The Socio-Cultural Practices of the Dorset Rock Climbing Community Towards the Local Environment

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Abstract

This research focuses on understanding the interplay between rock climbers and the space of participation. Using an ethnographically-informed qualitative approach, the data for this research was collected using active participant observation and 22 interviews, between 2017 and 2018, with a population of highly committed and achieved rock climbers in Dorset, UK. Data displays that rock climbing is the producer of an array of positive emotions and sensations that hold therapeutic qualities and identity-forming abilities within them. The analysis portrays rock climbers to be community-driven and suggests that locality in rock climbing is acquired through knowledge, skills, bonds and friendship, rather than location and geographic proximity. The research also suggests that rock climbing has the ability to take rock climbers to the most secluded of areas. To reach these spaces, climbers must employ their physical, material and embodied capital whereby the climbers' ability to visit these places become correlated with their accumulated capital. The analysis suggests that rock climbing is less individual than other lifestyle sports as it requires the presence of a facilitator, the belayer. Territoriality in rock climbing is portrayed to be heavily interlinked with notions of authority and power, which are acquired through prolonged exposure to rock climbing, experience and the accomplishment of first ascents, the most prestigious achievement in rock climbing. Data suggests the role of the British Mountaineering Council and the Access Fund is a passive type of governing, as they work towards raising climbers' awareness, resolving disputes, raising funds and improving climber's access to the rock. Lastly, the research highlights the value of non-academic niche subcultural media to academic research.

Table of Contents

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Date: 9th August 2019

“Looking out to sea, a glow of satisfaction grows with each pull of the ropes. Watching the waves, you think of the tide and yourself as a climber, sometimes rising angrily, rapidly and boldly, sometimes laughing slowly but steadily across the rocks, sometimes retreating. But each time, the inexorable pull brings us back.”

(Mike Cheque, The Seaside)

1 Introduction

In the summer of 2020, rock climbing will, for the first time, become an Olympic discipline (Tokyo2020 2019). However, competitions will only be held in three disciplines; sport-climbing, bouldering, and speed climbing. Traditional climbing and mountaineering, sports that are more than two centuries old will not be part of the line-up. The inclusion of climbing into the Olympic Games is the latest indication of the popularity of the sport. Other indicators include: The British Mountaineering Council has reported a steady growth in membership since 2007 to now 81,000 members (BMC 2017; the BBC have started broadcasting climbing world cups and national championships; the world of commercial advertising is packed with rock climbing related images and videos; there has been an increase in the number of indoor climbing walls in the UK in the last 5 years; and climbing has recently become an option as one of three sports in which candidates are assessed for the GCSE in Physical Education in the UK (Berry 2016).

The above examples suggest that this rise in popularity could potentially attract new participants and this increase in participants may be a cause of friction with already existing climbers and the spaces in which they practice. Like in mountaineering, surfing and other lifestyle sports in the past, the increase in numbers of participants may ignite conflicts within the environemnt of participation leading to territorial behaviours known as “localism” in the surfing scenario (Olivier 2010; Olive 2016) and Bolt Wars or The Great Divide in rock climbing (Donnely 1993; Bogardus 2010).

However, the increase in participants is not the only cause for territorial behaviours. The introduction of new technological advancements are significant as well. For example, Perkins (2005) discusses that the introduction of new devices to rock climbing was considered as cheating and these technological advancements have often been seen with disapproval from “authentic’’ climbers (Wheaton 2004). This disapproval in addition to the territorial practices such as “localism” is heavily intertwined with the strong connection that lifestyle sport partakers develop with the natural world through movement on rock, water, air and land scape (wheaton 2004; Brymer et al 2009; Brymer and Gray 2010; Humberstone 2011).

Localism in the context of rock climbing territoriality is demonstrated through what rock climbing culture have called “Bolt Wars”. The Bolt Wars are an example of localism, as they are acts of territoriality that are manifested in a series of battles for control of cliffs that climbers do not own, but, due to their emotional attachment, they have developed a sense of entitlement to them (Malmberg 1984; Lewis 2004; Usher and Gomez 2016). The bolt wars emerged into a vicious cycle of bolts installed by sport climbers and removed by traditional climbers. This cycle caused a turbulence in the rock climbing environment and carried on until the rock climbing community came together and worked with organisations such as the Access Fund and the BMC to find a solution that allows both disciplines to co-exist, acknowledge and understand the diversity of rock climbing and to have a sense of community (Bolt Wars 2015). This study questions the ways through which territorial behaviours such as localism and the bolt wars operate within rock climbing communities and discusses Bourdieu’s forms of capital in the context of rock climbing to inform discussions around the hierarchies and power relations within rock climbing communities.

Further, the physical aspects of climbing have been described as producing an array of positive feelings, emotions and states amongst participants, such as flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1975 Dant and Wheaton 2007), escapism (Brymer and Nielson 2012), freedom and spirituality (Brymer 2010; Humberstone 2011). It also suggested that climbing is the medium through which participants develop an activist approach towards protecting the natural world (Brymer et al 2009; Humberstone 2011). Not only because it is the venue through which they get to experience the aforementioned sensations but because these sensations and states are of great value for participants. These values range from benefits to mental health to them being venues for self and identity creation and display (Midol and Broyer 1995; Scott 2003; Wheaton 2004; King and Church 2015).

This thesis contests the accusation of lifestyle sport participants being nihilistic creatures who only want to prove themselves, overcome their feelings of powerlessness and add value to their lives by conquering or invading the natural environment (Shoham et al 2000; Le Berton 2000; Millman 2001; Mathews 2006). It also further explores the relationship between rock climbers and the environment

which leads to debates around the conquering of nature, rock climbing's ability to enhance climbers' social lives and mental wellbeing.

Further, the rock climbing community and most lifestyle sports pride themselves for being anti-institutional and anti-commercial. Indeed, Wheaton (2004) suggests that these are one of the main defining characteristics of lifestyle sports and also rock climbing as Donnelly (1993) describes climbing to be a self-governed activity. This research question aims to understand governance in rock climbing and how rock climbing community polices its members and achieves a consensus whereby all disciplines co-exist. It forms discussions around rock climbing ethics and explores the role of the British Mountaineering Council and the work they put towards the rock climbing communities.

Further, this thesis delves into the socio-cultural dynamics of the rock climbing community. It explores how in addition to socialisation, belonging and mental health benefits, rock climbing is less individual than other lifestyle sports such as surfing and skateboarding due to the essential presence of a belayer. The study investigates the relationship between members of the climbing community to create discussions around climbers' selfless behaviour towards their social environment and its role in knitting the climbing community, the meaning of locality and its acquisition and the significance of belaying.

Thus, this research adopts an ethnographically-informed qualitative approach through which the researcher conducts 22 interviews and 4 active fieldwork observations where he joins the Dorset Bolt Fund, a major facilitator for climbing in Dorset on re-bolting and path-improving outing The criteria for participation in the sample for this study is as follows: (a) the participants identified as active traditional and/or sport climbers; (b) climbers considered themselves local to Dorset's climbing areas, (c) climbers have been involved in establishing routes, first ascents, bolting and organised cleaning events, which naturally comes with great degree of commitment to rock climbing. The research participants were aged between 25 and 66. The research also consults rock climbing media and historical documents and as a result highlights the importance and value of non-academic, niche, subcultural media to academic qualitative research.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

To understand the interplay between climbers and the space of participation

1.3.2 Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing.
2. To explore the socio-cultural dynamics operating in the rock climbing community.
3. To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing.
4. To understand governance in rock climbing.

2 Literature Review

The discussion in this chapter begins by providing an introduction to the nature of lifestyle sports and rock climbing, followed by an exploration of how the movement that rock climbing produces bonds feelings and emotions that transforms climbers' perception, relationship and appreciation of the natural world. Additionally, the review touches upon the psychological effects that rock climbing and the outdoors have on the individual.

Further, the discussion investigates the ways through which territoriality operates in rock climbing communities with the help of historical documents and a variety of rock climbing media, discussing territorial issues which are characteristically and ideologically akin to surf culture.
Finally, this chapter will explore the ways through which rock climbing territorialism had been resolved and coexistence had been achieved by bringing in the notion of governance into the discussion of territoriality.

2.1 Lifestyle Sports

Lifestyle sports is the term used to describe a variety of alternative land, air and water-based sports such as mountain biking, skateboarding, snowboarding, surfing and rock climbing (Wheaton 2012). These activities are described to be unusual in comparison to traditional team-based sports like football and basketball (Midol and Broyer, 1995; Wheaton, 2004; Brymer, 2005; Robinson, 2008). Additionally, they are individual activities in which participants have been shown to have the tendency to be rebellious against the institutionalisation and commercialisation of their sport (Kiewa 2001; Coates et al 2010; Wheaton 2010).

Although each lifestyle sport has its own defining features such as history, identities, ideologies and ethics, Wheaton (2004) proposed a set of nine characteristics that most lifestyle sports fall under. These characteristics are: relatively new, participation at the core, novel, committed, hedonistic, individual, risky, space, and inclusive (ibid).

Lifestyle sports are relatively new, as they have mostly emerged in the late 20th century either through the revival of an existing culture like surfing (Wheaton 2004), or the creation of a new sport due to technological advances such as sport climbing that created a safer type of climbing and opened the door to unlimited potentials in the climbing world (Lewis 2000; Kiewa 2002 Donnelly 2003).

Participation in lifestyle sports is different from that of traditional sports as it lies at the core of each activity. Involvement in a lifestyle sport means that the individual is physically and actively engaged in play, whereas, participation in traditional sports could be achieved solely by attending a basketball or rugby game (Wheaton 2004). Although X-Games and similar thrill and risk-based events exist and are celebrated, most of those who identify as, and are considered, "authentic" participants do not attend nor agree with them. This is because they stand against the individual, self-governed, and rebellious ideology of lifestyle sports. Thus, those who do attend similar events are considered to be "Posers" (Beal and Wilson 2004; Coates et al 2010). Authenticity is an accumulated social achievement (Barker 2000), which plays a crucial role in how members of a social field or a subculture display their identities (Vannini and Williams 2009). Research on lifestyle sports suggests that the term "authentic" is viewed by members of the social field as membership status, and that the status is achievable through commitment, attitude, gender, class and race.

Lifestyle sports are characterised by their novelty through their use of new objects that often involve the utilisation of novel technologies to reinvent equipment such as kites, ropes, avalanche trackers and rock climbing bolts. However, embracing new technologies has led to the birth of new scenes or sub-activities that have facilitated the divergence of many lifestyle sport subcultures and subsequently created territorially-conflicting subcultures that use the same space (Lewis 2004; Wheaton 2004; Bogardus 2012).

Further, commitment lies at the core of lifestyle sports, since participants commit their time, money, way of life, attitudes and identity display, and self-expression into their chosen activity, whether that is translated through fashion, music, use of

language, or choice of career (Midol and Broyer 1995; Wheaton 2004; 2007; Lewis 2004; Beedie 2007; Scott 201).

However, the hedonistic aspect of lifestyle sports revolves around the pursuit of pleasure and indulging the self with exciting and arousing states such as flow, experiencing adrenaline rushes (Csikzentminalyi 1990), freedom from rules, perceived borders and limits imposed by modern society (Yakutchik 1995), refuge and escapism from responsibilities, mundanity and societal restrictions (Cohen and Taylor 1992; Brymer and Nielson 2012; Brymer and Schweitzer 2013), and in some cases derives from the lack of leisure and entertainment experienced in work and family environments (Lewis 2000).

They are also hedonistic in the sense that participants often refuse to follow in the steps of traditional sports by not going through the path towards institutionalisation, regulations and commercialisation. And when any of those mentioned above takes place, rebellion tends to be the response, where participants come together and protest, sign petitions, create independent brands and/or boycott events (Humphrey, 2003; Wheaton 2012; Coates et al 2010).

Hedonism also affects competitions, where ”authentic” participants appreciate certain aspects of it yet do not define themselves by it (Coates et Al 2010). Alternatively, they see it as a platform for fun, skill display and progression (Thorpe and Rinehart 2010). However, when competition is taken too far it begins to get criticised by authentic participants for having fallen victim to the realm of classification and institutionalisation. Hollinger (1997) expressed his concerns in a thorough description of a commercialised surf competition:

> The kids started paddling out with numbers on their bodies. Numbers! It was incongruous to the point of being blasphemous. I wondered about myself. I had been a contestant and a judge in a few of those contests when it all seemed innocent and fun. But it never is. The system is like an octopus with long [tentacles] and suckers that envelop you and suck you down. The free and easy surfer, with his ability to communicate so personally and intensely with his God, is conned into playing the plastic numbers game with the squares, losing his freedom, his identity,

> and his vitality, becoming a virtual prostitute. And what is even worse, the surfers fall for it. I felt sick. (p.40)

Further, exclusivity refers to the demographics which consist largely of western, white, middle class, male participants (Wheaton 2004; Beal and Wilson 2004). However, more recent research has shown that these are undergoing a constant change, with lifestyle sports reaching a broader audience (Edwards and Corte 2010). Although participants are still predominantly western, the number of participants from other classes and genders is constantly growing, especially in terms of female participation (Beal and Wilson 2004; Robinson 2008; Knijinik et al 2010). Women are constantly pushing the boundaries and making remarkable achievements that attract more women into the realm of lifestyle sports.

Additionally, individuality is one of the most significant aspects of lifestyle sports (Tomlinson 2001). Participation in lifestyle sports is celebrated as a performance and expression of the self (Reinhart 2000). Additionally, participation in these sports often derives from the desire to conquer and battle with the self (Wheaton 2004).

What is more, risk in lifestyle sports does not involve bodily contact nor aggression. Participants embrace and fetishise notions of risk and danger that are integral to the practice of the sport (Tomlinson 2001; Wheaton 2004). Furthermore, some research suggests that this addiction to risk in lifestyle sports is heavily linked to one's willingness to minimise, have control over, and manage risk, rather than embracing it (Robinson 2004; West and Allin 2010).

One of the most significant aspects of lifestyle sports is that the spaces of consumption in lifestyle sports consist of either new, purpose-built spaces, or outdoor, natural spaces that have been adapted to the activity. Midol and Boyer (1995) suggest that lifestyle sports take place in rural and non-urban environments in which one blends with or becomes one with the sea, mountain, rock, or air. Participants use spaces such as beaches, mountains, and urban spaces. These, in comparison to the spaces in which traditional sports occur, are considered unusual

and therefore the uniqueness of these spaces of consumption are considered as one of the defining features of lifestyle sports (Wheaton 2013).

The spaces of lifestyle sport consumption are always undergoing change (Thorpe and Rinehart 2010). In surfing, waves always differ in height, length and strength. In snowboarding, the quality and thickness of snow depends largely on the weather and the length of the season. In rock climbing erosion and weathering create, change, and destroy the features on the rock face (Olivier 2006; Thorpe and Rinehart 2010).

Additionally, substitutory spaces of consumption have started to emerge in the last two decades, for example spaces like surf and wake parks, indoor climbing walls and indoor parkour facilities. This movement from natural outdoor settings, to replicated, contained, and controlled settings has opened the door for further participation and played a big role in the growth of lifestyle sports.

Lifestyle sports are indeed unique and it is needless to say that the most unique and defining characteristics of these activities lie within the hedonistic, anti-commercial and anti-institutional ideology and the spaces of consumption spaces that, through participation, harvest a range of emotions and sensations, and for climbers, that lead to a unique climbing relationship with the rock.

2.2 Experiencing Rock Through Movement

Lifestyle sports are activities that occur in a natural outdoor setting through which the participant fully engages herself with the environment (Humberstone 2011). Achieving this immersion with the natural world leads to a further connection with nature and the natural elements (Wheaton 2010). Ingold (2000) and Brymer et al. (2009) discuss how this sensory engagement with nature is a medium through which the participant further explores herself within the environment and becomes more aware and protective of it.

Humberstone (2011) points out that lifestyle sports are more engaged with nature than traditional sports due to the continually changing nature of the outdoor and natural participation spaces. For example, the surfer has to adapt her body and

quickly react to the ever changing environment of the sea and wind as opposed to running towards and shooting the ball at a specific motionless target like in football.

In order for a participant to fully engage and immerse herself in the spaces of participation, she must touch the natural forces through which she develops a connection that leads to a further intimate and spiritual relationship with the environment. (Brymer and Gray 2010; Humerstone 2011). Dant and Wheaton (2007) describe how the relationship in windsurfing requires an interaction that goes beyond a connection between the windsurfer's body and the windsurfing kit. Rather, the kit becomes an extension of the windsurfer's body through which she navigates the waves, wind and water. When the windsurfer finds balance in the nexus that is body, kit, and nature, she experiences positive emotions and sensations such as being in the zone, being at one with the environment and experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1975; Dant and Wheaton 2007; Wheaton 2010).

Rossiter (2007) describes the moments in rock climbing before, during and after climbing when the climber meditates and gazes at the route as a sensory dialogue between the climber and a living body. Similarly, Karlsen (2010) described how rock climbers also experience a climb as opposed to other non-lifestyle sport activities:

> In case of pictures we see them. With music we listen. But with climbing, we engage the object with multiple sensory perceptions. We see the route from the ground, feel the holds when we climb it, and experience the bodily movements the route produces in us. (p. 220)

Finally, Brymer and Gray (2010), and Lewis (2000) suggest that the connection between lifestyle sports participants and nature is more like a dance, through which the participant strategically navigates her body within the environment, as if she were a dancer and the natural world is her partner. The participant then feels free

and becomes more aware and mindful of the environment that she touches, feels and becomes one with.

In line with Montagu's philosophy (1971) on the act of touching; by touching something the individual is allowing for something to touch her in return. It is arguable that the lifestyle sport participant, by being fully immersed in these natural spaces, is in return developing an intimate connection with the natural world.

This section will examine a variety of connections, feelings and emotions that are fostered through lifestyle sports participation in the outdoors.

2.2.1 The Connection with Rock

Spaces of participation in lifestyle sports allow participants to develop an intimate connection with the natural world (Lewis 2000; Wheaton 2004; Brymer 2005; Brymer and Gray, 20009; Olivier 2012). This connection has been interpreted in a variety of ways. For example; some participants perceive themselves as part of nature or friends with the natural world (Brymer and Gray 2010), while other participants find themselves at peace and solitude when surrounded by natural elements (Lewis 2000; Straughan 2012). Additionally, Brymer and Gray (2010) suggest that the fluidity of movement is only achievable due to the unique connection between participants and natural forces.

2.2.1.1 Oneness with Rock

Eco-centrism is a perspective that recognises nature's value and criticises notions that consider nature as a resource at humanity's disposal (Oelschlaeger 1992). It also considers humanity as part of nature (Davis 1996; DeMares and Krycka 1998; Lundmark 2007). The broad phenomenological explorations into lifestyle sports have shown that eco-centrism is a valuable element for lifestyle sports (Brymer and Gray 2010). Manifestations of this notion are oneness with nature (Brymer et al 2010), merging with the environment (Olsen 2001), and dancing with nature (Lewis 2000; Brymer and Gray 2009). These relate to Midol and Broyer's (1995) claim that

the connection between lifestyle sport participants and the natural world is unifying and that participants perceive nature as a living being which one must blend in and become one with.

Booth (2003) and Brymer and Gray (2010) articulate that these developed relationships with nature are unifying. Surfing, climbing and B.A.S.E jumping often make the individual feel like she is becoming one with water, rock and air. In surfing for example, Booth (2003) suggests that the moment a surfer enters a barrel in a wave is a moment of transcendence through which the surfer and the breaking wave merge and unify. This unity in surfing is also evident in Hawaiian surfing culture and is known as *Ho-pu-pu* which means 'the sensation of becoming one with the wave' (Poirier 2003).

Similarly, Brymer et al.'s (2009) participants displayed feelings of union between them and the natural world. For example; a climber being surrounded by vast open sceneries in the mountains makes her experience a force that is bigger than her and that allows her to feel like she is one with the wind, the mountain and nature as a whole.

2.2.1.2 A Friend Not a Conqueror

Brymer et al. (2010) criticised studies that accuse lifestyle sport participants of being selfish, immature and nihilistic creatures who only want to prove themselves, overcome their feelings of powerlessness and add value to their life by conquering and invading nature (Shoham et al 2000; Le Berton 2000; Milliman 2001; Mathews 2006). This considers participation in lifestyle sports as an expression of an innate human desire to conquer or battle against nature as part of identity formation or a display of power (Celsi et al., 1993; Rosenblatt, 1999; Millman, 2001).

These assumptions only take into account the risk and adrenaline aspects of these activities and have failed to consider the wider lived experiences of participants through which they develop their self and identity (Brymer et al. 2010; Wheaton 2010).

The notion that rock climbing participation is strongly associated with the desire to battle and conquer the cliffs is denied by numerous participants from a variety of interviews and studies, for example, rock climber Lynn Hill argued in an interview with Olsen (2001):

> It is not about going out there and conquering something – proving that you are somehow stronger than other people or the rock you're about to climb. It is much more about interacting with your environment. (p. 59)

Similarly, Houston (1968), on his ascents in the Himalayas, completely disagreed with the notions of conquering and battling the mountain. He also emphasised that he was only able to reach the summit due to the perfect conditions at the time of the ascent and that is because the mountain and all the other natural forces have allowed him to achieve that:

> Mountaineering is more of a quest for self-fulfilment than a victory over others or over nature. The true mountaineer knows that he has not conquered a mountain by standing on its summit for a few fleeting moments. Only when the right men are in the right places at the right time are the big mountains climbed; never are they conquered. (p. 57)

Thus, the assumption that nature is but a battleground waiting to be conquered by lifestyle sport participants is invalid and denied by many lifestyle sport participants (Brymer and Gray 2010).

Eco-centrism views nature as self and for the participant to fight, battle or conquer nature is to fight, battle or conquer herself. Brymer and Gray (2010) added that lifestyle sport participants consider the concepts of battling or conquering the natural world an unfortunate misunderstanding and added they rather view

themselves as part of the natural world or friends of the natural world. As mountaineer Reinhold Messner puts it:

> I am trying to live with the mountain. I'm not fighting with the mountain. But it is a relationship between the mountain and me. (1978, p. 31)

Risk, adrenaline and the concept of conquering amongst other drives are assumed to be the reason behind participation in lifestyle sports. Although conquering is never the case for authentic participants, risk and adrenaline are only a vehicle to a more wholesome, lived experience.

2.2.2 The Impact of the Connection with Rock

Drawing on Montagu's philosophy (1971) on the act of touching in which the individual, by simply touching the environment herself, is allowing the environment to touch her in return.

2.2.2.1 On Rock Climbers

In line with the nature of participation spaces in lifestyle sports and the benefits from being outdoors and surrounded by nature, it is no wonder that participating in lifestyle sports has a positive impact on the self.

Research has shown that sports like mountain biking, which is often performed in woodlands and upland forests, has many positive benefits on the mountain bikers such as socialisation, confidence building in addition to benefits to mental health and wellbeing (King and Church 2015). Similarly, research into rock climbing and indoor sports climbing has shown therapeutic effects on depression, anxiety and stress (Luttenberger et 2015).

Heintzman (2007) in his auto-ethnographic journey into the realm of kayaking discovered what he described as:

> The wonderful sense of peace, the wonderful connectedness to my world around me, to myself, not a sense that something was wrong, or I needed to work on something there was just peace, there was tranquillity, there

> was acceptance, there was harmony and I really fondly remember those moments because I felt so good inside (p.218)

For Shultz (2002) these feelings of connection, peace and unity with the natural world, are the first step for individuals to become more environmentally conscious and more emotionally and behaviourally committed to caring for and protecting the environment. Similarly, Humberstone (2011) recognises that experiencing flow triggers environmental awareness and that there is a direct link between an individual's sustainable practice and those feelings of flow and connection with nature.

2.2.2.2 On the Crag's Environment

Rock climbing is a diverse practice that takes place in areas of natural beauty like mountains, sea cliffs, and boulders amongst others. The practice itself is divided into a variety of styles of climbing such as traditional climbing, sport climbing, aid climbing, bouldering and deep water soloing.

The preparation of rock climbing routes often involves clearing the rock of vegetation and loose rock and cleaning the cracks of algae. The removal of loose rock is not only seen as ethically accepted but it is considered obligatory. It is actually considered poor practice when routes get prepared without the removal of loose rock (Ramsey 2010). This was articulated by Lewis' (2004) participants where they criticised climbers who do not clean routes before they consider them 'done'.

However, those from a traditional climbing background expressed their concern that sport climbers drill holes in the rock in order to install bolts which leave a permanent mark or litter in the rock face. On the other hand, it is claimed by sport climbers that the impact of drilling bolts is minimal and that climbing with artificial aids like traditional climbing gear also causes damage to the rock (Waterman and Waterman 1993).

The impact of rock climbing on the environment is manifested in acts that some climbers take part in. However, they are the source of a considerable ethical dispute that has been present in the world of rock climbing as early as the 1930's (Horst and Green 2013). The most controversial ethical conflict is the act of hold manufacturing, which is the act of manufacturing climbing holds by drilling or hammering the rock face in order to enhance a piece of rock or a route, by making it easier to climb. It is also known as chipping or chiselling (Berry 2015).

Hold manufacturing is frowned upon, and described by Duane Raleigh (1990) as fundamentally terrible and degrading. As a matter of fact, hold manufacturing has been present for decades, and although it should never happen, The Nose, a route on El Cap in Yosemite Valley has hundreds of holds that have been chiselled into the granite and yet it is considered as one of the greatest climbs in the world (Ramsey, 2010).

Although most climbers have a genuine worry for protecting the natural environment, hold manufacturing is still being practiced by some climbers despite it being described as environmentally unsound and disrespectful to the rock. Ramsey (2010) added that hold chipping is not only harming the environment but it is harming future climbing generations by setting the bench mark for high grades, and teaching them to do so.

In the light of ethical differences there is a vague consensus in the world of rock climbing that modification is only acceptable for safety reasons. Although the removal of loose rock is a form of rock modification it is acceptable since it facilitates safer climbing.

The use of chalk in rock climbing leaves permanent marks on the rock. In the long run, the white chalk marks on the rock are not only an eyesore but disturb the growth of flora and fauna, in addition to polluting the scenery as whole. Ramsey (2010), expressed frustration in regards to the issue of chalk marks in Eldorado Canyon in the USA.

> Take a hike through Smith Rock, Eldorado Canyon, the Motherline at the Red, or virtually any popular cliff with darker rock, and from the trail you will see the very obvious chalk on the wall that has been there for the last twenty years, and will continue to be there for several generations to come. (p. 153)

The section above discussed how climbers form a strong and intimate relationship with the natural world, through which they experience feelings and emotions of unity, romance, and friendship with the rock. Further, it analyses this relationship and its role in providing participants with freedom, escapism, flow and Zen. These experienced feelings and emotions are proven not only to strengthen the relationship between participants and the natural world, but to improve their physical and mental wellbeing, as well as transcending participants into more environmentally-conscious beings that actively work towards protecting the natural world and consequently the longevity of their practice.

2.3 Problematic Rock Climbing Space

Most lifestyle sports take place in an outdoor setting: venues such as water, air, rock or purpose-built urban spaces. Drawing on the nine characteristics of lifestyle sports, many of these activities have emerged or developed due to participants' embrace of technological advancements and innovation. This has led to the development of practices that differ in their use of equipment and style but mostly take place in the same spaces. This in turn has led to the creation of sub-practices and consequently, subcultures.

Due to the growth in the number of participants in lifestyle sports, participants must compete with other groups to use the same spatial resources. For example, surfers and windsurfers compete for access to waves (Booth 2003), while snowboarders and skiers must share slopes (Edensor and Richards 2007), skateboarders, aggressive skaters, and BMX riders share skate parks (Borden 2001). Similarly, traditional climbers and sport climbers compete for access to rock (Bogardus 2012).

2.3.1 Rock Climbing Space:

This section will map Bourdieu's types of capital and authenticity within subcultures onto observations about the social field that is rock climbing. This will be followed by an examination of the ways through which the space is consumed by sport and traditional climbers with emphasis on both disciplines' style of ascent, use of technology, approach to governance and values.

2.3.1.1 Bourdieu , authenticity and rock climbing

Bourdieu (1986) discusses that capital exists in the following forms: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. He suggests that capital can be accumulated and converted from a symbolic form to a material one (and vice versa). He makes three main points: 1) economic capital exists in the form of currency, whereas 2.)cultural capital exists in three different forms; embodied state, objectified state and institutionalised state. 3). social capital is the collection of resources that are shared by individuals within a social field. While symbolic capital is capital in any form and it can be seen as the multiple resources that are available to an individual on the basis of prestige or recognition that add value to the accumulation of capital which one holds within a social field. The next paragraphs will explore Bourdieu's concepts of capital in relation to rock climbing.

The embodied state of cultural capital refers to the accumulation of cultural capital due to efforts into integration into a culture, an investment of time and money. The embodied capital is the outcome of an external wealth (e.g. free time or economic capital) invested and therefore, converted into an integral part of the person; a habitus that cannot be transmitted promptly by gift, transaction, donation or other forms of immediate exchange, such as the gain of a muscular form or a sun tan. The embodied cultural capital, also referred to as physical (Dant and Wheaton 2007), is heavily linked with the climber and her biological singularity (capacity, memory and muscle memory). And therefore, the embodied capital in rock climbing is represented in the climber's physical coordination, spatial awareness, ingrained

climbing technique and muscle memory. All of which are acquired through a prolonged exposure to rock climbing and an investment of time (and money) in order to acquire the ability to navigate her body on the rock face. The embodied physical strength, knowledge and skill acquired through an exposure to climbing and the rock climbing community can be converted over time into other forms of capital such as money and status within their community or social field (Bourdieu 1986).

Further, the objectified state of the cultural capital refers to tangible objects that are transmissible in their materiality. It refers to objects such as paintings or instruments and in the context of rock climbing; gear such as hexes, cams, nuts and quickdraws. Climbing gear is usually acquired through an exchange or conversion of economic capital into a material one. However, the possession of gear on its own is not sufficient for a climber to achieve movement on the rock face. This is because in order for a climber to use the climbing gear appropriately, she must have access to embodied/physical cultural capital and symbolic capital. Dant and Wheaton (2007) discussed in their application of Bourdieu's cultural capital to windsurfing, that an interaction between the physical and the material is essential for the achievement of movement over water which then allows the windsurfer to experience the array of feelings, states and emotions that are associated with windsurfing.

Finally, the institutionalised state of cultural capital is the way through which society measures success (Bourdieu 1986). It is the objectification of cultural capital in the form of professional or academic qualifications. In the context of rock climbing, it is not an essential qualification to acquire. However, a climbing qualification in its essence serves as evidence to the time, effort and money invested into acquiring said qualification and it gives credibility to its holder (the climber). With this qualification comes the knowledge, experience and the lawful ability to instruct, guide and run rock climbing course through which a climber becomes able to convert embodied cultural capital into an economic and social capital.

Bourdieu (1986) suggests that social capital is the accumulation of resources that belong to a network of relationships of a mutual acquaintance, recognition or

institution, like being a part of an organisation, an academic institution or a sporting community. Bourdieu, saw social capital as a property of the individual rather than the collective. Whereas, Putnam defines social capital as the: “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (1995a p. 67). Putnam (1993) also suggests participation in sport as one of the ways through which social capital can be generated. This is because most sports are associational by their nature, as they require interaction between individuals in a variety of ways, either as participants, spectators, or volunteers (Perks 2007) and arguably, belaying in rock climbing.

Following Bourdieu (1984), skating, surfing and rock climbing, can be defined as a sub -fields of a larger social field of sport and recreational activities (Telford and Beames 2016). Meaning, lifestyle sports are social fields that are characterised by interaction of the different types of capital, which are at the core of identity construction (Beedie 2007). The accumulation of particular forms of capital increases participants’ relative position in the the field and therefore their power within the hierarchy of their field (Jenkins 2002; Beames and Telford 2013)

There appears to be a similarity between Bourdieu’s capital and what Thornton (1995) has labelled as “subculture”, a term that has been adopted by many lifestyle sport academics such as Wheaton (2002) and Beal (2003) to name a few. The concept of authenticity is, as discussed earlier, the accumulation of social achievements that play a crucial role in how members of a social field or a subculture display their identities (Barker 2000; Vannini and Williams 2009). Wheaton (2000a) argues that a committed participation in skating and windsurfing is much more important than the display of appropriate brand names on clothing and sporting items. This is because authenticity in lifestyle sports involves characteristics such as sporting prowess, style, attitude and commitment. In addition to no longer worrying about what the general audience thinks of their practices, looks and behaviours (Huybers-Whithers and Livingston 2010).

It is clear in Fox’s (1987) analysis of punk subculture that authentic members are the ones who live the punk ideology throughout all aspects of life, instead of limiting it to gigs on the weekends. And similar to that analysis, Beal and Weidman (2003)

noted that skateboarders have a similar approach to authenticity. Skateboarders who consider skateboarding a way of life or a lifestyle that is not separated from other aspects of their lives are more authentic than those who are only skateboarders when they are at the skatepark; they have even been deemed as 'Posers.' Identically, in rock climbing subculture, Kiewa (2002) notes that more authentic or "real" climbers who use climbing as a way to resist rationalised society call less authentic climbers "pretend" climbers, for engaging in activities such as, top-roping which is considered to be the least pure type of climbing (Kiewa 2002; Bogardus 2010 Taylor 2006).

Similar to social and cultural capital, authenticity plays a role in the power relationships in subcultures, suggesting that the more authentic the participant the more authority, status and power she has within their subculture. Authenticity in lifestyle sports is achievable over time. In order for a skateboarder or a rock climber to achieve authenticity she will over a period of time invest and immerse within the subculture. She will learn, adapt and accumulate the culture's behaviours, attitudes and style while keeping true to her true self.

2.3.1.2 Traditional Climbers

Traditional climbers believe the dangerous characteristics of climbing can be overcome by using removable protection placed in the rock in case of a fall. The climber uses ropes and a variety of different removable *passive* and *camming* devices as a means of protection that the lead climber places in flakes, cracks and around pinnacles as she ascends, while her *belayer* feeds the rope using a friction-belay device that can assist in locking the rope in the event of a fall (Hardwell 2007). The danger of a serious fall is reduced by placing *nuts, hexes,* and *cams/friends,* as protection points using cracks and other fissures in the rock. The climber in traditional climbing is completely reliant on the natural form of the rock to provide holds for climbing and placements for protective equipment.

Traditional climbing becomes more dangerous when the rock does not naturally provide the climber with placements for gear and thus the climber must completely

rely on her physical, technical, and mental skills to get to the next fissure or crack system and consequently risk a bigger and more dangerous fall (Donnely 1993). This often means climbers chose not to climb at the limit of their technical and physical ability (Hardwell 2007).

Although lifestyle sport participants embrace technology, in the world of traditional rock climbing, technological advances are an issue. New styles, equipment, and ideologies developed due to technological advancements, among other factors, have led to arguments over whether new developments remove certain aspects from traditional climbing or not (Taylor 2010). For example, when the *Cam* also known as a *Friend; a device that is easy to place in the rock and is more reliable,* was introduced to climbing, some climbers denounced them as they were perceived as a form of cheating (Perkins 2005). This seems to be an issue that arose in other similar sports as well, for example, in surfing, the use of jet-skis as an aid to access big waves has been and remains an issue in regards to what is considered a proper surf practice (Booth 2003). This revisits the notion of authenticity and what Kiewa (2002) participants' have termed 'real' and 'pretend' climbers.

Traditional climbers adopt two ethical ground rules: firstly, to leave no trace, in which climbers do everything in their power to ascend a mountain or a cliff face without altering or harming the rock, and secondly, to leave a route unchanged, so that others would be able to experience the route in the exact same way the first *ascentionis*t did (Cox and Fulsaas 2003). Additionally, traditional climbing is considered one of the most environmentally friendly and sustainable forms of rock climbing (UIAA 2016). However, the concept of 'leave no trace' is often arbitrary and irrelevant. This is because the preparation of rock climbing routes and the course of completing a first ascent often involves clearing a path through vegetation and loose rocks and cleaning the cracks of moss and lichen (Swan 2010).

Traditional climbers all over the world have debated what makes climbing ethical and which style or discipline is the correct and proper one since rock climbing began almost a century ago (Swan 2010). The general consensus is that a ground-up approach is the most applauded style of ascent. A ground-up approach means that the climber improvises an ascent from the ground up without knowing whether the route can be protected or not and which holds are available apart from big fissures or cracks that are visible from the ground (Waterman and Waterman 1993). Further, a first ascent is when a climber completes a new route or one that has not been completed before. It is considered one of the most prestigious achievements in rock climbing (Bogardus 2012; Cox and Fulsaas 2003)

Traditional climbing is a self-governed activity (Donnely 1993), it does not have a rulebook, nor does it have a national governing body that sets policies, and/ or organises competitions. Traditional climbers have informally created an evolving moral code of *ethics* and *style* to which compliance is voluntary (Waterman and Waterman 1993). These informal rules and ethics are enforced to protect their practice from the invasions of sport climbing. However, it is argued that by imposing these rules and ethics on sport climbers, traditional climbers violate the exact freedom and self-expression that they are trying to protect (Kiewa 2002).

Finally, traditional climbers claim that their form of climbing is a more wholesome experience as opposed to other styles of climbing, as placing gear brings the climber into a more intimate relationship with the rock, as John Long comments (cited in UIAA 2016):

> [Traditional climbing is] more testing of the spirit… it also offers greater rewards in terms of intensity and lasting memories. Climbers who limit themselves strictly to clip-and-go routes deprive themselves of the finest that climbing can offer. (p. 5)

2.3.1.3 Sport Climbers

Bolts are metal pieces of climbing protection glued into holes made by a cordless drill and are placed to last for decades (Ebert and Robertson 2007). Bolts feature

a ring that allows the climber to insert a piece of gear called a *quickdraw* into the hole. The *quickdraw* is a nylon sling with two *karabiners* on either end, one attaches to the bolt and the other attaches to the climber's end of the rope. The climber is belayed by a partner using a friction device through which the *belayer* feeds the rope out and takes it in. Additionally, the belay device assists the *belayer* in locking the rope in the event of a fall.

Unlike traditional climbing gear, bolts are more reliable. This is because in traditional climbing the availability of protection is often sporadic, and the quality of protection is only as good as the rock face allows.

Climbers' adoption of technological advancements has allowed the exploration of blank sections of sheer cliffs that would have been impossible to protect using traditional gear safely (Lewis 2004). Sport climbers, with the use of *bolts,* were able to achieve ascents that focus on the difficulty and technicality of routes while minimising risk (UIAA 2016). The development of bolts and permanent protection has allowed climbers to explore previously untouched areas of cliffs. Bolts have enabled climbers to progress up blank areas of rock and therefore concentrate solely on the technical moves required instead of placing gear. However, one of the most controversial and lasting disagreements in rock climbing concerns the use of bolts on cliffs (Taylor 2010).

Ebert and Robertson (2007) believe that sport climbing's value is that it has facilitated the advancement of rock climbing standards among elite climbers. The pre-protected nature of sport climbing routes allows climbers to move safely at the limit of their physical and technical abilities on routes they would be unable to climb otherwise. Further, traditional climbers prefer a 'leave no trace' approach to climbing, whereas sport climbers impose their will on the environment, pick their line of choice, place bolts and leave a permanent mark, which consequently alters the rock (UIAA 2016). In addition, bolts violate another fundamental value of traditional climbing; they reduce risk and uncertainty which traditional climbers believe are essential to the climbing experience (Bogardus 2012). However, sport

climbing makes blank cliffs as safe as possible so climbers are able to push their bodies to their technical and physical limits (Lewis 2004, Hardwell 2007, Ebert and Robertson 2007).

Sport climbing is a style that values the technicality and aesthetics of a climb. This style of climbing is believed to have been developed in France (Donnely 1993). As French climbers started exploring steep overhanging rock, they found value in performing technical and physically demanding moves safely. They also accepted failure in climbing performance and overcame those failures through repeatedly practicing hard moves, something traditional climbers did not agree with and has caused debates regarding ethics in the international climbing community ever since (Donnely 1993).

In contrast to traditional climbers, sport climbers place fixed gear by descending the cliff from the top by *rappelling,* while traditional climbers place their gear during the course of an ascent (Perkins 2005). Further, sport climbers are relaxed with the use of protection gear for resting or *dogging* until they have regained their energy or figured out the next move, whereas, traditional climbers use protection gear as a means of safety only in the event of a fall.

The preferred style of ascent in both disciplines is *on sight,* which describes an unrehearsed, successful ascent made from the bottom to the top without falling or *hangdogging*. However, in the case of a fall, a sport climber would rest on the bolt and rehearse the rest of the route as many times as needed before re-climbing the route without falling or *dogging,* whereas, a traditional climber would get back to the ground and start again (Donnely 1993).

Sport climbing has introduced indoor, formal and organised competitions into the world of rock climbing, as well as the creation of governing bodies that administrate indoor climbing teams and competitions. This has exposed the climbing world to the media, sponsorships, and other aspects of institutionalisation, commodification and commercialisation, which violates the self-governance of rock climbing. This

mainstream acceptance is evidenced by the fact that sport climbing has now become an official Olympic sport (Wheaton and Thorpe 2016).

Both traditional and sport climbing are distinct types of rock climbing that, apart from climbing rocks, have many similarities in the ways through which they use cliffs. Although some aspects of their styles and ethos overlap, they do have their differences. These differences could lead to tension when sharing the same space. The next section will explore conflict in rock climbing also known as “The Bolt Wars”.

2.3.2 Conflict within the climbing community

The term community has been used in sociology in reference to a variety of social phenomena. Gusfield (1975) suggests that a community is either the territory or the geographic area where individuals interact, or the character of relationships that bind individuals together and form a social group. For Warner and Dixon (2011 p. 258), a community is defined by the characteristics that lead members to feeling a sense of belonging, attachment, shared faith and interest in common goals or values’. In the context of sports, a sense of community is experienced by participants due to the nature of the setting through which sport is played (Warner et al 2012) and because, most sports are associational in their nature (Perks 2007). Lifestyle sport communities are described to be tribal or a neo-tribe (Crosset and Beal 1997; Kiewa 2002). Shields (1996) suggests that the notion of neo-tribes includes youth subcultures, sports enthusiasts and hobbyists and it is defined as group of people that is bonded together through behavioural commonalities, engagements in the same activity, adherence to the same school of thought (Mafessoli 1996). The use of the term rock climbing community in this thesis is therefore, used in reference to the group of individuals that are bound by the passion for rock climbing. Individuals who dedicate and invest time, money, use of language and lifestyle towards the activity. As Kiewa (2002) suggests, “identity in the rock climbing community is determined through playing the role of a climber, adopting a mode of being that subscribes to the values of the climbing community” (p.157). Regardless of their individual characteristic (Wheaton 2004), the sense of

community within most lifestyle sports is vital to the experience. This is due to the strong social connections that are formed between participants of informal communities such as lifestyle sport communities (King and Church 2015).

The continuous growth and development of sport climbing has sparked a concern from traditional climbers as they feel their existence and the longevity of their practice in the mountains and on cliff faces is under threat. This concern was voiced by a variety of climbers over the years. For example, Alex Huber (cited in UIAA 2016) said that the over-use of bolts is ruining humanity's last refuge of pure nature, and that the radical bolting in the 1980s and 1990s has put traditional climbing in danger. Similarly, Voytek Kurtyka, (Cited in UIAA 2016) stated that he has no doubt that the public, in the near future, will draw attention to the damage caused by sport climbers and climbing in all its forms will be banned indefinitely.

> Sport climbing offers the best fun of my life. I do it twice a week, but each time my exhilaration is marred because I can feel an essential part of my body – the rock – is being raped. There is a deeply rooted conviction among climbers that we are special. We believe we practise a noble art. Absurdly; we are proud of our love of nature. But whenever I feel this essential part of me being damaged I wonder if we are not barbarians.
>
> Hardly anybody seems to notice the scale of destruction. We take it for granted that natural rock is our property and we can drill it, chip it, crush it, rape it in any way we wish. Rock climbers treat their playground in the most invasive and abusive way. But still I do it twice a week! It's just gorgeous. It is a good escape from stressful life.
>
> We are turning the most attractive part of nature into a steel, pock-marked plague. Within the last three decades, rock in popular areas has become polished, like public toilets. I'm puzzled why it is not yet spreading AIDS. What will remain of this rock in a hundred years? (p.15)

Voytek raised his concerns in a very passionate manner that touches upon a variety of elements discussed earlier in the course of this thesis, such as oneness with nature, environmental awakening, escapism, and hedonism. However, his main concern is the future of rock climbing; Voytek wonders what the future holds for rock climbing if the damage of today is not put on hold. He also acknowledges that the significant growth of climbing, and with it the chipping and drilling, are concerning, but he finds it hard to stop sport climbing because of its psychological value to him.

2.3.3 Territoriality in Rock Climbing

Territory refers to the physical space in which a community or culture resides, develops identity, and interacts. This physical space becomes a territory for as long as the interaction or residency is sustained (Rivano-Fischer 1987). This connection between the culture and territory is sustained through territoriality. Delaney (2005) defines territoriality as the social construction of borders around a territory. This construct is profoundly embedded in notions of control and power, especially when the territory is under threat (Usher and Gomez 2010). These acts and behaviours are exclusionary and often aggressive through which a community or a culture entitles itself to a territory and defends it due to emotional attachment (Malmberg 1984).

As discussed earlier, Bourdieu's capitals and subcultural theory have conversed that social fields in their essence are facilitators for interaction between their occupants as they are engaged in the same activity (Thorpe 2011). Accepting rock climbing as a social field leads to the consideration that the existence of specific stakes and interests, the ones that rock climbers invest time, money and work towards in order to accumulate particular forms of capital, increases their relative position in the the field and, subsequently, their power within the hierarchy of their field (Jenkins 2002; Beames and Telford 2013).

It also appears that in subcultural theory (Thornton 1995) participants thrive for authenticity status in order to have more recognition within their subculture and

subsequently increase their relative position in the field and their power within the hierarchy of their subculture. As Bourdieu proposes, social fields are arenas of conflict and competition, within which members struggle in accumulating different forms of capital as a source of prestige, power and authority (1993). Prestige, power, authenticity and authority all proved to be of importance for rock climbers (Bogardus 2010; Kiewa 2002; Cox and Fulsass 2003). These aspects are the results of a prolonged exposure to rock climbing and the achievement of first ascents, high grades, bolting and involvement in the rock climbing community, all of which are considered to be the stakes and interests that hold symbolic capital within them that allow climbers to exert their authority and power over the rest of the community

Ultimately, territoriality refers to the array of actions and behaviours that are taken to control social interactions within a space. These actions are taken by individuals who believe they are entitled to the space and are the owners of sufficient accumulated cultural capital, that provides them with status within the field that entitles them to defend it through whatever means necessary (Usher and Kerstetter 2015). Bolts and different styles of ascent have sparked many disputes between rock climbers. These disputes over what is commonly known as *climbing ethics* have started a series of acts of territoriality. These acts of territoriality are labelled as “The Bolt Wars” in climbing culture.

2.3.3.1 Bolt Wars

Bolt Wars were acts of territoriality that are manifested in a series of battles for control of cliffs that climbers do not own, but, due to their emotional attachment, they have developed a sense of entitlement to them (Lewis 2004; Malmberg 1984; Usher and Gomez 2016).

Traditional climbers have argued over the meaning and content of ethics and style since the sport began (Bogardus 2012). When French climbers brought sport climbing to the United States, their practice was mocked, ridiculed and its legitimacy questioned (Mellor 2001). Taylor (2010) believes that the subject of bolts

and their use on cliffs and mountains has been the most controversial and lasting debate in the history of rock climbing. This is because bolts violate one of the most fundamental ethics of traditional climbing. However, when French climbers brought their aesthetic and physically demanding style to the United States, they demonstrated a level of technique, physical strength and gymnastics that was far superior to the Americans' (Donnelly 1993). This has kindled a sense of competition in some American climbers and led many of them to adopt the French sport climbing style (Archey et al 2002).

The birth of sport climbing in the late 1970s was met with fierce objection from traditional climbers who believed that their practice was the purer and more authentic discipline (Bogardus 2012).

Since bolts are considered permanent litter in the rock (Lewis 2004) and an unethical practice (Taylor 2010) to traditional climbers, the adoption of sport climbing led to what is known to be the most troublesome disagreement in climbing history (Mellor 2001). It also led to the segmentation of the climbing community (Strauss 1984). Taylor (2010) drew attention to the unique dispute concerning ethics and the use of bolts between the two styles of rock climbing commonly labelled as Bolt Wars. Those who oppose bolts and sport climbing ethics have removed bolts or even chopped them. This dispute has even gone so far as to trigger physical alterations between climbers (Taylor 2010).

The Bolt Wars, also called "The Great Divide" by Donnely (1993), is a phenomenon that is not unique to the rock climbing community in the United States. It can be found in the international climbing community between both disciplines that is manifested in acts of chopping bolts, vandalism, physical violence, and written diaries, publications and articles aimed to ridicule the "opponent's" practices (Fuller 2003; Taylor 2006).

Bolt Wars have taken place all over the world. Taylor (2010) shows that Moab, in Utah, went through its own Bolt Wars, where climbers were altering routes without permission from the first *ascentionists*, bolts were being randomly placed, and inexperienced climbers were placing unsafe bolts. Traditional climbers started chopping all bolts that were thought to be unnecessary, and whenever a sport climber replaced a chopped bolt, traditional climbers would take them down again. However, the presence of bolts in Moab has opened most of the now-bolted routes to a new segment of climbers, and routes that had only witnessed a couple of ascents until then have seen many *repeats* since.

Similarly, in the Case of Harpur Hill in the Peak District, in the summer of 1994, two dozen new bolted routes were put up in a quarry which already had traditional routes established, despite the local consensus being that all routes were possible with use of natural protection. The decision to place bolts at the crag was not taken lightly by local traditional climbers. This matter was later resolved when locals decided that all bolts were to be removed (Ward 1994). However, like in Moab, the temporary bolts increased the number of ascents of these routes, transforming the rarely-used crag to a regularly-visited site.

The film “The Bolt Wars”, which explores the development of sport climbing in the Garden of the Gods in Colorado and the events in Moab and Harpur Hill, highlight the patterns that occur in climbing areas where ethical disputes have taken place. Similar to Moab and Harpur Hill, The Garden of the Gods new bolts started appearing either on existing routes, or on newly-developed routes, thus inciting the vicious cycle of bolt chopping and re-bolting.

Eventually, climbers in all previously mentioned scenarios, from both disciplines, worked together to form a consensus either by taking matters to their own hands, or with guidance from organisations like the BMC and Access Fund (Bolt Wars 2015). Similarly, the film “Pioneering Smith Rock”: although the main developer Alan Watts was repeatedly criticised for his ethics, it eventually made a positive change in the dynamics of his climbing community and made sport climbing

become acknowledged as a practice on a national scale and paved the way to coexistence.

Additionally, climbers exert their influence through a variety of media, such as climbing magazines and web forums (Fuller, 2003). A potentially persuasive but biased medium is the guidebook. Guidebooks are biased in their nature in that they act as a channel for authors to promote their own ethical agendas and discredit the climbing styles of others. In certain cases, authors would completely disregard the achievements of climbers if their ascents were done in a style that does not match the authors' ethics (Taylor 2006).

During the Bolt Wars, climbers who published essays and articles in climbing magazines and journals promoting sport climbers' achievements were rarely acknowledged or accepted by the wider international climbing community. This was due to the constant undermining of styles of accents and manners in which sport climbers approached their achievements. The results which manifested in published rebuttals intended to question, disregard and humiliate sport climbers' beliefs and conducts.

Reinhold Messner, in his essay 'The Murder of the Impossible', addressed to those who have adopted the use of bolts and pegs, accuses sport climbers of having no respect for the mountains or themselves. He claims that climbers who value direct lines with hundreds of bolts in the rock face have no courage, but carry their courage in the form of bolts through which they eliminate the possibility of an unsuccessful ascent.

For Messner (1978), there is joy in retreating from an expedition or an ascent due to difficulty. In his opinion, that's where the courage lies, in the acceptance of being defeated by the mountain, or the conditions. For him, an ascent is only possible when the conditions and the mountains have allowed him to ascend. Messner deems the sport climber narrow-minded due to their refusal to approach the rock face with its natural features. Instead, he identified the bolt climber's desire to draw a direct line up the rock face with the aid of bolting as less skilful, less courageous,

and equipment-dependant. For them, he believes, retreating from an expedition has become dishonourable:

> *Expansion bolts are taken for granted nowadays; they are kept to hand just in case some difficulty cannot be overcome by ordinary methods.*
>
> *Today's climber doesn't want to cut himself off from the possibility of retreat: he carries his courage in his rucksack, in the form of bolts and equipment. Rock faces are no longer overcome by climbing skill, but are humbled, pitch by pitch, by methodical manual labour; what isn't done today will be done tomorrow. Free-climbing routes are dangerous, so they are protected by pegs. Ambitions are no longer built on skill, but on equipment and the length of time available. The decisive factor isn't courage, but technique; an ascent may take days, and the Pegs and bolts counted in hundreds. Retreat has become dishonourable, because everyone knows now that a combination of bolts and single-mindedness will get you up anything, even the most repulsive-looking direttissima (p.244)*

Similarly, Yvon Chouinard in his essay 'Coonyard Mouths Off' expresses much concern regarding the dispute within the climbing community and what its future holds. He, as well, rejected the use of bolts, praised Messner's style, and yet criticised the international climbing community for entering a chapter of disputes:

> Now there are bad vibrations in the overpopulated surfing scene and even worse vibrations with the climbing craze.
>
> […] Just as man continues to disrupt the natural order of things, so mountaineering has become increasingly technical, decreasingly difficult, much too crowded and far less adventuresome. The purity, uncertainty, naturalness and soul of the sport are rapidly being changed. (p. 246-247)

Chouinard displays disappointment in the international climbing community for interfering with nature, uncloaking climbing of its vital values, contaminating the mountains, and thieving the adventure from the adventurous. Additionally, he expresses that the climbing space is progressively becoming more crowded, and by drawing on a variety of studies regarding the notion of surf localism, overcrowding has been identified as the main cause for surf localism (Olivier 2012).

The following section will discuss how traditional climbers have started accepting sport climbers' existence in their crags and how the climbing communities in disputed areas have learnt from each other's practices and as a result, learnt to coexist.

2.4 Coexistence

Since bolting has facilitated the advancement of climbing standards (Ebert and Robertson 2007), it has allowed climbers to push the limits of what was physically possible at the time. In turn it has encouraged some traditional climbers to take a more relaxed approach to *ethics* and adopt the practices of top-roping and rehearsal of moves. These adopted practices have facilitated the achievement of what was previously perceived as impossible (Ebert and Robertson 2007). Bolting has also had an economic value to climbing destinations through national and international climbing tourists. (Pioneering Smith Rock film).

Bolts, alongside macho egos, have been the trigger points to all Bolt Wars around the world (Green 2010). He further suggests that the Bolt Wars do not solve the problem, but make it worse instead. The repeated bolting and de-bolting of routes further damages the rock, and consequently jeopardises rock climbers access to the rock.

> We need to disagree about ethics only to the point where the rock itself doesn't become an innocent victim of ethical wars and monstrous egos gone crazy. There have been too many Bolt Wars that did not solve anything, but instead left irreparable damage to the crags. A wound, although now healing, has existed in American climbing for the last couple of decades between traditional climbers

> and sport climbers. This us-versus-them mentality benefits no one. Respect and enjoy the challenges of both schools leave the petty ethical grievance behind (Green 2010. Introduction)

Green (2010) pleads in his guidebook to the rock climbing community to leave the battle of ethics and control over the cliffs behind and accept the fact that there is value in both approaches. Coincidentally, more traditional climbers have started to recognise the reasoning behind bolts and permanent means of protection.

Robbins, a traditional climber in Yosemite who protested the use of bolts and the ethical approach behind permanent protection, on one of his ascents as he was trying to follow a natural crack system on Half Dome, was lead to a blank wall, where he renounced his ethical and environmental stances by placing twenty bolts in the blank rock face. He later justified it as essential for progress and safety (Taylor 2006).

Further, Ebert and Robertson (2007) suggest that the vast majority of the best traditional climbers, nowadays, train on sport routes in order to develop their technical abilities, power, and endurance, confirming that traditional climbers were progressively adapting to the ethics and values of sport climbing. They have started practising the moves on top rope, *hangdogging*, practising clipping positions, and climbing a route with pre-placed *quick draws.* Consequently, they adopted new ethics and techniques and applied them to traditional climbing.

Dave MacLeod, a Scottish rock climber, acknowledges sport climbing as a practice and suggests that sport climbing has a place in rock climbing and that it should grow alongside traditional climbing, rather than at the expense of other climbing disciplines (Cited in UIAA 2016). Additionally, the UIAA, suggests that:

> climbing thrives on diversity. It is crucial that whole range of climbing styles are allowed to flourish and co-exist, so more than just one option is available (P.6)

Further, traditional climbing values freedom, and it would be contradictory to ban sport climbing for the amount of metal that has been appearing on the cliffs (Boardus 2010; Kiewa 2010).

No-one could argue that sport climbing is not enjoyable, for most climbers contributing to the UIAA's paper have expressed that their utmost enjoyment comes with bolted overhanging steep limestone cliffs in Greece, France and Spain (2016). Therefore, certain guidelines should be put in place to preserve the tradition and history of climbing and, since climbing is self-governed, these guidelines have to come from within the community.

After years of dispute, traditional climbers and sport climbers have managed to learn to coexist and integrate the values of each discipline into their own. The achievement of coexistence has only been attainable due to the community coming together and realising that the way forward starts with the acknowledgement of each practice and setting the guidelines of where bolting is acceptable and where it isn't (Ward 1994; Howett 2004; Taylor 2006).

Both disciplines have been able to solve matters arising from territorialism due to the community's willingness to find a middle ground, where a crag-specific code could be introduced by its local community or by facilitating bodies when a middle ground proves itself hard to achieve. For example, in certain places in the UK and the USA, coexistence has partly been made possible due to bodies such as the BMC, Access Fund and UIAA. These facilitating bodies play a big role in defending climbers' access and solving disputes between climbers. Their role will be explored in the following section.

2.4.1 Governance

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC), whose members mainly consist of hill walkers, climbers, alpinists and mountaineers considers itself as “the representative body that exists to protect the freedoms and promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, including ski-mountaineers.” (BMC 2019)

The BMC have issued a variety of materials and campaigns promoting good practice and codes of conduct. They also have been negotiating access to areas of natural beauty with a climbing potential with landowners and law makers to protect the longevity of these activities. The BMC declared in its Environment Policy that:

> The BMC recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering impact on the environment, and acknowledges responsibility to take reasonable measures to safeguard the environment for both the present and future generations. The BMC will improve its own environmental performance and provide assistance and advice to climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers on environmental issues relating to their activities. (Flitcroft 2007)

For example, in 2007 the BMC issued a ‘crag code’ that set out the minimum ethical standard expected from rock climbers regarding access, parking, footpaths, risk, respect, wildlife, dogs, litter, toilets, and the local economy. The council also regularly issues place-specific codes of practices and documents promoting better practice after complaints or issues have been reported during *area meetings*, which the BMC holds in different parts of the UK. One example in the sandstone crags of Kent which have been subject to damaging practices. As a result, signs have been put up and a crag-specific code of practice has been published. (Gardner 2007).

Another example is the BMC Green Guide for Groups of Climbers booklet (Dyer 2015). In which climbers are advised on ways to lower their impact on the crags and other users. It also includes tips on crag etiquette, information on important access legislation, and advice on dealing with litter and managing sanitation.

These publications are a reaction to issues presented to the BMC either directly or through BMC area meetings and were resolved, formally by the local climbing community.

Further, The Access Fund is a national advocacy organisation that is similar to the BMC and works towards protecting the environment and the longevity of rock climbing in the United States of America (Accessfund.org 2019). The Access Fund was formed in 1991 during the Bolt Wars in the US and it has been fighting for protecting access for climbers ever since. Like the BMC, The Access Fund runs events to raise funds and awareness, in addition to conservation events like path building, bolting, and tree planting (Accessfund.org 2019).

The Access fund explains in one of its short films that:

> At a policy level the Access Fund is able to work with land managers and law makers in a way that I never could as an individual climber and that is important to me. (Red Rocks: Open Acess 2013 .3:50)

And they advise rock climbers to get involved:

> Respect the places that matter to you, then volunteer, join your local climbing organisation, donate by becoming a member, do something! Do one of those things! Take Action. (Red Rocks: Open Acess 2013 .4:37)

Governing bodies help protect the environment and the longevity of rock climbing at a policy level. They also work towards raising rock climbers' awareness on

matters such as access, technical issue and proper gear use. In addition, they engage the rock community in events such as path building and re-bolting, while attempting to solve ethical disputes between climbers.

2.5 Conclusion

Rock climbing is a lifestyle sport that is characterised in its tendency to be novel, which derives from participants' adoption of new and modified technologies. These technologies allow them to reinvent and incorporate innovative equipment, and subsequently allow the creation of new subcultures (Lewis 2004; Wheaton 2004). One of the most noteworthy aspects of rock climbing is the spaces of participation, such as sea cliffs, quarries and cliff faces.

Rock climbers, through their participation in the activity, engage their senses with these natural spaces in a way that they become friends, become "one" and intimate with the natural world (Brymmer et al 2009; Humberstone 2011). This sensory engagement fosters the formation of feelings and emotions that have an impact on both rock climbers and rock.

Lifestyle sports in general have many positive benefits for participants, including socialisation, confidence building, mental health, and well-being (Luttenberger et al 2015; King and Church 2015). Therefore, it is argued that lifestyle sports, and rock climbing specifically, transcend participants into more consciously-aware beings that actively work towards protecting the natural world due to their attachment to the activity itself, while furthering the space of consumption which is the natural world (Montagu 1971; Humberstone 2011; Brymmer and Gray 2011).

Nevertheless, due to the growth in number of participants in lifestyle sports and mainly rock climbing, participants need to compete with other subgroups for space. For example, Bogardus (2012) explained that sport climbers and traditional climbers must compete for access to rock. In highlighting the differences, it is clear that traditional climbing prefers temporary gear placements and a from-the-ground-up style of ascent, whereas sport climbers tend to place permanent gear in the rock

and do not place much emphasis on how a route is climbed or created (Donnelly 1993; Lewis 2004; Hardwell 2007)

However, in the light of the continuous growth and development of sport climbing, traditional climbers were concerned as they started feeling like their existence on rock faces was under threat (Bogardus 2012). Traditional climbers' reaction to this threat was translated into a series of acts of territoriality taken against sport climbers' practices in the hopes of gaining back control over cliffs. This ignited a conflict also known as 'Bolt Wars', through which traditional rock climbers removed bolts and wrote letters and essays in climbing media in critique of sport climbing (Taylor 2006; Ebert and Robertson 2007). Traditional climbers have authority over the community due to the accumulated capital they acquire that gives them the status to do so. All meanwhile, a segment of traditional climbers has started seeing value in the advancements that sport climbing has brought to rock climbing as a whole; not long after, rock climbing communities around the world have come together to form place-specific consensuses through which they have laid the 'Bolt Wars' to rest (Ward 1994; Ward 1996; Taylor 2006; Howett 2004).

Furthermore, traditional climbers, through their adoption of some sport climbing practices, have been able to achieve what they have previously considered impossible (Ebert and Robertson 2007). This has encouraged many traditional climbers to start recognising the reasoning and the value behind sport climbing practices, and both parties have learnt to coexist and integrate the values of each discipline into their own (Ward 1994).

Additionally, the achievement of coexistence has only been attainable due to the community's push for the acknowledgement of each practice's existence. However, although rock climbing is a self-governed activity, coexistence, at times, has only been possible due to the involvement of facilitating bodies such as the BMC and the Access Fund. These bodies play a massive role in protecting climbers' access on a policy level, and work towards raising climbers' awareness on matters such as conservation, respecting the environment, and proper gear use.

They also help climbing communities in raising funds for cleaning and equipping events and, most importantly, in solving local and national ethical disputes.

3 Research Methodology

This chapter will lay out the methodological approach applied in this study, in the pursuit of better understanding rock climbers' socio-cultural practices. Additionally, it will justify the chosen methodology in relation to the thesis' aims and objectives. It will further rationalise the data collection and sampling method. This will be followed by a detailed discussion on the analysis of the data and the ethical considerations pertaining to this research. Finally, the role of the researcher will be considered in the process of the creation of knowledge.

3.1 Aim and Objectives

3.1.1 Aim

To understand the interplay between climbers and the space of participation

3.1.2 Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing.
2. To explore the socio-cultural dynamics operating in the rock climbing community.
3. To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing.
4. To understand governance in rock climbing.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Bell and Newby (1977) state that the paramount challenge in research is the identification of the most appropriate research strategy and the ability to defend its stance throughout the length of the research, whilst abiding to its limitations and exploring its capabilities as well as an appropriate research method (Brewer 2000). Adopting a qualitative approach allows a focus on context, narratives, and processes while embracing the fluidity between the observer and the observed, and the flexibility between the researcher and the researched (Bryman 2004). This

adoption of qualitative methodology was viable through a reflection on the philosophical stance adopted by the researcher, and the framing of the research aim and objectives (Brewer 2000), in addition to attentiveness towards the role of research and the tasks of being a researcher (Dwyer and Limb 2001).

Lynch (2010) believes that the significance of qualitative research lies in the researcher's ability to develop a humanistic and deep understanding of the world that a deductive quantitative approach would not be able to achieve.

3.3 Philosophical Underpinning

Epistemology focuses on how researchers can learn about reality, what forms the foundations of their knowledge, and how can we create knowledge about the world (Ritchie et al. 2013). Key issues within epistemology concern the ways through which knowledge is learnt. This research will utilise an inductive approach through which patterns are acquired from interviews and observations of the world and knowledge is then interpreted from these observations (ibid.).

3.3.1 Approach to Knowledge

Gratton and Jones (2010) lay out the two different approaches to knowledge: positivism and interpretivism. These approaches have different impacts on the data collection method and consequently the knowledge extracted. An interpretivist approach analyses findings through a measurement of words, statements, observations and other non-numerical data. These findings are then decoded by the researcher in order to develop an understanding of a social phenomena, as opposed to positivism which develops a definite numerical truth (Pizam and Mansfield 1999; Carson et al. 2001; Gratton and Jones 2010).

For this study a qualitative interpretive approach is taken as the research objectives seek to understand Dorset's rock climbing community, its attitudes, practices, and lived experiences towards the spaces they occupy, and to construct an understanding of the research participants' attitudes and behaviours towards the spaces they occupy. Furthermore, an interpretive approach allows the connections

between the social, cultural and historical aspects of climbers' lives to be revealed. (Wolcott 1999; Bryman 2004).

This study focuses on opinions, ideas and feelings of the local rock climbing community. Thus, influenced by ethnography, the researcher desires to immerse himself in the culture for a period of time to learn the cultural practices and behaviours of a particular culture-sharing group (Creswell 2007). This is because, ethnography looks at socio-cultural practices (Taylor and Bogdan 1998) and aims to understand the sociological realities of cultures by focusing on their ordinary and mundane activities and behaviours in order to thoroughly comprehend and learn their socio-cultural practices (Creswell 2007).

This research will employ tools that are traditionally associated with ethnography, such as immersion and observation, a style of research that is used to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular social setting (Holt and Sparkes 2001) which requires a level of involvement in the 'field' over a period of time (Hammersley and Atkinson 1994; Brewer 2000). It requires the researcher to become immersed in the *field* for extended periods of field work, to enable them to become accepted within the research setting (Brewer 2000). Members of a given community are studied in everyday settings, interacting as they normally would, with minimal interference and influence from the researcher (Brewer 2000).

3.4 Research Design

The key data collection methods used in this research are active participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the researcher paid attention to rock climbing-related print and online media, as he had mainly followed discussions on UKClimbing.com, read historical documents and watched a collection of short films that discuss ethics and bolting matters. The research took place between March 2017 and April 2018.

The multiple methods approach strengthens the validity of the research as it enables triangulation throughout the research process (Spindler 1982). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), trustworthiness is improved if different kinds of data lead to the same conclusion.

The process of data collection in this research consists of three phases. Firstly, participant observation, which allows the researcher to experience the observed culture in naturally-occurring settings. This is followed by enquiry, through which then allows for the researcher to decide what questions they need to ask and which questions will be answered naturally throughout the research stage. Finally, the researcher has to examine the history of the researched subject (Wolcott 1999). However, the third element above is not limited to data collection, but took place at various stages of this research, starting from the research proposal followed by the literature review.

3.4.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a data collection method through which the researcher establishes a place in a natural setting for a period of time in order to investigate, experience, and represent the social life in a given space in order to interpret its social dynamics (Emerson et al 2001). Tomlinson et al (2005) recommended the use of diaries, oral and written diaries and the observation of social events and gathering in order to fully grasp the complexities of identity expression of lifestyle sporting communities.

Sands suggests that participant observation is the main field work method in ethnographic research and he calls for its separation from other qualitative social science research methods as it is a more intensive, focused, and time consuming method in which the researcher participates in and observes the life of the informants (2002). Field work mainly consists of the researcher recording their field work notes in the form of a research diary (Bryman and Burges 1994). Fontana and Frey (1994) suggested that research diaries are vital for the researcher to document their experiences.

The researcher in this study followed Jackson's (cited in Atkinson 1990) recommendation by not putting too much effort writing field notes as they could interfere with the field work itself and therefore miss out on valuable interactions between the observer and the observed. Thus, the researcher did not take notes in the field unless necessary.

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

“Interviews are a type of survey where questions are delivered in a face-to-face encounter by an interviewer’’ (Lynch 2010, p73). They act as a look into participants’ perception of the world (McCracken, 1988). Interviewing is the most popular form of qualitative inquiry through which the researcher has to listen carefully in order to hear the meaning of what the participant is saying (Warren 2001). Throughout the process of interviewing the researcher facilitates a dialogue with their participants in order to obtain interesting and useful information for their research (Andrews et al 2011). Interviews are also the most common qualitative data collection method used in physical culture research due to their capacity of gathering participants’ in-depth thoughts (Jones et al 2013) and their ability to gather complex information in a relaxed environment (Lynch 2010)

In ethnographically-informed research, it is vital to be genuinely interested in listening to the interviewees’ stories and recognise them as co-producers of the findings as opposed to a data-generating instrument (Fontana and Frey 2005). Thus, informed by ethnography, the researcher aimed to establish a relationship with informants, as well as a set-up that was as comfortable as possible for them. This was easily achievable with climbers that the researcher has belayed prior to the interview or has climbed with in the past.

Interviews, normally, take three forms; structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Fontana and Frey (2005) discuss that structured interviews aim to capture precise data that would help explain behaviour in pre-established themes, whereas semi-structured and unstructured forms that seek to unravel the complexities of participants’ behaviours with guidance from pre-determined themes and no limitations (Fontana and Frey 2005). The semi-structured approach was chosen as it allows for flexibility, freedom and offers a linear structure between the researcher and their interviewees (Fox et al 2014) This approach also equips the researcher with questions that allow them to guide the interview in the direction they want and to ask about subjects and matters that were not thought of prior to the interview and have arisen during its course (Willing 2013).

3.4.3 Research Participants

3.4.3.1 Sampling

A sample refers to a selected group of participants that are taken from a larger population for the purpose of research. The sampling technique used in this thesis is an emergent purposive sampling, meaning that climbers were directly contacted and asked if they would participate due to their climbing status and the fact that they fit the criteria discussed below. Additionally, some of the participants were recruited by snowballing, as they were either mentioned in the course of interviews or have been recommended by other participants.

3.4.3.2 The Sample

Twenty-two rock climbers were interviewed for this research. These climbers are active members of the traditional and the sport climbing communities in Dorset. Of the four women and eighteen men, ten are personally known to the researcher, while some were recommended by other informants, and others were specifically contacted due to their climbing credentials, their knowledge of the 'bolt wars' in Dorset that took place between 1970 and 1995 and due to their climbing experience.

Criteria for participation in this study: (a) the participants identified as active traditional and/or sport climbers; (b) climbers considered themselves local to Dorset's climbing areas, (c) climbers have been involved in establishing routes, first ascents, bolting and organised cleaning events, which naturally comes with great degree of commitment to rock climbing. The participants' were aged between 25 and 66.. Additonally, Cuskelly and O'Brine (2013), discuss that volunteering is essential to developing a sense of connectedness within sporting communities and that often volunteering becomes an ingrained characteristic within an individual's identity. This has influenced the sampling for this research as volunteering indicates a higher level of engagement with rock climbing and portrays an aspect of authenticity. All informants are actively involved with the Dorset Bolt Fund.

It was desired to include an equal number of male and female informants to guarantee the research group's representativeness of the overlapping influences

of age, experience and gender (Bogardus 2012). However, unfortunately, the small number of active female climbers meeting the criteria above is very limited because the number of female climbers between the 70s and 90s was significantly lower than it is nowadays.

Most participants have climbed in Dorset during the aforementioned period and are still climbing to this date. Long-time participants have opposed practices such as retro-bolting and bolting, whereas younger participants have pushed for these practices. These participants offer a unique perspective as they have witnessed and participated in notorious changes in rock climbing especially in Dorset over the last four decades (Bogardus 2012).

3.4.3.3 Recruitment of Participants

For Wheaton (1997) hanging out in surfing shops and cafes was essential at the start of and her research into windsurfing culture. This is because informants' culture-specific shops and cafes are important spaces where social interactions occur and where norms and values are learnt and discussed. Similarly, having a local climbing wall as a social and professional space was beneficial for this research. The climbing centre is where the researcher had his first interaction with climbing in Dorset. It is also where the researcher entered the scene and progressively became more immersed in the community. Furthermore, the researcher had a part-time job at the climbing centre's cafe, and by climbing outdoors with Dorset-based climbers throughout Dorset, the rest of the UK, and abroad, and by taking part in cleaning, clearing, path-building and bolting events, he established himself as a member of the rock climbing community in Dorset. By doing this he was able to acquire contact details of climbers that have been active in the transitional era of bolt wars. Further, computer-mediated communications have become vital for researchers to access informants within the limitations of travel, time and budget (Hine 2013). In particular, social media has become an essential tool to use by researchers through which to access informants and populations that fit certain criteria. However, although social media is very important to access certain groups, some informants did not use technology and thus the researcher had to ask for their landline phone numbers from other participants. Finally, those who were not contacted through their landlines or

mobile phones were directly contacted through their UKC accounts, Facebook and face to face at the climbing wall.

Those who were recruited by employing a purposive emergent sample were individuals selected due to their level of insight on the issues addressed by this thesis, the researcher was able to identify names that are repeatedly mentioned by climbers when discussing the history of the area in general, local guidebooks and the historic documents acquired by the researcher. In order to access this sample, the researcher had acquired contact details through other climbers. As for the snowballing phase, the names were noted down by the researcher during the course of an interview and asked the informant for contact details after the interview.

The researcher then got in touch, pitched the study and asked if they would like to participate in the research

3.4.4 Data Collection

3.4.4.1 Observation

Between January and September 2017, the researcher took part in 4 climbing and clearing outings with members of the climbing community in Dorset. He had informed his subjects about his research prior to the outing. These outings consisted of bolting/path building events. The outings took place in Dancing Ledge, Worth Matravers and three different spots on the Isle of Portland, Weymouth.

Given the researcher's climber status, he was able to actively participate in every action during these outings. Active observation meant that the researcher got involved in everything that took place, including activities such as belaying, climbing, placing bolts, working on path improvement, and removing loose rock.

At the start of each day the researcher, would drive, and on some occasions would pick up other climbers on the way. Upon arrival to the meeting point, everyone would start getting the gear needed from vans and take them to the crag. Then we would get kitted (wearing harness, helmet and get the gear ready), fix the ropes

and get to work. Work in that scenario consists of gardening, digging, steps building, drilling holes into the rock, installing bolts and removing old ones with a mechanical puller or an angle grinder. The roles are rotational. However, some jobs are limited to those with certain expertise. Around lunchtime everyone would stop for a cup of tea and a sandwich, then everyone gets back to work until they leave the crag one by one.

The days spent in the field have allowed the researcher to fully engage with the community in Dorset, as the outings were all of a volunteering nature with the Dorset Bolt Fund, the researcher got experience the spirit of the community as it came together in order to better the conditions of the crags they enjoy

The value of these outings goes beyond data, the researcher managed to grasp a preliminary understanding of the climbing community spirit, additionally, the depth of conversations in the field raised matters worthy of further inquiry. This was of great benefit to the interview schedule.

The approach to field work in this study consisted of written records at the end of each day; in these records the researcher described what he had learnt and observed throughout the day. However, he had a small note book with him where he took notes of events, conversation or names that he did not want to forget about. Observations include activities, actions, questions and reflections.

3.4.4.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are flexible and depend on the interviewees' response. Thus, the researcher has the ability to ignore certain planned questions if the participant is guiding the course of the interview to a new, more interesting direction, which could enrich the findings and lead to unexplored areas (Jones et al. 2013).

Kvale and Brinkman (2009), named three types of phases in creating an interview schedule. In the first phase the researcher asks the interviewee opening or introductory questions which help break the ice and establish rapport. This is followed by deeper questions that allow the interviewer to steer the course of the interview where the researcher wants to, and finally, the researcher would use probing techniques by asking questions about matters that arose during the course

of the interview, before concluding the interview. This format was used as it flows nicely and assists the researcher in creating a linear narrative that is not boring to the interviewee and makes the transcripts narratively engaging (Brewer 2000). The interviewing style adopted was what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) called a conversation with a purpose, which meant that the interviews were of an informal and interactive nature, where a range of pre-determined theoretical topics informed the direction of the interviews.

All interviews started with questions (see Appendix 7.3) that would get the participants in the mood and would refresh their climbing memories in Dorset. For this phase, the researcher chose questions that inquire about participant's first climb in Dorset, their most memorable experiences in Dorset, where the researcher would often engage and perhaps minimally touch up upon his own memories of the same places to build a friendly structure to the interview and for the participants to relate with researcher. This phase ends with an inquiry of when was the first time the participant put an effort towards the community or felt like they belonged to the community to set them in the mood for the main body of the interview schedule. The second phase was developed in line with discussions in the literature review and by drawing on the research's aim and objectives (Bryman 2004). This phase also included questions that attempt to unravel disputes the researcher read about on forums or in Dorset-specific guidebooks, they also tackle matters the researcher is acquainted with due to his climbing knowledge and climber status within the Dorset rock climbing community. These questions tackled areas that are in a grey area in order to delve deeper into the dilemmas of rock climbing ethic. This was followed by enquiries about the participants' own engagement with bolting, their views on ethical matters, their relationship with the natural world and other climbers. Additionally, due to the researcher's engagement with fieldwork and his experiences of what belonging to the rock climbing community means, especially from a volunteering perspective, the researcher, in this phase also inquired about participants' engagement with the community, the motives behind it and belonging. This was done to further engage participants and to gain a greater depth of data. Finally, the researcher did not neglect matters that arose during the course of the interviews by employing probing techniques. The

researcher often asked participants to elaborate on certain matters to get a succinct answer.

22 Interviews were conducted for this research in November and December 2017, all of which were conducted on a one-to-one basis. The interviews took place in a variety of locations (See Appednix 7.4). One took place in a van overlooking Portsmouth, some took place in the researchers living room, the majority of interviews took place at The Project Climbing Centre, one of the interviews occurred in a caravan in the middle of North Dorset, and the rest took place in informants' living rooms, where he had the privilege to access climbing libraries and historic documents.

Every interview was recorded on a Dictaphone, the Dictaphone he used, had a really good feature where he could mark the bits he found interesting during the course of the interview. Also, the researcher took notes of topics he wanted to re-visit with the participant without interrupting the flow of the conversation. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, with aid of a free transcription software. The software did not work well, so the researcher had to revisit each interview and edit the files manually while listening to the interviews.

3.4.5 Coding and Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that qualitative data analysis consists of three stages. The first is data reduction, through which the researcher organises his transcriptions, research diaries and historic documents to then reduce them by discarding those that are irrelevant to the study. The second stage is data display, a stage through which the researcher codes the data and draws conclusions from the reduced. During this stage the researcher develops different themes and concepts through which, in the third and final stage, data display, the themes, and coded data allow the researcher to develop conclusions and validate them through reflection of literature and discussion.

All recordings were transcribed, research diaries were organised, and a coding system developed as part of the data reduction phase (Miles and Huberman 1994). This was the first step of conceptualising data. Data from interviews and research diaries were first analysed by developing categories/concepts drawn from reflections of the literature review, However, the researcher prioritised the emergence of the final themes from the data in addition to the literature, as the main source of knowledge development in social research is the respondents. (Bryman and Burges 1994; Brewer 2000)

Influenced by an ethnographic approach, the researcher used this research as a medium to decipher and further understand the lived experiences of people's everyday life and mundane activities (Beal and Wilson 2004). Since the voices and opinions of informants are of great value to ethnographic research, this study will use extensive quotations, bringing a sense of proximity and involvement in the field (Brewer 2000).

The analysis of data tends to took an inductive, thematic approach (Brewer, 2000). Throughout the search for themes the researcher will follow Ryan and Bernard's (2003) recommendations, which include looking for repetitions, categories, metaphors, transitions, similarities, differences, linguistic connectors and theory-related material, in order to establish a profound cultural representation of the chosen sample group that features both the thoughts and opinions of the group and the researcher's own interpretation of the sample and its socio-cultural practices.

Brewer (2000) suggests that data analysis is a process through which the researcher brings order to data by defining patterns, categories, and other illustrative elements from correlated comments, answers, and observations. Thematic analysis consists of methods applied to the data in order to evaluate, identify, analyse, and report themes from the data (Braun and Clarke 2006).

The researcher was able to extract themes and topics from the data by actively looking for topics that touch upon the following themes: Connection with Nature, Community, Governance, Bolt Fund, and Ethical Debates. Further, while these

themes were being coded, the researcher collated all highlighted data into theme-specific word documents where the extracted quotes displayed patterns and similarities, especially those in regards to the community, connection with nature and ethical debates.

3.4.6 Ethical Considerations

To ensure privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and to make sure this study meets expected ethical standards, an ethics checklist was completed, submitted, and approved by the researcher's supervisors. It has also achieved ethical clearance via Bournemouth University's ethics panel.

Qualitative research aims to interpret the in-depth emotions and perceptions of human behaviour. Ethical considerations have to be made during data collection and data presentation since human subjects are closely involved (Jones et al 2013). According to Grix (2010) participants should be provided with all information regarding the study they are involved in, including details of the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants. To ensure privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of informants, they were handed participant information sheets (Appendix 7.1) that explain what the research is about and what it aims to achieve. Additionally, informants were given participant consent forms (Appendix 7.2). These forms included details such as: interviews will be audio recorded; participants will be anonymised; interviews will be transcribed and analysed; transcribed interviews will be made accessible to supervisor and examiners; and that participants can leave the interview whenever they would like to.

However, there were some individuals within these public climbing spaces that were unaware of the researcher's identity and whose practices and interactions with research participants have informed the participant observation element of the research. To tackle this, the researcher sought to ensure his study focuses on the actions and behaviours of those informed.

All the data collected was treated as confidential. Before data collection, pseudonyms were set to all participants. By the end of the study, secure destruction of all information will take place, all data recorded was transcribed onto

the researcher's laptop. Files were only accessible to the researcher. All recordings will be erased immediately after the completion of the study. Additionally, all data collected will be retained for 3 years and then erased form the researcher's computer.

4 Findings and Discussion

This section will set out to critically discuss the emerging themes from the literature review and analysed data. Each quotation that is extracted from the transcriptions, research diaries and historical documents such as the letters and BMC meeting minutes, will be discussed comparatively with other respondents' thoughts and opinions. Extracts will also be discussed with a critical reflection drawn on material discussed in the literature review.

4.1 Connection with Rock

Due to the unique relationship between rock climbers and the natural world, terms such as *conquering, freedom, flow* and *escapism* have been mentioned and discussed by informants. This section will examine the concept of conquering in rock climbing and will discuss informants' descriptions of flow. Finally, this section will assess the benefits of being connected with nature as a vital part of rock climbing.

4.1.1 Conquering re-visited

The work of Brymer et al (2011), Bane (1996), Oslen (2001), Houston (1968) and Page (2003) suggests that professional and extreme sport athletes do not feel like they are conquering the natural world and its forces, instead they are working with nature in order to conquer the self. These authors argue that extreme sport participants do not see themselves as a force that is fighting the elements to ride a wave or get to the top of a cliff, instead they are challenging themselves to achieve what is perhaps perceived as impossible. While the informants in this study do not identify as professional athletes nor extreme sport athletes, they discussed similar experiences. For example, Simon commented on the concept of conquering, and whilst he held a conqueror mindset at the beginning of his climbing career, he was humbled by later encounters with dangers in rock climbing:

> *"… totally working with the rock. I think the other thing is that I kind of [pause] because I kind of came in through the hill walk in mountaineering, I very much dropped this kinda-- I mean, I did start with a conquering mindset, but [laughs] Jesus, I [pause] I dropped*

that probably in the first 10 years. Because I had a [pause] I've known, um, somewhere between 50 and 60 people have been killed climbing, really. So that pretty much stops the [laughs] conqueror mindset " (Simon)

The term 'conquering' does not resonate with participants since they have no desire to battle with any external forces, but they are battling against themselves and their ability to climb. This is because they are aware of their insignificance in relation to the force of nature. This theme has been discussed by participants from this study, and the findings support previous studies in related activities (see: Oslen 2001; Houston 1968; Brymer and Gray 2009; Brymer et al 2010; Wheaton 2010; Brymer and Gray 2010).

"I hate that word, conqueror. Um, you know, they talk about conquering a peak, but um, you're only there on sufferance you know, um. The weather changes, you could be dead, you know." (Phil)

"No I didn't, I didn't conquer anything. I didn't conquer anything physical, outside myself." (Stephen)

Rocks, cliffs and mountains are not perceived as conquerable. They are separate entities that rock climbers engage with in order to tackle something within. The research findings show that for these participants there is a disconnect from the notion of conquering. They view conquering as a term that implies superiority and power display. The assumption that rock climbers are conquerors seems uninformed as the climbers in this study appear to accept the strength of nature. They are aware and humbled by their own insignificance in relation to these natural forces.

4.1.2 Therapeutic Connection

The literature review has explored the theoretical work of Wheaton (2004), Brymer et al (2009) Brymer and Gray (2010), Humberstone (2011) and Thorpe and Rinehart (2013), into how participants foster liberating emotions and sensations

such as flow, escapism and freedom through movement on waves, air, rock and land. Participants in this study have described the aforementioned sensations in a variety of different ways.

Karen for example, suggests that movement in rock climbing is immersive, meditative and relaxing; "*I go climbing to relax."* (Karen). This is similar to Emily's take on her own perception of flow, which all informants have struggled to articulate, but they have all revealed that these moments of flow and escapism are not frequent, nor are they lasting. However, once they are in a state of flow and climbing smoothly and effortlessly while fully-focused, they are reminded of why they have undertaken rock climbing in the first place. This is the reason they always come back for more.

> *"I think, and it is part of what may have attracted me to climbing. In the same way that one needs the skateboard, it's that elegance and effortlessness of movements. It's not just all about cranking really hard and, uh, about being strong or looking good or anything like this. It's how it feels to be, you know, in harmony with nature in doing something which is elegant and effortlessness, even though it takes a huge amount of physical resolve to, um, to be able to do it. Yeah.*
>
> *I've had a couple of moments. So I think particularly um I climbed [pause] when you say climbing out of your skin. I guess a lot of people, especially on trad, when things have clicked." (Emily)*

This gives an insight into the nature of the relationship between rock climbers and rock climbing, through which participants get to relax and de-stress. This is due to rock climbing's ability to provide participants with an escape from responsibilities, the mundane and societal restrictions (Cohen and Taylor 1992; Brymer and Nielson 2012; Brymer and Schweitzer 2013). Further to relaxation and de-stressing, there are numerous benefits associated with rock climbing, escapism and flow. For example, in a discussion with Sophie, who struggles with anxiety, she shared how rock climbing helps her maintain good mental health, build confidence in her

abilities and her self-esteem:

> *''I think for me, climbing is very, very much about, um, maintaining good mental health. I found-- For me, um, climbing was like-- I mean, it's a [pause] immediate goal, isn't it? Let's get started from the bottom, get to the top. And it's a solo sport so you're only doing [pause] You have your thoughts, and that's it. Maybe a bit later [people are] shouting at you, but you can ignore that. So for me, it was very much about… And the beginning stages. Um, if I could set this goal and I could complete it, then I can apply that to real life.*
>
> *I struggled with anxiety a lot and I'd be like, "Oh, I can't make a phone call 'cause what if this happens when that happens." But then, if you reflect on the weekend and then you're like, "Well, at the weekend, I climbed a cliff." You're like: I'm a lot more capable than I think I am. So for me it's definitely always been about, um, building my self-esteem." (Sophie)*

These findings support King and Church's (2015) and Luttenberger et al's (2015) discussions on how participation in lifestyle sports has many positive benefits on participants such as socialisation and confidence building. Further, this discussion indicates that the moments through which climbers experience escapism and flow are therapeutic. Therefore, rock climbing as the vehicle through which participants experience these moments and sensations is also therapeutic.

4.4.3 Exclusivity of Space

Rock climbing is an activity that often takes its participants to remote and difficult to access areas, that may only be accessible by ropes and rope-work knowledge. For example, Carol expressed how climbing always takes her to unique places and she mentioned the fact that, although climbers use the same paths as other members of the public to get to certain crags, other foot path users are oblivious to the spaces around that are only accessible by abseiling down a sea cliff, or by boat. This was also discussed by Jerome who emphasised the unique exclusivity of

places climbers get to experience.

> *"You see things that people would not- wouldn't see you know? Like, people walk along the coast path at the top of Durlston, and there's a whole world underneath them that they have no idea is there […] rock formations, the fossils, all that sort of thing, birds, and, yeah. It just opens up a whole another dimension to explore." (Carol)*

> *"Some of the places that we get to as a climber, the high percentage of everybody else in the world will pretty much never get to see. So it's kind of, uh, this is quite amazing." (Jerome)*

This suggests that climbers are privileged by their ability to spend time climbing in isolated natural spaces. The isolation allows for an exclusive and unique climbing interaction with the natural world that enhances the overall rock climbing experience. However, it also suggests that more skilled rock climbers get to experience spots of natural beauty that are not accessible to inexperienced climbers. For example, most sea cliffs require climbers to have sufficient technical knowledge and ability to abseil[1] to the base of a sea cliff or set up a hanging belay[2] and learn how to self-rescue in an emergency.

This suggests that the depth of the relationship between rock climbers and rock climbing is reliant on climbers' level of experience. This concurs with Bourdieu's concept of capitals (1985) and with Dant and Wheaton's (2007) application of Bourdieu's capital into windsurfing. In the context of this research, climbers' embodied and objectified capital refers to climber's physical strength, knowledge, muscle memory and ability to navigate their bodies on the rock (climbing technique), including the equipment used to facilitate the navigation of the climbing body in the climbing scape (rope, belay devices, quickdraws and traditional

1 The act of self-belaying down the length of a rope to descend

2 The place where a climber belays and the anchor is set up attaching the climber to the rock. A hanging belay, is a belay that does not offer the climber a space to stand so they sit in their harness while hanging in the air.

climbing gear).

In order to achieve movement in windsurfing Dant and Wheaton (2007) suggest that an interaction between the embodied and the material capital is required. Therefore, since most sea cliffs require the acquisition of both embodied and objectified capital, it is suggested that the same applies to rock climbing or certain aspects of rock climbing which suggests that a correlation lies between rock climbers' technical knowledge and ability and their capability to access more secluded and exclusive climbing spaces. This also suggests that accessing these areas is a privilege, for those with sufficient accumulated cultural capital that gives them the ability, skills and knowledge to do so.

This section reveals that, similar to Brymer et al (2009) and Humberstone (2013), participants in this study are disconnected from the notion of conquering as they acknowledge their insignificance and powerlessness in relation to natural forces. It also shows that the relationship between climbers and rock climbing is valuable to participants' wider lives, as it plays a big role in maintaining good mental health, build confidence and in participants' social lives. This touches upon the work of (King and Church 2015) and suggests that rock climbing, as the producer of states such as flow, freedom and escapism, is therapeutic.

Further, it suggests that rock climbing acts as a vehicle through which climbers produce self and identity, get to express themselves through play, and are able to experience natural spaces that are exclusive and unique to rock climbing.
However, their ability to experience exclusive and unique natural spaces is limited to experienced climbers, with sufficient accumulated cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986; Dant and Wheaton 2007). Therefore, it is suggested that there is a correlation between rock climbers' cultural capital and their capability to access more secluded and exclusive climbing spaces.

4.2 The Rock Climbing Community

Rock Climbing is an activity that brings people together which is very evident in the

case of these participants. The scene in Dorset is constantly growing and veterans have witnessed the transition and inclusion from traditional only to sport and traditional climbing between 1970's and the early 1990's. Participants acknowledge that the scene is historically strong. The connection between climbers, especially those with higher status, who have developed and established routes and have had a big impact on the rock climbing scene in Dorset, goes beyond colleagueship and friendship. Tristan described the scene to be:

> *"It was a gang, it was a family, you know? And that family still exists now with us 'cause [clears throat] we're all climbing still, you know? That's the lovely thing. Even if people have moved away. And the best times, travelling with mates, going abroad, going to places, going to America, doing big road trips. Climbing with John and a guy called {identifiable informant} down the Ruckle […] It was the adventure. It was being with everyone in the group and exploring Portland." (Tristan)*

The community that Tristan, John and others have built is described to be beyond friendship and colleagueship as they were bonded as family. Even though years have passed and members have moved to different parts of the world they are still gathered by the love of climbing. This suggests that rock climbing, despite being an individual sport, draws participants together and plays a vital part in their social lives. This goes in line with King and Church's (2005) discussion on how participation in lifestyle sports has many positive benefits on participants such as socialisation. It also shows how social fulfillment has been taken further and has led to the formation of the Dorset rock climbing scene and consequently, the sport climbing subculture in Dorset.

Further, Karen believes that rock climbing fosters familial relationships that places trust at the heart of the activity, because when a climber lets another climber belay them, they are putting their lives in the hands of the belayer. Thus, a form of trust unique to climbing is fostered between the climber and her belayer at the tie of a knot:

> *“Uh, most of – most, yeah, most of my good friends are still climbing. And I think that moment that you get on a rope with someone [belaying you] at the other end, you -- the trust that you put into them, and the friendship that you get out of having an epic day, like out climbing, yeah, is – yeah, there's nothing stronger I think, and they become your family. Yeah.” (*Karen)

Although rock climbing as an activity itself is an individual sport, the presence of a team member or more is essential. This is because for a rock climber to be able to ascend a route safely, they need to be belayed from the ground or the anchors of the previous pitch. While the belayer has no role in the leader’s physical ability to complete an ascent, a great deal of attentiveness is required in order to provide them with the right amount of rope through the friction belay device in order to be able to ascend far enough without injuring themselves in the event of a fall.
Thus, a level of technical knowledge, skill and communication between members of the team is vital. Due to the risk element of rock climbing, this mutual understanding between the climber and her belayer acts as a fast track into a level of trust through which climbers know that their partner will help them complete an ascent in a safe manner. This does not imply that rock climbing is a team sport, but it highlights the fact that it is an individual sport that heavily relies on the presence of a facilitator, and therefore may be less individualised than other lifestyle sports such as surfing, as described by Rinehart (2000) and Wheaton (2004).

4.2.1 The local community

In order to understand the meaning of “local community”, one must first look at the term ‘local’, and what it means and what it holds for participants. Akin to rock climbing, in surfing culture the acquisition of local status holds geographical distance in its meaning. At the same time, it is not limited to a physical location. This is because participants, through their surfing and their developed connection with the ocean, the waves, and breaks they surf at, become participants in and advocates for their surf territory (Olive 2016).

Evers (2009) suggests that local status is not necessarily acquired, but rather developed through knowledge and skills specific to a surf break. Further, locals are given authority and power over a surf break due to either historic and geographic connection with a surf spot, or through repeated visitation and participation in that surf territory (Olive 2016).

By drawing on the similarities between the two subcultures it is proposed that the acquisition of local status in rock climbing is similar to the one in surfing. With that in mind, Emily, one of the most experienced female participants, is not residing in Dorset, yet her involvement in the scene, her climbing achievements, and her bond with the rest of the community have made her a part of it as a local to the Dorset climbing scene.

> *''But I do feel, like with the call to re-equip the routes and everything that. I do feel part of the community, and I want to contribute. So things like that I do feel I'm part of the cohesive community, even though I'm not local enough to be really part of the Dorset scene.''*
> (Emily)

This displays how geographical distance did not prevent her from feeling part of the community and it never prevented her from giving back to the local community for example by volunteering with the Dorset Bolt Fund[3].

These examples show the similarities between climbing culture and surfing culture in regards to local status. For example, Olivier (2010) argues that the identification of locals and outsiders is complex, and often illogical and unreasonable. That is because *local* statuses are not only acquired by belonging to the break or coastline where participants live, but through knowledge and skills that are particular to the surf break and its waves (Olive 2016). Similarly, rock climbers do not necessarily need to be located near to the crag to be considered local, but local status can be

3 The Dorset Bolt Fund is an organisation formed by local climbers that takes care of equipping routes and works on improving access

acquired through knowledge and skills that are particular to the area or crag. Thus, acquiring knowledge of the local crag, creating social bonds, knowing specific routes, and finding a place in with the rest of community can act to confer local status.

It is arguable that community is brought together by the love of climbing and the emotional, social and physical values it produces in climbers regardless of geographical distance.

4.2.2 Community-driven Characteristic

As discussed in the literature review (2.3.3.1) the birth of sport climbing in the late 1970s was met with fierce objection from traditional climbers who refused the use of bolts and considered them either litter or a form of cheating (Donnelly 1993; Lewis 2000; Bogardus 2012). However, after an era of conflict, traditional climbers started seeing value in some of the sport climbing practices and started adapting them.

Data collected from experienced climbers such as those who have completed first ascents, or who frequently volunteer with the Dorset Bolt Fund, has presented elements of community-mindedness and willingness to sacrifice time and energy to allow the rest of the climbing community to safely access climbing spaces. Which also revisits Cuskelly and O'Brine's (2013) suggestion that volunteering is essential to developing a sense of connectedness within sporting communities.

This is also suggested to be associated with elements of power and skill display and will be further explored later on. This is because, as Cox and Fulsaas (2003) and Donnely (1993) explain, by adding bolts, routes become safer regardless of their technical difficulty and the community gets to enjoy climbing safely. Dan for example, explains that bolts are only used for safety.

> *"To put the bolts in you're not putting them in to make them in real easy, you're just putting them in to make it climbable without people killing themselves all the time." (Dan)*

Similarly, Stephen added that the purpose of bolting less technical routes that are easily climbable with traditional gear is performed to encourage more people into the sport, but also to offer unexperienced climbers something enjoyable to 'play on' rather than constantly failing on harder routes:

> *"You know, we wanted beginners to be able to enjoy the same experience so we retro bolted, well, we were the first ones to put bolts in really easy routes in like the fallen slab." (Stephen)*

Participants discussed how bolting easy routes magnetises new climbers. Clive, who used to be a strict traditional climber, shared a story about a time he was asked by a climber with very high status in British Climbing the reason behind his act of bolting easy routes:

> *"When I was at home, in the evening, and someone phoned me up and said, 'Thank you for bolting that route [referring to a very easy route], Clive. My seven-year-old daughter has just led her first route,' I said, 'That's why,' and for once, [name]'s silent, you know. You know, good enough, that's, those are the pleasing moments, when people say, 'Yeah, we, we understand why you did it.'" (Clive)*

By drawing further on the testimonies of the participants, it is suggested that the joy that is found in one's repetition of an ascent exalts and humbles the strict traditional climber by the simplicity of a child's introduction to the community.

The community building aspect does not only entail the growth of the community, but also maintaining the community through processes by which members can address their grievances. It is valued when ethical grievances are put aside or get resolved and co-existence prospers as is evident in Johnathan's words:

> *"The fact that we've got this, um really good solid sport and trad agreement, I think that being ironed out really early was an example to the rest of the country of how they can both live together really well. I think it is a shining example." (Johnathan)*

Finally, during a chat with Ed, he said that since he lives in Portland (a popular climbing destination in Dorset) he has the duty to carry out all cleaning, clearing and bolting activities as Portland gets numerous climbers coming from all over the country to enjoy what the island has to offer:

> *"You know, we're ideally placed for doing that. People travelling here every weekend from London or wherever, aren't. They need something there, ready for them." (Ed)*

The examples above display an immense amount of community-mindedness of climbers, and it is not exclusive to those with first ascents, but also, those who are carrying the work of their predecessors by preserving these existing routes and working hard on maintaining access to these areas.

For rock climbers, especially veterans, the community has a unique bond. This is not only due to rock climbing's social values, but also due to the unique relationships between climbers where participants rely on trust, without which traditional and sport climbing would not be possible. This bond, in addition to the one with nature (Brymmer et al 2009; Humberstone 2010) fosters the creation of a motive through which climbers actively work towards the overall benefit of the community. This is evident in Clive, Johnathan, Tim and Dan's willingness to bolt easier routes in order to attract new climbers. They do this because it gives them feelings of joy and fulfilment. This was displayed by all participants with first ascents:

> *"Well, happy. I love people repeating them […] I actually love it. It's what it's for." (Dan)*

> *"That's—what they are there for, therefore, I'm pleased […] in my opinion, the whole reason for doing new route is so other people can enjoy it." (Brian)*

Thus, while the relationship between rock climbers and nature drives climbers to protect the natural world as discussed by Humberstone (2011) and Brymmer et al

(2009), however, it also appears that the socio-cultural dynamics play a role in sustainable practices as well, not only to protect nature but maybe more importantly to conserve climbing spaces for the next generation of climbers and therefore the community, which goes beyond geographical location.

This section has explored the socio-cultural dynamics within the rock climbing community highlighting the fact that rock climbing, although an individual sport, heavily relies on the presence of a facilitator, the belayer. This suggests that rock climbing is less individualised than other lifestyle sports such as surfing and skating as described by Rinehart (2000) and Wheaton (2004).

Further, this section suggests that the meaning of locality in rock climbing is not limited to geographical proximity, but that local status can be acquired through knowledge and skills that are particular to the area or the crag, echoing the work of Olive (2016) discusses in the context of surfing.

4.3 Negotiating Rock Climbing Territory

The British Mountaineering Council states that in the absence of rules related to rock climbing, a code of ethics has evolved since the 1890's (Thebmc.co.uk 1999). While the BMC suggests that some ethics are simple, such as what defines a successful ascent, some ethics are not. Most of the ethics concerns that arise amongst climbers are the ones related to rock alteration, such as chipping rock and bolting.

As discussed by Bogardus (2012) and Kiewa (2001), rock climbing spaces have undergone numerous socio-political changes. First, there was the introduction of new gear which was considered as cheating by traditional climbers, followed by the introduction of bolts which have caused what is known as the Bolt Wars (Donnely 1993; Bogardus 2012). As covered in the literature review, the bolt wars were acts of territoriality that manifested in a series of exclusionary acts taken by traditional climbers against sport climbing. This section will review conflict between sport and traditional climbers in the rock climbing community in Dorset in order to understand how territoriality operates in rock climbing. Additionally, this section will discuss the complexities of rock climbing ethics and will end with a conclusion that

discusses how territoriality operates in rock climbing.

4.3.1 Dorset's Territorial Bolt Wars

Similar to the reviewed literature, stories and films which discuss the bolt wars, the findings show that Dorset's bolt wars were less violent when compared with documentaries and rock climbing media.

This excerpt from a long conversation with Johnathan, one of the most active climbers from both disciplines in Dorset is testament of this:

> *"There was a huge amount of friction between me and people like Dan and [name of a climbing club]. I was basically at war with them and they were at war with me, […] all they wanted to do was go out and chop-chop bolts" (Johnathan)*

He explains that those climbers with strong traditional climbing ethics repeatedly chopped the bolts that he and other climbers had placed. And when asked for the reasoning behind that, Jonathan expressed his belief that traditional climbing activists were against sport climbing because of its potential to spread bolts on cliffs, especially around sea cliffs. This is because bolts on sea cliffs go against the ethics of the British rock climbing scene as expressed by Ebert and Robinson (2007), Howett (2004) and Hardwell (2007).

Further, rock climbing ethics would be interpreted differently by members of the community. Phil and Clive for example, who were very active traditional climbers, were involved in chopping and removing many bolts. They confirmed that they were against the spreading of bolts on sea cliffs and that is why they went out and chopped them. Clive argues that it is not the bolts themselves he is against, as he participates in sport climbing himself. He has been involved in bolting himself, and in fact he has retro-bolted[4] some of his own traditional routes:

> *"I'm being told- I'm anti-bolt. This is not true. I'm, uh, anti-anti bolting*

4 The act of inserting permanent protection in a route that was once deemed to be a traditional climbing one.

the wrong place [referring to seacliffs], and bolting, you know, um, without any agreement. And that's what, what they were up to […] Of course I have. Of course I have. I have been out there with a grinder and a hammer, and smack the fuckers flat, yeah. There's a point that we should have to say no." (Clive)

Instead, the quote above shows that Clive considers the acts of unsolicited bolting as an act of arrogance, undermining the agreements and the history of the crags. He explains that bolting without the consultation of veteran climbers, who have spent a considerable time developing these areas whilst respecting the local ethics and the legacy that climbers leave behind, is the trigger of territorial conflicts.

Similarly, John, who has been climbing for years and has developed many sport and traditional climbing routes expressed that he agrees with British climbing ethics where natural cliffs should not be bolted. He added that if someone would put a bolt in a seacliff crag in Swanage, he would go and take them out himself:

"I [pause] I would um, oppose putting bolts in there for sure. I'd probably take them out. I've got a big mechanical puller, I got it back in the day, and welded it all up. I'd probably go and take them out, or give the puller to someone else to do it, you know. I would-I would-I would oppose bolts. Yes. It's beautiful isn't it? It is. Trying to put bolts in Subliminal [a climbing area on Swanage], you know, why would you do that? Just cover it in gear, you know. It's great. Good rock" (John)

Notably, both John and Clive have displayed elements of power, as they have either admitted having gone out and chopped bolts or asserted that if bolts were to appear on seacliffs, they would go out and remove them. This concurs with Delaney (2005) suggestion in regards to localism and how territoriality is embedded in notions of control and power. This power or status in rock climbing is acquired through a long term exposure to rock climbing and an investment of effort, time, and money in order to accumulate capital that also increases climbers relative position in the field and subsequently their power within the hierarchy of this field

(Jenkins 2002; Beames and Telford 2013). As Cox and Fulsaas (2003) and Bogadus (2010) suggested, first ascents are the highest and most prestigious achievement in rock climbing.

However, John's opposition to bolts on sea cliffs is mainly influenced by the British climbing ethics and due to sport climbers acting against the Bolt Agreement they have shaped in 1993. As by Phil points out: "it was against the Good Bolt Agreement", which declares sea cliffs to be bolt free areas (Appendix 7.4).

Tristan expressed additional reasons for why sea cliffs should not be bolted: classic and atmospheric traditional climbing routes should not be bolted, since they have been climbed traditionally for a long time.

> *"I don't think the traditional places that were traditional for a very long time: The Ruckle, the Subliminal, Black Zone, all those places have got a-a healthy amount of lovely routes that are classics. That is atmospheric, of course, you shouldn't bolt those." (Tristan)*

Additionally, The interference with nature and traditional routes, in addition to ignoring local rules, is also discussed in Cox and Fulsaas (2003) and Bogardus (2012).

The newly-emerged sport climbing scene in Dorset has triggered territorial behaviours, such as the bending and chopping of bolts, and has similarly been described by the work of Lewis (2000) Wheaton (2004) and Bogadrus (2012). They argue that new technologies lead to the birth of new scenes or sub-activities that facilitate the divergence of lifestyle sports and subsequently create conflicts of territoriality within subcultures that use the same space, similar to surfing (Borden 2001; Booth 2003; Olivier 2012; Olive 2016).
However, this poses the question of whether the exclusion of bolts from sea cliff is an act of protection, or if it is for territorial reasons.
Building on the discussion in (4.4.4), most sea cliffs in Britain are traditional climbing areas. Since there is a correlation between climbers' experience and their ability to experience secluded areas such as sea cliffs, traditional climbers view

their discipline as superior as it requires cultural capital that is greater than that of a sport climber. This accumulated capital also increases their relative position in the field and subsequently their power within the hierarchy of the field, which gives them the authority to use their position of power (Telford and Beames 2016).
Further, John Long shows how traditional climbers see their form of climbing as superior, which in turn is a display of power towards sport climbers:

> [Traditional climbing is] more testing of the spirit… it also offers greater rewards in terms of intensity and lasting memories. Climbers who limit themselves strictly to clip-and-go routes deprive themselves of the finest that climbing can offer. (UIAA 2016 P.5)

The findings above suggest that veteran climbers oppose bolts on cliffs because they go against the local ethics and the bolt agreement, and because sport climbers have taken the liberty of bolting without consulting veteran climbers, who have been abiding by the ethics of British rock climbing and respecting the cultural heritage of rock climbing in Dorset.

> *"It's, it just destroys the whole climbing form, it destroys, destroys, it devalues the cultural heritage, and the efforts of all those people who've climbed, in that way - to smash a lot of bolts up a route." (Clive)*

However, by looking deeper into the responses and the discussion above, it becomes clear that the rock climbing community is hierarchical and that the relationships between its members is defined by power relations. Thus, by drawing on the knowledge that crowding is the main drive for territoriality within surf culture (Olivier 2010; Booth 2003), a comparison between rock climbing and surfing subcultures can be made.

When rock climbers install bolts where they are unwanted, traditional climbers start behaving territorially and chop them. Arguably, this is a response to sport climbers rebelliously inserting bolts in sea cliffs against the local ethics and the bolt agreement, which traditional climbers consider to be a threat to their existence on

the cliffs of Dorset, as well as to the longevity of their practice.

Elements of power display are present in the quote below by Clive:

> *I said, "For every bolt that's placed in one of my routes, I will cut 10 bolts, on Portland," and they-- and I guess someone was talking about retroing one of my bolts [sic], one of my routes, and he actually said, "For fuck's sake, don't do that. He means what he says," and he knew that, and I told him, I'd cut 10 bolts […] And they know, I have the time, the skills, the grinder, to go and do it" (Clive)*

This clearly shows that the veteran climbers, and especially the veteran traditional climbers, claim a position of authority in the local community. This authority is not only displayed by experience and locality but more importantly by power, the power to not only remove bolts where they do not belong i.e. sea cliffs, but in turn to punish the entire community by removing bolts on established sport climbing routes.

It is worth highlighting that the above discussions are not limited to academic research, but these discussions on ethics, guidelines and codes of practice have been present in a variety of different popular rock climbing media and rock climbing reports formed by bodies such as UIAA, BMC and Access Fund. Thus, it becomes of importance to highlight the similarities between what is discussed in the academic realm and what is discussed in niche and specialised literature. This underlines the value of non-academic, niche, subcultural media to academic research.

This section has offered an insight into the ways through which territoriality operates in rock climbing and how closely it is interlinked with the power relations and the displays of power and hierarchies between members of the community.

4.4 Governance

In the context of Dorset, the dispute labelled as Bolt Wars, was laid to rest due to

members of the rock climbing community coming together and forming a bolt agreement that set out clear guidelines on which sections of Dorset's sea cliffs and crags are subject to bolting and which ones are excluded from it. The process of achieving this agreement was facilitated through a series of meetings run by the British Mountaineering Council. While the BMC describes itself as the representative body that exists to protect the freedoms and promote the interests of rock climbers (BMC 2018), the fact that it has a role in handling conflict suggests that it claims governing authority over the British rock climbing community, which contradicts the self-governance characteristic of rock climbing as described by Donnelly (1993), Waterman and Waterman (1993) Cox and Fulsaas (2003), Howett (2004) and Bogardus (2012).

Additionally, the word 'ethics' in rock climbing refers to the moral principles that were established with the start of rock climbing, and have been revitalised simultaneously with the continuous redevelopment of rock climbing and the advancements of its styles, equipment and grades. Additionally, the codes of conduct detailed in the Dorset bolt agreement (1993) (Appendix 7.4) are a prime example of what rock climbing "ethics" are to the rock climbing community in Dorset. It also refers to the unwritten rules of rock climbing that have been passed on from one generation to the next, such as the ones detailed by Donnelly (1993), Bogardus (2012) and Cox and Fulsaas (2003) in section (2.3).

This section will focus on establishing a grounded understanding of the meaning of governance in rock climbing and will introduce the term "passive", which participants have used in description of the BMC as a governing body. It will also look at discussions with informants on ethics in order to critically understand the meaning of rock climbing ethics and the ways through which they impact the dynamics of the rock climbing community and the interplay between rock climbers and space.

4.4.1 Discussion of Rock Climbing Self Governance

Ethics have always been a subject of debate and conflict in rock climbing culture. However, due to the bolt wars and similar conflicts, especially ones that took place

during the rise in popularity of both sport climbing and social media, generic climbing etiquettes have been further laid out by mountaineering and rock climbing media, as well as "passive" governing bodies such as the BMC, UIAA and the Access Fund.

This section will examine matters that are considered to be controversial by the rock climbing community because they have been causing recurring debates on a variety of rock climbing media, as well as this research's participants.

4.4.1.1 The Use of Glue

The use of glue is not foreign to rock climbing, as most modern sport climbing bolts require glue to remain in situ. However, glue is also used to reinforce certain loose pieces of rock that may be crucial for a successful ascent or in order to preserve the original character and difficulty of a certain route. Discussions on the use of glue have emerged throughout the data collection phase and yet is not captured in previous literature unless in description of the process of bolting (Ebert and Robertson 2007; Cox and Fulsaas 2003).

Brian shared his views on the act of gluing, through which he believes that it is acceptable to reinforce loose holds with glue within "reason" (Brian). Similarly, Simon, said that he is comfortable with reinforcing loose rocks with glue but once a piece of rock falls off, then it should not be placed back. Clive, shares that he supports the concept of reinforcing loose holds with glue, but he disapproves of gluing extra holds on the rock to make a route easier.

> "*Gluing, extra holds on, again totally toss-toss idea. Gluing-Gluing a loose hold-on on a sport route, I've done it. I think-*
>
> *Yeah. The holds there, yeah. I've pulled up on it but, you know, it's a little bit loosen it will, in the end, pull off, and so, I have-- I have glued them up, glued them on. It's nothing I've done a lot of. […] because when you're bolting the route you're trying to create a nice product, uh, really and if it's going to be a better*

route with the hold in there, yeah, it's probably better off. A lot of the holds you see, they're loose, but then they'll never-- they're won't fall out till something takes them out." (Clive)

This suggests that the use of glue in rock climbing is acceptable as a medium to reinforce loose holds on routes that have been put up by veteran climbers, and ones that are evidently labelled as classic or have witnessed many repeats[5]. However, these reinforcements should be done in a way that does not interfere with the original character of the route, as detailed in the 1993 bolt agreement (BMC 1993) and as discussed by Bogardus (2012) and Cox and Fulsaas (2003). Further, if a hold falls off then it is to remain off, as this is the natural course of the rock climbing space, which is always undergoing change as explained by Thorpe and Rinehart (2013).

Additionally, it is worthy to note in the quote above that Clive yet again displays community-mindedness, as he believes that when he is preparing a new route, he is creating a "product" for the rest of the community to climb and enjoy. As discussed earlier, first ascensionists find fulfilment and joy through other climber's enjoyment of routes they have put up and worked hard to make as flowy as possible. However, since first ascents are also a form of power display then perhaps first ascensionists pay extra attention to such details in order to maintain high status and to magnify their route-creating reputation within other members of the community,

Further, there have been incidents in Dorset where climbers have glued extra holds on routes and they were later removed by members of the community, mainly ones with higher status, as gluing extra holds does not concur with the local ethics of the area. The removal of these glued holds is not questioned by the community due to the status that these individuals uphold within the rock climbing community. Their status provides them with authority and legitimacy that derive from their life-long involvement in the community, their experience, their belonging to the local

5 The classic label of routes is detailed in modern guide books. Routes termed as classic on guidebooks are labelled with either stars which range from 1 to 3 or by being Top 50. Additionally, the number of repeats of routes can be viewed on UKClimbing as many climbers log their ascents on the very popular platform.

territory, and the number of first ascents they have completed, which is described to be the most prestigious accomplishment in rock climbing (Cox and Fulsaas 2003). (See section 2.3.1.1)

4.4.1.2 Chipping/ Hold Manufacturing

The concept of hold chipping or manufacturing is perhaps the most controversial practice in the realm of rock climbing ethics. Throughout the history of rock climbing a lot of climbers have been condemned by the rest of the community for having chipped the rock face in order to make a route climbable or easier. This is evident in the work of Ramsey (2010) and Swan (2010), a variety of films, and popular climbing media, as well as the respondents' views.

The participants did not agree with chipping and consider it a form of cheating. However, they all clarified that the preparation of routes for first ascents always involves cleaning and clearing the route of loose rock, and they shared that the unintentional creation of holds during clearing routes of loose rock is acceptable and that cleaning routes is a must, which concurs with discussions from Lewis (2004), Ramsey (2010), Swan (2010), Ebert and Robertson (2007), in which cleaning routes is considered obligatory in order to create a safe climb for the rest of the community.

> *''when you're all cleaning up, inevitably you're going to create holds, or pull holds off" (Ed)*

> *"You have a duty to care of all people who are going to follow you, uh, so you should clean it properly and to the best of your ability on the day. And, so, it does come down to safety, but then that doesn't come down, doesn't overstep the mark or make it, bring it down to your level" (Tim)*

Tim denounces the act of hold creation by climbers that cannot complete an ascent due to difficulty. This was also touched upon by Dan, who recalled a few occasions

where he gave up his projects to other climbers since he was unable to do them and he refused to create a hold and cheat.

> *"-I-I had a couple of routes on Portland that I just couldn't do. I wasn't good enough, but I could've chipped an edge or chipped a pocket to make them doable, but I-I wasn't good enough, you know, to give them up to other people. They're better than me." (Dan)*

Further, it is arguable that rock climbing polices self-preservatory behaviour through which rock climbers work towards reducing friction between all disciplines in order to prevent conflict between climbers and land owners that could lead to the loss of access to rock. This is because gluing, bolting and chipping holds are actions that cause issues not only within the rock climbing community, but if they were to be exposed to the wider population it could result in access issues and jeopardise the longevity of rock climbing.

4.4.2 The British Mountaineering Council's Passive Governance

As described in the introduction, the BMC has been described as a facilitator and mediator in the absence of an unwanted governing body, deeming it the body that takes care of local ethics disputes and gives the rock climbing community some sort of legitimacy.

> *"These-these traditions--these area meetings are. Even if it's a whole thing about governance and running the BMC. It's-it's the nearest thing there is to a government's body. Cause there isn't a governing body to the climbing. You just do what you like. But someone has to have--set rules and it's like, it's the person--the BMC are the people who sort of control the local rules and ethics. And it--it gives it a voice and gives it some sort of legitimacy." (Brian)*

The bolt agreement, since its formation, in 1993, has been respected. Younger

informants have displayed compliance and have praised their predecessors for having reached an agreement that acknowledges and respects all disciplines in the area. Adam, who is one of the younger and less-experienced climbers in the area, displays frustration in the limitation that the bolt agreement imposes on his route-creating abilities.

> *Um, yes. I think in this area we've-we've got a ni-nice balance of-of ethics in relation to designate[d] trad zones and designate[d] sport zones. Um, it becomes a little bit blurred in certain areas around the Promenade and there's areas under um, Durlston Country Park that should be bolted 'cause there [are] some amazing lines, um, but, it can't be bolted unfortunately. (Adam)*

However, he acknowledges that this limitation is implemented due to an agreement that he values and therefore decides to leave the area where he had seen room for development untouched. This is because he respects the agreement and recognises it as the vehicle through which the Dorset rock climbing community have achieved co-existence.

Veteran climbers have shared their contentment with the BMC's role within the community:

> *"I like the passive governance of the BMC" (Simon)*

This was also voiced by Andrew:

> *"And the way to manage like that, with bolt free areas, but it can be negotiated and discussed at the BMC forum. I think it's a good way of doing it, it seems to work." (Andrew)*

It is plausible that the role of the BMC and the work they put towards the rock climbing community is similar to that of the Access Fund's in the United States (Access Fund 2019) where they both act as a medium between climbers and landowners, policy makers, national parks, and conservation organisations.

Therefore, as per active participant observation, the data from interviews and the BMC's website, it is arguable that the BMC is a passive national governing body that champions the interest of rock climbers. It is also a body that actively works towards raising climbers' awareness on appropriate equipment and countryside use by producing codes of practice, raising funding to improve and protect climber's access to rock, and resolving disputes.

5 Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

The findings of this research have provided valuable insights into the realm of rock climbing subculture. The ethnographic data collected over the course of 4 active field works, 22 interviews and with the aid of historical documents, have broadened the knowledge relating to the relationship between rock climbers and rock climbing practices and spaces. This section will recap on findings relating to each objective.

5.1.1 To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing

This study argued that rejection of the term “conquering” is not limited to participants at the extreme or professional end of the spectrum, but also by this research’s informants who do not consider rock climbing an extreme sport and do not identify themselves as athletes. It also suggested, that through interaction with rock, the natural world becomes a channel through which lifestyle sport participants experience a variety of positive feelings and emotions such as freedom, flow, escapism and simply, play. Thus their relationship with the natural world becomes the medium that allows participants to fulfil their hedonist and socialising needs. Further, this research discussed that lifestyle sports can have a positive effect on social and emotional health and that rock climbing is therapeutic as it is the vehicle through which participants get to experience positive emotions and sensations.

Rock climbing also provided climbers access to places that are isolated and inaccessible to non-climbers. Participants acknowledged their privilege for being able to experience these spots and consider this element of rock climbing valuable. There is a relationship between climbers’ experience, technical knowledge and skills and their ability to access more secluded and exclusive spaces. This is because, in order for climbers to experience these spots, for example, sea cliffs, they need to have sufficient knowledge, skills and technique to navigate their bodies in the given space. Thus, through the application of Bourdieu’s cultural capital (1986) and Dant and Wheaton’s (2007) application of Bourdieu’s capital into wind-surfing (2007), it becomes evident that there is a correlation between rock

climbers accumulated cultural capital and their ability to experience more secluded areas.

5.1.2 To explore the socio-cultural dynamics operating in the rock climbing community

The findings suggest that rock climbing although being an individual activity draws participants together and plays a vital part in their social lives. While this objective aimed to understand the socio-dynamics within the rock climbing community, the findings highlighted that rock climbing is an individual sport despite requiring the presence of a belayer. The belayer plays a facilitator role, which indicates that rock climbing is less indvidualised than other lifestyle sports such as surfing and skating. Additionally, this research discussed that belaying forms a trusting connection between the climber and the belayer.

Further, the thesis suggested that the meaning of locality in rock climbing, is not limited to geographical proximity but that local status can be acquired through the development of knowledge and skills that are particular to the area or the crag and through the formation of bonds and friendships with other members of the community regardless of location.

This research also highlighted climbers' drive towards the community. Climbers with first ascents for example, have shown satisfaction and joy in others repeating their ascents, expressing that this is why these routes exist in the first place. Informants have expressed community-mindedness in a variety of ways as detailed in (4.2.2), which suggests that the relationship between rock climbers and the natural world discussed by Humberstone (2011) and Brymer et al (2009) does not only drive climbers to protect the natural world and the longevity of their practice, but it also drives them to conserve nature for the next generation and to maintain the venues that their community attends for relaxation, escapism, leisure and self-formation.

5.1.3 To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing

This thesis acknowledged that the bolt wars were acts of territoriality which were manifested in a series of battles between sport and traditional climbers for the control of seacliffs. It also compares the bolt wars to the notion of localism in surfing culture. The findings suggest the rock climbing community is hierarchical and that the relationships between its members are also defined by power relations.

Hence, the research suggests that veteran climbers and especially veteran traditional climbers claim a position of authority in climbing communities. It also proposes that this authority is a display of power over the community and the territory. This power or status in rock climbing is arguably acquired by their climbing achievements, as Cox and Fulsaas (2003) and Bogadus (2010) suggested; and by the accumulation of capital that allows them to exert their authority and power over the rest of the community.

Finally, this study underlines the value of non-academic niche subcultural media to academic ethnographic research, as discussions in regards to bolt wars, ethics, guidelines and codes of practice are present in a variety of different popular rock climbing media.

5.1.4 To understand governance in rock climbing

The findings clarified that rock modification is forbidden and is highly frowned upon. However, modification with the use of glue is acceptable when used in preservatory way or to reinstate safety. For example, when a hold is loose, it is widely acceptable for climbers to reinforce it with glue. Yet, these reinforcements should be done in a way that does not interfere with the original character of the route, as detailed in the 1993 bolt agreement (BMC 1993).

Further, the thesis argues that the ways through which the rock climbing community polices its members is a self-preservatory behaviour through which rock climbers work towards reducing friction between all disciplines in order to prevent conflict between climbers and land owners. This is because conflict between land owners and rock climbers could result in loss of access to rock.

Finally, the role of the British Mountaineering Council and the work they put towards the rock climbing community is proposed to be a passive governing body for rock climbing in the United Kingdom. A passive governing body that champions the interest of rock climbers. It is also a body that actively works towards raising climbers' awareness on appropriate equipment and countryside use, producing codes of practice, raising funding to improve and protect climber's access to rock and resolving dispute.

5.2 Limitations

Although the findings of this research provide a valuable and appropriate understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of the rock climbing community in Dorset, there are limitations to this research and should be addressed.

Firstly, the methodological approach of this study itself can be a limitation. Ethnographic research in the context of sport has emerged as a valuable for the study of sporting cultures (Sands 2002). The researcher was keen to conduct an ethnographic piece of research. However, due to the time limitations, the researcher conducted qualitative research that employed elements that are typically associated with ethnography. In this way the study adopts ethnographic approaches such as immersion and observation. Brewer (2000) suggests that during observation, participants might present ideal behaviour or tell the researcher what they assume she would like them to say.

Furthermore, the bias resulting from the researcher's climbing status is recognised and acknowledged. However, the researcher's views and opinions influence is inevitable within the research. In many ways, the researcher is a rock climbing enthusiast and his belonging to the climbing community has made him more careful and critical about the way he views, analyses and reflects on what he was able to see of socio-cultural aspects of the community. Through regular reflection based on a review of existing literature and a justification of the methodological stance of this thesis, the researcher developed an approach to an aspect of his life he has a strong affiliation with and became not only an insider to rock climbing but a critical observer.

Finally, this study focuses primarily on the era between 1970s and the 1990s when the majority of rock climbers were males, which is representative of the imbalance of gender in rock climbing population back then, however, it is not representative of the contemporary rock climbing community.

5.3 Future Directions

By drawing on this research's findings it is clear that there is a lack of research into the realm of rock climbing when it comes to communities as a collective rather than individuals.

This research understands the value of the relationship between rock climbers and belayers and the researcher suggests that a study that aims to comprehend the relationship mentioned above further would be a great place to start. The researcher also believes that a more thorough application of Bourdieu's capital should be conducted into rock climbing specifically with attention to the role of the belayer in order to fully understand where the belayer stands in terms of capital and understand the social and symbolic capital that lies within the ability to belay.

This thesis displays a narrative of behavioural changes that have taken place during the bolt wars, arguably a transitional period within rock climbing subculture. Since rock climbing is growing in popularity and the number of participants is rising, it could lead to overcrowding at crags. Thus it is recommended that the climbing community and "passive" governing bodies should work closely with bodies such as IFSC and BMC (The national governing body for indoor competition climbing) towards the formation of new frameworks in order to prevent conflicts in the future.

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7. Appendices

7.1. Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

The Scoiocultural Practices of the Dorset Rock Climbing Community Towards the Local Environment; an Ethnography

You are being invited to partake in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, my name is Yazan Abbas and you can find my contact details below.

Yazan Abbas, M.Res candidate, Bournemouth University.

yabbas@bournemouth.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the project?

The background, aim and duration of the project

Research on lifestyle sports such as skateboarding, surfing, mountain biking and rock climbing has started taking shape in the last 20 years, literature has shown that there is a gap in lifestyle sports literature. Literature concerning rock climbing specifically in terms of understanding how rock climbing communities interact with the natural and urban spaces they occupy, how members of the climbing communities interact with each other.

Aim:

To explore the relationship between climbers and the environments they occupy.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as a member of the Dorset rock climbing community. I believe that you are an ideal member of the climbing community that I could learn from by visiting climbing crags with, chatting with and potentially interviewing.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and refusal to agree to participate will involve no penalty or disapproval. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a **Consent form**). You can withdraw at any time, up to when transcripts are written up and anonymised so that your identity cannot be determined. If you decided to withdraw, you do not have to give a reason.

What would taking part involve?

This research involves two phases over a period of 4 months:

Phase A:

This research will involve myself as a researcher being present at the crag or the climbing centre around yourself in one or more of your regular climbing outings or indoor sessions, on which, I will be climbing with you or nearby you, sat chatting with you, possibly belaying you and occasionally taking notes.

Please note that my research does not require you to climb in anyway.

Phase B:

Your role in this research **might** involve taking part in an interview that will last for up to one hours. The location of the interview will be arranged according to your convenience.

The interview will be recorded in audio format for data gathering purposes, will be transcribed and will not be broadcasted or shared with anyone outside the research group (Myself, supervisors and markers). The data that is collected will be securely stored for five years with a university password.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

As you are not required to climb to take part in this project, there are not any risks associated with the project.

This project is interested in the interaction between climbers in different spaces and not climbing itself.

What are the advantages of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the interview, it is hoped that this work will provide a useful insight into the understanding of the dynamics of the rock climbing community in Dorset.

Will I be recorded?

Yes, data from phase A will be collected in the form of notes and data from phase B will be audio recorded and stored securely

Would my taking part in this project be confidential?

Yes, all collected data will be kept strictly confidential. All names and identifying features of the individuals that take part will be disguised and anonymised. And you will not be identified in any reports or publications. The data will be used for analysis and transcription purposes only.

The results of this research will be published in academic output over the next 5 years (for example, journal articles, book chapters and conference papers). Published outputs will be made available via the academic open access system.

Contact for further information

Researcher:

Yazan Abbas, M.Res candidate, Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University.

yabbas@bournemouth.ac.uk , Tel: 07446900602

Complaints

Should you want to make a complaint about this research project, please contact:

Dr Katherine King, Senior Lecturer and project supervisor, Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University, kingk@bournemouth.ac.uk

Dr Jayne Caudwell, Associate Professor and project supervisor, Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University, jcaudwell@bournemouth.ac.u

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet.

7.2. Consent Form

Participant Agreement Form

Full title of project: The Socio-cultural Practices of Dorset's Rock Climbing Community Towards the Local Environment

Name, position and contact details of researcher:

Yazan Abbas/M.Res candidate, yabbas@bournemouth.ac.uk

Name, position and contact details of supervisor:

Dr Jayne Caudwell/Associate Professor, jcaudwell@bournemouth.ac.uk

Dr Katherine King/Senior Lecturer in Leisure Cultures, Kingk@bournemouth.ac.uk

	Please Tick Here
I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary.	
I understand that I am free to withdraw up to the point where the data are processed and become anonymous, so my identity cannot be determined.	
During the task or experiment, I am free to withdraw without giving reason and without there being any negative consequences.	
Should I not wish to answer any particular question(s), complete a test or give a sample, I am free to decline	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with	

the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the outputs that result from the research.	
I understand taking part in the research will include being recorded (audio) but that these recordings will only be made accessible to members of the research team	
I agree to take part in the above research project.	

_____ _____
_____

Name of Participant Date Signature

_____ _____
_____

Name of Researcher Date Signature

This form should be signed and dated by all parties after the participant receives a copy of the participant information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated participant agreement form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

7.3. Interview Schedule

Questions	Literature	Objectives
Warm up/Opening		
How and when did you start? When was your first time on Dorset's rock? Talk me through one of your most memorable climbing experiences in Dorset. When did you start being active in the scene in Dorset? And why?		To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing
History		
Can you tell me about your role in the Climbing scene in Dorset? Your bolting experience? Do you think some areas should not be bolted? (why) Did you take part in the meeting in which bolting and trad areas were decided? In Swanage 1993 First ascents? What style did you approach your first ascents How do you feel when people repeat your ascents		To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing. To understand governance in rock climbing
Connection with nature		

What dozmbing mean to you? Rock climbers have this intimate connection with the natural world, could you tell me about your connection with nature? For some its conquering some it is a challenge, dance, poetry etc Feelings, emotions and sensations? Escapism? Release? Freedom? Flow?	Connection with the natural world Impact of the relationship with the natural world	To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing.
Impact on nature		
Our connection with nature has an impact on us and on nature as well: How can the Dorset community limit its negative impact on Dorset's rock? Does this conflict with the concept of bolting? What are your thoughts on holds-chipping/manufacturing? Have you ever chipped? When is it okay to alter the rock face?	Problematic climbing space Territoriality Governance Coexistence	To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing.
Response		

Have you told other climbers off for inappropriate use of bolts? Or vice versa.. Do you think that we could keep the bolts longer by introducing a crag-specific code of practice? Any ideas on how we can introduce ways to make climbing more eco-friendly? Thoughts on BMC Crag Code and Groups of Climbers? Suggestions on improving the Bolt Fund	Territoriality Governance Impact of the relationship with nature	To explore the relationship between climbers and rock climbing To identify how territoriality operates in rock climbing. To understand governance in rock climbing

7.4 Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Date	Place	Duration	Gender	Age	Climbing Credentials
Darren	15/11/2017	Red Spider Climbing Centre	1:10:17	M	28	Manages a climbing wall, E6 ,8A
Tom	16/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	44:03	M	28	Runs a climbing blog, Helps with the Bolt Fund) 8a, E2
Andrew	16/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	37:23	M	44	7c, E5 Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
Brian	20/11/2017	My Flat	1:11:06	M	46	Runs the Dorset Bolt Fund, 7B, E3
Emily	24/11/2017	Her parents' conservatory	38:59	F	55	Runs a climbing shoe resoling business 7b+, E3

Tim	24/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	45:06	M	49	8a+, E5 Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
Sophie	27/11/2017	My Flat	30:20	F	25	7a, Helps running a climbing blog and the bolt fund
Jerome	27/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	38:06	M	37	Outdoor instructor, Coast Steering, Climbing, mountaineering) E5, 8A+
Sam	28/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	45:47	M	44	Runs outdoor activity centers,
Karen	28/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	36:03	F	29	Sponsored climber
Simon	29/11/2017	His Conservatory	1:21:38	M	65	Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience Written many articles, one of which is cited in this thesis
Ed	29/11/2017	His living room	44;41	M	61	Bolt fund, E2,7a_
Carol	29/11/2017	Her Caravan in a farm	32:02	F	34	7b/E4 Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
John	30/11/2017	Project Climbing Centre	1:06;14	M	55	E5, 7C Extensive climbing knowledge, climbing author and helps scientists with access
Dan	01/12/2017	Facebook video Call	50:10	M	53	E5, 7b+

		(my living room)				Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
Adam	05/12/2017	Project Climbing Centre	1:02:32	M	35	E7, 8a Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
James	06/12/2017	His van near Portsmuth	39:21	M	28	E5, 8a+ Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
Clive	12/12/2017	His living room	1:41:33	M	66	E4, 7a Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience BMC ex president
Tristan	18/12/2017	Project Climbing Centre	43:42	M	45	E3, 7b Life-Long Climbing and bolting experience
Stephen	T15/12/2017	Project Climbing Centre	53:55	M	51	E7, 8a
Jonathan	12/12/2017	Skype	1:15:36	M		E8,8b
Phil	13/12/2017	Skype	1:11:20	M	65	E4, 6c+ Life-Long Climbing experience

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SOUTH WEST & SOUTHERN AREA COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 93rd Business Meeting held on Saturday 27th March 1993 at the Mowlem Institute Theatre, Swanage.

Present: Mike Rosser, Chairman
Bill Wright, Access Officer
John Willson, Climber's Club
Tony Bird, Gloucestershire MC
Nigel Coe, Wessex MC and CC
Pamela Holt, Pinnacle Club
Tim Dunsby, Wessex MC
Scott Titt, Wessex MC
Catherine Styles
Damien Cook
Jonathan Cook
Pete Oxley

The Chairman indicated that he would like to make as quick progress as possible on items 1 to 7 in order to allow plenty of discussion time for item 8.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dick Hanson, Richard Scantlebury, Murray Hodgson and Diana Oakley.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd November 1992 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the following amendments: Tina Dunsby should have read Tim Dunsby (members present); reference to Bill Wright's investigating rockfall at Wintour's Leap should be deleted.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) Cornwall - Bill Wright had received letters from Rowland Edwards concerning environmental problems in West Penwith. He suggested that these should be dealt with at the June meeting in Penzance. Pam Holt enquired whether the free parking for climbers still applied at Land's End. It was confirmed that they did.

(b) Bill Wright had received an agitated letter from the Longleat Estate Manager (Cheddar) concerning the incident on 14th February in which a tourist had been hit by a rock possibly dislodged by climbers on Acid Rock. A meeting to discuss this further had been arranged for Monday 29th March. It was important to establish the bolt lower-offs as soon as possible. Pam Holt suggested that cliff top goats could also be responsible for precipitating loose matter.

(c) Pete Oxley enquired about BMC bolt funding. Bill Wright explained that it was only for lower-off points necessitated by access problems.

4/5 **AREA MATTERS AND ACCESS**

(a) Dancing Ledge, Swanage - Bill Wright had had a meeting with The National Trust and local user ODP centres. The Trust were charging the centres for parking and toilet facilities and restricting the usage to five centres on weekdays only and on a rota basis at busy periods. Bona fide climbers would be able to continue activities without let or hindrance except on seven banned routes (Peter Oxley thought it might be fewer). Pete Oxley asked Bill Wright about BMC financial support for bolt belays here. It was felt that the BMC's involvement would help to 'legitimise' climbing in the Trust's eyes. This was not ruled out.

(b) Go Wall & Wintour's Leap - Bill Wright reported that he and John Willson had had a successful meeting with Anthony Watkins (landowner) who had agreed to our 'optimum' proposal; tennis court finishes to be off limits (bolt lower-offs to be established on Surrealist), while the woodland finishes (Hyena Cage to Cheetah) would be permitted with egress to the Offa's Dyke path via a one-way gate. Mr Watkins intended to fence off the whole wooded area and did not require an additional cliff top fence. Bill Wright suggested that the BMC should offer to pay for the gate.

(c) Portland - Bill Wright asked if there had been any reports of problems with the Heritage Coast Officer and asked that people should phone him if any arose. Scott Titt explained that there were some genuine bird and sea-lavenda

conservation issues, but it was the HCO's job to resolve conflicts of interest between these and tourist and leisure activities, not just to curtail the latter.

6. **CLIMBING WALLS**

A draft of strategy had been prepared and would be ready for the next meeting.

7. **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

(a) The Sports Council Grant Advisory Panel had agreed to fund the BMC for a Development Officer with responsibility for climbing walls, competitions and youth.

(b) Membership has risen by 500 to around 8,000.

(c) The main discussion at the last meeting had concerned incorporation of the BMC as a limited liability company. The principle problem had been relationship with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

(d) The accounts showed an unusually healthy surplus of about £48,500.

(e) The three nominations made by our Committee at our January meeting for Vice Presidents had been adopted and would be formally proposed at the AGM.

(f) Competitions - It was proposed that UK should be substituted for GB.

(g) There were negligible rises in the subscriptions.

(h) The Corporate Plan for submission to the Sports Council for the next three-year grant would be available for our discussion in June.

(i) Next meeting preceding the AGM at Ullswater on 23rd April.

7. **BOLTS POLICY - SOUTH DEVON & DORSET**

The comprehensive report prepared by Nigel Coe was widely appreciated. This included proposals by Pete Oxley concerning bolting and retro-bolting at Portland and Swanage. Pete made clear that while gear-point for gear-point was a guiding principle in retro-bolting, it was his intention that sport climbs should be such and not hybrids. This was generally accepted provided that the first ascender's permission was sought if possible.

(a) Portland - Bolting and retro-bolting acceptable. However, the name-painting at the route starts was disapproved.

(b) Durdle Door & Dungy Head - Fully bolted - accepted.

(c) Lulworth Cove & St Aldelm's Head - To remain bolt-free except for the already bolted Stair Hole roofs.

(d) Winspit Quarry - Fully retro-bolted - accepted.

(e) Seacombe Area - bolt-free.

(f) Hedbury Quarry Area - Fully retro-bolted - accepted.

(g) Smokey Hole Area - bolt-free.

(h) Dancing Ledge - Fully retro-bolted.

(i) Guillemot & Cormorant Ledges - bolt-free.

(j) Blacker's Hole West - bolt-free, except for a couple of belays, which need renewal.

(k) Blacker's Hole Cave Area & Quarry - Fully retro-bolted - accepted.

(l) Blacker's Hole East - Bolt-free, except for main belays only on some of the hard classics. Pete agreed to debolt Dose of the Malhams.

(m) Fisherman's Ledge Main Area & Connor Cove - Bolt-free.

(n) Fisherman's Ledge Cave Area - Fully retro-bolted except Mine Cathedral.

(o) The Promenade proved the most contentious area. It was agreed that selected routes from Benny to Romu could be retro-bolted.

(p) Cattle Troughs & Amphitheatre Ledge, Boulder Ruckle, Subliminal and Traverse of the Gods - all bolt-free.

The question of access to the Tilly Whim Walls was also touched on. Nigel Coe and Scott Titt both felt strongly that a successful negotiation on this was most unlikely, and could instead draw attention to our use of other areas where there were no formal agreements, but climbing was unofficially tolerated. Bill Wright was willing to attend a general meeting of landowners to see if anything could be achieved.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(a) During the meeting a phone message was received from Nick White offering his apologies and urgently requesting that bolt issues in South Devon were not discussed in his absence. The validity of this request was fully accepted,

and in any case no time was available. It was suggested that he be consulted whether he would like this put on the agenda for the June meeting in Penzance, or whether waiting for the Exeter meeting in October would delay his guidebook schedule unduly.

(b) Pete Oxley asked whether his staple bolts could be tested by the BMC's Technical Committee. Bill Wright replied that they certainly could.

(c) Scott Titt asked to be on the mailing list.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12th June 1993 at 7.00pm (AGM followed by Business Meeting) at Penzance.

2nd October 1993 at 7.00pm at The Ship, Chudleigh.

The meeting closed at 11.00pm.

7th April 1993
Ref: SWSMTG.MAR