpoints to the contrary in each authority. This in itself can be seen as a way for institutions to distance themselves from having to act proactively and offers a further insight into how discourses develop around the need for action (or not). Officers read these signals as they engage with others in their social network and their assumptive worlds. Their appreciation of these issues has become embedded in their practical consciousness and the results of their practical consciousness are reasons for their lack of success. However, a more critical view of these practices from an officer with far less at stake candidly puts it,

*... ..in any organisation it is easier to make things not happen than happen. Making things happen can be extremely hard work!*  
(Ex-Principal Sports Officer)

### **De-Racialisation: 'Race' at the Margins of Assumptive Worlds**

An understanding of how processes can disempower can be illustrated with a focus on recruitment and retention in these authorities. The dearth of black people in the dominant elite of each authority points to the structural inequalities that Nanton and Fitzgerald (1990), and Bagilhole (2002) assert is typical of underperforming organisations or structures where it comes to race-equality. Bagilhole (2002:23) went further to problematise the notion of power within such organisations as the ability to perform or underperform where those closest to it see it appropriate.

The issues of where power is located in the organisation is important because being relatively powerful allows individuals to confidently offer varying responses to EO policies including those that reduce their effectiveness without fear of retribution.

The parameters that make up an actor's assumptive world are themselves socially constructed and are not static. As knowledge of the institution, its actors and each agent's specific place within it are considered, an appreciation of the boundaries that make up their assumptive world augments understanding. Where (non)-decisions are



made and actions taken a deeper understanding of assumptive worlds contributes to an explanation of outcomes. Further, we can see that by these officers staying within institutional norms and by not resisting them they accommodate, recreate and renew them. Simply put, the status quo is reinforced, the management by the joint elite is strengthened, their power, position and status left intact. The relationship between those charged with making and implementing policy and a sensitive caring local public service has been the focus for writers and national governing organisations intent on identifying the gaps that plague equal opportunities in organisations and the effective implementation of race equality policies (Stone 1988, Verma and Darby 1994, Solomos and Back 1995, Collier 1998, and LGA 2001). Each of them agree that there is a prevalence of white males in positions of power and influence in local authorities. Consequently even though there will be advocates for race-equality amongst these dominant elites there is a strong chance that these concerns will be marginalised or ignored as local needs and priorities are not sensitively met (see Home Office 2001: 76). Black people have been conspicuous by their absence in senior positions in sport and leisure management for some time (LGTB 1990, Sports Council 1994a, Hylton 2001). For Ouseley (1990) the issue should be viewed in terms of the organisation of power. In other words it is the institutional power that Scarman (1982: 28) called unintentional or unwitting discrimination in public bodies that later Macpherson (1999) argued could be construed as institutional racism in its most severe form. The Local Government Training Board (1990: 10) found it necessary to support the view that,

Good policies on recruitment must be seen as evidence of good management practice.

Wieviorka (1995) asks a question of the racial ideology that underpins and perpetuates such practices within an organisation. Here as in Giddens' (1995, 1998) work the actor-structure dichotomy is a false one. Clearly where there is a level of discursive consciousness of this situation and a lack of reflexivity on their practical consciousness to transform undesirable outcomes serious questions must be asked of such structuring practices. Wieviorka's (1995: 65) view is such that he makes a fundamental point that captures the essence of what some might see as a benign, accidental outcome of unconnected, innocent circumstances. He describes a,

Set of practices which have acquired a certain autonomy and a dynamic of their own, but a dynamic which is shaped by contradictory affects and interests arising out of history and the work of society on itself.

These processes become part of the cultural fabric of each local authority so that as people come and go they induct these values through dominant practices. Further examples of such practices can be identified in the way monitoring was carried out across the authorities; this will be discussed later in the chapter. Each authority offered their own views for the lack of diversity in their senior ranks; the legitimisation that explained these outcomes away were rationalised, naturalised and seen as an inevitable outcome of circumstances. Goldberg (1993:111) writes at length about how these racial exclusions are articulated by influential actors in institutions. Thomas (2000) on the other hand sees it as no surprise that the professional fraternity is ethnically skewed given the way access is limited to such professions. He questions what resources are distributed before professionals enter an organisation and recommends that any analysis of power within an organisation needs to be supplemented by a consideration of professional networks and how they operate. Although not part of the scope of this thesis he points to findings from Macpherson (1999) to illustrate how an ethnically skewed workforce is likely to generate and sustain a racist occupational culture. It is worth at this point illustrating further how these racialised structuring processes manifest themselves around specific issues. For the want of a less dramatic term the following section revolves around defining moments or key issues in each authority that emphasise the recursivity of processes that structure and validate action/inaction in equality work across each authority.

### **Assumptive Worlds: Defining Moments**

#### **North City**

Officials in North City throw some light on the authority's inability to achieve some of the major goals from its Vision document. These revolve around resourcing and the real practicalities of having to work under the day-to-day pressures of a local authority. The

Chief Sports Officer was given a clear message when he started working in the authority to ensure that equal opportunities principles were deliberated on and worked towards, as North City is an 'equal opportunities employer'. However the reality of working in the authority has revealed a slightly different slant on this theme. For instance it is generally agreed that one of the reasons why North City has to work hard on equal opportunities is due to the way it entered into the spirit of C.C.T. There was a degree of haste involved in the way contracts were written and as a result many social objectives were missed out of the clauses for the newly tendered services (see Escott 1996).

*In the first round, because writing specifications were done in a rush, lots of things about sports development and equal opportunities were somehow missed in the rush, that they weren't specified or they weren't written in clearly enough or they weren't put in such a way that the contracting organisation could somehow miss them out.*

(Ex-Director of Sport)

This is a theme identified a number of times in the appreciative context of senior officials in North City. Some of their problems have been blamed on the ambiguous messages regarding equal opportunities experienced in the first round of C.C.T. Equality in North City's Sport Division was hard hit as the authority's officers were caught out by the pace of change and the technicalities of writing and bidding for contracts. It was clear early on that C.C.T. had its benefits, however they were not fully realised due to the hurried and mechanical way writing and bidding took place. North City like a number of local authorities involved in the initial stages of C.C.T. were under pressure to write contracts and put services and facilities out to tender. They made mistakes, which they tried to amend in the second phase, but this did mean continuing with contracts that did not have equal opportunities specifications or principles written in. Examples of how C.C.T. affected North City came through references to the authority writing and bidding for contracts that its authors knew would mean cutting employment costs and opportunities to the bone. This had a knock on effect to the Sport section being able to include new staff or conversely to pay those on the lowest levels better wages/salaries. This made the Sports and Leisure services less accessible and attractive as a long-term employer for black people. As a relatively new employee to the

council a more detached view was offered on the authority as the Chief Sports Officer remarked,

*.... the [EO] policy isn't necessarily being delivered in the best way or in the most appropriate way because of what happened the last time round. What happened the last time round, was for example that local authorities didn't really understand what C.C.T. was about and when it came to specifying what was going to happen in facilities, they basically put down what was already happening at the time and then said we need to work to the status quo.*

Interestingly, although the Chief Sports Officer had no part to play in this unfortunate chain of events by attempting to distance North City from any major errors by adding that all “local authorities” and not just North City had this problem (a device employed earlier in this chapter). The need to personally and professionally accept that North City, just as other authorities, are individually responsible for their own mistakes is perhaps eluding him at this point as he implies that other professionals were similarly caught out therefore North City cannot be too much to blame for being an underperforming authority. Even though this is not a particularly healthy situation in which to run a service, on reflection the Ex-Director of Sport spoke about this period and how equality principles were jettisoned in a hierarchy of priorities of which they were ignored,

*... some of the interest that they perhaps had at that time in providing a quality balanced programme of opportunities maybe has disappeared to some extent to lots of things which make lots of money, and that money principle is much more to the fore than it was before.*

The Principal Sports Development Officer supported this view and outlined how the actions of senior officers led to a more hardened economic view of social provision,

*... I think what it has done is made the delivery of service more income orientated, so in terms of concessions, in terms of discounts, in terms of if you like, some of the barriers removing, the onus is very much on the client to insist and to some extent recompense the contractor rather than the contractor saying we should be doing this, we should be doing that. I think we are trying to re-address some of that within the next round of contracting.*

Here senior officers are reflecting on a time when pressure had been applied to the working environment and presented officials with an opportunity to demonstrate how equal opportunities had permeated from principle to practice. It gives a clearer idea about how close mainstream equality principles were tied in to practice in the first place. The authority's policy on equal opportunities and its vision statements are clear about the position of equality in the organisation and it could be argued that this was a chance to show that it was not purely rhetorical but mainstream and translatable into action and positive outcomes. There was an obvious dilemma for officers and councillors because where contracts are active and subsequently seen to be militating against some of the core principles of the organisation, decisions have to be made by those involved in monitoring contracts. So should they try to maximise the principles of the contract or the principles of the authority? Here is an opportunity to clearly see an assumptive world in operation. That is, the Chief Officer's and Ex-Director's recollections of a time where their peers were put under pressure and chose to ignore principles of equality, even at a minimal level, because clearly they were not grounded in the core work that they did. They knew that they would not be tested against these principles locally and consequently did not challenge or resist the assumptive world in which they existed. It seems that equal opportunities was not grounded in North City in the past, and according to the Chief Sports Officer

*...new contracts replicated what was going on before the contracts were written.*

Hence the reference to the unsatisfactory 'status quo' or the marginalising of equal opportunities, which in itself raises serious issues about the ad hoc nature of equal opportunities, the de-racialisation of policy, and practice that does not synchronise with corporate ideals. Similar comments came from colleagues who themselves found that the high pressure period around the writing and implementing of the first contracts for C.C.T. were actually a defining period for them to demonstrate how mainstream equality work operated in the sport division.

Young (1977, 1979, 1981) explains how actors organise and prioritise issues within their assumptive worlds. Evaluative and directive processes such as what needs to be considered in C.C.T. contracts i.e. what is essential, desirable, optional depends on

influential actors' reading of what is important in the authority and what is acceptable. The power to set agendas comes from knowledge of others and the institution, that itself is made of an aggregate of influential actor opinions, attitudes and ideologies (Giddens 1995, May 1996, Foucault 1980, 1998). The organisation of C.C.T. was an outcome of a test of these relational, cognitive, evaluative and directive factors. It is generally agreed that Foucault contributes persuasive analyses of power in particular the power to generate or determine 'knowledge' according to the values and ideals that an actor(s) holds. That is, to generate and maintain discourses, agenda setting, the ability to redistribute/distribute resources (Goldberg 1993, Foucault 1998). On this note, Foucault's attempt to relegate the questions of who 'has' power and what their aims/objectives are is perhaps another reason for Young's (1995) accusations of the Eurocentric colour-blindness of aspects of his work. However the activities of these social actors is a legitimate context for the analysis of how institutions constitute subjects as a result of power processes (Gordon 1980, Sarup 1993). The institution is constituted of the senior officers and politicians who make up this joint elite in North City and it is to them that we have to turn to interpret why in this example the impact of C.C.T., amongst other things, has over time caused equal opportunities work to be relegated and race-equality to be marginalised. It must be emphasised here that by North City adopting the processes and practices that were already operating, equality work was no worse off than before C.C.T., but importantly no better off either. The likelihood is that the efficiency gains and cutbacks that occurred in most local authorities would not have improved matters in the medium term. Goldberg (1993: 99) emphasised this point when he argued that,

If it is clear that some institutional practices gives rise to racially patterned exclusionary or discriminatory practices or outcomes, no matter the institutional aims, and the institution does little or nothing to avoid, diminish or alleviate these outcomes, the reasonable presumption must be that the institution is racist or effectively promotes racism of a sort.

This pointed claim is one that North City would find hard to defend. However, North City has been attempting to implement its equitable provision, but in what could be seen as a sports policy vacuum. It did not have a sports strategy that would allow its senior officers to argue beyond anecdote that they have a plan to ensure sport for all, nor to ensure that some members of the community are not advantaged over others,

*... Amazingly all these things ..... have happened without a background of an overall sports strategy. It's been done piecemeal according to local pressures or politicians favoured speech, that's what's happened, and we don't have a sports strategy for the city as a whole, and it has become evident when we're putting together sports lottery bids, and the sports lottery people saying where's your sports strategy for the city, ....we don't actually have one!*  
(Chair of Recreation Services Committee)

A gestural/reactive view to sports provision was working in North City as all of this was happening against a backdrop of a piecemeal view of the way sport should develop, that had achieved much in terms of initiatives and facilities, but at the same time was criticised by key policy actors conscious of the lack of rigour in the way sports provision was being planned and implemented,

*I'd been used to planning things - that's why when I came to North City in the beginning everything seemed to be ad hoc, there didn't seem to be any definite planning process.*  
(Senior Officer – North City)

In addition to things happening in North City as a curious result of having an unstructured overall plan for sport, there have also been other less favourable consequences of this approach over the years. One area which was seen as in need of further deliberation was the targeting of groups identified as disadvantaged. It was suggested by the Senior Sports Development Officer with a line management role for community sports provision that the monitoring of work and objectives across the authority was too difficult unless providers were clear about what they were trying to measure. It was at this stage in the fieldwork that the sports division staff were contributing to the formulation of a long term sports strategy, he argued that,

*... without a set plan, you can't monitor - that's what we're addressing now, and finding relevant plans in different spheres [parts of North City sports division] covering different aspects and different target groups.*

## **Ethnic Monitoring in North City**

Verma and Darby's (1994) study of local authority departments' responses to minority ethnic group participation found a similar situation unfold before them. Departments bound by local authority commitments to equality found themselves unable to work effectively due to their lack of data. They roundly criticised these authorities' ability to adequately provide opportunities that were sensitive to the needs of their local communities. Verma and Darby (1994:85) stated that,

The absence of routine, and systematic data collection and analysis which would make it possible to identify low participation groups was a matter for concern. Without such information it is hard to see how leisure departments can know who they are reaching. Without that knowledge, planning to reach low participation groups cannot realistically be undertaken, nor is it possible to present a case for additional funding, either within the authority or from external sources, such as the Home Office.

Accepting Verma and Darby's concerns it follows that as the sports division goes about its daily business the outcomes of its work are not fully reported. This is due to issues concerning the rigour of the monitoring and the direction and nature of the feedback. Even if there was a sports strategy in the public domain sports facilities and the sports development workers do not have a coordinated system of monitoring and feedback which would allow senior officers to gauge the levels of success in achieving equality targets. Other sections within the authority, like the Equal Opportunities Unit, have discrete roles in monitoring equality work although at the time of this study the Chair of the Equality sub-committee complained that they did not have a 'Race' Officer and had struggled for nearly two years to get one. Given these constraints she said of her area of responsibility that,

*.... Because nobody's perfect and the Council's got an equal opportunities policy and they've also got a mission statement in place [...], ... it's the people that you have working within the council to implement it, and this is where equal opportunity comes in, to monitor and see that these policies of the council are carried out.*



The Chair of the Equality Sub-committee seems to have a confidence in the system that is based upon a rational view of the policy implementation process. This confidence could reflect her relative inexperience on the Council or perhaps reflects a moral belief in the priorities and values of her senior officers commitments to carry out policy promises. She also chairs the Council's Race Advisory committee that is made up of politicians and members of the public who receive papers from across the departments for public scrutiny. Given that North City does not have a 'race' specific policy it is beholden upon groups like this to ensure that 'race' and ethnicity find a place on their agenda.

*As an ethnic group they may not be specifically represented within that leisure services policy, but what we do have in equal opportunities - going back to that - are advisory groups where there is a race advisory committee who are made up of.....individuals, with politicians and members of the public represented who will receive policy and papers for them to comment on, so it brings the external referral, so it may well be just to take that chain through, that maybe an issue relates to race, recreation services , sports division, that may be referred to equal opportunity who would then refer it to the race advisory group, and those comments would come back.*

A caveat is presented here by the Chief Sports Officer who warns that what is fed into them and how they interpret and distribute the message from those data should be a cause for concern,

*... We have an equal opps. unit within the council and there are other units, such as a race equality unit in the council, and there are reports which are taken on a reasonably regular basis to those groups for example, talks about recruitment and employment issues, .. If you want my personal view of those, I don't think that that's necessarily the most effective way of monitoring the service. I think inevitably in those circumstances, people ain't going to want to write the bad news.*

The idea of 'writing the bad news' is often an issue about the objectivity of those who have been charged to conduct the monitoring or in this case to gather the data<sup>vi</sup>. The notion of an equality-monitoring unit in North City is obviously challenging according to the CSO as his colleagues' ability to critically reflect what is happening in the city is compromised by a need to be seen as successful. So it does not benefit everyone to

publicise the bad news. The desire to be seen as successful is not just vanity but also has economic and status rewards across departments (Stoker 1991). These interdepartmental situations lead them to compete for budgets, staffing and status. This Stoker (1991) argues can lead to substantial delays in the implementation of policy. Given that efforts are being made to monitor and report on equality work across the city, the Equality Unit and the Sports Division, it could be argued that North City could do more in the way of providing a transparent service in sport than they have at the moment. This monitoring phenomenon was also problematic for West Town and South City, which will be discussed further shortly.

The Human Resource Unit in North City Council is able to generate the data that are necessary to monitor for ethnicity in employment, due to the nature of the application forms that they produce. However this is a reactive service and one that takes a snapshot of the city's employment profile at any time rather than a unit that is able to make proactive change in the Sports Division. That is down to the senior officers in sport. Ultimately, until they systematically monitor their own recruitment and service delivery there will continue to be a gap in the equality (and quality) implementation cycle in the city,

*Having sat around a senior officers table for some years I know what that means.... it means getting the quotas to meet the performance indicators...*  
(Ex-Principal Sports Officer)

### **'Seeing Colour' in North City and West Town**

Taking a realistic view of what has been happening in North City and other authorities key members of the Sports section are reassessing the direction that their practices have taken. The use of commercial private sector philosophies on profits, to a degree, ensures that more of the public purse can be redistributed to areas of more need. However, the dilemma for sports officers was illustrated by the CSO who suggested that,

*There's a perception that C.C.T. means you've got to run your leisure centres as a business. I haven't got a problem with running facilities in a business like way, an efficient way, but we're a local*

*authority provider and we should be providing services to help the people based on local needs rather than putting line dancing everywhere to maximise your income.*

It would be naïve to expect consensus on too many issues in North City over the last few years. Compulsory Competitive Tendering is seen unanimously as a highly significant sea change in the way local government sports providers conducted their business. C.C.T. has been received with mixed feelings and it is no different in North City. In West Town the impacts of C.C.T. and the implications of Best Value were also being managed, however West Town had a backdrop of policies that 'saw race' and was not colour-blind as North City could be interpreted as being here. In North City there were no messages about 'race' and sport, although this is not surprising at the time, as it did not have a sports strategy. The Leisure and Recreation Services in West Town on the other hand was implementing a five-year plan to achieve the Council's main themes within leisure and recreation. The policy statement issued by the Head of Service states that the strategy is aimed at 'assisting managers in establishing clear objectives and targets for the resources and work programmes'. The Chair of the Race Equality Committee showed how committed he was to changing the life chances of black and ethnic minorities in the authority when he stated that,

*... .. What I decided to do a couple of years ago with the race committee was to establish a programme that recognised the problems that exist within the black and ethnic minority groups. Those in particular, because we've found that the values were greater for them with regard to employment, housing etc.*

Here commitment is demonstrated in the priorities of this influential committee and this would be expected in an authority that has been featured in case studies of excellence by national bodies involved in the provision of community sport and recreation. The impact of these decisions should be manifest in discussions with peers and senior officers in the authority. These priorities then should be illustrated in positive outcomes in various guises across the authority. These outcomes may be traced to cultural changes in the organisation in the way that individuals conduct themselves and their work on a qualitative level. Or there may be physical changes in the composition of the staffing or number of focused initiatives planned to reduce some of the disparities that public authorities have identified in their sports provision.

'Race' theorists have criticised governing organisations like local authorities for being too timid in their explicit focus on race-equality in provision (Ouseley 1981, Cross and Keith 1993). There has been a tendency towards what many local authorities have done in applying a regulative or distributive liberal framework for their officers to interpret, rather than a proactive redistributive one which is prescriptive and unambiguous in the messages being sent out to front line practitioners (Young 1989). There is less room for policy confusions where proactive direction is offered at a policy level, as Gibbon (1989) and others have criticised large organisations for not doing. The latter perspectives have often been signposted as the way forward if a real challenge is to be made to the historical disadvantages that black people have encountered as institutions have systematically excluded them as peers, and their needs as citizens (Crenshaw 1995, Delgado and Stefancic 2000). Where the opportunity for social transformation is not taken there is a much stronger sense of what is valued in terms of action in North City, and any other for that matter. Ouseley (1981), Parker (1998, 1999), Delgado and Stefancic (2000) would take such inaction around 'race' as a clear signal of a local authority's intentions. The liberal, regulative politically 'safe' choices made by influential actors in these local authorities do much to set the backdrop, cues and props in their assumptive worlds.

### **West Town**

The Sport and Recreation department in West Town is trying to sustain a "Sport for All" ethos and intends to target disadvantaged groups such as young people in order to "provide accessible community and facility-based activities and opportunities which strive to meet the needs of young people" (Young People and Sport Policy- Leisure and Recreation Policy Statements). Statements, in this authority, relating to women, people with a disability, the fifty plus and black and ethnic minorities continue in a similar vein to the work with young people, i.e. there is a recognition that discrimination and disadvantage are key factors which influence the nature and extent of [the target group's] involvement in sport. It is also suggested that this work cannot be completed quickly and that it is part of an ongoing development process.

Compared to North City, the statement relating to 'Racial Equality in Sport' is very clear that racial equality should be "... incorporated into all of its work and will take measures to meet the prioritised needs and aspirations of Black and Ethnic Minorities in Sport" (Racial Equality in Sport Statement cited in Leisure and Recreation Services Policy Statements). It also emphasises how aware workers must be in keeping its social objectives close to everything that happens in implementation. West Town was also keen to implement its own version of the CRE's Racial Equality – Means Quality (1995) standards which they named Equality 2000. This in itself had an overarching effect on practice in sport in West Town, as equality targets were set and performance measured against them over five years. C.C.T. in West Town had to operate in a strategic framework that senior officers, policy makers, and contract writers had to take cognisance of, this clearly lacking in North City. As a result a framework like West Town's offers much clearer guidance where 'race' and sport are concerned, especially where there are pressures to operate a nationally imposed policy like C.C.T. or Best Value. In operating a more collectivist policy on equality West Town presents a framework in which to, at minimum, regulate activity. Authorities like North City who do not have these guidelines in place can only learn from them. West Town recognise that discrimination and disadvantage occurs at the level of the institution rather than just at the level of the individual. This is a more enlightened strategy than the more tacit one emerging out of North City. North City thus runs more of a risk as it reinforces, as it perpetuates, opportunities for disadvantage, discrimination, and racism.

It has been identified that senior professionals in local government contexts play a crucial role in the way policy is taken on board philosophically, and then implemented (Stoker 1991, Henry 1993, Elcock 1994). An example of this in West Town came from the Principal Equal Opportunities Officer. Unlike North City or South City this officer had a specific remit to work with the sport division in West Town. She was able to keep the minds of senior officers focused on equality in practice, with confirmation of this seen in their commitment to set up a Sports Equity Action Team. This team had an important role in the planning and monitoring of equality work in the authority, and also contributed to a larger cross-authority group that allowed for a certain degree of partnership working and the exchange of good practice. A senior sports development officer (who is now lead SDO) suggested that,

*.....I think firstly it was everyone seeing the value of the sports equity planning action group. Which I think everyone genuinely does see the need for that group. They might disagree about the way the group is actually organised, but they all see the need that we ought to take time out and I don't think 5 years ago there would have been any commitment.*

This officer's reflections on how things have changed over the past five years gives some insight perhaps into the legacy of long-term thinking in the authority on equal opportunities. It seems a little incongruous that an authority with such a good reputation in equal opportunities work should have experienced officers willing to reflect on a recent past where there was little acceptance, or commitment to, such work. The Lead SDO is describing a hegemony that has perhaps diminished although five years ago West Town was still seen as a forward thinking authority. As a contested site equal opportunities in local authority sport is exemplified here, with the notion of unity around equality in sport being challenged.

The Principal Equality Officer suggested three main reasons why the Equality 2000 policy had been taken on board. The three areas consisted of different reasons for Council officers to adhere to the equal opportunities policies of the authority. These reasons involved a business case, a professional case and a personal case which acted as motivators for officers to work towards equal opportunities. One, or all three, of the motivators could act as an incentive for the managers in the authority. The officer went on to posit that,

*Those three main areas are probably the driving forces if you like, and are certainly the kind of driving forces that I use as a lever with service managers when I'm talking to them.*

It is not unusual in recent times for such tactics to be employed. The CRE have used this strategy with their Leadership Challenge and Racial Equality Means Quality initiatives for local government. Similarly the new public management and managerialism that Pollitt (1990), Clarke (1994) and Cochrane (1994) consider in the public sector encourages this discourse. This officer does imply the use of different strategies need to be employed to ensure that equality work appeals to everybody. This also suggests that ideas around equality in sport provision are contested and that there are those within West Town who have a different set of priorities and hence their

dominant ideals or attitudes need to be teased or persuaded to operate the philosophy or hit the targets of Equality 2000. She went on to say that the different strategies are used dependent upon the knowledge base, the degree of commitment partners have in their everyday work, and power positions within the organisation. This difficult process can only be emphasised or imagined as we consider the dynamic configuration of issues, individuals, opinions, attitudes and ideologies that make up the appreciative context of key actors and aggregate into an assumptive world.

### **Contract Culture and Race-Equality in West Town**

A test of these regulatory frameworks and the strategies used by the Principal Equalities Officer is a phrase that was used in North City to describe the real pressures of ensuring that the authority does not default on its promises; 'the bottom-line'. Like most local authorities resources into the Council have been shrinking over the last decade and the officers have had to be more creative and pragmatic in the way they approach their work. The Principal Equal Opportunities Officer has recognised that,

*..... The amount of money that's getting poured into it [sport] is shrinking, and we're faced with very hard decisions in terms of either there might be a charge to people, and then there's the fine line about the charging system for all.... because you're actually working in the environment and you want to maintain the service,..... you have to look at the very real questions of money at the bottom-line. That's what the service does provide, it certainly makes every effort to provide... like specialist activities.*

This reference to shrinking resources is an indirect reference to the straitjacket that many local authorities found themselves in when they won the tenders to continue running their own contracts on a fraction of the resources they were using previously. In addition, decreasing central government funding from the then Conservative government had to be managed in an environment of increasing austerity and rationalisation (Clarke 1994, Ravenscroft 1998).

Specialist or focused activities have been identified as successful ways to develop service delivery and to encourage low-participating groups into sport (Rigg 1986, Sport England 1999, Hylton and Totten 2001). Such activities tend to be resource intensive

due to the difficulties in providing for hard-to-reach communities. This has a knock-on effect to the client-leader ratio and/or the quality of the provision available in busy sports and community venues. In an environment of contracting and competition the policy of equal opportunities becomes difficult to implement as expressed by those officers involved trying to make it work...

..... *In general, if you take the spirit of C.C.T., which is the three E's, effectiveness, economy, efficiency, commercial approach you are looking at maximising income through products. You drop your dogs, if your dogs happen to be women, or your dogs happen to be playing middle-class badminton, or a disabled event, then that's what you drop. If you want your cash cows and you want your stars in simplistic marketing terms, C.C.T. in my opinion makes you focus on saving money, generating money because your bottom-line has to be protected. .... But I still subscribe to the opinion that when times are bad, you do what brings the money in. It's that simple!*  
(Senior Officer – Area Manager)

Not everyone subscribes to this new managerialist philosophy in the authority, as although this discourse is commonly heard in West Town, it does not have universal acceptance. The Senior Sports Development Officer commented that,

.... *I still think a lot of things are perceived as being luxuries rather than actually you could do with them and they are good practice anyway.*

At this point the challenge set by Equality 2000, the Council's equal opportunities policy and the urgings of the Equity Action Team and the Principal Equality Officer meets the real world pressures of an officer articulating his own appreciative context. Here the stressors placed upon this manager are ones that Clarke (1994) and others argue force him to prioritise economy, efficiency and effectiveness over equality (Clarke 1994, Chelliah 1998). There is no ambiguity in the way this senior officer interprets the work that he is paid to do. Somewhere along the line from those clear messages, from the Vision statement to the Chair of the Race Equalities Committee, Principal Equalities Officer and Equity Action Team, there has been a reordering of priorities. This reordering of priorities is not problematic for this senior officer in West Town, neither is it problematic for his colleague the Leading Officer in the council's



Direct Services Organisation (DSO) the contracted part of sports provision, who cynically remarked of equal opportunities in this context,

*Getting it to work in reality becomes a little bit more difficult, than just making the statement, and saying the words.*

Some equal opportunities commentators would argue that there is an unwillingness demonstrated here to integrate an equality strategy into the cultural and economic heart of West Town sport (see Blakemore and Drake 1996: 186). Recognising the importance of equal opportunities to the authority at the same time as being lukewarm about it throws up a contradiction that becomes difficult to fathom. At the same time this incongruity goes some way towards gaining a more critical understanding of the difficulties of trying to implement an all embracing policy like equal opportunities. Indeed Hogwood and Gunn (1993) argue that there is a certain inevitability about these anomalies when they suggest that although official objectives may not always be compatible with each other, for example C.C.T. and Best Value not having fundamental social objectives written into their basic principles, confusion is exacerbated when professionals operate using their own goals and values. Within a programme, even where goals are clear, they are likely to be changed or displaced over time as pressures and priorities shift within an organisation.

It was later stated that there are other elements which officers have taken into consideration when planning for equal opportunities in the authority for the black community, and that is the white community. One officer offered the example that although they have tried Asian only sessions in the past, because of some public hostility they are avoiding planning such 'specialist' sessions. In an explanation to this effect the Leading Leisure Officer (DSO) stated that,

*.....And if it just happens to be that there's thirty Asian ladies go and there's no white person, then that's just tough, but there are no [ethnicity] parameters cos if I was to put on an Asian only event we'd get a hammering, and that was proved to be the case at Huddersfield sports centre, they did an Asian Ladies Day, twelve months ago, and they got a lot of stick from that and I think people sort of backed off.*

The criticism discussed here came from members of the majority white community who were unhappy about being excluded as taxpayers from local authority facilities. These complaints were treated seriously enough for the local providers to reconsider what has been seen in sports development terms as good practice (Sports Council 1994a, Sport England 1997). This willingness to concede to more advantaged members of the community reinforced and heightened the marginal status of black people in West Town by raising the expectations of the Asian women in a period when their needs were not being met. Here officers acquiescing to a dominant white community's demands are consequently subjugating a marginalised black group. In addition its impact will be felt as the dominant hegemony is strengthened as a result of the current practices being maintained and left unchallenged. In effect these two officers are defending the pragmatics of implementation where they are forced to make decisions about the priorities for them and therefore the authority. This position on race-equality, that open access is the best way to generate a wider diversity of participants, is also adopted in North City by the Principal Sports Development Officer, who argues that,

*... So its trying to positively move barriers that prevent people from participating rather than saying, this is an Asian ladies swimming session, and I would say that is not the way we should be working. What we're doing is recognising barriers that may stop Asian women participating in this particular event, so by providing that particular opportunity we don't exclude groups.*

West Town Council's equal opportunities policy, which emphasises how aware workers must be in keeping its social objectives close to everything that happens in implementation, is tested at times like these. The senior officer (area manager) went a stage further and contradicted the vision of the authority and ultimately implied that it was unrealistic given the pressures the officers are under of trying to meet more immediate priorities such as balancing accounts. He went on to argue that,

*..... I shouldn't be talking about ethnicity, disability, women's issues and other community issues in terms of luxury products [which is perhaps a reference to the counter culture in sports development], but the fact is that if you are not meeting your targets, they are in inverted commas, in my opinion "luxury activities" because it doesn't matter what the vision of the policy, aims and objectives are, if you're not meeting the targets, unless somebody is going to underwrite that for you, if you're half a*

*million down on your overall budget, you ain't got time to be thinking about international days for the disabled, you're worrying about how you can increase our turnover in the bar, where your next major income event's going to come from.*

To briefly digress, the view on racial-equality as a luxury around this time was being challenged by the Chair of the Equalities Committee in Birmingham (Benjamin 1996). His position was that race-equality needed to be defended and warranted chief officer status, hence Birmingham's subsequent advertisement in the Local Government Chronicle. This topic was one being debated in North City as different ideologies emerged between the contracted out officers who in particular are focused on facilities and those involved in sports development. According to Ellis (1994) and Escott (1996) most sports development sections were not contracted out mainly due to the difficulties of not being able to quantify their work, which is not surprisingly, developmental and therefore qualitative. However they have to work with colleagues who manage facilities and it is at this juncture where ideologies clash and are recreated, resisted or reinforced in assumptive worlds. As a result of this quirk of C.C.T. in sports provision, development officers are clients of the direct services organisation (DSO) therefore they were able to be more detached from the running of contracts and thus more reflective on the process. Of the tensions and outcomes of C.C.T. a senior sports development officer for North City (community) outlined some of the issues raised which impacted on the authority's ability to work towards equal opportunities,

*...If you're in an income producing area you may say right, you've got to produce much more income so then, putting bums on seats sort of thing, rather than a balanced programme and I think that's one thing that's a bit of a bone of contention as far as leisure centres are concerned. They could fill the place each night with aerobics, and so on - now that is good from an income point of view, but does it give other people the opportunity?*

Here is another area of contestation for those working towards equality in North City and West Town. There is a sense of those under the direct regulation of C.C.T. and impending Best Value being under much more pressure to meet bottom-line indicators than those on the periphery such as senior sports development staff. The new contract culture forced upon local authorities by the Conservatives in the 1980s made them consider the aims and objectives of what they actually did rather than a blind acceptance

that sport is good and 'for all' (Coalter 1998). The discourse of quality, increased markets, bottom-line, and reduced 'dead time', appeal to these sports providers who have themselves generally embraced a more commercial market oriented style of management. This extra framework for the officers concerned could be seen as more crucial an organising factor than equality principles, given the consequences for staff who do not meet their financial targets, they may become unemployed, lose their bonus or can be seen as under-performing. Whereas without very clear equality indicators, equality of opportunity becomes a low priority. At the same time as promoting consumer sovereignty these officers find it relatively easy to ignore social inequalities in sport. This point was not lost on the Chair of Recreation Services in North City, who had the problem brought to his attention by senior officers and members of his local community,

*...I've spoken to sufficient Asian cricketers and sufficient Afro Caribbean footballers and Asian footballers for that matter, at local level here [...], and they've given me enough anecdotal examples of things which have happened to them for me to know that just because North City Council says it believes in equal opportunities, well it means nothing unless we positively do things to try to change the culture in which we live in.*

He planned in the second round of contracting to alleviate the inequities caused by the first,

*.....I don't intend to take the lowest tender just because it could possibly save money, as I have social objectives which need to be written into the contracts so that it takes into account things like .....there needs to be an increase in the amount of local community people who use the centres,..... there will also be specs written in about ethnic minority use of facilities which was not in there before...*

Although these are laudable commitments emanating from the councillor a question must be asked about how the system managed to omit these ideals in such an important process. It seems as though the machine that is the bureaucracy can exclude and include people, ideas, and policy according to how assumptive worlds are framed by key actors. Here equal opportunities was ignored/marginalised in the name of expediency, efficiency and what some would see as the external pressure from central government

(Clarke 1994, Clarke 2000). What the councillor is describing helps to unravel how rational equality policy principles are being contested and subverted by the particularistic framing of institutional problems. In effect what can be seen here is that where two authorities are working to incorporate C.C.T. or Best Value into their overall operating procedures, even where one has a clear strategic commitment and edge in terms of a 'race' focus, there can still emerge an 'appreciative gap' in both contexts between what is expected on a policy level and how individuals interpret what is required on a micro level. This interpretive gap has been a source of some conjecture for policy analysts but for those with a critical insight into appreciative contexts and assumptive worlds reasons reduce down to the prioritising of the opinions, attitudes and in particular ideologies that act as catalysts for action and outcomes. These are the 'rules and resources we draw upon that are the medium of our activity' (Layder 1994:134). Giddens and Pierson (1998) describe this process as making use of conventions that are 'going on in the world' on a daily basis.

### **Ethnic Monitoring in West Town**

The challenge for the authority to improve its performance came from the Principal Equal Opportunities Officer who argued that West Town needs to move beyond publicising its vision and equality policies and move towards a more rigorous process of monitoring. This is something recognised in North City as a sign that action is being taken and the authority is becoming responsible for its plans for equality. As Ohri and Faruqi (1988) argue, systematic monitoring and evaluation will give a sport and recreation department a very clear message as to whether or not it is achieving what it set out to achieve using its own methodology and discourse. In implementation the authority cannot rely upon the data that is being received because, by the Equalities Officer's reckoning, it is anecdotal and ad hoc rather than systematic, rigorous and clearly rationalised. This has been suggested in West Town in the light of ad hoc monitoring with differing degrees of rigour in and around the sport and recreation section. In this respect there are examples of bar staff checking people for ethnicity from videos of customers in sports centre reception areas. This type of methodology reflects poorly on the authority and opens a window onto the domain of 'race' and ethnicity issues in the assumptive world here. The West Town Equality Officer's challenge proposed that,

*...Each authority has a policy now, and people sort of like wave the policy now, and promote the policy now, but that's not enough. We need to go from the acceptance that people have policies in terms of measuring the practice and that I think is going to be the next challenge for the next five years, and It's a bench mark in the equalities, so that we've got clear measurement of what we have achieved, and equally we can identify that we still have lots to do.*

As stated earlier, the West Town document 'Racial Equality in Sport' aimed to incorporate into all of its work measures to meet the prioritised needs and aspirations of black and ethnic minorities in sport. To varying degrees the authority's officials have consciously engaged with working towards being an equal opportunities organisation and employer. It has actively demonstrated a commitment to equality work, which has some resonance across all of the members of what Stoker (1991) called the joint elite. However there are still gaps in understanding. The Policy Statement on Quality clearly posits that the Council cannot have Equality without a community oriented Quality strategy. Crucially where research has been conducted in human resource management the Council has, by its own reckoning, fallen short of its own ethnicity targets. West Town's employees do not reflect the local community and in a policy document it states that a council whose workforce reflects the community it serves will find it much easier to deliver services sensitive to the community's diversity.

Some inconsistencies in approach to equal opportunities work in West Town are apparent. Reaction to Council policy concerning equality of opportunity has come in the form of ad hoc monitoring of sporting activity within selected centres. In addition monitoring in some cases has occurred where the expertise and methodology has not been appropriate for the intended outcomes of the data. Statistics can be used in a number of ways to show success but ethnic monitoring has moved on from merely putting participants into categories according to the colour of their skin. Monitoring progress and outcomes have moved beyond such statistical or descriptive approaches. Analyses of the perceptions of customers and the lived experiences of employees add an informed context to numerical and descriptive data (Jewson and Mason 1989, Blakemore and Drake 1996). An organisation that plans provision or employment for black people, or measures success based on the number of people coming through the doors to participate, is using crude methods that do not take into account the socio-

economic and cultural diversity that is the rich tapestry of large conurbations. Issues in empirical research, in connection with evaluation and monitoring, suggests that the data collected during an investigation are only as rigorous as the methods used to generate them. A range of methods have been used in the monitoring of ethnicity in West Town human resources unit as the lack of black staff in positions of seniority in the authority has been flagged up on a number of occasions. Recruitment itself has also been considered imbalanced in favour of white able-bodied men, however the strategy of tightening up recruitment processes to take into account the diversity in the local community in an environment of minimum staff turnover could not be seen as proactive. This minimalist view of equal opportunities work has been shown to reinforce the status quo and maintain the corporate culture rather than challenge it. Further, the major players in the policy process, i. e. the councillors, who by the admission of the Head of Leisure Services, make policy, tend to exclude women and black people in their ranks. It can be seen that the peripheral sub-committees are where black people and women are represented. The most powerful networks in the development of sport policy in West Town have a definite anglo-white male hegemony, which has been defended over the years. Here lies a question which may require introspection and reflection by those involved in proactive change in West Town. Measures of success could possibly start here.

West Town has been proactive with many equal opportunities issues especially in its development of Equality 2000 (its adapted national standards), and other examples of good practice could be listed at will by many of the respondents. This is recorded against a backdrop of regular financial cuts handed to the authority from central government. These cuts in a way may have hardened the resolve of officers in the authority to keep an eye on the 'bottom-line' within their cost centres. Compulsory Competitive Tendering has been seen by some officers as a double edged sword in that it has made the organisation of sport more efficient but not necessarily more effective in equality terms. Words like 'luxury', market, cost, ability to pay, and bottom-line have been linked directly with the rationale for the delivery of provision for disadvantaged groups. In addition to the profit centred nature of some respondents the feeling that equal opportunities policies were anti-competitive was exemplified within the statement which argued that equal opportunities policies are easy to write but much harder to implement in practice. This type of statement emphasises what some writers and

practitioners see as the mismatch between policy formulation and policy implementation.

### **South City**

The new structure of the Sport and Community Recreation department reflects this creative 'Best Value' oriented revision of services. What in effect is happening here is a rationalisation of the council services and a separating out of functions into Core Business, and business that can be specified as Internally Provided (according to efficiency gains) and Externally Provided (partnership work). The Assistant Director of Leisure said that they call this their 'solar model' due to the way these spheres of activity intersect. Crucially the new structure in South City emphasises what many local authorities have been trying to do in recent years and that is to withdraw from being a front line provider to becoming more of an enabler (Cochrane 1994). This is reinforced through the 'Core Business' of Sport and Community Recreation where three priorities are identified:-

- Facilitating involvement in local decision-making processes.
- Stimulating and supporting partnership arrangements with the community and external bodies.
- Ensuring that City Council supported services provide best value.

There is a movement in the authority away from a traditional paternal provider to a more progressive arms length facilitator school-of-thought that sponsors extended governance. In effect what is happening in South City is that it is changing the nature of local authority bureaucracies (structurally at least) to what is described as a 'core-periphery' model. Internal and external providers are having their targets set by the 'core' whilst at the same time allowing external suppliers the autonomy they need within the core values of the Council. In discussion with the Assistant Head of Leisure and earlier with the Chair of Parks and Open Spaces concerns regarding equality targets and Trust provision became a little clearer. One way the sport and community recreation section has tried to ensure that an accessible service is developed is through writing access clauses into service agreements with the Trusts. This step puts an obligation on



the Trusts so that the Council has conditions like community use agreements, and management agreements in place about what rights of access they will have in return for the grant aid they contribute. The Assistant Director was conscious of the tension between equality targets for the Trust and the impact this would have on his budget. He seemed reluctant to apply the equal opportunities policy of the authority as he had to underwrite any deficit by the Trusts. His major worry was if 'quality' time instead of 'dead ' time is allocated to groups with less disposable income then the Trusts will generate less income over the year and if this amounts to a loss then the city has to make up the balance. He argues that,

*... In general terms, for me to establish the parameters for equal opps. for them (Trusts), I have to take account of broader balances. You have to bear in mind that the City Council has a deficit guarantee with the Trust, in other words if the Trust doesn't achieve its budget the city council underwrites the difference. If I asked the city council, say, stop doing those fifteen aerobic classes and get in these specialist classes or whatever it is, and that costs about £70,000, that's £70,000 that I've got to find, which I haven't got. So I have to balance those considerations alongside the other considerations we've got.*

It is hard to say exactly what was meant by 'balance those considerations out' however, by implication the inference is that the sovereignty of the bottom-line economics of the Trust partnership is being protected at the expense of equality principles, especially practice that might involve loss leading, discounts or other concessions as targeting ploys for low/non-participant groups. Still, the fears of an ungovernable periphery that the Chair of Parks and Open Spaces was alluding to earlier has some foundation here. Equal opportunities work in South City is under pressure as there is pressure for cost cutting and reduced expenditure. Invariably equal opportunities work, which is often a shorthand for low profit activity is seen as one possible area to reduce expenditure. Examples of the impact of reducing budgets on equal opportunities work in the authority involves the concessionary work which needs a heavier subsidy than the average work in the sport and recreation division. As the Chair of the Leisure Committee commented,

*Certainly the approach to Equal Opps is not a bolt on issue,*

However where equality work is not mainstream there is always the risk of it being stymied during times when cost is the main expedient at the expense of core values. The two equality officers were less praiseworthy of the implementation of equal opportunities in the authority. They contradicted their Chair of Leisure when they agreed with the senior disability officer's point that,

*... I guess again, like with disability, there's still a lot of work to be done. And I still think there is so much more work to be done, to the point where the equity issues are integrated with all aspects of work. At the moment its an add-on, from my own work, I tend to feel as though I'm adding on to other people's responsibilities rather than them incorporating it into their day to day work. But that's going to take a decade of re-education.*

Lipsky (1993) suggests that those involved in implementation or 'street level bureaucrats' try to do their best under adverse conditions and develop techniques to 'salvage service and decision-making values within limits imposed upon them by the structure of their work' as seen in West Town and North City. However there is still anxiety where concessions are applied towards targeted groups who have been traditionally disadvantaged in sport in South City and further due to the possible financial losses that this may entail for the authority. The Director of Leisure Services articulated the strain that a redistributive stance on equality in the authority would have upon them.

*...And for every positive action session, you might want to buy in a programme in a sports centre, if it was certainly bought at a time which could have been sold on the market at a very profitable price, there is arguably a cost to your profitability of putting on those programmes, and how do you work those relationships through?*

South City is trying to 'work these relationships through' in that they are still providing opportunities that have a focus on the black community. However reference to positive action and more radical redistributive policies rings the same alarm bells for the Director of Leisure in South City as it did for officers in North City and West Town who were prepared to 'drop dogs', 'keep cash cows' or 'line dancing everywhere' in the pursuit of maximum income. In terms of a hierarchy of priorities one can see how economics in terms of a rejection of redistributive action trumps the proactive

politically orientated action intended to redress years of inequality. Given that Best Value was seen by Thomas (2000) and the Home Office (2001) as an opportunity for local authorities to adopt a broader collectivist vision on equal opportunities it seems that this opportunity is at times being squandered in South City. It can be evidenced that each authorities' preoccupation with a new managerialist zeal is having a significant effect on their efforts to combat the processes that culminate into institutional discrimination and racism which has plagued local government no matter which regulatory regime has been the operational framework for its activities.

### **Ethnic Monitoring in South City**

One of the institutional practices that holds back advancements in equal opportunities in the city revolve around the monitoring issues that have impacted both North City and West Town. On the issue of monitoring there was no consensus in South City on the form it should take and when it occurred and as a result how successful the authority was in its work around equality. Both development officers with a responsibility for equality work in the authority lacked confidence in how sports professionals in the authority engaged with measuring the quality of their work and therefore evidencing success. The Assistant Director of Leisure & Head of Sport and Community Recreation reinforced this by stating,

*... Well, to monitor something you've got to measure it haven't you. So if you were to ask me what we would do to measure our work with ethnic minority groups - we don't, there is no systematic way of measuring.*

The work with Trusts does not escape the gaze of those not fully satisfied by the way the authority has pursued feedback on its work. Further in some instances, just as in North City, they have not set out clear parameters to be measured against in the written contracts with external partners. Senior officers have recognised the lack of sophistication in the planned outcomes from contracts. For example they have failed to set specific targets in their access clauses which focus appropriately on reaching disadvantaged or under-represented groups in the authority.

How connected officers are with what is needed as a result of this lack of focus is something that the Chair of the Equalities Committee could not confidently comment upon due to this shortfall in strategic direction. A practitioner's view of the results of equality work is sometimes different to colleagues involved in discussing and making policy. The effective implementation of policy can sometimes change daily and therefore the results of such work can best be commented on by those delivering according to the values of the 'core' work of the authority. The Assistant Head of Sport and Community Recreation gave a reflective view of the progress of the department he works in,

*... So, in terms of how do I think we're doing, I don't think we're doing very well. But I don't think that that's particularly a comment on equal opportunities, but it's a comment upon the coherence of our decision-making.*

On another level the Sports Development Officer with responsibility for Black and Ethnic Minority work (line managed by the Asst. Head in the city) concurred with her two colleagues in suggesting that equal opportunities should ideally be a part of the daily work of sports development professionals in the authority so that there would not need to be a specific post focusing on black and ethnic minorities or disability. As it is, she feels that there is, and will be in the future, a need for posts like hers as progress is not moving as quickly as it could be<sup>vii</sup>.

South City has been involved in good practice in sport and recreation development in the past. On occasions when councillors and senior officers become introspective they can often ask questions of themselves which people from the outside like myself might be more circumspect about. One such instance with the Chair of the Resources Committee came into focus when the success of work concerning equality in the authority was under consideration. Comment on South City's progress was offered by the Assistant Head of Sport and Community Recreation and the Chair of Resources who was concerned about working with Trusts in the city. He feels that South City must be very clear in articulating its equal opportunities requirements to the Trust otherwise, as happened with C.C.T., citizens of the authority will not get what is intended for them in the corporate mission of the authority. This is something that South City is working towards although they are struggling to complete Trust agreements. This is due to the

pressured timescales that also forced North City to ignore their social objectives in the first round of contracting. This was reinforced by the Head of Leisure Services who stated that,

*...We've still got to develop I think more sophisticated outcomes that we're wanting from that relationship, so for instance, [on the topic that you asked me on Equal Opps.] - the relationship doesn't specify yet about, you know, whether we've got specific targets about reaching certain groups. I still firmly believe we've got to move towards that, because the obligations are about recognising the city council's equal opps. policies.*  
(Head of Leisure Services)

## **SUMMARY**

From the narrative in this chapter the appreciative contexts emerging each of the officers and councillors offers differing perspectives on the dominant processes that structure the success of equal opportunities in their authorities. Assumptive worlds are constructed according to the relatively easily changed opinions of actors to the more established ideological blueprint in which to interpret the world (Young 1977, 1979, 1983, 1992). A critical reading of these local authority contexts reveals a gateway to the multiple realities that Rosenberg (1989) and Wolman and Cook Ford III (1996) have considered to be the reasons behind why the same policy is often processed in contradictory ways. These multiple perspectives also helped me to see how actions or inactions by individual actors have emerged out of their understanding and evaluation of what is acceptable or right in a given context. For example the Area Manager and the Lead Officer (DSO) in West Town *know* to put bottom-line concerns first just as the contract writers in North City *know* that they can write binding contracts that ignore social objectives, whilst in South City the tension between Trusts and the Core Management around social objectives are marginalised for economic reasons. Given the ontological starting point of this research a further analysis of the narrative above highlights three themes which can be identified across each authority that dominate the way the assumptive worlds of councillors and senior officers are structured. They revolve around the conceptualisation of equal opportunities, policy tensions or confusions and colour-blindness, however they can not be seen as mutually exclusive.

They are interconnected as each have a part to play in reifying the assumptive world of each interviewee. These themes all contribute to the knowledge formation about equal opportunities in the assumptive world of each authority. It is information like this that actors will base their opinions, attitudes and ideologies about their assumptive worlds and therefore the acceptability of their dominant practices. These themes are further developed in chapter seven.

## **CHAPTER 6: VOLUNTARY BLACK AND ETHNIC SPORT NORTHSHIRE: A PERIPHERAL VIEW OF RACE-EQUALITY IN PUBLIC SECTOR SPORT**

VBES is the acronym for the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport Forum<sup>viii</sup>. It is committed to equality of opportunity and antiracism in sport and recreation for black people in Northshire. This commitment was in recognition of the disparity in the representation of black people as administrators and managers in sport as opposed to purely participants (Jarvie 1991b, Hylton 1999, Long et.al 2000). In this chapter Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's progress as a notable actor in the regional sports policy network is outlined, additionally its wish to develop a commitment to proactive race-equality strategies by public sector agencies is also considered. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's achievements in terms of its aims and objectives are highlighted as it provokes regional governing organisations to increase their efforts to develop sport for black people. Importantly the aims and objectives of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in the light of the findings from chapter 5 introduce us to a different world where black people are turning the volume up on their own voice and have adopted a discourse of transformation, emancipation and politicisation. Here the impact of the outcomes of local authority interventions in sport for and with black people emerge out of the lived experiences of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as 'outsider'.

This ethnography of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is not intended to be a direct response to the three authorities in chapter five. It is intended here to outline how institutional structures have systematically and summarily excluded black people from the policymaking and implementation processes in sport, and why black people in Northshire have felt it necessary to resist this. It was stated in chapter four that rather than use the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport ethnography as a direct response to the findings of chapter five the experiences of VBES would instead act as a barometer of success in the region through following their concerns and agendas in the research period from 1996-2000. This opportunity to appreciate the black client-eye view of race-equality issues that pertain, not just to the three authorities, but also the others in the region, has allowed the thesis to temper the normative assessments of progress in race-equality in sport generally emerging from established professionals in local government. Views from VBES critically challenge what is and should be happening across the region. The alternative discourse presented here is one that leisure and sport

studies writers have argued is little known and is therefore worthy of further exploration in the academy (Henderson 1988, Hemingway and Parr 2000, Johal 2001).

This overview of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport results in the researcher charting its development, and allowing the terms of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's cause to define the issues, problems, or concerns for local government racial equality. The findings suggest that the outcomes of local authority practices have meant that accounts inside local authorities have perhaps been less critically reflective on their own actions than more involved individuals and groups on the outside such as VBES. A key outcome of this means that the appreciative contexts and assumptive world discourses from Chapter 5 no longer remain the narrow foci for analysis, critical pedagogy and epistemological consideration (Ladner 1990, Ladson Billings 1998, Lather 1991, Delgado and Stefancic 2000).

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport occupy a space in a regional sport policy network that, I soon realised whilst in the field, was paradoxical. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's existence contests the discourse of equality within the public sector, which presents local government sport as equitable in terms of the development and implementation of sports policy/practice. The historical developments that led members of a black and white sports network to challenge the cumulative negative outcomes of public sector activity are illustrated here. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's story is a counter-story, a competing discourse, an alternative paradigm that situates the black experience of sport in a process that constrains as it liberates, empowers as it disempowers, includes as it excludes (Goldberg 1993, Nebeker 1998, Ladson-Billings 1998, Delgado and Stefancic 2000).

Delgado's (2000) argument that 'ingroups' create their own stories applies here to the public commitments by local authorities to equality. These are the symbolic pledges that typify local authorities' standpoints (see Chapters 3 and 5). 'Outgroups' like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport aim to subvert that reality, hence Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's forceful objectives (below) that place racism and equality of outcome in local authorities as two of their primary concerns<sup>ix</sup>.



## Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's Nine Objectives

1. To promote sport and physical recreation in Northshire for Black and Ethnic Minorities (BEM)
2. To promote the development of sport for local Black and Ethnic Minority groups in the region.
3. To bring together BEM community representatives, recreation and leisure services officers, community sports development officers and officials of sports governing bodies to discuss sports race equity issues and other related matters in the context of BEM participation.
4. To enhance consultation processes between sports providers and representatives of Black and Ethnic Minorities.
5. To promote equality of opportunity and outcome for Black and Ethnic Minorities in:
  - Sports participation including administration officiating and coaching.
  - The pursuit of excellence.
  - **Representation in sports management and administration in local authorities, governing bodies and the voluntary sector.**
  - Media coverage
6. To encourage the provision of educational and training opportunities in sport and recreation for Black and Ethnic Minorities.
7. To raise the awareness, and develop an understanding among sports providers of racism in sport, and its impact on the ability of members of Black and Ethnic Minorities to access opportunities in sport.
8. To give participants the opportunity to share experiences of good practice.
9. To oppose racism in sport at all levels.

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's 'story' is one told by the researcher as he interprets their experiences and presents them not as narrative but as a series of events and observations, which aggregate into a black experience of 'the system'. It is about inequality, social justice, institutional racism and exclusion, where local authorities choose to focus on less emotive, morally difficult to contest, and yet public sector discourse of working towards improved services for all. What we get here is a re-framing of the outcomes of race-equality in sport by those who experience it (Smith 1999). To reiterate, this story of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's constitution and

development is not a direct criticism of those voices or ‘ingroups’ inside the local authorities in chapter five. It is however a reflexive account of responses to the cumulative outcomes of public sector sport provision. These experiences stand as a testimony to contested racialised spaces, alternative accounts of race-equality in sport and counter-storytelling.

A counter-story....challenges the majoritarian story or that bundle of pre-suppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings persons in the dominant ‘race’ bring to the discussion of ‘race’.  
(Solorzano and Yosso 2001: 475)

### **Emancipatory Ideals: Establishing an Agenda for Change**

The initial idea for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was proposed in 1995 and it started seminally as a sub-committee of the then Northshire Sports Council. The sub-committee developed out of a Black and Ethnic Minorities working party chaired by the Regional Director of the Sports Council. It was designed to consider the major issues facing the Sports Council at a time when they were considering their record on equal opportunities and race-relations (Lyons 1991). It was this group made up of individuals, professional sports development officers, and co-opted parties, both black and white, who suggested that there might be a need for an independent black sports forum to support black people where governing bodies, local authorities, Sport England<sup>x</sup> and voluntary groups were concerned. In March 1996 I attended a seminar with forty other people there to see if there was a need for such a regional group. This seminar entitled 'Building a Working Partnership; setting up a dialogue' seminar was successful in introducing a number of new people to the goals of a black and minority ethnic sports forum. Workshops that included voluntary groups, regional governing bodies, local authority representation and Sports Council officers concluded with a commitment to stay involved until such a forum was constituted. The seminar included speakers from the Sports Council head quarters as well as the Northshire region, senior local authority staff including North City, West Town and South City, voluntary organisations and academics. Further, it was argued at this seminar that as an independent constituted

pressure group it would be free to set its own agenda. So in June 1996 a draft provisional constitution for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was circulated for comment.

It was a laboured point from this group that the new forum stays independent as it was felt that local authorities and the Sports Council had been moving too slowly when it came to racial equality in sport and that an organisation without allegiances might hurry them along without fear of being manipulated. The chance for a black group to take up a position to voice their own concerns at the same time as challenging the hegemony of the past was an opportunity they knew was rarely afforded to outgroups.

Grant (1978) proposes that the resources available to a group are important indicators of an effective organisation. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is at an early stage but there are words of warning from Bishop and Hoggett (1986) and Stoker (1988) who talk of the life of an interest/pressure group taking three phases. The first phase like a new life is the most vulnerable, however the forum in Northshire has moved through this stage into youthful exuberance due to its relative success in developing interest in its activities. How mature and effective the forum becomes comes down to the decisions that it has to take through its executive group. The Forum does not yet have a regular stable source of funding. There is provision in its constitution, which allows it to raise funds from associate member organisations, but this has not developed fully due to the early stage in the growth of the organisation. Small organisations need a strategic plan which would incorporate a clear statement of aims and objectives, a structure to work within, a plan of regular activities incorporating a prioritised action plan to enable a planning cycle to commence and a vision for the future (Gann 1996). VBES has recognised this and writes a comprehensive yearly plan of activity not least because the regional Sports Council gave £5000 of funding to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as a gesture of support until it could get its own funding stream after constitution<sup>xi</sup>. It was established in my discussions with the VBES members and Sports Council officers that this funding was also about working with the Sports Council to address their own inability to widen the sporting franchise to minority ethnic groups in the region, hence the need for detailed monitoring and reports. It was clear to the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive that relying on this funding could not continue especially if the funding was withdrawn in three years as planned. Further, if VBES intended to escape the hegemony of funding institutions and maintain its independence and integrity it

needed to consider the terms behind funding from any external agency. The Sports Council have a clear agenda tied into their overall strategic plan and VBES therefore became one of its stakeholder partners, so a shared agenda is assumed and specific outcomes are therefore expected by the Sports Council. This the members were concerned might derail items on their own agenda, though pragmatism meant that they would attempt to anticipate this with other agencies rather than refuse to work in partnership.

### **VBES' Representational Form**

So the members saw external partnerships and funding as a double-edged sword, West's (1993) analysis of the representational forms that black people may turn to, so they do not have to survive by relying too much on mainstream institutions for approval and acceptance, captures some of the discussions that occurred amongst the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members. West's fourth type is the one that particularly relates to VBES, however, it is useful at this stage to consider the other three. The first strategy type is one that involves them being located in the mainstream thus gaining acceptance by the main purse holders and seats of power. The historical problem here is that black people within large institutions in the UK have tended to be marginalised and their critical emergent thought tempered by the dominant hegemonic projects they found themselves involved in. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was not in a position to start life off as a widely accepted addition to the sports policy network in Northshire, so it could not immediately locate itself in this area of the elite habitus of power anyway. We will see later how over time Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport took this path as it interacted with more established network agents. The second type involves a group like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport representing the black community as a spearhead or leading intellectual force for the 'less talented' masses. This strategy has the problem of perpetuating stereotypes about the capacity for transformational thought and activity being vested in only a few individuals 'of colour' (West, 1993). Thus the 'talented tenth' strategy brings up dated issues around biological determinism and intelligence. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's constitution talks about its position as a representative/advocate for the black community it engages with the discourse of community development, capacity building and transformation but does not engage with the discourse of super-intellectualism. My thoughts on this as I interacted with the

members was that if I presented them with this notion of the talented tenth I would be the object of some derision and perhaps ostracised myself as someone who did not understand the end game that they were involved in. The talented tenth accusation I expect would have been one they would be prepared to accept if their objectives were realised. In a way arguments like these are a luxury for organisations like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport especially where more serious problems need their attention.

West's (1993) third type involves a separatist strategy brought to prominence in the sixties with the Black Panther movement and the latter-day Moslems. Amongst the objects of the new Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport constitution are commitments to both equality of opportunity and outcome, and there was also a specific object to challenge racism in sport, especially as the impact of racism on the experiences of black people was finding a place on the agenda at this time (Long et. al. 1995, Long et. al. 1997). There are merits to this type of radical/extreme strategy and it has been demonstrated as a necessity by some sports groups, not just in Northshire but all over the country where the 'whitestream' provision has let them down or racism experienced by participants has caused many to turn their backs and set up a club or league system with a sympathetic and emancipatory edge<sup>xii</sup>. However, there are serious issues here around how groups like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport might gain access to resources and equality without engaging with the mainstream. Organisations like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport, who have reached the stage of a dialogue with the establishment, are less likely to engage in this level of overtly radical activity and I did not witness any such activity in the field. In fact a mixture of strategies that included incremental and political agitation enabled Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to gain some success over the fieldwork period (see Appendix 7).

West (1993) has argued that the only way for black groups like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to work is by enabling the networking of black and white progressives in an atmosphere of trust, confidence and reliance which does not curtail any 'individual expressions, curiosities and idiosyncrasies'. The overarching message here, which fits the views and position of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport the closest, is that of maintaining with integrity as a group that which is valuable to the black community, but without excluding those agents with a positive social agenda within the policy network. Further, if resistance is encountered co-option onto other groups becomes unnecessary

where they can manage the needs of the group from outside the system (Hain 1976). Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport has acted as a catalyst for proactive change and partnerships with local voluntary groups/organisations, local authorities and Sport England regionally and nationally. Lyons (1991) comments on the need for Sports Council action in this area as they admitted that their paternalistic view of delivery was insufficient to satisfy the needs and aspirations of black communities<sup>xiii</sup>. There was also the issue of providers failing to understand the needs of their own diverse local communities that came through clearly in the early consultation seminars. The Sports Council included both itself, its partner governing bodies and government-supported organisations, in criticism of its own activities. Specifically they stated that there was not an effective consultation mechanism that was sensitive enough to diverse black populations. This was still the case in the Sports Council's national policy document for black and ethnic minorities five years later (Sports Council 1994a). It was generally recognised by professionals in the region that this brief history provided by sports policy makers gives a backdrop showing why the regional Sports Council in Northshire initiated its work with black and ethnic minorities. Similarly another justification for the Sports Council's involvement came through one of its key corporate aims to 'ensure equal opportunities in provision of sport and recreation for black and ethnic minorities' recognising the needs of specific groups in a context of cultural diversity (Sports Council 1994a: 7).

### **A Comment on Public Sector Performance: Forming a Critical Mass**

The aims of the original sub-committee who were charged to focus on racial equality were quite simple. They were to bring together 'black and ethnic minority' representatives, sports development officers and other interested parties to share the experiences of black communities when accessing (or not) sports facilities, services and opportunities. They wanted also to examine the sports 'equity' strategies in operation amongst the region's sport and recreation providers aimed at removing the barriers to sports participation and job opportunities that were so apparent to them. They were also interested in finding out whether there was any desire to establish a group that would focus on black and ethnic minority issues in the region, and act as a consultative body. These first steps were in response to a number of significant issues. The Sports Council as the national organisation for sports development in the UK has struggled to achieve

equality of opportunity for black people in terms of the quality and level of participation in sport and similarly in its own employment practices even in recent times. There is much evidence of this both inside and outside of the Council, which slates its own weaknesses in this area of sports provision (WMCSR 1990, Sports Council 1994a, Wheeler 2000). Considering these challenges it was a highly adventurous or pragmatic move for a region of the then English Sports Council to begin a concerted development in this area of good. Northshire did this by enlisting the part time assistance of Will McKenzie, a community activist in the black community, to guide a project that quickly caught the imagination of other black and white professionals interested in the development of sport for black people.

In addition to the Building a Working Partnership (BWP) seminar there have been a number of milestone events and collaborations, which have contributed to the confirmation of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as an emergent organisation in the sports policy network. The first important meeting that set the agenda for the 'Building a Working Partnership' seminar occurred in November 1995 was funded by the Northshire Sports Council and held in the Sports Council regional head quarters in North City. It concluded that there needed to be a dialogue established between local authorities, governing bodies and the black community. These disparate voices, both black and white, were agreeing that there was a minimum of understanding of cultural needs and interaction between local authorities governing bodies and their local communities. Approximately 25 delegates attended this 'Breaking the Barriers' meeting. The delegates came from across the region with representatives mainly coming from most local authorities and a few voluntary groups. The delegates unanimously agreed on the need for a developed dialogue with crucial agencies in the sports decision-making community. A number of delegates agreed that black people were disadvantaged by their local authority and Sports Council activity. Their concerns revolved around cultural insensitivity and the lack of black people as role models or in positions of influence. This was to be the basis for the rationale for the Mill Town (BWP) conference in the spring of 1996. When Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was constituted later in 1996 the nine objectives outlined earlier were tabled as the foundation for its future work.

## **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport – Forming A Pressure Group**

Baggott (1995), Simpson (1999) and Grant (2000) all consider how groups established with a view to influencing policy should be referred to. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members never discussed with me how others should best frame the category of organisation type they fell under. Although the terms ‘interest group’, ‘pressure group’ and ‘cause group’ are often used interchangeably there is a difference between them (Wilson and Stoker 1991). Interest and cause groups are seen as types of pressure group; Baggott (1995) argues that interest groups are typical of limited membership groups so only potential members with the correct background, personal academic or professional, can be admitted. Therefore the aims of an interest group are more likely to be about furthering the self-interests of its membership. Cause groups, like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport, are more often described as organisations defending or representing some principle or belief (Simpson 1999), and they do not exist primarily for the self-interest of their members (Baggott 1995). Grant (2000) would even suggest that although the turnover is high in cause groups, they are more likely to have more enthusiastic numbers due to the political nature of the cause. Even though Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport could be viewed as a cause group it must be understood that the interest versus cause group debate can be misleading, as an interpretation of these readings might see interest groups as insiders and cause groups as outsiders and this is too neat a distinction for this case (Simpson 1999). On an academic level the distinctions are clear, but it is often only at the empirical level that either type of group can be accurately viewed as an insider or outsider. Due to the many definitions of what constitutes a pressure group authors have satisfied themselves by choosing acceptable descriptions from others. For Example Wilson and Stoker (1991:2) are happy to use the short statement that a pressure group is ‘any group which tries to influence public policy without seeking the responsibility of government’. However it is the intention of this work to use the term pressure group to incorporate discussions of both interest and cause groups and where reference is made to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport the term pressure group will be utilised. Grant’s (2000) working definition of a pressure group states that,



A pressure group is an organisation which seeks as one of its functions to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy.....  
(Grant 2000:14)

This working definition is wide ranging and incorporates pressure groups at all levels from local to transnational. Similarly the definition includes organisations with party political aims at the same time as those with a specific social interest or cause such as Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport. Grant's working definition is broad enough not to alienate the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members views of what they do and therefore is adopted here.

### **In The Field: Making Contact, and Getting 'Inside'**

In wanting to gain a critical perspective of the black outsider's view of race-equality in local government sports provision I considered a number of options during the course of this research. Matsuda's (1995) view that black people or people who have experienced discrimination 'speak with a special voice to which we should listen' encouraged critical black theorists to 'look to the bottom' for answers. One way I initially thought to do this was by consulting black residents able to critically reflect upon the three case study authorities' performance. Given the part-time nature of this study it was logistically too difficult to try and establish links with the local black communities of North City, West Town and South City. It made some sense to do this but my capacity as a part-time researcher mitigated against it. For me the emergence of a black sports pressure group that would eventually be named Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was a stroke of luck and a piece of opportunism that reaped dividends. As the only regional black sports organisation with a profile amongst the local authorities and influential policy makers in public sector sport in the region it was a chance to see and hear at first hand what black people thought about their place in and experience of local sport structures. I was particularly fortunate in gaining access to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as noted in Chapter 4, however it is worth at this juncture just re-establishing my position with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport and perhaps why I was able to get close to the key actors in this black sports pressure group.

As other ethnographers have established themselves in groups through key contacts I too was able to gain such an unequivocal position with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport (Whyte 1996). Whyte's tale of gaining access to 'Cornerville' revolved around his friendship with 'Doc' a well known community leader, mine revolved around Will. In 1995 When I was forming my methodology I spoke to him in his position as the Sports Council's part-time regional coordinator for black and ethnic minority sport (Northshire). When I explained to him that I was 'doing research into race-equality/equal opportunities in local government' he was quick to tell me about his past senior position in equal opportunities in a local authority and his activism in black sport in the region. He was also keen to inform me that he was willing to help and work with me as we were likely to need each others help in the future. At this point I was sure that Will was viewing me in the way Reinhartz (1997) describes a researcher's multiple selves (see Chapter four). Will would have seen me as an ally who was able to bring a number of facets to his cause as a black male, black researcher, black academic, involved in sports development..... This feeling of multiple identities extended to the meetings I attended during the study as I also found it necessary to introduce a strategic selection of selves at any one time. Still it was at this meeting with Will where I opened up an invaluable dialogue and friendship with the key player where it came to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport and race-equality in sport in the region.

Will had a heavy Caribbean/South Northshire lilt. Having grown up with an aunt who has a heavy Jamaican/Blackburn accent typified by each sentence being prefixed with 'do you not want' before being finished in a flurry of patois I found this less problematic than others in the regional sport network. I also found that some of the influential white regional officers were uncomfortable with this accent and would on occasion patronise or marginalise his point until it was made by another colleague who spoke a little closer to the way they did. As in the local authority contexts in Chapter 4 there is a definite white middle class male hegemony that is not culturally diverse and less likely to meet people like Will in their regular business. I wondered if this might have something to do with the conspicuous lack of tolerance by some of these members? This I did not share with Will, but for me it seemed to reinforce his 'outsiderness' even though he himself as a part-time regional coordinator was part of the system for a while and was perhaps learning to 'talk the talk' as often happens to people who interact with a system for long enough? (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991,

Roediger 1998) These observations emphasised how my selection of events and issues, things that I saw as important, constructed the ethnography through the eyes of the researcher (Steier 1995, Emerson et al. 2001). Although I was conscious of the need for a balanced reflection of what happened in the field I did not lose sight of the reflexive race-conscious ontology adopted in Chapter 2, therefore where discussions concerning 'race' and ethnicity were encountered in an open forum such as Advisory meetings, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive meetings, or seminars I felt comfortable in adding my views to a resolution of them.

### **Researcher as 'Insider'**

The research into Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport involved phases of researcher participation that shifted as the group became more established and therefore more active. Using Spradley's typology of participation the researcher in this case shifted from a low degree of involvement with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport, as a passive participant, as it went through its stages of consultation with various individuals and agencies. Previously as a relative onlooker in the black sports network most of my roles involved a low maintenance connection with the Regional Advisory group of the then Sports Council who were instrumental in supporting opportunities to establish the consensus that there was a need for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport. As an individual in the black sports network I was able to stand from my 'observer post' (Spradley 1980) and be a bystander as there were no formal roles to be fulfilled. In fact being part of an advisory group enabled me to contribute to the seminal ideals and formation of such a group because it was *expected* that someone like myself would make such a contribution. Further, had I *not* made my contributions in the early stages it would have been more conspicuous, and my place on such a group queried. As time moved on I became a more active participant moving gradually from an observer as participant to a participant-observer as I was nominated and elected onto the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive at its inaugural meeting. This was forced upon me and took me by surprise in some respects, and so at a time when I was negotiating the culture and tension between the researcher as 'insider' and 'outsider' I actually became an insider (See Burgess 1991 for a further consideration of ideal participant-observer types). At this stage I was considering the impact that I was having upon the group in terms of

changing the course of its development and progress, the way its members interacted with outsiders, the positions it took on certain issues, in short directly affecting the outcomes of the group and the data. After a number of years, and my second opportunity (2000) I stood down as an executive member at the AGM. The research rationale for me at this point was to view the forum from a distance to see how it developed with me as an observer. In the same forum meeting however I was voted onto the executive as a co-opted member thus reinforcing my original suspicions from chapter four that my professional contribution *was expected* in matters concerning 'race' and sport in the region. This position, as a co-optee, resulted in me becoming less involved in the group and yet remain on the inside, and of course by 2001 there were enough experienced volunteers for this role to be deemed superfluous.

### **Lonely on the Inside**

Many researchers will confirm that being in the field is quite an isolating activity, and I found the people and organisations who were aware of my work were interested in my ideas and recommendations but not the process of data gathering, methodology and so forth. For them I was a participant [really an unobtrusive participant as observer as they no longer saw me as a researcher], rather than an observer-participant, which would have made the process less smooth, more mechanical and possibly less realistic and supportive for those directly involved. I tried to fit in by trying to time investigative questions with natural settings. At the end of meetings questions were formed inviting the opinion of those involved in discussions so that there was nothing out of the ordinary about them. On many occasions any contact a certain period after meetings might have seemed rather suspicious and more obtrusive than the more natural settings. After a while events started to repeat themselves to the extent that I knew the views of most of the members on most of the issues and so confirmatory discussions were less necessary beyond the post-meeting discussions that forum members have as a matter of course. After approximately two and a half years I felt confident that I had been in the field long enough to be accepted as a colleague, co-executive and insider rather than academic, researcher and outsider.

Lareau (1996) stated that writing up fieldnotes was always problematic for her. I was fortunate in that the bulk of my encounters were in meetings and thus formalised into an agenda and later written up into minutes that generally reinforced who said what to whom. Some of the stress of furious note-taking around key points in these meetings then was taken away as they were written up and sent to me by each respective secretary. However, the danger of other interpretations entering my data set was countered as I would scribble my thoughts down in meetings where I found it necessary to remind myself of an issue without raising suspicion, as of course other people were doodling or making notes to themselves about points they wanted to raise later. The gathering and shaping of these fieldnotes was a reactive process. Notes, minutes of meetings and later more polished reflections came together in a way that could be described as haphazard just as it could be described as organic. A reading of Emerson et. al. (2001) involved comforting and sobering thoughts as they reinforced this fragmented process when they stated that,

Fieldnotes accumulate set-by-set over time into a larger corpus. That is fieldnotes are produced incrementally on a day-to-day basis, without any sustained logic or underlying principle. (p.35)

When I first entered the field I was conscious of trying to understand power processes, personal dynamics, current issues, political perspectives and outcomes from this melee. This involved rapidly writing up field notes and considering individual comments and in some cases follow up telephone calls with members of meetings to gain a further understanding of the interactions with their view of proceedings. The bulk of the information for this ethnography came from observations and participation in meetings that generally occurred quarterly<sup>xiv</sup> and the boon of having minutes for all meetings sent to me to check as a member of the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive. Thirty six minuted meetings various seminars and ad hoc discussions over four years contributed to my field experience. Throughout this period of 'active ethnography' I had to ensure that the fieldnotes, official minutes and observations were gathered and considered in such a way that I was able to triangulate data. The benefits of triangulation here were not for the research to gain credit with the positivist academic community, but more to ground my emotional self in a reflexive and realistic process of verification and validation. For the findings of any aspect of the research to benefit

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport they needed to stand up to critical challenges and methodological acceptance from the professional and research community without compromising the ontological premise of the research.

### **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport Pen-pictures**

One of the first things I wanted to establish in my fieldnotes about Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was who its main players were. According to Hain (1976) an organisation with the social and community drives of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport draws towards it individuals who in the past have been isolated by the organisation and structure of their working or personal experiences. He suggests that organisations like these enable people to take some control of their own destiny by affecting and effecting change. This was clearly the case for the black professionals linked to the emergent pressure group as they saw the sum of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport being far more influential than its parts. Consequently the forum members have made a point to those established organisations in the sports policy network that they are failing and it is time that there was a critical black voice amongst them. Whatever the motivation for the forum members to be involved the increased level of agency achieved by volunteers in community or pressure groups is an important factor for them to join such a group. My discussions with the key members demonstrated that their ability to influence policy makers and practitioners in their new position as Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive members was a common reason for them to get involved. Considering the extent and range of the possible activities of this forum it is worthwhile taking into account a brief synopsis of its executive members. In their investigation of community groups Bishop and Hoggett (1986) felt it necessary to provide a cameo of those groups/clubs involved. This was necessary as it enabled preconceptions of voluntary groups to be shelved as the reality of these clubs emerged through their reporting. The changes, conflicts and achievements of the forum since its beginnings in 1996 have been enabled and faced by the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive in the sport network in the region, as well as through contacts from other related areas. In the case of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport it is important to develop this backdrop against which to understand its context, the organisation and also the individuals in the forum's executive group.

## **The Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport Executive**

*Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is made up of a chairman, a vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary and two executive members. All of the executive are full-time black sports development professionals based in Northshire. They have been drawn from the areas in the county that have the highest black and culturally diverse populations; Blowden, North City, South City, West Town, and East Borough. Each of the executives has a direct professional and personal line into their local authority or their local community. Each member has worked for their authority and/or their local community for over ten years and yet significantly none at a senior (principal) officer level. This has enabled them to work as advocates for the black community in their geographical area. Although this position is fraught with contradictions in terms of representing or being advocates for a myriad of different ethnic groups and sub-groups, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is trying to be proactive in a less than effective system.*

*The forum was constituted with four executive members and two vice-chairs however, although all of the positions are filled the inactivity of some of these post-holders reflects the inappropriateness of giving any background about the 'missing' members. Not surprisingly the pressures that full-time professionals in voluntary posts experience means that often the first things to be de-prioritised are extra-curricular/voluntary activities.*

### **The Chair**

*The chairman (African Caribbean, South City based) was the head of the Equal Opportunities Unit in South City Council. He was a founder member of the South City and African-Caribbean Cricket Organisation (SCACCO) which has received local and national attention as a well established forward looking multi-sport club for black people. SCACCO also offers training opportunities and related community services for black people in South City and district.*

*The chairman also sits on a national equality advisory group based at the Sport England head quarters and as a result is able to influence sport policy at the highest levels as senior officers in Sport England sit on this group. The chairman was also the*

*appointed 'Race' adviser for the Sports Council-Northshire in 1996 when the idea of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was first mooted. As a result of his early retirement he has been the most active and influential member of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport.*

### **The Vice-Chair**

*The vice-chair (Asian, Blowden based) has been involved in community recreation in Blowden for fifteen years and has been the lead officer in a considerable amount of the city's work around 'race' and sport. Cricket and football initiatives involving research into racism have brought him closer to policy-making actors outside Blowden. He is also the lead officer in the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport project with the Community Sports Development Facilitators.*

### **The Treasurer**

*The treasurer (Asian, Blowden based) is the only active female member of the forum. She has been employed in a joint facility/community development role in Blowden's Recreation Unit for over ten years. She has a specific remit to work with Asian women and has been very successful in generating interest and increasing participation in that respect. She has recently been involved in the setting up of the Blowden Sport Action Zone (SAZ).*

### **The Secretary**

*The secretary (Asian, Northshire region) is the Northshire regional development officer with a national governing body. He has worked for a well established governing body for five years in a full time capacity. He recently stepped down due to the pressure of having to take responsibility for another region.*

### **Executive Members**

*The first executive member (Asian, West Town based) is a development officer with West Town and works with Asian youngsters in the Council's Community Recreation Team (CRT). He is the youngest member of the executive group even though he has been in his authority for nearly ten years.*

*The second executive member was the researcher.*



*There are two inactive members of the executive. One of these members (African-Caribbean) recently left West Town Sports Development Unit, to join the new racial equality in sport partnership between the CRE and Sport England 'Sporting Equals'. She continues to sit on the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport sub-committee, the Regional Advisory, however her commitment was always strained due to work pressures. She now leaves the West Town Sports development Unit without any black female staff.*

*The second inactive post (African-Caribbean) in the executive was held by the coordinator of a West Town equity project. This member has never been in a position to contribute fully to the activities of the forum due to regular demands from the work of the project.*

### **Influential Networks: Processes that Include and Exclude**

The regional sports policy network can be identified by those who are part of a more established configuration of institutions (Marsh and Rhodes 1992). Others like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport enter policy networks often as issue centred groups and therefore inhabit spaces that are less influential, ad hoc, seen as outsiders and needing to work hard to be included, or as Blom-Hansen (1997) suggests 'intrude' in continuous policy decisions. The regional sports policy network can be identified as an aggregation of four main groups that have a restricted membership thus reinforcing its powerful position with members and outsiders. Because the network is quite mature and its members established it could be described as a policy community although using Rhodes and Marsh's (1992) typology it could better be described as an intergovernmental network due to: the centrality of public sector organisations such as local authorities, national governing organisations, Active Sports Forums and related organisations, limited vertical independence, extensive horizontal articulation or ability to penetrate a range of other networks. As with most models Rhodes and Marsh cannot fully describe and categorise real life networks but the intergovernmental characteristics do fit this network reasonably well. The mechanisms that include and exclude (Smith

1993) can be seen by the way these networks as institutions function (Blom-Hansen 1997, Marsh 1998).

In the period of this fieldwork the most influential groups in the region were the Northshire Sports Forum, which included only chief officers from local authorities and related organisations. Similarly the Northshire Federation of Sport and Recreation was constituted as a meeting opportunity for regional governing bodies of sport. These two important committees came together to make up the most influential group called the Northshire Sports Board (NSB). The NSB was made up of regional governing organisations, local authorities and Sport England. In the latter stages of the fieldwork Active Sports Forums were being set up in all of the county's regions. Active Sport is a particularly well-resourced Sport England programme focusing on young people in ten specified sports<sup>xv</sup>. In summary then, any organisation that sits on these new committees is in a position to influence not only their equality policies and practices but also the way resources are distributed across the region.

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's entry into this intergovernmental network that includes inter-organisational institutions like the NSB and single organisational institutions like Sport England or single local authorities like West Town cannot be viewed independent of power relations. Van Waarden's (1992) description of policy networks as institutionalised exchange relations between state and (organisation of) civil society illustrates how Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as a social entity needs to engage those closest to networks of power as a result of their inclusion (or exclusion). Further, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's agenda, which includes challenging racism in sport, and promoting racial equality, is in itself a multi-pronged challenge to those involved in the development of sports policy formulation and implementation in the region. A transformation of racial inequality in sport can happen as a result of a liberal incremental change, which in itself does not guarantee consensus due to its impact on power structures. Conversely others would argue that a more proactive 'race' centred approach would cause these outcomes to be realised more quickly but with more resistance. Both strategies involve a focus on sport as a contested terrain evidenced through; policy formulation, implementation, inter-organisation networking, and a centring of 'race' and equality. Which in itself might change the "rules of the game that govern the exchanges in the network" where in the past they had been marginal issues

(Van Waarden 1992: 35). Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's dependence on other organisations in this network is significant if it is to establish itself within this policy network to gain some form of strategic advantage (Knight 1992). The NSB, Sport England and related organisations' invitations to sit on their committees or for regular consultations is validation for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport. There is recognition that Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport has something that these organisations need. The necessity for these organisations to consult Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is vindication that their vision is not imagined. That is, there are significant actors in the regional sports policy network who do accept that they have a resource deficiency or a need for further expertise on race-equality, racism and community needs in sport.

Each of these key actors in the sports policy network reflect what Marsh (1998) earlier termed the 'pattern of inequality in society' as each of them mirrored the racial clustering of local government sports policy actors that have excluded black people in the past. It should be noted here that these negative power relations were also replicated where gender and disability were concerned but in each of these cases a concession of membership had been offered to the Women's Sports Foundation and the English Federation for Disabled Sports Organisations. For Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to make any impact on race-equality in the region it had to move from its relative outsidership to become a more established member of this policy network. Due to the under-representation of black people as senior officers in local authorities, influential committees like these are reproducing the same racial exclusions and power relations that Brownill et al. (2000) observed in their analysis of urban development corporations. Observations of local authority ethnic disparities in the three Northshire authorities, reflecting those in the network, gives further weight to these views. After reading chapter five it is no surprise that the selection of senior officers from Northshire sports practitioners for these committees will result in a process of privileging white professionals, which recreates the hegemony of public sector providers in another influential context. Conversely, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's relative position of influence on these committees must also be tempered with the understanding that a closer reading of their context reveals other processes at work. In particular recognition of the dialectics of networks is likely to see the network reproducing Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's structural position within society, as indeed Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport modifies the network's practice (Blom-Hansen 1997, Marsh 1998b).

## **Extending the Participatory Franchise: From Outsider to Insider**

This intergovernmental network had the influence and proximity to other influential networks of power to make radical shifts of policy direction and resource distribution due to the position and status of its members. So some of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's biggest milestones since its constitution have included invitations for it to nominate members for the four main sports policy network groups. To state one reason for these changes would oversimplify the power of networks and the intended and unintended outcomes of multiple actors and actions. It has been agreed by writers that the benefits of extended governance and partnership working have become part of the fundamentals of working in local government (Gaster and Deakin 1998, Dowding et. al. 1999, Robson 2001, Houlihan and White 2002). In particular, networks have been considered to work as an important governance function.

At this point around 1997/1998 there was much optimism within the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executive as they were being consulted by both local authorities and governing bodies independently, and in committee groups. They noted that the environment fostered by a new Labour Government and sports policy in 1997, which advocated sport for all and equality/social exclusion, was causing them to be seen in a much more favourable light. These are aspects of the resource dependencies that trigger entry into such networks (Marin and Mayntz 1991, Marsh 1998). It was also in this period that high profile compacts between the Government and the voluntary sector were being struck, these emphasised the discourse of social exclusion/inclusion, governance and community consultation (Home Office 1998). In addition, the political environment mentioned above fostered an environment of extended governance, Best Value, partnerships, and Active Communities which themselves acted as external drivers for such developments. On the other hand the absence of such a climate would present a less welcoming environment for the development of a new stakeholder for race-equality in the regional sport policy network. Consequently funding mechanisms like the Lottery Funds, which many local authorities have used to subsidise their budgets, changed their conditions for awards. Here evidence of wide community consultation and equality targets meant that organisations like Voluntary Black and

Ethnic Sport gained popularity, as they became evidence of consultation and endorsement by the community of sports plans, as North City found to its detriment in Chapter five. Related central Government policies have resulted in an extension of a participatory franchise from the local government core to well placed periphery policy actors. An increasingly fragmented local state, dedicated to developing a mixed economy of service provision and committed to the sovereignty of the customer are the backdrop to the increasing relevance of groups that use the terminology of interest, pressure and cause groups in sport (Wilson and Stoker 1991, Home Office 2001).

Grant (1978) would classify pressure groups according to power structures and the subsequent efficacy of that group within the structure. Insider/outsider stratification allows analysts to see who is closest to the seats of power and agenda setting and, also, for those close to power helps them to see their adversaries or potential problems. Insider groups tend to be welcomed by institutions and are seen as allies, this is a contrast to outsider groups, who themselves, according to Grant (1978), do not want to get enmeshed in a consultative relationship with officials, or who fail to get recognition (Appendix 6 sketches a hypothetical habitus to this effect). Grant (1995) argues that strategy and status are linked closely in terms of whether a group is seen as an insider or an outsider. Thus a new organisation is more likely to get quicker results if, as in Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's case, it adopts an insider strategy as it is a more recognised and comfortable way of working. Lishman (1976) refers to a 'dual approach' strategy necessary for a community group to ensure an adequate relationship with those in positions of authority and influence. This approach, he states, is manifest where a commitment is made by the community group to work pragmatically. This is reflected by working with as well as against influential organisations, so working both inside and outside existing institutions. Although many gains can be made using this dual approach, especially where the pressure group is clear about its main business and aims, there are still opportunities for pressure groups to be nullified. This may occur through coercion, over-compromise, and co-option so that they no longer pose a challenge to the establishment. Working for too long inside an organisation can do this and have a negative impact on the efficacy of a pressure group, just as ongoing criticism of the system can cause resistance to the demands/needs of the pressure group.

The real value of the movement is the way in which the diverse practice and experience of all the groups is aggregated to achieve lasting change.  
(Lishman 1976:88)

### **Local Authority Race-Equality Frameworks**

After Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was invited to sit on the executive of the Northshire Sports Board in 1996 it adopted the 'Fair Sporting Chance' (FSC) document in 2000 which is a racial equality action plan for local authority sport and recreation departments, modelled on the CRE standards from the Racial Equality Means Quality (1995) and Auditing for Equality (1999) series. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport commissioned the document in partnership with Sport England. It was launched at a conference attended by most of the local authorities in Northshire before subsequently being adopted by all of them at the chief officers group the Northshire Sports Forum. The aim of the FSC was to get local authorities to move beyond the rhetoric of charters and commitments and mission statements to one of mainstreaming race-equality. It needed to be 'owned' by all concerned in the sports divisions so that everyone would be working towards the same ends.

The Fair Sporting Chance document posed an interesting dilemma for me at this stage in the research (1999) as I was asked to co-write it as part of my deployment with the regional arm of the national sports development centre as part of my normal university work with them. Although my fieldwork with the local authorities had been completed by this time I was conscious of the perceived conflict of interest as I was involved in Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport but also researching them and now conducting consultancy for them. The works of Ben-Tovim (1986), Henderson (1988), Lather (1991), and Stanfield (1993) have all supported the position of research as praxis and research as political. I also considered this as I rationalised that the work would be written anyway so *why not me?* It was a predicament that demonstrated how multiple id-'entities' could work in parallel with each other. As I noted earlier my own profile in the black sports policy network meant that such work is often identified with my institution or me. This was one of the sharpest ethical points I had to manage and perhaps other ethnographers might have refused this task but they would then most

likely not be aligning themselves with a critical black perspective that endorses kind of transformatory reflexive approach.

### **A Fair Sporting Chance: Gaining Acceptance**

The document was a simplified and tailored adaptation of the CRE standards so that it could be achieved in three years over three levels. The need for the Fair Sporting Chance document came from the locally accepted position that equal opportunities policies in most of the local authorities in Northshire were not being comprehensively written or implemented. In Regional Advisory meetings it was documented that there had not been any equality plans produced for many years and this was as a result of many local authorities not having a current policy on equality work and in some cases, as in North City, some did not have a current sports policy (see Appendix 7: 1998-1999). The piecemeal developments that came about by ad hoc initiatives, and *desirable* pluralist ideologies that consider inequality to be equally shared across groups who generally all have the resources to articulate their case, are endemic within local authority sports provision (Judge 1995, Smith 1995). Thus meaning that inequalities were being maintained. Coherent long-term plans to reduce racial inequality in sport or to develop general equality work in most authorities were so conspicuous by their absence that Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport felt it necessary to focus on making a significant impact in this area. The significance of the document here came as a result of making practitioners and policy-makers open up a dialogue with each other to agree on the way forward where equal opportunities in sport was concerned. The CRE frameworks (1995, and 1999) and the FSC are written in such a way that these discussions and agreements must take place if a robust attempt is to be made in writing a comprehensive document for a local authority sport provider. As the NSB adopted the framework each of the authorities in Northshire were then committed to be judged on this framework and their own standards over the three years. This Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport felt, was a major step forward and similarly for the regional Sports Council it was more commitment than they had managed for many years. However even at this point there was a suspicion from Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport and the Sports Council that local authorities have a history of adopting policies and statements without implementing them, and needed to know that at least some of the local authorities were

actively working towards achieving the standards. So, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in consultation with the Sports Council identified South City and West Town to be monitored for the following reasons 1) West Town' equality plan (Equality 2000) was referred to in the writing of the Fair Sporting Chance document as good practice in itself and was viewed as an authority further down the stages of development than any of the others 2) South City's Equality Officer was working closely with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in the city and was also proactive in volunteering 3) both authorities were willing to be monitored 4) the two authorities represented different parts of Northshire with high concentrations of black people (West and South).

The acceptance of the FSC framework by the local authorities was seen as a major step for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport, due to the lack of success by Sport England in Northshire and nationally, who had struggled to get the local authorities in Northshire to produce any form of equality action plan. Ironically up to this point the Regional Advisory group had encouraged Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to apply sideways pressure, in the form of letters and verbal communication with key staff, to the local authorities that had promised plans and yet not produced anything. The FSC document enabled VBES to be seen as setting the agenda for local government racial equality action plans. Here Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was involved in what was seen as an activity that agents in the regional policy network had failed to achieve. In fact in July and October 2000 South City and East Borough respectively produced action plans based upon the FSC framework (the South City one being called 'a more level playing field') for discussion and revision in the regional advisory and Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport committees<sup>xvi</sup>.

In terms of acceptance into the sports policy network this was clearly seen as a step in the right direction<sup>xvii</sup>. This possibly alerted more established agents that there might be an important role for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to play in informing, advising and supporting them. Therefore, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's place on this group with the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF), the English Federation for Disabled Sports Organisations (EFDSO) and Sporting Equals clearly shows that it has established itself as an influential organisation in this policy network. However filling gaps does not make changes, it is action in these positions that does. For example Northshire Cricket Association, so long a target of derision for anti-racists due to its recruitment strategy,



asked for assistance in the formulation of its anti-racism and race-equality policy statement.

### **Awareness Raising and Capacity Building**

One of the initial hopes for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was that it would be the centre of a network of interest and activity around 'race' and sport in Northshire. It was expected that this core-coordinating role would mean that where information needed to be disseminated to key people or organisations in this area regarding courses, seminars or other related issues an active database of contacts would be maintained and available to whoever needed the contacts. For example, the regional information seminars that Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport supported with volunteers in South City and Blowden councils in 1999 and 2000 both drew upon the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport database, just as the lottery roadshow for black and minority ethnic groups from the Sports Council Head Quarters had done earlier in 1998. Both needed to rely upon these local contacts specifically because of the link with black and minority ethnic communities, individuals and groups. Both of the seminars were planned to raise awareness in black communities. The lottery roadshow was the second of only two roadshows for black people in the country that were scheduled to achieve two things with black communities. One was to find out why black people were not bidding for lottery funds in larger numbers and the second major point was to find out what Sport England could do to alleviate some of the possible barriers for black people (Fraser 1996). The speakers on the day were regionally and nationally high profile and these included Paul Jenkins, who at the time was the chair of a prominent Sport England Advisory Group, Richard Sharpe the Northshire Sports Council's Regional Director, and black Lottery Sports Fund staff from the Sports Council Head Quarters. Delegates included senior officers in local authorities keen to improve their own record in this area, councillors and a range of community groups some representing specific S.Asian and African-Caribbean sports organisations. Black people from the region were also given the opportunity to discuss their own needs with specialists without fear of inhibiting future bids. As these opportunities do not occur very often the day was viewed as successful, not least because of the Sports Council's failure to distribute its funds equitably up to that point.

Lottery funding has consistently failed to reach marginalised groups for a number of reasons. One of the reasons is Sport England's startling admission in the Northshire roadshow that they did not monitor for ethnicity and could therefore not say who were getting the awards and who were not. Rightly or wrongly this reinforced what Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members had thought about the way lottery funding was being distributed as the notion of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer was a metaphor used quite frequently. Up to the time of the lottery roadshow in Blowden in 2000 there had not been a single award made to a black group in Northshire that year. In addition out of the three authorities of North City, West Town and South City only West Town has a lottery officer who does active community work to generate applications from black groups. It was reported to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport that there have been recent moves in this direction from North City and South City but there remains a large task ahead. Fortunately, as a result of the roadshows a number of concessions were made by the Lottery Sports Fund Unit. In particular a commitment from the Sports Council to monitor Lottery bids for ethnicity which the delegates were particularly vociferous about. This type of monitoring would also enable Sport England to see that the funds were going to the right places and also ensure that the funds were not just going to those who were more established i.e. white sports clubs.

The lottery roadshow is an example of black people in Northshire being given the opportunity to be self-sustaining and independent of external bodies. Augmenting their knowledge of sources of funding and how to apply with confidence is an aspect of the work of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport that is considered in the objectives. That part of community development focused on skill and knowledge development so that people can use the available support systems around them to resolve community concerns is an aspect termed capacity building (Schuftan 1996). Capacity building is part of the community development model of community work (Twelvetrees 1991). Schuftan suggests that capacity building strengthens the assessment-analysis-action process in the community, and improves the opportunity for sustainable developments. Previous attempts by sports' administrators have been generally unsuccessful in the way they have distributed funding and opportunities across social groups. They have also struggled to encourage marginalised groups to develop an understanding of their systems and procedures (Fraser 1996). The roadshow bucked this particular trend and

ensured that more black people were conscious of common sources of funding for sport than before.

### **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in the Community**

A more recent and comprehensive example of empowering black people in sport and building up the capacity and confidence of communities to be self-sustaining and independent was the Community Sports Development Facilitators (CSDF) project. Here a relatively small amount of money, £12500, was awarded to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in 1999 from Sport England centrally as news of their activities reached Head Quarters. The CSDF project was designed initially to train twenty black facilitators to assist community groups to write Awards for All lottery bids, getting paid a nominal amount for work completed in their local communities around the region. From there the project developed so that the facilitators were encouraged to take part in day seminars that gave them an awareness of practical sports development skills needed in local community groups. They were also invited to a session that was run by the National Coaching Foundation who see the facilitators as a way to identify black coaches and train them to national standards (see Appendix 7: 1999-2000). The cumulative effect of this work with the facilitators is that they are being trained to work in their local communities according to their needs. However, if they wish to, they have the skills to set up groups and give advice through their contacts and network if they need any more support. Some of the facilitators are more experienced than others, but they now have a foundation of knowledge that enables them to bid for lottery funds which some of them have already done successfully. This aspect of self-support and resourcing the black community has been lacking in previous years and the CSDF project is an example of how a strong regional and national network could be empowered and developed.

The Regional Information Seminars for black and minority ethnic communities were also very successful in raising awareness and levels of agency in the black community. Again the need for a targeted audience meant that there was a much better chance of the publicity getting to interested parties. All of these activities are given further publicity across the county through the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport newsletter. The

newsletter is circulated to all of the contacts on the database and so offers further information to those people/organisations aware of what is happening across the county at the same time as making people aware that these activities are actually happening. An indication of the themes covered in the Newsletter is reflected in the autumn 2000 issue which profiles local authority responses to the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport equality action plan initiative, anti-racism projects and research, Sports Actions Zones, and Running Sport, National Coaching Foundation and Sport England services. I am conscious in raising these issues that it seems as though without Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport these events would not have happened. The likelihood is that most of these activities might have taken place but maybe not in such a coordinated and public way. My evaluation of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport at this stage was that it was giving focus to 'race' centred work in the region which it did not have before thus giving professionals in the field reassurance that they were not operating in isolation or in an ad hoc way. In a way they were becoming aware that their work fitted into a bigger picture and an emerging area of policy.

### **For Knowledge and Power Read Education and Employment?**

There has been a growing recognition that too few black people get into the coaching or administration of sport after their playing careers have ended. As in Chapter 4 similar evidence from across the region shows that black people are poorly represented in senior positions in local authority sports provision. It can be seen from the previous chapter that North City, West Town and South City regret their inability to rectify this position for a number of reasons detailed earlier. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's view is that if there is a wider pool of qualified black people with more experience then it will make it harder for employers to ignore them when opportunities do arise. Two examples of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's training and education work follows.

In September 1996 Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport ran a course subsidised by the regional Sports Council for a professional certificate/diploma course in sports development for black and ethnic minorities. Sixteen delegates from Northshire attended the intensive week long residential course at the Carnegie National Sports Development Centre. The course enabled a number of black people directly involved in sport from volunteers to professionals to receive valuable education and training

designed to help them with their future work. The aims of the course were for the course members to provide each other with a valuable support network for the future at the same time as gaining a university qualification. The delegates shared experiences and were in a better position at the conclusion of the course to apply examples of good practice to their particular environment. A number of the participants have gone on to further employment in sports development that have local, regional and national prominence. On this theme Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport also encouraged the Central Council Of Physical Recreation (CCPR) to run free tutor training courses for black people in a bid to generate more qualified black trainers who could then run level 1 courses in their own communities in Northshire. In addition the CCPR agreed to tailor the course to the suggestions from Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport executives for its black audience so that its images and examples within the course would be more culturally appropriate. For Example, issues regarding the difficulties in accessing particular ethnic communities were identified as needing to be emphasised in each course. These courses were not run for the typical CCPR audience and as a result their tailoring made the courses more suitable for its public and more likely to motivate black sports people. Two courses were run in Northshire, one in South City and one in Blowden. Here the Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport network and database was used to good effect to get black delegates onto these courses where national and regional governing bodies like the National Coaching Foundation and the CCPR have struggled to get a representative sample of the population in areas with a black population. Now there are more black tutors who are able to run community sports leaders courses in their area/community.

## **Practice**

Ultimately, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's work is about transforming poor practice and promoting good practice, and the examples of networks and policy development, awareness raising, education and employment and capacity building, demonstrate this. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's nine objectives focus on action, and implementation for change. For example just as the Cricket Development Officer for the Northshire Cricket Association has relied upon Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's support at a regional level, the lottery roadshow has also informed practice at a

national level. At a regional level the Fair Sporting Chance initiative and the CSDF project are both about changing practices and attitudes towards black people in sport. Grant (1995) looks at the problems in categorising and theorising pressure groups. He further describes a pressure group as an organisation which seeks, as one of its functions, to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy. This indeed is what Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport has set out to do as they are working within a context of racism, top down bureaux professionalism and historical disadvantage, which has manifested itself in sport in the form of barriers (glass ceilings, invisible walls), in what some would say is one of the most enlightened of environments, i.e. sport.

### **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's Effectiveness in the Sport Policy Network**

Whitely and Winyard's (1987) critique of interest groups posits that 'the question of interest group effectiveness is probably the least adequately researched aspect of the study of pressure groups'. The problem here stems from trying to link action with effect. An action by one group of people on an institution or network is very rarely attributed to them due to the plethora of agendas, both personal and political, of actors surrounding the organisation and network (see also Blom-Hansen 1998, and Marsh 1998). Grant (1995) used a typology to illustrate the factors affecting a pressure group's effectiveness. The three main areas include 1) the features of the proximate environment of groups, the domains they are seeking to organise, 2) the resources available to groups, and 3) the features of the external economic and political environment. Smith (1993) however points to the value of not taking a narrow focus to these indicators of success by arguing to take into account an analysis that includes a perspective on the relationship between the state and the pressure group and the interests and actions of state actors. The following section will draw upon Grant's typology at the same time as recognising the guidance offered by Smith (1993) specifically in the critique of local authorities to the end of the chapter. The local authority critique allows the interests and actions of the state actors to be considered against the backdrop of the main developments and achievements in Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport since 1996.

## **1. The Proximate Environment**

In terms of domain organisation Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport chose to represent black and minority ethnic groups who as a result of their colour suffer from the effects of exclusion in sport. Some of the problems, which occur from this basic aim, lie in how many advocate groups there are working for black people interested in sport in Northshire. According to Grant (1995) if there are a number of organisations competing to do the same thing then there might be a tendency for the group to be weaker as a result due to the lack of members available to join the organisation. Multiple messages from competing organisations could confuse the general public as was demonstrated by the administration of disability sport before the EFDSO was established. There can soon develop a credibility gap due to no-one organisation being able to represent their members en-masse. However, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport stepped into a niche, which needed a presence in Northshire sport. There was not another organisation in a position to be recognised by the established fora like the Northshire Sport Board and other related organisations. Until recently the Board made up mainly of able-bodied white middle class men, invited reserved membership to established women's and disability sport representatives. These individuals came from regionally recognised, constituted organisations who had developed credibility with the members of the biggest and most influential groups of sports people across the county. There are still weaknesses in the diversity of people on the Board but as a result of becoming a member organisation the women and disability groups were able to influence changes with their votes and make contributions in meetings where black people were previously excluded. So it could be said that Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport has achieved success in that, like the women and disability groups, it has managed to gain executive membership on the Board, and consequently access to some of the prime movers in sport in Northshire.

In writing this chapter I wondered what would happen if Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport became the sole representative agency for black sports related issues. On one level this is what Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members are hoping happens as it wants to be 'the voice for black sports issues in the region'. However, where this voice is consulted to the detriment of other emergent or alternative voices there becomes a serious (if not yet problematic) question for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to

answer. Van Waarden (1992) describes this situation as ‘clientelism’ just as Ben-Tovim et al. (1992) warn community groups that although this may look like the perfect result the motives of the consultees might be the superficial cloak of consultation which ultimately legitimates/validates their own ideas. They call this ‘marginalisation through consultation’, which results in only emphasising and reinforcing the powerlessness of black groups. Thus the skill of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in understanding the social, political and strategic nature of a pressure group in a policy network is essential for them to maintain an effective organisation.

## **2. The Resources Available To Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport: Strengths and Weaknesses**

During the course of my fieldwork with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport I noted a constant resentment of funding agents, in particular Sport England were keen to see Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as a more established organisation. But, Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport felt unable to get onto a ‘business like’ footing due to their inability to pay workers to maintain their activities when the executive were at their paid posts. The executive was keenly conscious of stereotypes of black groups not being able to organise effectively and how that might be directed at them if there were any problems. In a way there was the sentiment that they were successful despite the system and not because of it. For Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to consolidate and engage in proactive work around the region and to send representation further a field it will need to raise funds. It needs to ensure that it maintains the profile, which has enabled it to gain recognition from established organisations regionally and nationally. Their gaining of a volunteer coordinator in 2000 must be tempered with the knowledge that there was the danger of them having limited funds. This could put other volunteers off if they did not have the funds to work unpaid. Some would see volunteering as a white middle class pursuit and it is important that Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport address this issue as soon as it is in the position to reimburse potentially active members. Henderson and Thomas (1992) in their discussions on the practical needs of neighbourhood groups include the basic servicing, accommodation and day-to-day finance of a group as crucial elements in working effectively. With Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport being a regional forum it does not have the problem of



accommodation as there are many members who have expressed a willingness to lend their premises to the Forum and executive free of charge when they meet three or four times a year. However, the basic servicing and day-to-day costs are not fully resolved for any executive member or the secretariat involved in carrying out his/her duties in accordance with the plans of the executive board. Therefore there needs to be a recognition by the executive board, if not the Forum, that there has to be a system in place to compensate any member involved in work beyond their everyday obligations. This is a significant point for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as many organised groups have 'established' leaders. These established leaders would tend to be recognised community leaders who have the time and resources to be an advocate for a section of the community. So, it is important that everyone is given the opportunity to take part in the decision making process regardless of economic background. Thus even in Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport there should be an acknowledgment that safeguards need to be in place to ensure that they do not reproduce class inequalities through the way it is organised.

Olson (1965) suggests that people decide on the costs and benefits of joining groups. Thus they multiply the benefits of joining by the likelihood that their contribution to the group will determine its success. The Chair, being the prime mover, has many years of experience negotiating at a high level in a large metropolitan authority. He is one of the biggest strengths of the Forum, but also one of the biggest threats to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport can be seen here as well, if that is not too ironic. The Chair is involved in many of the initiatives concerning black people and sport in Northshire due to his dual role as the Chair of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport and part-time Advisor for Black and Ethnic Minorities Sport for the English Sports Council Northshire<sup>xviii</sup>. He is involved in advising, coordinating, tutoring and sitting on committees locally and nationally. The reason for him being the biggest strength is due to his ability to apply pressure at the right time through mobilising support for projects. An example of this was the way in which he was involved in positive action work for the black sports development officers' course. Publicity was gained through the regional Sports Council's 'Sports News' paper and then by persuading the South City Council to pay for a second course.

Although the South City course went very well the question remains, what would have happened had the Chair not acted? There needs to be a structure in place to train or educate less experienced members of the Forum to take over from more established colleagues. My gut reaction is one of optimism as the Community Sports Development Facilitators scheme has now started that process and also my observations of the executive has shown that other members of the executive are now taking a lead in important areas. Hence it is imperative that this training and exposure to managing Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport and local black sports development is continued otherwise the extraordinary skills displayed by the Chair and other members might be lost to the region. Thus a strength could be seen as a threat in this instance because just as it is dangerous to rely too heavily on an external agency to gain resources, the same dangers apply internally. Again caution must be observed if they are to ensure that the longevity of the Forum is protected thus the auditing of the skills of the CSDF should help to identify suitable candidates for the future.

### **3. Features Of The External Economic And Political Environment**

The third area suggested by Grant to assess the effectiveness of a pressure group involved an assessment of the external economic and political environment. The biggest threat to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's existence to date was the recent change in the national Sports Council where there had been a lot of confusion surrounding its new role in the regions (there are parallels here with the pressures on local government in the 'defining moments'). One specific directive close to the General Election in 1997 from the Sports Council headquarters called on regional officers to cut all financial ties to regional forums until the impact of a new government on its resources could be anticipated. This would have meant neither administrative support nor any base for meetings in what were Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's early days. Fortunately the regional Sports Council was put under some pressure by Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to think about the efforts it took to get Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as far as it had. This included an argument concerning the lack of black sports administrators currently and historically, and also to take into account related equal opportunities issues. It was clear that the more established groups would continue regardless but new fora would perish and the least established across the

region at that time was Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport. Little did either party know of the state/voluntary sector compact or other developments to come.

The political environment around sport and politics in 1997 was one of change. Local authorities were taking into account social objectives through compulsory competitive tendering where in the first round they did not (Escott, 1996). The English Sports Council (1997) as part of their strategy for consultation stated that "England, [is] the sporting nation providing equal opportunities". And the new Labour Sports Minister Tony Banks was witnessed re-embracing the 'Sport for All' motto when supporting the new sports strategy England: The Sporting Nation (1997), a slogan that had been marginalised by the previous Conservative administration. The national lottery at this time was also a key factor that had the potential to empower and redistribute the wealth in sport which had for so long been in the hands of the few. The methodology behind the Lottery Sports Fund distribution has been shown to be spurious ad hoc and inequitable, with funding going to a limited amount of sports and worthy causes. The mass of bureaucracy to be sifted through for lottery funding was a big draw back for many of the groups that Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport was set up to be an advocate for, this includes barriers like language, supportive lottery officers, and consequently a lack of community expertise. This is why the concession by the national Sports Council's lottery unit to pilot the lottery roadshow workshop in the Northshire region is another indicator of progress. Again, this is an example of indirect pressure from Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport which may reap dividends for local black groups in Northshire

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport has thus far not seen the need to be co-opted into a larger organisation. As West (1993) stated it needs to keep its independence and integrity in a progressive atmosphere of trust and confidence with partner agencies. Its various achievements to date like the positive action work with the National Coaching Foundation Tutor training, the Central Council of Physical Recreation leadership programme and the offshoots from the National Lottery grants are commensurate with the efforts being put in by members of the Forum. There is however a need in some areas of sports provision and employment of black people to set a more radical agenda. There is plenty of evidence around to support the argument of the dearth of black sports administrators, managers and officers in the mixed economy of sport nationally (Sports

Council, 1994a). As any successful organisation Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport must be ready and willing to mix up its approach to working to ensure an appropriate strategy for the needs of the task. If an organisation becomes too liberal in what it expects from its partners, it may open itself up to being taken for granted or even worse, being seen as a paper tiger with no real sanctions. This is not apparent with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport but it is a real issue for them to consider.

### **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport: A Healthy Paradox?**

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's contribution to this analysis of race-equality in sport is a reminder that our knowledge is socially constituted, just like our epistemologies. By opening up alternative lines of inquiry that include these often under-valued sources of data Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport produces an oppositional story that rejects the claims of progress in public sector sport. Instead it produces contradictions that count as caveats for more complacent local authorities, and incentives for more forward looking authorities. The report of PAT (9) on community self-help outlined how community groups like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport are in fact a paradox. They are necessary because of the actions or inactions of public authorities. Their emergence occurs as a response to the perceived need of a black community that sees a disparity in the quality and quantity of sports facilities and services available to it. As noted earlier, the emergence of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in itself sends a message to local authorities and other sports governing agencies that others in their network want to go beyond documented affirmations of inequality and racism in sport, and that black people in the region are also taking actions to address the imbalances. The PAT (9) team's view of organisations like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport being an unwitting by-product of public policy is relevant here. However, contrary to popular pluralist ideologies, it is not a normal consequence of public dissatisfaction for groups like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to form otherwise there would be more groups like them not just across the country where there are few of note, but also in the region.

The impact of a contract culture is being felt across the country and the resultant motivations to broaden out the consultative network in the local government sector is a

direct consequence of that. Where local authority consultation processes differ lies not in the fact that they have inconsistent individual circumstances that include locale, demographics, size and history, there is also the notion of quality of provision. For some local authorities such as Birmingham their investment in consultative mechanisms in the past has meant that the black voluntary sector has been able to have a degree of influence on local policy (Solomos and Back 1995). In Northshire it can be seen that some local authorities actively consult community and interest groups whilst others do not show the same willingness to operate beyond minimum levels. Where local authority officers are involved in consultation they are more likely to consider and act upon the advice of significant proximate others. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport constitutes part of this proximate group in Northshire which enables it to gain a robust picture of each authority's work on racial equality. The ability to do this is important for an organisation like Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport that relies upon its local contacts and up-to-date knowledge of practice and policy development across a county.

As an indicator of Best Value in local authorities Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport can be seen as very useful evidence of consultation. However the outcomes of these consultations in terms of results, real power sharing and sensitivity to causes can easily be overlooked. On one level the motivation for consultation may not matter to Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as long as consultation is taking place however, this state of affairs is not likely to change long term behaviours or attitudes. In the case of the local authorities in Northshire they are all members of the Northshire Sports Board (NSB), which has on its executive committee a Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport representative. The reality of this situation is that for some authorities this is enough of a gesture towards proactive work in sport due to their lack of conspicuous action in the specific area of racial equality in their area. An example of this comes through clearly with the local authorities' adoption of the Fair Sporting Chance (FSC) framework by the NSB (and therefore all of the organisations in the Northshire Sports Forum and Federation in the region), and its monitoring of specific local authorities. However, activity in its implementation that has come to the attention of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's network is coming from a limited number of authorities like South City and East Borough. This could mean that the other local authorities are active and not publicising their work or they are choosing not to do anything towards these ends for the time being (Young and Connelly 1981). A number of reasons for this dearth of

action plans could be suggested although given the historical inertia in this area they are likely, unfortunately for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport, to be perennial ones.

East Borough and in particular South City have been conspicuous in their writing of a three year action plan based upon the FSC framework with West Town maintaining a related framework. They are all able to demonstrate through transparent paper trails how they have fared in their plan of working towards racial equality in their areas. West Town's plan is less up-to-date than the South City plan due to a number of recent departmental changes however they still have a more rigorous system in place to monitor their activities than organisations like North City who consistently work without a specific overarching plan in this area. However local authorities like North City have found themselves involved in another mechanism that is having a similar impact on the widening out of proximate policy-makers for local authority equality work these are the Active Sports Forums. The new Active Sports Forums, like Best Value, impose upon their members (in the main local authorities and governing bodies) the requirement of having to produce an equity policy before any resources are released for the local authorities in their sector of the region. Given this requirement from the Sports Council these emergent groups could offer something new to racial equality in the county. The Active Sport Forums need to produce the equivalent of an equality statement that equality professionals will agree by themselves are ineffective without a plan of action, and a fuller racial equality policy<sup>xix</sup>. Given the profile of the PAT 10 (DCMS 1999) recommendations on social exclusion and the general profile of inclusion in sport the coming years could be seen as some of the most conducive since the early nineteen eighties for equality work to have an interested political and professional audience. So anomaly, paradox or both Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is well placed in the region to influence this transformation if it manages to stay on the same developmental trajectory.

## **CHAPTER 7: IN CONCLUSION**

This thesis takes as its starting point the position that equal opportunities as a concept and practice have been conceptualised and operationalised inconsistently in local government (Nanton 1989, Young 1990, 1992, Bagilhole 1997). As a result the PhD investigated the appreciative contexts and ideologies that underpinned the assumptive worlds of those who influence policy and practice in sport in three local authorities in Northshire. The study critically examined the views of senior officers and councillors in local authority sport using Young's (1977, 1979) assumptive worlds framework as a heuristic device. Young's (1977, 1979) ideas endured through the PhD as the opinions, attitudes and ideologies that shape the priorities of each actor's assumptive world, established the strength of the images, beliefs, judgements and values within and across local authority contexts<sup>xx</sup>.

Lorde's (1979) assertion that the "master's tools will never dismantle the masters house" is thought provoking in the extreme. For this thesis its interpretation applies to three key areas 1) local authority policymakers and practitioners and the ideologies that underpin their policy decisions, 2) the status of black people in sport and their political mobilisation, 3) the ontological standpoint of the study and its implications for the academic and political community.

Lorde's (1979) application of the 'the master's tools' in the context of local authority elites becomes a comment on the historical outcomes of inequality emanating from the policies and practices in the sector. Each of the case studies revealed entrenched processes that underpinned inequality and discrimination on racial grounds. These elites have been accused of reinforcing the inequalities in a racialised society through consciously and unconsciously ignoring or marginalising policy and practice, that accepts a proactive collectivist view of these issues (Nanton 1989, Law 1996). The libertarian views that inform the ideology of the free market and consumer sovereignty, that are key principles of the contract culture in local government, revealed minimalist ideologies in the application of race-equality work in each authority. The legacy of C.C.T. was strong in North City, West Town and South City even though they were all at different stages in the development of the externally imposed structures in which their sports provision sat. The environment that exists that allows organisations with

comparable goals to take different strategies to reproduce similar outcomes requires further investigation beyond this PhD. There is a need for a critical evaluation of the endemic structural response to racial issues here. Law (1996: 17) summarised this problem eloquently when he advised that,

There is not only a need for critical reflection and reassessment of our understanding of the processes of racism and ethnicity, there is a related search for the new ways to construct and frame policies, strategies and initiatives in response to social problems associated with these processes.

### **Three Core Themes**

Three dominant themes emerged throughout the study of the local authorities and evidence of them found expression in the activity of VBES as they attempted to address the historical disadvantages they and others had suffered over the years. The conceptual confusion surrounding equal opportunities and race-equality, policy tensions caused by individual appreciations and interpretations of policy and the colour blindness that ignores wider issues of 'race' aggregate to represent the core processes that affect each authority's ability to effectively tackle race-equality in sport.

Conceptual confusions, policy tensions and colour-blindness, that enwrapped the assumptive worlds of each authority effectively led to policy implementation gaps between their promise and practice. The marginalisation of 'race' from mainstream provision has resulted in the ambiguity that Young (1990, 1992) warned against and in the lack of leadership that was the focus of Ouseley's (1990) analysis. Ultimately there are issues that need to be managed in local government about how race-equality in sport is to be translated from policy to practice. Without mainstream-collectivist commitments that shift action from description to prescription local authority sports providers will allow contradictory dominant ideologies to hegemonise aspects of provision in such a way that progress is likely to remain piecemeal or ad hoc. The recursive nature of the dominant practices that affect recruitment and retention, a 'race' focus, ambiguity in conceptualisation, monitoring, diversity in the joint elite and related policy tensions perpetuate the unintended outcomes of the practices that were outlined



and yet regretted in each authority. Consequently, the paucity of a consistent critical reflexivity on the practical consciousness in each authority means that they are more likely to reproduce these problems.

### **Conceptual Confusions: ‘Equal Opportunities’**

The commitment to equal opportunities, demonstrated by each of the authorities is typical of that experienced in other studies of equal opportunities (Jewson and Mason 1986, 1989, 1992, Young 1989, Bagilhole 1993, Clarke and Speeden 2000, Speeden and Clarke 2000). There was a consensus, illustrated in chapter five, of the adoption and significance of equal opportunities in each authority. There were also conspicuous individuals who recognised the direction that their authority needed to travel in order to be more convincing in their claims of success around equality in their authority. However the general view of equal opportunities across the authorities equated to popular understandings of the term that mirror the ideology of ‘equal access’ and ‘same service for all’ discussed in Chapter 3 that do not consider wider collective racial issues of power, historical disadvantages, discrimination, culture and racism(s). A regulative policy discourse did enter the discussion in some instances although these are the more popular liberal or ‘minimalist’ positions adopted in local government (Young 1989, 1990, 1992, Jewson and Mason 1989, Cunningham 1992). The gestural and reactive types that Horne (1995) outlined in his study also describe these authorities reasonably well. Apart from the identified examples of good practice in each authority, there was no consistent ‘race’ centred practice that moved beyond the regulative to the distributive or even redistributive (Young 1989), liberal to the radical (Jewson and Mason 1992), or even reactive to the proactive (Horne 1995). Rather than contesting wider inequalities and institutional racism, this position tends to maintain those privileges that come to a limited few in terms of service delivery and organisational diversity. It is the cumulative effect of these activities in the three authorities, and thus implicating similar such authorities in Northshire, that caused VBES to focus their principle objectives on; equality of outcome in recognition of wider socio-historical inequalities; the pervasive institutional racism that the members have experienced as participants and professionals in sports development; and a regulative framework (Fair Sporting Chance) that focuses the attention and resources of local authorities on their concerns around ‘race’, racism

and a progressive politics of race-centredness in sport. The invisibility of 'race' beyond ad hoc or piecemeal good practice prompts a criticism below of a colour-blind ideology of the authorities. Considering the perspectives outlined to me throughout the interviews, I can see the incongruity from the previous comments in this chapter of the actors who in practice relegate its significance as a result of their daily pressures. This is an illustration of the public and private spheres of institutions. This is no excuse for the impact of their activities, which could be interpreted as a defence of white privilege and racist institutions. However, the corporate view is similar in presentation across the three authorities that equal opportunities has a high significance in the delivery of council services for the local community.

Bagilhole (1997, 2002) posits that actors in institutions are often theoretically confused when talking about equal opportunities, hence the symbolic consensus above. This results in a neutering of key concepts like positive action, equal opportunity, equal treatment and equal condition. Bagilhole (2002:24) summarises these ideas when she stated that,

Different interpretations of policies.....spread confusion and allow for play in the playing off of meanings. Gaps and spaces for action and response are opened up as a result.

It is these 'gaps' that VBES members indirectly considered as they felt these confusions enough to spark them into acting to change the way the main actors in sport policymaking approached the resourcing of sport. For some on the inside, characteristics of their authority's policies and practice have become a constant source of irritation as perhaps they see a plethora of activity under the banner 'equal opportunities'. In each authority there were officers or councillors prepared to challenge the dominant corporate discourse of equal opportunities knowing that they were challenging a core aspect of their corporate mission. For instance, an influential chair in North City called his authority '*politically correct*' and involved in a project of 'building up an industry around equality'. This position is one that does not equate with the image I saw of an authority unprepared for the stresses of concerted activity on equality, but also it is one that could be seen to do no real service to equal opportunities work in the authority. He trivialises this activity as the media and members of the public did with the far more radical activity set in Labour/socialist controlled authorities in the

1980s (Ouseley 1990). The slurs of 'loony Left' are tied in with its modern-day incarnation of political correctness that perhaps was best demonstrated in the way officers capitulated to white community pressure against Asian-only initiatives in West Town. Similarly, some who felt that the policies were in effect symbolic and did not connect with what was actually happening on the ground articulated the futility of having a policy. Each actor demonstrated to varying degrees how they saw the world. Their understanding of their own dialectic of control was articulated even where more critical readings suggested alternative viewpoints. The contexts were clearly representative of white institutions that emphasised the outsidership of black people, VBES and the practice of racial-equality in these local authorities.

### **Policy Tensions**

Each authority was led by a small group of actors who between them had a significant influence on the direction that equality work in sport and recreation took. This joint elite made up of senior officers and councillors, were able to reflect the stance of each authority towards equality working. West Town had a strong political steer from councillors with support from senior officers. South City was similar to West Town, although I did not perceive a consensus, in that there was a subordinate senior officer steer to councillors, and the reins of power had been loosened somewhat by Trusts. Members of the Trusts were, unlike the councillors, unelected representatives who had a great influence on sports provision in the city. So, a new dimension was added to South City's dominant group, which has been a source of rancour and confusion, for councillors, and senior officers alike, who would ideally like to ensure that the Trusts (periphery) are governed more firmly than has happened in the past by the local authority (core). North City was reflected by a more pragmatic partnership between senior officers and councillors. Even though there was agreement that councillors made policy, there was some discussion about the significant input of officers to the policy-making process. This led to views from senior officers and councillors of the seemingly higher priority of the senior officer input compared to both West Town and South City. For VBES and Ouseley (1981, 1990) this was an academic argument as they both agree that black people are excluded from these decision-making positions.

Collier's (1998) argument that political, economic and cultural power operates to privilege white people in such institutions is apparent here because a critical mass is consistently replenished by similar predominantly white male workers and politicians, with all of its incumbent consequences for service delivery. A second form of power he identifies is that ideological form that seeks to justify discrimination or even the privileges of whiteness (McIntosh 1997, Long and Hylton 2002). At this juncture a brief reflection on the way racialised power can exclude will help us to see how a monocultural joint elite acts to exclude the black 'other', stratifying the authority on 'race' lines, thereby retaining a white hegemony. Wilding's (1982) observation on professional power gives a clue as to what domains black people are excluded from as he considers the nature and extent of professional power. Power in policymaking and administration; power to define needs and problems; power in resource allocation; power over people; and power to control areas of work. Analysts concerned with power in society and organisations have been active in trying to explain how power manifests itself and impacts upon social relations (Foucault 1980, Clegg 1989, Goldberg 1993, Layder 1994, Crenshaw et. al. 1995, Delgado and Stefancic 2000). Foucault (1980) and Clegg's (1989) perspective on power that it is relative to an actor's proximity to networks or circuits of power is useful at this stage. Given that predominantly white professionals are close to these racial formations in each authority, and therefore 'inside' and thus inhabiting a very influential world black people therefore do not inhabit. For black people they are indeed 'outside' and therefore furthest away from networks of power.

Each authority had been able to satisfy external and internal observers that they have acceptable equality statements and what amounts to identifiable policies towards equality in their authority. Still, behind this background of commitment there are degrees of activity in the area, which allows each authority to be distinguished by the transparency and clarity of their claims. West Town has a clear link between their corporate equal opportunities policy and their sports and recreation statements for target groups. 'Race' and ethnicity are considered in the context of sport and recreation and is triangulated in the workings of their Sports Equity Action Team. On the other hand, South City has struggled to make an unambiguous link with its range of providers and its corporate equal opportunities policy. Its local authority contract culture has been exaggerated by its use of Trusts and therefore caused problems in its overall ability to

manage equal opportunities with these providers. Where equality objectives have been considered in the Trusts they have been hazy and poorly constructed. In addition, the city's policy of developing international standard facilities has been in conflict with equality objectives for local residents, especially those concerning access. North City's equality links were the least clear due to its absence of a sports policy. The ability of critical observers like VBES, myself and arguably the providers and facilitators to ascertain how equality principles found their way consistently into the work of the sports department was questionable. Further, lack of an overall sports policy has also been problematic when they have tried to justify the reason for bids from external funding agents especially the sports lottery awards that are now insisting that North City has equality targets.

It could be the weak management that Ouseley (1990) blamed as a contributory factor in the non-achievement of race-equality objectives. Deficient managers tended to have poor information, communication networks and weak or non-existent monitoring and evaluation systems. On the other hand in cases where this existed, it allowed 'race' policies and programmes to be integrated in the day-to-day management and processes, and to be part of review and monitoring processes. However, the strength of leadership in each authority in communicating the message of equal opportunities varied. Equal opportunities policies failed to find their way consistently and coherently into the activity of any of the three case studies. None of the respondents were satisfied with their authority's employment practices, their monitoring and consequently their evaluation plans. There was also evidence of the regulatory frameworks of C.C.T., Best Value, and Trusts which themselves are colour-blind, leading practice in the wake of the new managerialist discourse that gathered strength and professional capital throughout this research period. Ultimately mainstream equal opportunities principles were not finding their way coherently into sports policy and practice.

It has been established that policy analysts in identifying appreciative or policy gaps rarely consider 'race' or even the duality of structure popular with some sociologists as a means to rationalise this phenomenon in equal opportunities (Rees 1998). In this study a sense of legitimation of action (or inaction) is consistent across each authority where values and beliefs, opinions and ideologies are not only manifest by individuals but are shared in assumptive worlds. Discussing appreciative contexts allowed actors to

articulate how they saw and understood the assumptive world around them, but critically they are simultaneously aligning themselves with the values of the dominant ideals in the section, group, and authority. The result of such actions, that is the practical outcomes of such activity for these individuals, is that they have a 'knowledge' of whether radical or liberal action is acceptable where 'race' is concerned in the authority they 'know' as a result of social relations what is a priority and what is not (Marshall and Mitchell 1991, Marshall 2001). In some cases their discursive consciousness lets us into this world while in others a more critical reading of their narrative and practical consciousness led to these conclusions. There are signposts and cues that inform behaviour in their daily-pressured existences that validate them and their work. From an analysis of the performance of the local authorities, these systems are also likely to militate against unilateral redistributive proactive work, which might help to explain when asked how each authority was able to offer examples of good, but not sustained practice. In discussing the plaudits received from governing bodies like Sport England the lead SDO in West Town remarked,

*... If you had asked me to state everything that we are doing to promote equality in the district I could come up with a stunning list. But that doesn't mean to say that we are committed to equal opportunities..... Well I don't think we've gone anywhere near there.*

What in effect we do get here is practice that lacks coherence or consistency. In West Town, another officer accepted the plaudits but inadvertently tripped up over the use of language and perhaps demonstrated his own lack of awareness of issues, especially his use of language concerning 'race' and ethnicity,.....

*But we've met those challenges, because a lot of the managers are well informed with good practices and they're still going on, and especially with say the equity issue on ethnics.*

*Also.....*

*but we were lucky because we realised ten or twelve years ago that this was .. if there's a black tide in Mill Town that's Asian people who were*

*ten years ago, twelve years ago, four out of every ten that were born in hospital were Asian, its eight out of ten in Mill Town, then that tide is going to come and you can either fight it or you can go with it.*

This was not an example in isolation from the other authorities as other officers were prepared to be just as candid about the (in)ability of the authority to meet the demands of an equal opportunities commitment. In North City the Principal SDO remarked,

*... I think lack of awareness and understanding of the cultural needs of different elements of the population is always going to create problems, and reading a piece of paper talking about equal opps. policies doesn't create an understanding of some of the issues that need to be addressed.*

At this stage the Principal SDO is reflecting upon his authority's ability to produce consistent action towards inclusive sports provision or perhaps his own commitment to equal opportunities. Either way his reflections on his own appreciative context include all of the factors that shape and order his assumptive world and his message is not the message of hope that one would expect after reading the Council's commitment to equal opportunities. These are policy implementation tensions as well as policy development tensions, as each of the senior officers has varying influence on the way policy is developed and therefore resourced in their authorities. So assumptive worlds can be seen to include, reward and legitimate at the same time as they can negate, exclude and penalise. An actor's appreciative context will contribute to, and is an illustration of, an assumptive world, and allows them to act accordingly even if it is at the expense of contradicting equal opportunities policies.

### **Colour-Blindness**

In reiterating this study's 'race' conscious standpoint many writers would challenge the fairness ethic that is inextricably linked with local authorities (Ladson-Billings 1998, Delgado and Stefancic 2000 and Parker (1999). Parker (1998, 1999) and other critical 'race' theorists would argue that the notion of colour-blindness, merit and liberal equality principles summarily serve to reinforce the least successful aspects of activity

in each of the authorities. The professional social relationships that form amongst members of the joint elite (both officers and councillors) occur as a result of key actors ignoring the significance and presence of 'race' and power in forming and perpetuating these relationships. Further, the lack of a challenge to these alienating structuring practices is a constant endorsement and defence of them. It appears then that racial power is manifest in the way local authorities organise influential mechanisms. Each authority, in recognising its disparity in recruitment, retention and promotion of black staff as a problem found reasons to justify their failures rather than present plans for a transformation of this endemic issue. It was also noted that the less than radical transformative effect of these groups on the opportunities to include 'others' beyond ad hoc/piecemeal initiatives or to provide, even in their own eyes a satisfactory attempt at equal opportunities in this area, exacerbates a chronic problem in local government sport.

### **Colour-Blind Policy Discourses and the Detached State**

There were examples of processes at work in each authority that advocated the use of 'Eurocentric' approaches. An example of this can be seen in the prevalence of a political position on equal opportunities that uses an integrationist paradigm typical of those highlighted in chapter three associated with the assimilationist, and multiculturalist thought of the 60s, 70s, and 80s. A forced cultural integration through sport becomes effectively an assimilationist policy. These approaches negate the identity claims of black people whilst at the same time alienating them and reaffirming the 'white cultural identity' of Britons (Parekh 1998, 2000). Gilroy (1987), Alibhai-Brown (2001: 103) and others have criticised the racialisation processes in British society that have constructed a discourse on 'race', identity, and nation that 'denies those who deviate from the norm which characterises the British collectivity'. This process of alienation and exclusion ultimately reinforces an imagined homogenous cultural identity that protects tradition against 'outsiders', and 'immigrants' who themselves have to make important cultural decisions about self, identity, and community. In West Town this view was also apparent,

*.....which was firmly believed through our previous Head of Service that equal opps. was about integration not segregation,*



*and we could compound and cause a lot more problems operationally by trying to set up [separate sessions].*  
(Leading Leisure Officer - DSO)

His Head of Service took a similar if not more pragmatic view when he announced that,

*...I would say integration, but also a response to cultural needs within particular parts of the community and recognising that it is part of our policy approach to Equal Opps.*

In South City, the Chair of the Equality Services Sub-Committee expressed a preference for an aggressive integrationist view,

*.....As soon as you .. I mean, my preference is for integration, integrated provision, but that's an aim to be worked for, it can't be achieved overnight.....So that's going to be a long slow process of working through the issue of integration, versus separation.*

Here the councillor was clear that it was a contest between two philosophies, one that espoused a cultural pluralism versus another that proposed what is often seen as a separatist position. In North City, there was also a supporting voice,

*.....I think the goal should be in integration - what I mean by complete integration, you'll never be able to integrate people completely - I think it's a good thing that people have this love for their roots etc. (Senior Sports Development Officer)*

Writers have been critical of those who profess that the state must remain neutral in conducting its duties (Parekh 2000, Markus 2002). In analysing what people mean by 'integration' Parekh (1998, 2000) has gone on to explore five main differences in the ideologies that have affect state policy direction; I) The state as culturally neutral, II) The state promotes a single national culture and expects assimilation, III) The state sponsors a liberal view that unites around a single public political message i.e. social inclusion, whilst in private spheres there is tolerance for diversity and distinct communities are empowered to develop these messages. IV) Building on the third message the fourth removes the barriers between the public and private spheres so that the private realm has more influence on the public. Recognition rather than tolerance of cultural diversity is a stronger message that comes through here, just as communities are

encouraged to become more interdependent and cohesive. V) The state sponsors independent separated communities that work within its legal and civil framework. In each of the authorities views were received that fell close to one of the less attractive categories such as the notion of a neutral state, or a single national culture. In recognising these differences, local government councillors and officers can see how each starting point on integration can affect the way they provide for their local communities.

In her assessment of the cultural neutrality of a liberal democratic state Markus (2002), in agreement with Parekh (1998, 2000), asserted that in pursuing the equality of all its citizens the state should be critical of itself where it aligns itself with a particular ethnic or racial group. The question for these local authority integrationists is ‘integration into what?’ ideally a healthy and happy society which cannot last too long without a degree of cohesion, unity or sense of belonging. Provision that maintains an uncritical perpetuation of mainstream norms, traditions and values commonly associated in practice with the white community, is likely to reinforce social inequalities. This relative impartiality of the state in terms of not developing proactive distributive or redistributive practices (that go some way to equalising outcomes and treating some people *unequally* as a result) creates a context in which the inequalities in provision can remain unchanged. This further maintains the everyday white privilege that Delgado and Stefancic (1997), and earlier McIntosh (1997) and Long and Hylton (2002) warn against and propose as a new frontier for critical ‘race’ theorists.

All these considerations lead to the conclusion that the impartiality of the state and its desirability ought to be evaluated selectively, examining how far it contributes to the reduction of the privileged position of the majority where it is detrimental to the cultural heritage and cultural identities of other groups. (Markus 2002: 395)

When these views were articulated they were leant a pragmatic view. They were not fully supported across the authorities and in some cases a view was taken that accepted the sovereignty of different cultures and were willing to develop practice that would take this into account,

*There was I think a recognition that these cultures are valuable parts of what goes on in the UK at present, and in North City, and rather than necessarily trying to marry cultures together and lose some of the traditions which we've built up over hundreds of years, then they should somehow be partly integrated or run alongside whatever...*

(Ex-Director of Sport - North City).

Parekh (2000) is clear in proposing that none of his five views are mutually exclusive, even though some are less coherent for the state to operate than others (see No.5). What we can see here is that attitudes to equality work can form a strong steer to policy and provision. Local providers who do not critically reflect on how their views on difference and diversity in their practices can severely constrain opportunities and agency, should make us sensitive to why appreciative gaps form in the implementation of equal opportunities in local authorities.

Omi and Winant (2002: 126) argue that the state has to reject a neutral position if it is to take a consistent view of its past actions that have favoured some over others. In these circumstances it would be illogical for state actors to,

declare themselves 'colour-blind' without in fact perpetuating the same type of differential, racist treatment.

Colour-blindness is a theme that becomes apparent not just in the way sport is planned but also in the way it is implemented and monitored. In North City the non-specification of 'race' when working towards equality of opportunity and access for the Black and minority ethnic communities of North City in the first round of C.C.T. are the most significant indicators of its weaknesses in sport (CRE 1995, Collier 1998, Ladson Billings 1998, LGA 2001). The impact of this major omission, although not affecting sports development directly, still affected the way sport was delivered in every aspect of sports development work in the city. One suggestion might be to focus down to the stresses of the day-to-day management of self and work in a dynamic environment. This 'managing' of daily pressures leads to decisions being made or 'judgement calls', which managers have to stand by. Although there is officer recognition of inter/intra departmental pressures where it comes to equality of opportunity, if the ideals are not part of working practices then they can easily be ignored when time is short and stress is high. As a result 'race' continues to structure inequality and signify difference (Omi and

Winant 2002). If organisations do not ‘know’ the benefits to the department, authority and the local population, of equality work then there is always the chance that the option chosen even at the highest levels might be what is ‘known’ rather than what ‘should’ have happened. The result of this and other actions then feed back into the assumptive world as they simultaneously modify the appreciative contexts of others in the organisation. The ex-Principal Sports Officer in North City argued that,

*Certainly there was a closer working together with the Equal Opps unit but I know that people due to the sorts of pressure they are working under in the department and other departments is that perhaps they don't, it's not as integrated into their mainstream thinking as it should be.*

Similarly in West Town although there are examples of ‘race’ being a specific focus in the sport and leisure department where a very clear commitment is made to this very focused area of activity, there are significant incidents that demonstrate the contradictions in practice that conspire to marginalise and reinforce the position of black people in the authority. The example of the Asian women and the white community illustrates how a half-hearted attempt at a ‘race’-centred approach was taken. This involved a step away from mainstream provision that was soon given up in favour of a popular disregard for such things that Ouseley (1990) remarked happened in the radical authorities of the eighties. As the officers were not conscious of the practical outcomes of these activities in addition to the ethical issues in the monitoring of ethnicity, it has to be a significant symbol of a colour-blind authority. This type of thinking can be traced to the ethnocentric assimilationist and integrationist ideals of the three decades since the sixties where cultural development related to a single national culture that came out of white Britain. Brown’s (1970) earlier ‘unmelting pot’ comments strike some resonance at this point.

South City was the only authority with a sports officer responsible for black and minority ethnic groups even though this was a junior post. However, the issues around recruitment, retention, promotion and monitoring were all problematic. As in the case of West Town we can find in South City examples of a ‘race’-consciousness permeating aspects of their work in particular the work of this one officer. However she was less optimistic about the mainstream integration of ‘race’ equality in sport in her authority.

She articulated a version of a role model debate criticised by Delgado (1995b) where the problem of having someone in her position or ‘doing work on race’ means that others leave it alone. This marginalises and tokenises race-equality even further and reinforces a racial split in policy and provision. Hence there becomes a racialisation of a specific area of policy and provision rather than a ‘race’-centred policy and provision. As a majoritarian device, it separates ‘race’-focused provision and gives the institution an opportunity to distance itself from the failures of special initiatives run for black people, as we have seen with some of the reasons raised earlier for underperformance. The conclusion of such activity like those in South City and West Town is that there are conspicuous examples of specific sport policy and practice that can be offered of their efforts to combat disadvantage and discrimination at the same time as the bulk of their activity remaining generally unchanged. The marginal position of ‘race’ and equality means that the local authorities consciously or otherwise do not see it as significant an issue as others. Further, where they have identified it as an issue in West Town and South City in particular it is not consistently taken cognisance of across their critical mass. Some openly ignore it or contradict it with an alternative often economics-based discourse of ‘success’.

it is a slippery slope to say that these differences should not count, to saying that they don’t matter.

(Collier 1998: 34)

## **SUMMARY**

So local government as another contested and racialised space mediates the status, power and privilege of black people in wider society (Goldberg 1993, Cross and Keith 1993, Crenshaw 1995, Parker 1998, 1999). The political mobilisation of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport has led to a more emancipatory ‘race’ centred agenda in Northshire allowing Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to challenge the ‘master’s tools’ to do a satisfactory job for them. That is, they have decided to employ a liberatory politics that no longer relies upon the local state to make decisions on their behalf. In forming this group, however successful it becomes, they are challenging the normative assumptions of influential actors in sport to seriously reconsider their evaluations of progress on race-equality because a network of black people are telling the same story

and they cannot all be wrong. The value of reading about this black experience is that it reinforces the proposition that racial formations exist in society as a result of racial processes that liberate and constrain, advantage and disadvantage. It forces readers to engage with the black 'other' where previously they would not have had concrete knowledge of them and perhaps reconsider the assumptions that underpin their own practices. hooks (1991) argues that this recognition would lead to a critical practice that would act as a catalyst for a radical liberation struggle. This principle of social transformation is core to a critical race perspective.

hooks (1990: 25) also emphasised that the need for liberatory theory will,

...challenge racist domination or promote a breakdown in traditional ways of seeing thinking about reality, ways of constructing aesthetic theory and practice.

The application of this to the 'master's tools' in academic and policy domains is to encourage critical race theorists and critical sports/policy studies writers to continue with their transformatory agendas (Nebeker 1998, Delgado and Stefancic 2000, Hemingway and Parr 2000, Scraton 2001, Solorzano and Yosso 2001, Watson and Scraton 2001). The development of progressive 'race'-centred epistemologies and theory allows the academic and policy community to acknowledge that just because they do not hear the black voice, and understand the black experience, does not mean that it should not have a voice or is inarticulate (Lemert 1999). A stream cannot rise higher than its source (Cooper 1892). Hence the epistemologies that are valued in the study of policy and sport studies need to engage the plurivocal, non-traditional methodologies and theories that dispute established positions, agendas and theories with those that have been marginalised and ignored. Such methodology enhanced a traditional policy study with a frequently-ignored 'race'-centred standpoint, complimented by a 'view from the bottom' which allows us to engage the black experience. Further down the line this methodology still has merit in the way traditional voices or experiences are not privileged over 'others'. However, my engagement with this process have heightened my awareness of the praxis of research and makes me wonder if an even more adventurous, less traditional, methodology would have opened other windows on race-equality in sport. Perhaps the black voice would have been louder and the challenge to dominant epistemologies more acute?

Stanfield II (1994) recognises that the dearth of research in the social and political sciences into racial and ethnic phenomena is a result itself of a process of ethnic production. Ragin (1994) too supported the idea of giving voice to groups who are traditionally outside the mainstream. So although the epistemological value of studying such groups is recognised as enhancing a body of knowledge, a crucial objective of this type of research is to raise awareness of lesser-known phenomena. It should not be forgotten that it is simultaneously attempting to shed new light on established phenomena and demystify such phenomena at the same time as informing. The praxis of this research then is one that results in a challenge to a marginalised 'race' standpoint that embraces a critical emancipatory discourse of social transformation through racialised processes and racial projects. The critical political engagement of the researcher to the topic is gaining some momentum and is endorsed by critical race theorists like Ladson-Billings 1998, Delgado and Stefancic 2000, and Solorzano and Yosso 2001, feminists like Lather 1991, Bhopal 2000, critical theorists like Kellner 1989, and Kincheloe and McLaren 1994, policy studies White and Adams 1994 and Marsh 1998, and leisure theorists like Birrell 1989, and Coalter 2000. The centring of this 'race' pragmatic in the study of sport, leisure and policy studies will ensure that the hegemony of positivism will be modified; critical 'race'-centred agendas will emerge that will shift equality from the margins; and critical race theories will inform established epistemologies.

If the master's tools are left to dismantle the master's house the creeping incrementalism of the past is unlikely to provide the transformation of practice in the academy, local government, race-equality, and in the experience of black people as advocated by critical race theorists. However, a CRT standpoint in our theorising of race-equality is likely to start this process and it is really at this point that the journey begins.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Had the timing of the fieldwork been closer to the implementation of the amendment in 2000 there may have been an increased awareness of 'race' amongst the sample group.

<sup>1</sup> Perea (2000) warns writers of this black/white binary that negates and renders invisible the experiences of those groups not normally considered as black (or white for that matter). This is a common mistake of writers in discussions of 'race' and social policy.

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Association (2001: 7) discuss 'ethnic communities' here as a homogenous entity.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Black and Ethnic Minority' was not universally accepted by the Forum members due to the negative connotations surrounding 'ethnic minority'. However, there was recognition that the term was used in a comfortable way by many diverse groups of people who the Forum did not want to exclude due to semantics.

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting at this point that South City provided the only black officer input. Putting to one side the monocultural nature of the joint elites briefly, it was of critical importance in this study to see who the main actors were in the policy implementation process in each authority.

<sup>1</sup> With North City planning for a Best Value pilot its performance indicators will be monitored by external auditors although equality indicators and social objectives are only indirectly audited, for example community consultation, equal opportunities per se is not party to external scrutiny (LGIU 1998, Thomas and Piccolo 2000).

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that this officer's three year contract was not extended.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Black and Ethnic Minority' was not universally accepted by the Forum members due to the negative connotations surrounding 'ethnic minority'. However, there was recognition that the term was used in a comfortable way by many diverse groups of people who the Forum did not want to exclude due to semantics.

<sup>1</sup> For instance the point raised in Chapter 5 that black representation at senior officer level is consistently poor across the county has not escaped the gaze and energies of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members.

<sup>1</sup> Through the course of the research the Sports Council has changed its nomenclature to the English Sports Council and also uses its brand name Sport England. Occasional inconsistencies may appear dependent upon the context in which the organisation is referred.

<sup>1</sup> This funding was to be reviewed annually.

<sup>1</sup> Recent Sport England (2002) Active Communities Experimental Projects have adopted this philosophical position.

<sup>1</sup> In 1989 the Sports Council adopted a paper "Sport and Recreation in a Multi-Cultural Society"

<sup>1</sup> Ad hoc meetings were also called by working groups.

<sup>1</sup> There are forty-five Sports Partnerships that cover whole counties or parts of larger ones as in Northshire. Each sports partnership in Northshire is, or will be in those areas not already set up, made up of the local authorities in those areas, relevant governing bodies and people who have the local knowledge, expertise and experience of sport in their area. Each partnership is responsible for ensuring local delivery of the programme to young people and this includes accessing and utilising lottery sports fund awards for named projects. Examples of the scale of funding can be seen in Greater Manchester where £200,000 was used to develop girls hockey, football and netball in the area. Merseyside sport was also awarded £210,000 to develop five of the nine sports, for girls. £10 million per annum will be invested in the Active Sports Partnerships until 2005 (Sport England 2000)

<sup>1</sup> West Town and North City had not produced action plans up to this point.

<sup>1</sup> Since the Fair Sporting Chance (1999) was written the CRE and Sport England have jointly developed a very similar racial equality standard for sport (1999) and the Local Government Association have written an identical framework for local authorities (2001).

<sup>1</sup> Will's advisory role for Sport England ceased around the end of this fieldwork period.

<sup>1</sup> Having seen the initial policy from the North Northshire Forum Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport refused to endorse it on the basis of it not stipulating plans and procedures for monitoring, harassment and also due to the lack of clarity and consistency in the language used. In terms of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport exercising influence over local authorities in North Northshire this is an example of it making matters very difficult for those who have traditionally ignored these issues due to the relatively low figures for black people in their area. When professionals in N. Northshire are presented with Census figures for black people in their area they are often surprised at how many there actually are.

<sup>11</sup> It is worth reiterating that this is a dialectical process as appreciative contexts modify assumptive

worlds and vice-versa.



## **APPENDIX 1: Letter of Introduction to Local Authorities**

Cllr.  
The Chairs Secretary  
Leisure Services  
Old Town Hall  
South City S12HH

26 February, 1998

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a lecturer on the Carnegie Campus at Leeds Metropolitan University and I am conducting an investigation into good practice relating to equal opportunities and sport. I have to date been involved with two local authorities like South City who have an excellent reputation in providing opportunities for and delivering sport at all levels.

Over March to April 1998 I will be talking to key individuals like yourself who have been involved in contributing to sport and recreation policy at a senior level. I hope at some time to be able to meet with you for approximately half an hour to enable me to get a complete picture of the roles that sport and its related policies have played in the development of equity in the city.

This work is seen as at the cutting edge of sport policy as very little work has been completed academically to bring equal opportunities onto the sport and leisure policy agenda. Therefore I hope that you can contribute as your comments are viewed as an important part of this process.

The investigation is for the use of Leeds Metropolitan University as partial fulfilment of a Ph.D. thesis and also for your own use if you identify that the material might be useful to you. Any discussions that we have will also be subject to complete confidentiality and University protocol.

I have enclosed a list of possible dates and times where I am available, if none of them suit you I will be able to fit into your schedule. My telephone number at the University is below and my extension is 4704 I look forward to meeting you.

Yours faithfully

**KEVIN HYLTON**  
**LECTURER in SPORT AND RECREATION DEVELOPMENT**

## **APPENDIX: 2**

### **CASE STUDY SENIOR OFFICER/COUNCILLOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **Generic Questions: -**

Introduce Three Main Sections

- a) **Policy Process/Equal Opportunities & Monitoring**
- b) **Implementation**
- c) **Future Plans**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Overview of the research

- 1) Personal History

#### **POLICY PROCESS/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MONITORING**

- 2) Who develops and controls policy?
- 3) What are the main stages in the policy process?
- 4) What are the main influences on the decision making process?
- 5) How does the policy process work in relation to equal opportunities?
- 6) Who are the main decision makers?
- 7) Where are black people represented in the policy-making process?
- 8) How is the community represented?
- 9) Are some external interest groups better at affecting policy decisions than others? Examples.
- 10) How do you influence the policy process?

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 11) Do you have a equal opportunities policy?
- 12) How significant is the equal opportunities policy in this authority?
- 13) Policy approaches that local authorities have taken include anti-racist, multi-cultural, integration and separation which of these might fit yours?
- 14) Can you give me any examples of a) good practice linked to equality and sport/recreation here? B) bad practice?

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

- 15) If you were to name four major changes or challenges in the last ten years in local government what might they be?

- 16) How has C.C.T. [BV, Trusts] affected equal opportunities issues?
- 17) How does central government affect the thinking of policymakers and senior officers?
- 18) Do you feel that there has been a growing professionalisation of managers?
- 19) How has this affected the way the public are viewed?
- 20) Is equal opportunities work in better hands now than ten years ago?
- 21) Are there any issues omitted that you think might be important? [or anyone else I need to talk to?]

**Kevin Hylton**  
**Leeds Metropolitan University**

## **APPENDIX: 3**

### **Request for Further Information**

From: Kevin Hylton  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
Beckett Park  
Headingley  
North City LS6 3QS  
Tel:- 0113 2832 600 ext:4711

To:

Regarding my work on Local Government and Equal Opportunities would it be possible to let me have any of the following? :-

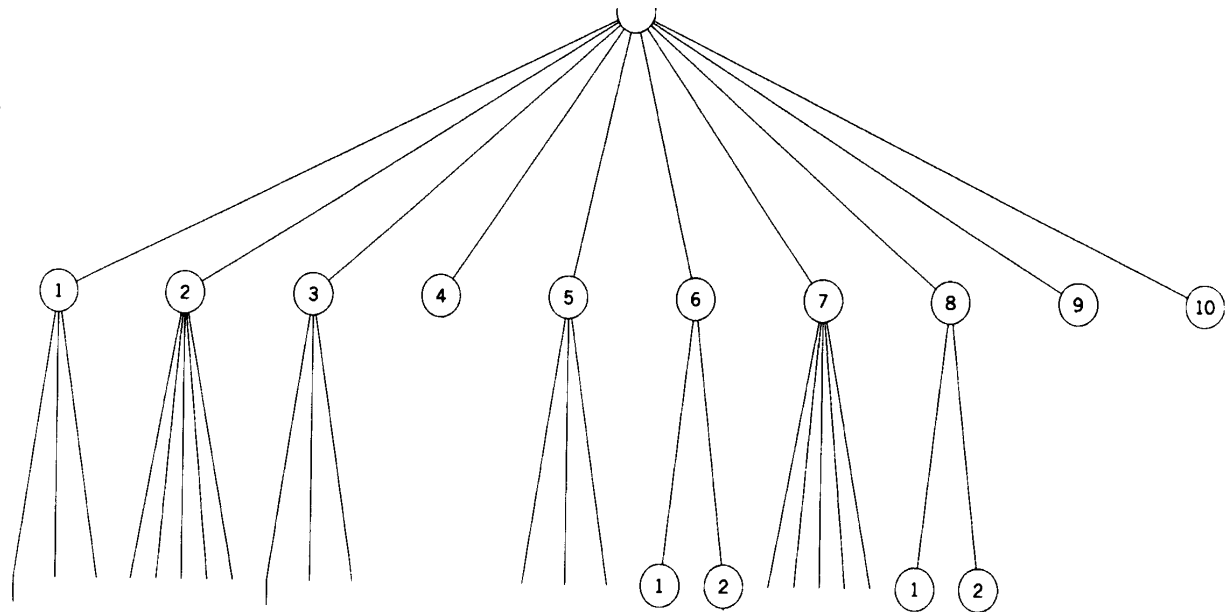
- 1) A breakdown of the budgets for
  - a) Sports Provision in the authority
  - b) Leisure section and / or
  - c) the Equality unit.
- 2) Any documents/ lists of any Good Practice on Race Equality initiatives relating to Sport and Recreation in your area.
- 3) A copy of the latest policy on Sport.
- 4) A copy of the latest policy on Race Equality.

If any of this request does not fall within your jurisdiction please ignore it.

**THANKS**

**Kevin Hylton**

**Appendix 4: Nudist Tree  
Display at <Root> For  
South City**



- Key:**
- 1) Politics
  - 2) Equal Opportunities
  - 3) Community
  - 4) Resources
  - 5) Senior Officers
  - 6) Councillors
  - 7) 'Race'
  - 8) CCT/BV/Trusts
  - 9) Impacts
  - 10) Structure of Sport

**n.b. The Tree emerges as searches and reports are generated in the sorting, coding and analysis of data.**

## **APPENDIX: 5**

### **Overview of Council Structures**

North City had a very traditional council structure at the point of interview which had departments connected to a series of committees and sub-committees led by key chairs and vice-chairs supported by senior officers. The strategic and operational management aspects of West Town have been restructured since 1989. Similarly in South City Recent wide-ranging changes have occurred as a result of the new posting of a Chief Executive leading the authority through Best Value. In a move to make the city more accountable, coordinated and businesslike the CEO has drastically reduced the initial twelve departments in the Council to just five large units the same as West Town. In West Town There is an extra corporate dimension of five executive directors who oversee the strategic development of each of the five streamlined directorates. This group is seen as the new 'culture' from the lean and efficient private sector, which has become very comfortable with competition and quality, profit and loss, balance sheets and accountability. Clarke (1994: 163) describes this ethos as the 'new managerialist orthodoxy', which has become popular in leisure management.

These executives have direct access to senior councillors at the same time as having direct control over the implementation of Council business. The executive directors have a strategic role to play in the authority through advising and working with the Policy Board where between them they can consider all of the possible alternatives to a policy or policy problem before it gets to the full Council or Labour Group. Theoretically the Labour Group in a number of cases will end up rubber stamping pre-discussions in the previous forum made up of the Chairs of committees and ex-high level executives from the private sector who make up the executive directors.

In South City Each unit is being managed by a new senior executive with a history of managing large enterprises in the private sector. The message sent out is one of developing more lean and competitive departments with the Heads to act almost as a management board with senior councillors. Thus allowing the Council to operate as a more corporate body as opposed to a less cohesive mixture of departments. What were the old Heads of Department are now Heads of Service under their respective Executive Heads they as before are responsible for the day-to-day management of their service with the executive Heads ensuring the corporate policy steer.

## APPENDIX: 6

### Domains of Influence

	(Insider) Inside Organisation
(Insider) Outside Organisation	(Outsider) Inside Organisation
	(Outsider) Outside Organisation

Insiders Inside Local Authorities may be Chief Officers, Senior Officers & Senior Councillors.

Outsiders Inside Local Authorities may be Race Unit Officers/Representatives, Community Sports Officers and possibly Junior Councillors.

Insiders Outside Local Authorities might include, University researchers, The Sports Council, Funding Agencies and Established Forums e.g. Northshire Sport Board, Active Sports Forums.

Outsiders Outside an Organisation might include Pressure Groups (wanting radical as opposed to incremental change) or new Groups i.e. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport.

This should be viewed as a dynamic model as issues and strategic positioning of organisations often determine where an actor is placed in relation to influence on local authority sport. I found this illustration useful early on in the study as a working model to help visualise who was closest to networks of power both inside and out of local authority sport.

## APPENDIX: 7

### **Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport Milestones 1996-2000 (SEE ALSO the Regional Advisory notes – p225)**

**1996**

**(30<sup>th</sup> March)**

**The Mill Town Conference had speakers from the Sports Council HQ, Senior Local Authority staff, and academics. There were 20 local authority staff, 8 from national governing bodies, 5 Sports Council staff, 4 from voluntary groups and 1 from a Race Equality Council.**

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**(1-6 September)**

**Professional Certificate/Diploma in Sports Development  
North City (No. 2 in South City in 1997)**

Here are notes from the leaflet:-

The courses enabled a number of people directly involved in sports development for black and ethnic minorities to receive very valuable education and training which will help them with their future work.

The course members will provide each other with a valuable support network for the future.

The course will enable delegates to gain a University qualification in Sports Development.

The delegates shared experiences and should be able to apply examples of good practice to their particular environment.

A number of the participants have gone on to take on professional roles in sports development. Some of them have moved on to prominent roles in equality/equity roles in sports development from local to national levels. For Example, one delegate has gone on to lead a Sport England/CRE race-equality project. Another has gone on to become a regional cricket development officer for Northshire, and one other has become a development officer for the inner-city of North City. Further, the success of this course led South City Council to support another course to be run in the city.

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### **DATABASE SET UP OF BEM CONTACTS**

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CCPR - Tutor Training

Offered to tailor 2 courses for BEM communities. Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to act as link to get tutors interested. South City and Blowden

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**14<sup>th</sup> June** Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport invited to delegate a representative to sit on the executive of the regional sports forum the 'Northshire Sports Board'. An influential group made up of all of the local authorities and governing bodies in the region.

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**4<sup>th</sup> September** - NCF and Sports Council considering a tailored course for BEMs as a result of the Professional Certificate/Diploma success.

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**October 5<sup>th</sup>** East Town meeting for those interested in constituting part of the new black sports forum. A steering committee was appointed and the first AGM was planned for 7<sup>th</sup> December.

It was around this time that the Regional Advisory and Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's roles started to separate (even though some confused them).

**7<sup>th</sup> December** AGM - Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is invited as a stakeholder in discussions on lottery bids in the region MCT  
Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport invited to discuss the work of the regional coordinator.

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## 1997

Lottery Roadshow put on the agenda

Possible office base in South City where a black voluntary group is offering assistance.

Membership forms needed to generate interest and income.

Charter for Fairplay in Northshire adopted (Northshire Federation of Sport and Recreation initiative).

---

Conflict between SC and Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport in that SC Officer expecting BS to set up regional workshops to get potential BEM coaches upto the standard for the NCF tutor training – seen as NCF's job

Also - focus is young people and performance and excellence. NJSP offered as a package for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport (also the work programme in 16<sup>th</sup> Jan meeting reflects product orientation) to use to increase participation (rather than starting with the needs of the group/communities) – to be resolved.

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**MARCH 97** REAG objective to have 2 roadshows London and Northshire (Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport link and reputation raised in group)  
**WEAKNESSES/PROBLEMS WITH LOTTERY DISTRIBUTION**

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**March/April - South City course to run.**

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport administration being put in place e.g. logo, letterhead, leaflet

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**June**

East Borough sports Forum wanting Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport representation Chair of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport sitting on the REAG.

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Starting to receive membership applications - 2local authorities, and individual members

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Prospective NCF tutors identified and application forms submitted.

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**OCTOBER - Lottery Roadshow for Northshire (Blowden)**

Delegates included Paul Jenkins, Richard Sharpe LSF staff, Senior Officers in local authorities, Councillors, range of community groups some representing specific S.Asian and African-Caribbean sports organisations (see programme)

Overall Workshop Objective - to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the service offered by the Sports Council Lottery Unit and Local authority Lottery Officers, in processing applications to the Fund and addressing the problems of equity of access to the LSF.

Commitment from the roadshows for ethnic monitoring to be written into the process before clients and LSF officers.

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**29<sup>th</sup> November 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM** - only concern was the lack of funds held by Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport. An urgent action point. (Chair's report notes consultation with YCA's development plan 1996-2000 i.e. its anti-racism and race equality policy statement & acts as a sounding board for the new CDO for ethnic minorities).

---

**1998**

**AUGUST**

English Sports Council Development Officer for the National Junior Sports Programme and Equity Service Team reported that after Success of roadshow they will be setting one up in each region across the country.

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## 1999

June - Visit by the Head of Policy @ Sport England to discuss local initiatives and possible ways of accessing Sport England funding

## 2000

**£12 000 – Funding for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport directly from Sport England HQ for Community Sports Development Facilitators.**

January - Community Sports development facilitators training Day - LSF staff intro. to Awards 4 All

July 2<sup>nd</sup> session at Wislet Hall ( 10 facilitators)

August 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> session at LMU (NCF)

### February

Fair Sporting Chance - Racial equality in Local Authorities seminar. Most Local authorities in the county attended (including NCF) document to all LAs - adopted by - Northshire Sports Federation and by default ALL Local authorities.

MONITORING South City and West Town identified as the 2 focus authorities.

### March

Regional Information Seminar for BEM communities - very successful, very busy. In collaboration with South City CC. to Raise awareness of funding, products

Active Sport manager in North Northshire - Representation from Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport

Problems with accessing Sport England (central funds) because the regional development officer is asking for unnecessary reports from Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport where non were asked for in the original agreement. In addition reports are being supplied via NSDC but Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport is being asked to duplicate this effort.

Meeting with the Regional Director of Sport England being set up to make the point that S. England money is not enough for the conditions they are putting down. May withdraw from any partnership work and will publicise this break with HQ.

The parallel Sport England regional advisory group for Black and Ethnic Minorities made up of any unelected interested parties in Northshire to become a sub-committee of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's. The financing of this group will be paid for through Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport funding. So after 4 years the parent becomes the child. The work in this area then becomes independent of the regional Sport England. There are positives and negatives to this

## **Regional Advisory Committee (extracts from notes)**

### **1995**

Initially called the 'Black and Ethnic Minority Working Group - Northshire

Evidence of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport being used by the RA to apply pressure to organisations who are not providing enough positive feedback on equity initiatives. Even used by the regional Sports Council to apply pressure to the central Sports Council.

Clearly the work of the Regional Advisory and Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport mirrored each other. The group that was being instrumental in Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport were making sure their agenda was that of the regional advisory. The RA had more resources and political will. So references to the professional certificate, CCPR tutor training, and the need to establish an independent Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport were accepted by all at this stage.

**May 1996** focus was the future of the regional advisory and whether an independent 'black and ethnic minorities sports federation' in the mould of the regional disability sports organisation was needed. This was a crucial time for the regional advisory and the future Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport as Sports Council reorganisation was interpreted by the regional SC-SDO that support for any ongoing consultation networks would be terminated until further notice. The implications for fledgling un-established organisations was there for all to see except the regional officer.

It was also agreed at this meeting that there would be value in appointing a resident tutor for the duration of the professional certificate/diploma (ME). Issues here about being drawn further into the black sporting network in Northshire. A pivotal role educating the next generation of black SDO's

The idea was to be tabled at the Northshire Federation of Sport and Recreation in June (7 major objects of the forum are attached).

### **1997 (see Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport notes above)**

Northshire Sports Board have agreed to take a member of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport onto their executive and one for the general assembly.

NCF willing to talk about targeted tutor training courses with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport

Sport England/Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to look at tailoring the lottery seminar for the black community.

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport asked to contact the Lottery Unit directly to inform them of the concerns of the RA.

### **1998**

March - At a national level Paul Jenkins was expressing his concern as chair of the Race Equality Advisory Group (ESC) that there was not enough commitment being shown by the ESC and that there was not senior officer input. He gained a concession that Anita White Director of Development or Derek Casey CEO of ESC would make

the meetings. Announced in March that CRE/ESC would partner up to form Sporting Equals.

Jan

Tabled that 4 authorities had held the ESC equity training course - South City and Lowtown had no equality plan to that point West Town were advanced in their planning and North Lincs had started the processes but only Skeltbrough had a plan but needed it to be updated by N.Belcher. North City had not held the training nor had an equality action plan.

**IMPORTANTLY VOLUNTARY BLACK AND ETHNIC SPORT WERE BEING ENCOURAGED (noted in the April meeting also) TO LOBBY THOSE LOCAL AUTHORITIES WHO DID NOT HAVE A PLAN (ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAD TAKEN THE TRAINING AND AGREED TO WRITE THE PLAN)**

November

Seen as important to re-confirm the terms of reference for the group (as there was some confusion about the role of the RA and Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport) Terms are attached to the agenda and can be compared with Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport's 9 key objects.

**Again I was commissioned to write the template for Local authorities race equality action plans in Northshire. To be launched at a seminar for local authorities.**

Part of regional ADVISORY plan was for a member of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to attend programme planning meetings with ESC and contribute to the development future policy.

## 1999

February

1<sup>st</sup> April - Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport responsible for its own secretariat

Kick It Out introduced itself to RA

Here the future of the advisory group was tabled as it only had an advisory role and had no power or constitution to do anything. Question: should it become part of the Northshire Sports Forum or Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport?

May 4<sup>th</sup> interest being expressed by local authorities for membership of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport.

Awareness seminars noted for July (Blowden and South City) ---put back to February 2000

September

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport giving support to a tutor training day for black and ethnic minorities in October-South City

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport found funding from Sport England to fund the training of community facilitators as awards for all advisers.

4 local authorities, and 2 NGBs and reciprocal membership with the Federation of Northshire Sport

November

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport given a seat on the new Regional Sports Board

### **2000**

‘A level playing field’ was adopted by the Northshire Sports Forum

March 2000-2003

South City community information seminar was very successful, well attended, Blowden to follow suit

### **Facilitators training days noted - 29 registered**

A new voluntary coordinator for Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport appointed.

**2000/1** Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport to be funded directly from HQ and CNSDC would be contracted to act as secretariat to RA and Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport

Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport publicise their equal opportunities statement.

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- <sup>i</sup> Had the timing of the fieldwork been closer to the implementation of the amendment in 2000 there may have been an increased awareness of 'race' amongst the sample group.
- <sup>ii</sup> Perea (2000) warns writers of this black/white binary that negates and renders invisible the experiences of those groups not normally considered as black (or white for that matter). This is a common mistake of writers in discussions of 'race' and social policy.
- <sup>iii</sup> The Local Government Association (2001: 7) discuss 'ethnic communities' here as a homogenous entity.
- <sup>iv</sup> The term 'Black and Ethnic Minority' was not universally accepted by the Forum members due to the negative connotations surrounding 'ethnic minority'. However, there was recognition that the term was used in a comfortable way by many diverse groups of people who the Forum did not want to exclude due to semantics.
- <sup>v</sup> It is worth noting at this point that South City provided the only black officer input. Putting to one side the monocultural nature of the joint elites briefly, it was of critical importance in this study to see who the main actors were in the policy implementation process in each authority.
- <sup>vi</sup> With North City planning for a Best Value pilot its performance indicators will be monitored by external auditors although equality indicators and social objectives are only indirectly audited, for example community consultation, equal opportunities per se is not party to external scrutiny (LGIU 1998, Thomas and Piccolo 2000).
- <sup>vii</sup> It is worth noting that this officer's three year contract was not extended.
- <sup>viii</sup> The term 'Black and Ethnic Minority' was not universally accepted by the Forum members due to the negative connotations surrounding 'ethnic minority'. However, there was recognition that the term was used in a comfortable way by many diverse groups of people who the Forum did not want to exclude due to semantics.
- <sup>ix</sup> For instance the point raised in Chapter 5 that black representation at senior officer level is consistently poor across the county has not escaped the gaze and energies of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport members.
- <sup>x</sup> Through the course of the research the Sports Council has changed its nomenclature to the English Sports Council and also uses its brand name Sport England. Occasional inconsistencies may appear dependent upon the context in which the organisation is referred.
- <sup>xi</sup> This funding was to be reviewed annually.
- <sup>xii</sup> Recent Sport England (2002) Active Communities Experimental Projects have adopted this philosophical position.
- <sup>xiii</sup> In 1989 the Sports Council adopted a paper "Sport and Recreation in a Multi-Cultural Society"
- <sup>xiv</sup> Ad hoc meetings were also called by working groups.
- <sup>xv</sup> There are forty-five Sports Partnerships that cover whole counties or parts of larger ones as in Northshire. Each sports partnership in Northshire is, or will be in those areas not already set up, made up of the local authorities in those areas, relevant governing bodies and people who have the local knowledge, expertise and experience of sport in their area. Each partnership is responsible for ensuring local delivery of the programme to young people and this includes accessing and utilising lottery sports fund awards for named projects. Examples of the scale of funding can be seen in Greater Manchester where £200,000 was used to develop girls hockey, football and netball in the area. Merseyside sport was also awarded £210,000 to develop five of the nine sports, for girls. £10 million per annum will be invested in the Active Sports Partnerships until 2005 (Sport England 2000)
- <sup>xvi</sup> West Town and North City had not produced action plans upto this point.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Since the Fair Sporting Chance (1999) was written the CRE and Sport England have jointly developed a very similar racial equality standard for sport (1999) and the Local Government Association have written an identical framework for local authorities (2001).
- <sup>xviii</sup> Will 's advisory role for Sport England ceased around the end of this fieldwork period.
- <sup>xix</sup> Having seen the initial policy from the North Northshire Forum Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport refused to endorse it on the basis of it not stipulating plans and procedures for monitoring, harassment and also due to the lack of clarity and consistency in the language used. In terms of Voluntary Black and Ethnic Sport exercising influence over local authorities in North Northshire this is an example of it making matters very difficult for those who have traditionally ignored these issues due to the relatively low figures for black people in their area. When professionals in N. Northshire are presented with Census figures for black people in their area they are often surprised at how many there actually are.
- <sup>xxxx</sup> It is worth reiterating that this is a dialectical process as appreciative contexts modify assumptive worlds and vice-versa.