Social class and the cultivation of capital: undergraduate PE students' socialisation in sport and physical activity

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Abstract

Social class inequalities in accessing sport persist across the western world as a result of financial, social, and cultural factors. Research to date largely explores how inequalities impact both accessing and practicing sport and physical activity – identifying patterns and differences between social classes but failing to identify the long-term implications such as how students exchange these as official qualifications and knowledge in Physical Education (PE) degrees. In this paper, we use Bourdieu's concepts of capital, and to a lesser extent habitus and field to theorise about sport as sites of socialisation that shapes the composition and volume of capital students enter PE degrees with. To date, research suggests the role socialisation and informal learning plays in shaping PE students' development of valued dispositions, but often overlooks the intersecting impact of social class. We draw on data from seventeen undergraduate students, studying a non-teacher training PE degree, in the UK. The data presented is selected from interviews exploring how the fields of family, school, extra-curricular sport, and the geo-demography of the area they grew up in shaped their access to and practice of Sport/PA. Furthermore, it indicates class differences exist in both the key sites and agents of socialisation. We suggest this has ramifications, in relation to the volume and composition of capital PE students enter Higher Education (HE) with, highlighting the importance for PE staff in HE to be aware of this. Consequently, we demonstrate prior socialisation contributes to students' differing experiences of PE degrees, potentially shaping inequalities resulting from their capacity to exchange capital when studying PE at university. This paper encourages PE staff in universities to question the assumption parity of entry qualification results in all students entering HE with same access to knowledge and experiences valued in PE degrees.

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Keywords: social class; socialisation; physical education, higher education

Introduction

Much research identifies social class playing a significant role in an individual's socialisation in sport/physical activity (PA) (e.g., Allen et al., 2021; Lareau, 2002; Stuij, 2015). Consequently, class inequalities are prevalent in the Sport/PA sector, with pupils entering school physical education (PE) with vastly different experiences of sport and endowments of physical capital (Evans and Davies, 2010; Kennedy et al., 2020). There are significant differences in both the type of sports individuals participate in and how they practice PA (Wiltshire et al., 2019). Furthermore, agents located in key sites of socialisation - such as families, schools, and sports clubs – play important roles in shaping dispositions towards Sport/PA (Vincent and Maxwell, 2016). For example, middle and upper-class families are more likely to invest time and money in sport, enrichment activities and education, to cultivate desirable forms of capital; subsequently, reproducing and crystallising class inequalities (Bourdieu, 1984).

Research into social class and higher education (HE) indicates class inequalities are commonplace throughout universities in western countries with students from upper and middle-class families more efficiently utilising social and cultural capital to navigate all elements of university (Lehman, 2014; O'Shea, et al., 2016). Furthermore, sports participation acts as an important form of cultural capital in student populations (Magrath, 2019) with disparities in participation between students from low-income backgrounds evident (Griffiths, et al., 2020). Nonetheless, while evidence indicates prior socialisation impacts the development of symbolically valuable dispositions in PE teachers (Everly and Flemons, 2020), and social class shapes forms of capital exchanged for academic success in HE (Bathmaker et al., 2013), limited research explores how prior socialisation and social class together impact the capital students bring into their PE degrees (HEPE from herein). The work of Aldous and colleagues (2014; 2016) is a notable exception, highlighting how compositions of capital impact working-class students' transitions to sports degrees. This paper builds on this work through a case-study exploring classed patterns of sporting socialisation of undergraduate HEPE students (non-teacher training) at one university in the UK. In doing so, it seeks to further understand the forms of capital students enter HEPE with and begins to explore and how equitably they were exchanged, influencing their university journeys. To do so it:

1. Identifies the influence of family jobs, education, and economic resources upon cultivating capital
2. Considers the impact of prior school conditions such as teachers, infrastructure, and practices upon cultivation
3. Explores the influence of sporting environment and agents (e.g., coaches, teammates) and types of activities participants engaged in on cultivating capital

Within the following discussion, we identify classed differences in the sites of socialisation participants accessed prior to enrolling on HEPE degrees, both in terms of volume and nature of extra-curricular sport accessed. Furthermore, key differences in the roles that parents, teachers, and coaches played in cultivating capital are also explored. In our analysis, we consider how these factors shaped the composition and endowment of social, cultural and physical capital that participants entered HEPE with.

Social class, PE and HE

Research exploring norms and values reproduced in HEPE, highlights forms of knowledge, behaviours and embodied dispositions valued by both academic staff and undergraduate students. In particular, it identifies HEPE is a contested field where practices of PE in schools and sport contend with ideas from academic scholarship and content knowledge, challenging each other for status. However, this often focuses on aspects of identity such as gender and masculinities (cf Skelton, 1993), valued bodies and health discourses (e.g., Varea and Pang, 2018), subject knowledge/course content (Johnson, 2013), and the re-production of teaching practices (Everly and Flemons, 2020). But questions about how equitably students exchange capital from sporting socialisation are rarely addressed. However, this is essential to consider when you factor in research highlights variations in the levels and types of sports participation across different socio-economic groups in the UK, and many western countries *(*Eime, et al., 2015*;* Vandermeerschen et al., 2016).

Bourdieu (1978) argued Sport/PA are important cultural institutions, which simultaneously reproduce tastes and act as sites of distinction between social classes. Likewise, Warde (2006) identified sport as an institution that holds significant connotations for classed inequalities, transmitting insidious messages about 'appropriate' sports/activities for different individuals to both view and participate in. More recently, Savage et al. (2015) contended, distinct patterns between social classes and subsequent (dis)advantages are crystallised through the repetitive investment in mundane everyday activities (e.g., attending a specific sports club or engaging in informal PA). Such investments cultivate compositions of capital, then exchanged in other social arenas - such as education, HE and employment - where judgements about their symbolic value are made by powerful agents (Wallace, 2018). Notably, Stuij (2015) identified classed differences in participation and subsequent socialisation among children often derives from institutions such as families, schools and extra-curricular sports; suggesting upper and middle-class children's preferences and opportunities are likely to be generated in the nuclear family. Certainly, research indicates parents' enrolment of their children in enrichment activities is often driven by a desire to be a 'good parent' and facilitate future success (Allen et al., 2021; Evans and Davies, 2010; Stirrup et al., 2015; Wheeler and Green, 2019). For example, investing in early years PA to ensure children are 'school ready' (Stirrup, et al., 2017:882), or facilitating participation in multiple extra-curricular sports clubs to develop skills for children to become competitive in education and labour markets (Wheeler and Green, 2019). Certainly, middle-class parents can invest considerable time and finances in supporting the development of skills they believe will benefit children in later life (Lareau, 2002). Wiltshire et al. (2019) suggest, this shapes individual's attitude towards specific sports, in addition to their tastes and acquisition of capital which has value in other social arenas. Therefore, the socialisation process arguably produces differences in both the sport experiences and types of broader skills students enter HEPE with, posing questions about how equitably these are exchanged in HEPE (Aldous et al., 2014: 2016).

Patterns of participation in sport for children from working-class families often appear significantly different to their middle-class peers. Participation in sport/PA often appears organic and less structured and is more commonly practiced in informal spaces such as local streets, parks or recreational areas (Lareau, 2002; Wiltshire, 2019). In addition, numerous significant factors appear to considerably impact working-class youths' likelihood of participating in sport/PA across western nations, including the location of opportunities, a sense of safety and security, parents'/carers' time commitments, finances, and sports provision at school (Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; McEvoy, et al., 2016; Pot et al., 2016). Consequently, a variety of agents instrumentally

shape sports participation beyond the nuclear family including PE teachers, peers, youth workers, and community sports coaches (McEvoy, et al., 2016; Stuij, 2015). For example, McEvoy, et al. (2016) highlight the importance of pre-existing peer relationships in working-class youths' decision to either engage with or disengage from sport/PA, while, elsewhere sports coaches (and community activators with relevant cultural capital and knowledge of the local community) influence the investment in sport and facilitate relationships to other fields such as education and public services (Debognies, et al., 2019; Richardson and Fletcher; 2020).

The significance of social class, however, goes beyond young people's experiences in sport/PA. Numerous scholars, identify the impact of social class extending to students' experiences of navigating both academic and social spaces within universities (Abrahams,2017; Bathmaker, et al., 2013; Reay, et al., 2010). In particular, the extent students feel they belong to the university culture, mobilise social networks to gain insights into their degree, and participate in employment and enrichment activities complementing their study have all been identified as significant. Indeed, Travers (2017) highlights that working-class students sometimes convert sporting capital into academic capital within the HE field. Furthermore, Aldous et al., (2014; 2016) explain, working-class students' apparent ability to navigate sports degrees is influenced by social networks developed through sports participation prior to university. Which shapes their ability to gain knowledge about academic and social elements of university life, subsequently influencing their sense of isolation or belonging. Broader research, too, has noted how the social class of pupils can result in them being offered different opportunities in sport within and beyond school, as well as shaping their access to forms of academic or vocational qualifications (Kennedy, 2020; Morton, 2021; Whigham, et al., 2020). It is within this landscape, we argue, that a greater understanding of students' socialisation in sport before university is required, to analyse the extent HEPE is a level playing field. Thus, we utilise Bourdieu's concepts to address the dearth of studies uniting research on social class and HE and sporting socialisation, and question assumptions of equitable access to valued capital in HEPE.

Bourdieu, Social Class, and the forms of Capital

Bourdieu's conceptual triad of habitus, capital and field serve as a popular tool for understanding classed inequalities in sport. Indeed Bourdieu (1985b: 194) recognised varying compositions of capital are awarded symbolic value and power in different social arenas, stating 'to each field or sub-field, there is a certain kind of capital, which is current, as a power-stake, in that game'. Therefore, while all individuals possess some degree of social, cultural or economic capital, specific compositions are cultivated as a result of the social institutions and spaces individuals operate in (Bourdieu, 1986). Moreover, the 'exchange value' of capital depends upon the status awarded to it in different social arenas, meaning the configurations of fields within an individual's social landscape are significant in facilitating – or not – these transactions. Indeed, Bourdieu (1984) argued exchanging capital depends upon three dimensions: 'volume of capital, composition of capital and change in these properties over time (p.114). Consequently, compositions of capital mark out the hierarchies and power structures in university and PE fields (Haye & lisahunter, 2004: Mountford, 2017). Thus, a person's capital shapes their sense of agency, and status within a social field, impacting their feeling of belonging (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In this way, socialisation is instrumental in the

accumulation of capital that individuals enter HEPE with, and how equitably they exchange capital while studying HEPE (Aldous, et al., 2016).

Different forms of capital have a varying impact upon an individual's socialisation in Sport/PA (Pot et al., 2016). While economic capital refers to financial resources, social capital considers the proximity of social networks individuals can utilise (e.g., family members, mentors/social sponsors, and friends with knowledge of a given field) and cultural capital indicates technical knowledge/expertise and embodied attributes (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) separates cultural capital further as official, objectified and embodied, which considers the different ways an individual's cultural goods are valued in society. While official cultural capital is accredited in forms of qualifications, objectified cultural capital considers value attributed to material possessions, and embodied cultural capital refers to consuming culturally symbolic goods (Savage, 2015). Furthermore, Shilling (1991) asserts cultural capital should be extended to consider *physical capital,* and the physical traits individuals can exchange for other forms of capital (e.g. money, qualifications, or social networks). Consequently, possession of valued capitals can influence an individual's trajectory as a resource to exercise agency. Thus, understanding how prior socialisation shapes an individual's endowment of capital is vital for recognising the qualities students enter university with, and the subsequent impact this has upon their experiences and sense of belonging.

While in this study we principally focus upon the forms of capital students entered university with, in the tradition of Bourdiasian scholarship we recognise capital simultaneously interacts with field and habitus. Fields are social arenas possessing their own logic and structure and have relative levels of autonomy and unique identity from other social arenas (Sandford and Quarmby, 2018). While having relative autonomy, they can overlap and interlink with other fields, which will be partially shaped by social stratification and the social institutions individuals are exposed to (Bourdieu, 1986). For Bourdieu, the 'stakes' of fields derive from the histories, social norms and subsequent hierarchies existing in these social arenas where different compositions of capital are valued, and subsequently reproduced, referring to these orthodoxies as the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Indeed, he refers to committing to the norms of the field as *illusio,* whereby individuals unreflexively invest in practices providing them with a sense of legitimacy. Consequently, the nature of fields participants invest in is seen to be instrumental in cultivating compositions of capital they possess. Certainly, Bourdieu (2002) argues the fields participants invest in - and the compositions of capital they possess - become embodied as habitus, developing shared bodily schemas and dispositions as those positioned in similar fields. Furthermore, conditions of fields individuals occupy cultivate shared embodied habits becoming engrained as bodily 'hexis' in dispositions such as postures, accents, and tastes (Bourdieu, 1985a). These embodied schemas and tastes inextricably link to social class generating a sense of distinction between classes through exposure to similar social structures (Bourdieu, 1984). Subsequently, shaping an individual's sense of self and likelihood to behave similarly to other 'people like us' (Bourdieu, 1990: p70), and sense of inclusion/ exclusion from specific fields. Therefore, within the discussion below, we explore the extent socialisation in sport and PE fields shaped the capital students enter HEPE with and begin to question what this means for HEPE.

Methods

The study utilised an interpretivist approach exploring how participants sporting socialisation cultivated the capital they entered university with. Our argument is informed

by empirical research undertaken with second-year undergraduate students at one university in England - referred to throughout by the pseudonym St Penelope's. Despite being a post-92[1] university - and having a very few independently educated students at the time of study - St Penelope's recruited fewer students from low-income families than the sector average. As an institution it specialises in degrees in subjects such as education, sport, and the humanities

After gaining ethical approval, participants were recruited via completion of a demographic questionnaire. This was distributed to a cohort of more than a hundred second-year undergraduate HEPE students and those interested in participating in the study were asked to provide contact details. All other questionnaires were securely destroyed. In total, thirty-one students showed an initial interest, but several did not respond to follow-up correspondence and the final number of participants was seventeen. These participants were then clustered based upon characteristics such as parents' employment, the post-code of their family home and their sports participation prior to university (information drawn from the questionnaire). Factors such as parent's education qualifications were also considered to cluster participants in 'class groupings' (see below). However, while questionnaires served as the initial basis for clustering participants, during interviews discussing their education and sports participation prior to university, it became apparent that parental occupation was not always appropriate for determining social class, as some parents' occupations changed over time. For example, some parents worked in manual professions and participants wrote things like "baggage handling" or "catering" on the questionnaire. However, during the interviews it became apparent these parents had attained managerial posts early in the participant's childhood and amendments were made accordingly. Therefore, adjustments were made to clusters based upon information students presented in interviews. Subsequently the seventeen participants were grouped as follows: working-class (n=5); new middle-lass (n=6); and established middle-class (n=6). An overview of the clusters can be seen in table 1, where pseudonyms are used to protect participants' anonymity.

Although, defining social class is problematic, the most common way of doing so in the UK is utilising NS-SEC descriptors, a set of classifications based upon employment status which evolved out of Goldethorpe and Heath's' (1992) class schema. Within the schema managerial and professional positions are interpreted as upper and middle-class professions, whereas manual and service professions are seen as working-class. This schema, therefore, acted as guidance for grouping participants but there were several considerations applied. Bourdieu (1984) recognises that class fractions exist within classes, with factors such as educational and cultural capital shaping these fractions. Therefore, these clusters were not treated as homogenous, and we recognised some participants could be argued to fall within fractions (a point we return to in our findings). This was further exacerbated by other characteristics of identity such as ethnicity and gender (see also Table 1). St Penelope's is situated on the outskirts of a large city with a

[1] Post-92 University is a term which refers to universities given university status because of the Further and Higher Education act 1992. They are often deemed less prestigious than "Old Universities". Post-92 universities tend to have a greater number of working-class students, especially in comparison to institutions in the Russell Group, who are a group of 20 of the most prestigious universities in the UK.".

multi-cultural population and four of the five working-class participants identified as non-white. In contrast, only one new middle-class participant identified as non-white. Furthermore, the established middle-class students who volunteered for the sample were disproportionately female. Several additional considerations are noteworthy here. Firstly, no participants were what is traditionally labelled upper-class, with parents who worked in elite professions. Nonetheless, while not "cultural elites", participants whose parents were teachers, small business owners, and white-collar workers, were labelled as established middle-class due to qualifications, career trajectories, and access to cultural capital. Secondly, we adopted the term "new middle-class" from Lockwood (1995) identifying this cluster as distinct from both the working-class and the established middle-class, due to parents being mobile in traditionally working-class professions. However, we recognise ambiguity exists around the labelling of intermediate classes, and different labels are used elsewhere (See Bathmaker, et al., 2013).

Table 1 -Clusters of participants

Social Class	**working-class**	**new middle-class**	**established middle-class**
Parents' Employment	Low-skilled/ Manual" jobs, some were unemployed	Manual or service jobs but rose to senior positions. No educational qualifications beyond secondary schools	Business-owners, 'white-collar' professionals, and teachers. For 4/6 families at least one parent had a university degree
Geodemography of family home	Urban areas: high levels of social housing, ethnic diversity and crime.	Suburbs or large commuter towns described as 'quiet' and 'normal'. 2/6 moved from urban areas before age 11.	Suburbs, villages and market-towns described as 'nice' and having 'lots of opportunities'
Ethnicity	Ethnically diverse. Only one Participant identified as White British	Majority White British (though some parents had migrated from English speaking countries). One participant identified as South Asian.	All students identified as White British.
Participants	Andre (*m*, Mediterranean British) Idris (*m*, East African British) Lewis (*m*, Caribbean &White British) MJ (*f*, North African & White British) Vicky (*f*, White British)	Alex (*m*, White British) Ben (*m*, White British) Chris (*m*, White British) Lizzie (*f*, White British) Shaq (*m*, South Asian British) Steph (*f*, White British)	Charlotte (*f*, White British) Harry (*m*, White British) Kelly (*f*, White British) Lilly (*f*, White British) Maria (*f*, White British) Maisie (*f*, White British)

The first author conducted semi-structured interviews, lasting between 47 and 93 minutes, focusing upon participants' lives prior to university. For example, participants were asked how different agents such as family members and teachers influenced the activities, they had participated in. They were audio recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim. Following transcription, interviews were analysed using principles of qualitative coding suggested by Charmaz (2006). Initially each transcript was read through with line-by-line codes being made. This was followed by focused coding - which involved selectively identifying significant incidents and drawing together key components between transcripts - before axial coding was completed to explain relationships between the different categories in the data (see also Buckley and Waring, 2013).

While coding was central to the analysis, Bourdieu's conceptual tools also provided a framework for understanding and interrogating the data, facilitating ongoing conversations about the connections between data and theory. In this way, the analysis allowed for an understanding of the relationship between the fields participants had previously occupied and their composition and volume of capital upon entering university and (Wiltshire et al., 2019). Moreover, it highlighted how families, schools, and sports clubs all cultivated qualities which had greater or lesser 'exchange value' when studying HEPE at St Penelope's. These issues are discussed in more detail below, under the broad headings 'sites of socialisation' and 'agents of socialisation'.

Findings

When comparing patterns of students' participation in Sport/PA differences between social classes became apparent. Evidently, sites of socialisation such sports clubs, schools and extra-curricular activities cultivated compositions of capital in classed ways. Certainly, both the nature and number of institutions participants were exposed to prior to attending university differed significantly. Typically, established middle-class participants such as Maisie, Harry and Kelly took part in multiple sports clubs every week and reported other hobbies. In comparison, middle-class students (e.g., Ben, Steph and Alex), largely participated in one sport, training with the same club regularly. Finally, working-class students' (e.g., Andre, MJ and Vicky) participation was largely shaped by schools and sport development organisations. Subsequently, exposure to different institutions resulted in different compositions of capital and classed inequalities when studying HEPE at St Penelope's.

Working-class Sites of Socialisation

For working-class participants like Andre, Idris, MJ and Vicky, schools were the prominent stimulus for cultivating physical capital and participating in sport both inside and outside of school. Generally, participants attended after-school sports clubs and community sport development programmes associated with their school. Otherwise, participants reported unstructured play with peers in their local area as a significant part of their PA (e.g., playing street football or "playing out"). For example, Vicky described PA when "playing out" as being when her peer group would *"make our own little games up…just like kick the ball against the gate or against the wall or something".* It was evident that working-class participants were involved in Sport/PA most days: playing with friends, attending after school clubs, or coaching at local community projects. For example, Andre explained the role of playing football (soccer) with friends:

(We) did training with the school team. When there wasn't training, we just usually stayed behind and kicked footballs around… before we got kicked out… And then after that we would go to the park because it has a football cage. It wasn't grass or anything it was just concrete. (working-class, male)

Vicky's discussion of extra-curricular sport also typified participation for working-class students, explaining:

When I went to secondary school, I joined all the sports teams because my group of friends that I hang round with liked sports as well… like there was quite a lot of new things that we did in secondary school, like rounders… And then as I got older, I think a lot of people started dropping out, so then we didn't have enough for certain teams. (working-class, female)

Significantly, all working-class participants reported barriers to participation in sport, be that due to parents' work commitments, the cost of sport or violent crime in the local area. Therefore, schools and associated community projects provided opportunities to cultivate physical capital and cultural capital valued in HEPE, such as practical experience of coaching.

Like Richardson and Fletcher's (2020) findings, participants in this study cultivated social capital through connections with individuals from a similar class background. This trend contrasts findings related to middle-class sports participation, where new social connections from different schools and areas are often cultivated (Wheeler, 2018). For example, Andre, MJ, Idris and Vicky all volunteered in, or worked on, local community sport projects and supported PE teachers to 'give back' to the community. Notably, these sporting initiatives prioritised overcoming barriers to participation for disengaged social groups or used sport to address issues in the area, such as crime or cultural stigmas around females participating in sport. For example, Andre explained criminal behaviour in his local area distinctively shaped participation and coaching at the PL Kicks[2] project he played and later coached at:

When I was first working for them, we had lots of meetings with the police and stuff like that… We are here (essentially) to lower crime rates. Because statistics show in this area, crime is going up on these times and it's being caused by these people… By being in gangs being in this age group. So, we'd run the Kicks project, everyone could go there. No-one pays anything and what we'd do is either football training or a match. And then from there you're doing three hours of football... Yeah you are being kept off the street. (Working-Class, male)

Similarly, MJ explained how her basketball club provided a space for South Asian females to participate in sport:

It's a girls' club and it was to help out girls. Because it's like an Asian school. It was to stop girls getting in trouble… It was to give them an outlet if they had a bad background at home. Or if their parents didn't want them like hanging round with boys, but then it was like getting them into sport and getting them fit and healthy. (working-class, female)

For these participants, such activity developed a distinct sporting habitus and capital unique to the logic of urban working-class sport and PE; arguably different to the pedagogy expected when studying HEPE. As Debognies et al. (2019) explain, the logic of practice in sport development initiatives have a unique pedagogical approach which does not always translate to other sports contexts. As such, it is vital for individuals working in HEPE to recognise, the knowledge and experience working-class students bring with them often differs to their peers. Thus, the cultural capital and resultant pedagogic knowledge they possess can be shaped by sport positioned as a medium for positive social change rather than sport for competition and fun as in traditional middle-class families.

The one participant largely participating in sports outside of school PE or sport development initiatives was Lewis. Interestingly, Lewis' mother experienced downward social mobility, and he was 'at-risk' of becoming involved in criminal behaviour or excluded from school. As a youth Lewis participated in Gaelic football, rugby, sailing (as part of an alternative education programme) and athletics. When asked why he stated:

> *Because of, sort of my personality when I was younger. I was very troublesome. I think my mum feared that because it was so easy to be part of the norm and go into the sort of mislead life if you like. My mum felt it was fundamental that I was out in to sport early. So that I found a calling elsewhere from the norm in my area. (working-class, male)*

This provides an interesting case for exploring the fractions of class and could potentially represent what Wheeler (2018) refers to as "essential assistance" (p.20), where working-class families make sacrifices to stop their children from negative trajectories. Lewis' experiences remind us it essential to recognise patters effecting participation within and between social classes. Furthermore, highlighting it is important to understand what capital students enter HEPE with and its subsequent exchange value.

New middle-class sites of socialisation

In comparison, new middle-class students largely cultivated their sporting capital within a single sport. These varied from grassroots to performance sports clubs and were independent to their school. These clubs offered a structured pedagogical approach focused on skill development and competitive sport. Whilst other enrichment activities such as Scouts or Guides were mentioned by participants, these appeared less significant in cultivating valued capitals compared to sport. Our findings reflect Evans and Davies' (2010) assertions that physical capital developed by investing in sport outside of school was often exchanged for status in PE lessons and school sport, these participants were often considered "high ability" in PE and were praised for their physical competencies and attitudes in interactions with teachers (Haye and lisahunter, 2006).

Importantly, participation in sport served simultaneously as a tool of socialisation and cultivated social capital which was exchanged for pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge in HEPE. As a by-product of their sports participation, new social networks were formed which helped participants develop their pedagogical skills (although participation in sport was the predominant focus), reflecting previous research these activities generated physical capital, with social capital as a welcome biproduct (Wheeler, 2018). Furthermore, echoing claims by Nelson, Cushion and Potrac, (2006) it became evident that coaches, teammates, and colleagues in part-time employment facilitated

informal learning of fundamental pedagogical knowledge. For example, Alex identified social capital leading to coaching opportunities and mentoring from a former coach explaining:

> *He'd send me… different resources on different sessions… which I've tried. And he's definitely influenced me... he's supported me a lot through (my) coaching… even if I'm in the wrong… like, in what I've done because he'd guide me. (new middle-class, male)*

In addition to generating knowledge of pedagogical skills and practices, these sites provided participants with access to individuals with what Ball and Vincent (1998) refer to as "hot knowledge" (p. 377) of university, where participants could draw upon insights into studying, HEPE from individuals at their sports clubs. For example, as Ben commented:

> *(A lecturer) was my assistant coach when I was 11, and if I ever saw him, we would probably stop and chat I didn't know he was a university lecturer until my Academy manager mentioned the possibility going to university… and he sort of explained the course… At the time another lecturer was our team analyst, and I got on really well with them. So, I remember talking to him about university… I would spend quite a long time talking to him asking him how it all worked… And he said that, he (thought) it would be good decision. (new middle-class, male)*

While Ben's example of knowing two lecturers prior to starting university was uncommon and facilitated by high levels of physical capital as an academy footballer, he was by no means the only new middle-class student who used connections through sport to gain this "hot knowledge" about university. For example, Lizzie asked questions to her gymnastics coach who was "in the middle of doing her teacher training" at the university, while Steph "knew some people who were here already", through football. Consequently, not dissimilar to the findings of Aldous et al. (2014), participants were able to mobilise these networks to develop knowledge useful to both the course and studying at the institution broadly, thus possessing capital awarded greater value than their working-class peers.

Established middle-class sites of socialisation

Finally, established middle-class participants had a significantly different socialisation. Like Wheeler and Green's (2019) findings, participants' parents invested heavily in exposing them to multiple enrichment activities and sports from an early age. While taking part in multiple sports (including football, tennis, athletics, equestrian, netball, rugby and dance) participants also discussed engaging with other enrichment activities such as playing musical instruments and drama. Reflecting previous research (Stuij, 2015; Vincent and Maxwell, 2016), these activities often took place at extra-curricular clubs not associated with their school, exposing participants to new social networks and expanding both social and cultural capital. Much like parents in Lareau's (2002) seminal study, established middle-class parents made a concerted effort to expose participants to multiple sports clubs and extra-curricular activities, with participants viewing this as 'normal' behaviour. One example was Maisie (established middle-class) who stated:

> *I played rugby and netball and threw the Javelin... we did ballet and dance for years, yeah, like, tap, modern… there'd be an after-school club or a club in the evening, and on weekends it would be rugby in the morning, and on Saturdays it would be ballet in the morning... and then swimming twice a week, I don't know how my parents did it.*

While investment in multiple sports was predominantly for enjoyment or to accrue health benefits, participants also discussed exchanging this capital in HEPE. For example, when reflecting on her socialisation Maisie explained:

> *I was able to talk about multiple different ones (sports)... I could talk to different lecturers about different things. And it meant that I could engage in more conversations if they were brought up within class… I had so much access as a kid to so much sport.*

Similarly, other established middle-class students agreed, noting heavy investment in multiple sports was awarded value during class discussions or practical sessions, subsequently shaping their sense of belonging and being highly engaged in the course. Hereby participants exchanged informal learning and cultural capital developed outside of their course as official cultural capital on the course (Nelson et al., 2006).

Agents of socialisation

In addition to differences in sites of socialisation, key agents of socialisation also varied. These again differed based upon social class, and agents were tied closely to sites where participants regularly participated in Sport/PA. Compositions of economic, cultural, and social capital, for example, clearly impacted which individuals became key influences in shaping dispositions that participants entered HEPE with. While parents and family members played a role in shaping participants' sporting habitus, established middle-class parents played the most active role in cultivating capital valued in HEPE. Furthermore, PE teachers and mentors at sports development projects played more significant roles in shaping the capital working-class participants entered HEPE with.

Agents of socialisation in working-class students

Reflecting previous research, working-class participants' close relationships with teachers played an essential role in cultivating the capital they entered HEPE with (see Stuij 2015; Wheeler et al., 2019). Indeed, for all but one working-class participant (Lewis), schools and PE teachers were the catalyst for their sports participation; these individuals were often described as being a "mentor", an "inspiration" or a "second father". Such individuals provided opportunities for students to participate in sport and gain voluntary or paid coaching roles, as well as offering knowledge about university and studying HEPE. Significantly, teachers not only provided practical opportunities for participants but also the chance to gain valued cultural capital. Such as completing coaching qualifications, experience leading extra-curricular sports clubs and providing advice about pedagogy. For example, MJ noted:

So, at school my PE teacher played a massive part... And then since then he was the one that kind of pushed me and because my home background was so negative... Sport was my outlet… I think I joined every single team. From the boys' basketball team to the point where I did everything I could. (working-class, female)

Debognies et al. (2019) indicated similar findings in sport development programmes in urban neighbourhoods, where coaches were key sources of social capital and performed relational pedagogies. However, this is less commonly reported in studies about PE teachers. Significantly, participants in this study were likely to re-produce the choices and practices of their PE teachers. For example, both Idris and Vicky chose to study at St Penelope's because their teacher studied there. In Vicky's case this extended to her choice of Sport/PA when she started university, as can be seen from the extract below:

Vicky: *And then in sixth form I started doing volleyball… it was more like teaching… and that's what made me want to join the volleyball team at uni… because I just really enjoyed it.*

Michael: *That was one of Mr Neutrino's sports as well, wasn't it, volleyball?*

Vicky: *Yeah, he's quite good at it actually. I don't know if you know Mr Keys as well. He went here, both of them did it, they both did volleyball. (working-class, female)*

Evidently, for many participants PE teachers were key agents of socialisation, playing active roles in providing opportunities to participate in sport, insights into university and facilitating opportunities to develop pedagogical skills. However, this acted as a source of tension for some participants during university. For example, Lewis noted feeling like "*like just another number"* and other participants suggested a lack of close relationships with staff, left them feeling distant to their course compared to experiences at school. This suggests it is important for staff teaching on HEPE degrees to be aware of this potential difference in relationships when students enter, HE and recognise a sense of otherness or disengagement might develop due to differences in these relationships.

Agents of socialisation in middle-class students

In contrast New and Established middle-class participants largely participated in sport outside of school, relying less upon PE teachers for socialisation. Here, parents became key agents of socialisation providing support such as transport to training or actively modelling participation and pedagogy. Generally new middle-class parents were likely to 'juggle' multiple commitments to support students' participation, often facilitating access to fields of socialisation. For example, Lizzie commented:

Bless my mum, she had hard work getting us places… But I think in terms of getting us there… she'd really put herself out to make sure we were places that we need to be. (new middle-class, female)

This reflects broader research on middle-class families (Stefanson, et al., 2018; Wheeler and Green, 2019), who often invest significant time in their child's socialisation in sport to support their future development. In this study, some established middle-class parents took even more active approaches in cultivating sporting habitus and capital. Some

parents volunteered to support the running of children's activities, while others established new sports clubs, coached their children's team, and engaged in informal conversations about coaching - thus modelling pedagogy and passing on knowledge through informal conversations. For example:

> *the first sport I (was) part of a club and taking part in was rugby and the reason (was) my dad… He became my coach because no one was going to be the girls' coach... So, he was my coach for three years as well. And my mum… set up a netball club. So, me and my sister could play locally, and now there's like seventy girls doing it. (Maisie, established middle-class, female)*

> *My dad coaches. He coaches us all. He coaches my brother. So has a lot, and has read a lot of background information... That's kind of been passed on to us. The conversations around the dinner table are normally about running. So, I think that helps and it gives me extra knowledge. (Kelly, established middle-class, female)*

Interestingly, for many established middle-class participants, studying PE was not their initial aspiration. For example, Maisie aspired to study medicine and Kelly and Harry planned to run businesses. However, when this aspiration failed, they chose to study HEPE. Nonetheless, it was clear their families volunteering in sport, and working as PE teachers or sports coaches transmitted a sense that roles associated with pedagogic authority were normative behaviours in their nuclear family (Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012). In this way, socialisation in the nuclear family cultivated symbolically valued ways of being in PE spaces, leading to them appearing natural to participants and enhancing pedagogic skills associated with PE (Storr and Spaaj; 2017; Strandbu et al., 2020). Furthermore, this provided easy access to volunteering opportunities where knowledge and skills valued on the degree programme were nurtured. Consequently, this socialisation process cultivated distinct compositions of capital and advantages for these participants in comparison to their peers.

Conclusion

In contributing to discussions surrounding socialisation and social class, we have explored in this paper how different sites and agents of socialisation shape the dispositions students entered HEPE with. Furthermore, we have noted how Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus are helpful in this task. While other aspects of identity such as gender and ethnicity are perhaps more immediately visible, this paper evidences that greater awareness of the impact of social class on students' socialisation into HEPE is also needed. Indeed, it helps to demonstrate that classed socialisation has ramifications beyond participation patterns in sport and PA. Furthermore, in considering the distinct capital and embodied dispositions cultivated by individuals and deemed as noteworthy, it holds real implications for practice - not least, we argue, that HEPE staff need to be aware of classed socialisation patterns, particularly when considering how sites of socialisation may have influenced the range of sports students had participated in, how this has been practiced and to what extent this is accommodated within HEPE curricular. Evidently, social class has the potential to impact the compositions of capital students enter HEPE with, influencing what they consider PE/Sport to look like, how it is practiced, and who are key agents in the field.

Consequently, it becomes important to consider how this might be tied to the course content, assessments, and professional placements. For example, HEPE practitioners may need to consider if/how the exchange of capital developed externally is facilitated within the university context, as well as whether an individual's classed habitus is recognised (or perhaps judged) in summative assessments such as micro-teaching and presentations. In this respect, there may be a need for reflection on, for example, the extent to which value is attributed to behaviours such as speech patterns and body language associated with assumptions about what 'good PE' and 'good HEPE students' look like. We would encourage practitioners to consider where orthodoxies such as "communication skills" in presentations, or a student's ability to talk knowledgably or demonstrate effective practices in practical assessments may be a result of classed socialisation. If we are to be more equitable in our approaches, then it is essential, sports and pedagogy more commonly practiced among middle- and upper-class families are not provided greater status in the curriculum of HEPE.

Furthermore, consideration could be developed for initiatives between academic and service departments (e.g., university widening participation departments) to make opportunities more equitable. Some possible interventions could be developed through early induction activities which gather information regarding the different forms of capital students are entering HEPE with such as sites of sports socialisation, coaching experience, access to mentors and pedagogic knowledge, and ease of access to employment and placements in PE and Sport settings. HEPE degrees could then look to partner with university widening participation and employability departments to support initiatives which increase opportunities to develop appropriate capital. Finally, building positive relationships with working-class students could help to scaffold engagement, like their experiences in school and sixth form. As alluded to elsewhere (Hobson, forthcoming) positive informal interactions both inside lectures and around campus can act as the initial stimulus for developing relationships.

If we do not look to implement change as noted above, there is a danger that HEPE will continue to re-enforce privileging middle-class students who appear to "play the game" more naturally as a result of prior socialisation. Indeed, Aldous et al. (2014;2016) identified these personal histories as shaping participants' subsequent ability to navigate and sense of belonging in HEPE, though Bourdieu (1996) also explained fields of practice are continually contested in relation to what is awarded status. It is our hope that a recognition of the subtle and not-so-subtle differences in everyday practices of Sport/PA are highlighted to HEPE practitioners, who recognise the differences in capital as stimulus for developing HEPE as a more equitable space.

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