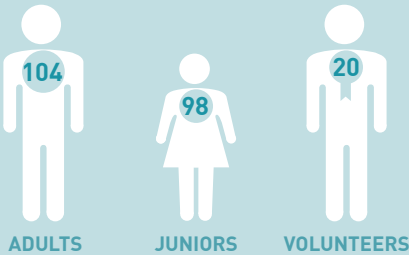


SOCIAL COHESION AND EXCLUSION

1 IN 3 PEOPLE (32%)

STATE THEY HAVE ONLY ONE OR TWO CLOSE FRIENDS. SPORTS CLUBS CAN HELP TO CREATE NEW SOCIAL CIRCLES; THE AVERAGE SPORTS CLUB HAS A MEMBERSHIP OF



7 IN TEN PEOPLE (71%) SAY THE PERFORMANCE OF TEAM GB AFFECTS THEIR NATIONAL PRIDE



WHILST 6 IN 10 (58%) PEOPLE STATE THEY TAKE PRIDE IN BRITISH SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS MORE GENERALLY

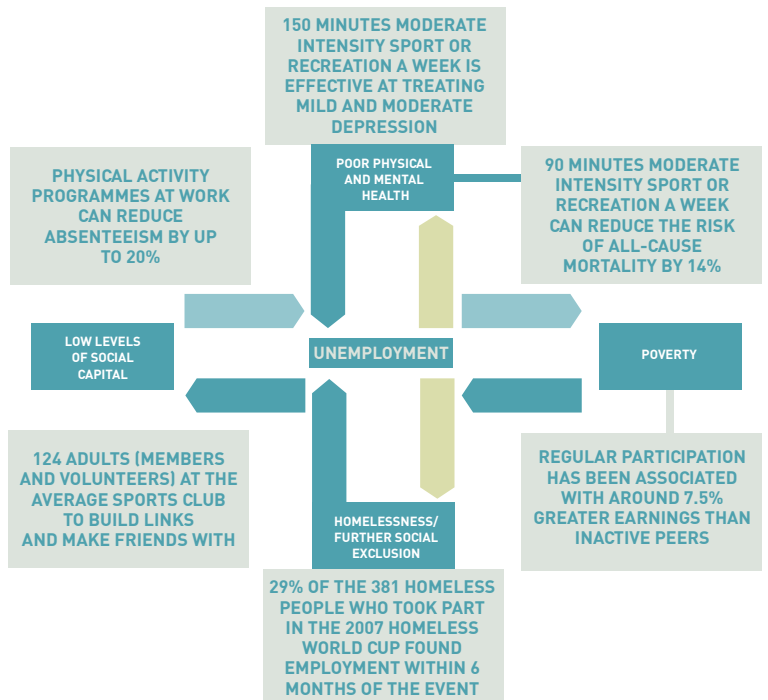
THE ENGLISH PUBLIC THINK THAT PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS CAN BE ENCOURAGED TO MIX MORE BY:

1. GOING TO WORK/SCHOOL/COLLEGE TOGETHER (40%)
2. SHARING HOBBIES AND GOING TO SPORTS CLUBS (29%)
3. SOCIAL EVENTS OUTSIDE WORK/SCHOOL/COLLEGE (24%)
4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS (22%)
5. USING THE SAME LEISURE CENTRES/SPORTS FACILITIES (20%)

THOSE LIVING IN THE POOREST AREAS OF ENGLAND DIE ON AVERAGE 7 YEARS EARLIER THAN THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE RICHEST AREAS - REGULAR PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND RECREATION CAN HELP TO INCREASE LIFE EXPECTANCY.



ONE STUDY FOUND THAT 90 MINUTES OF MODERATE INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY A WEEK RESULTED IN A THREE YEAR INCREASE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY WHEN COMPARED TO INACTIVE COUNTERPARTS





PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

INTRODUCTION

Social cohesion refers to the bonds that bring society together and is a deliberately broad title for this section in order to focus on the role of sport and recreation with regards to social inclusion and exclusion and in relation to social capital. An independent report submitted to the Government in 2006 outlines the dimensions of social cohesion which should be understood as being interrelated but not synonymous with each other. It proposes that the base for social cohesion is formed from material conditions such as employment, income, health, education and housing, which facilitate good relations between and within communities. It is these factors that form the social fabric of society and indicate social progress. On top of this base comes social order, tolerance and safety, creating a harmonious society; positive interactions and networks between individuals and communities, thus offering support, information and trust; and social equality with regards to access to opportunities or material circumstances (Parkinson et al., 2006).

As the millennium approached and social theorists took stock of the world there was a growing concern that technological developments and globalisation were leading to increasing individualisation and that this would erode social cohesion (see de Beer and Foster, 2009; Putnam, 2000; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). More recently, the global recession, mounting unemployment, increased immigration, the apparent absence of opportunities for young people and their disengagement from society have ensured that social cohesion has remained on the policy agenda. Indeed, the Coalition Government's Big Society programme is aimed at bringing people in society together and empowering them, and community and voluntary organisations – such as sports clubs – are at the forefront of this effort. This isn't surprising given that after going to work/school/college together (40%), sharing hobbies and going to sports clubs (29%) was the most frequent public response for how people from different backgrounds could be encouraged to mix more (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011).

Data from the latest Citizenship Survey suggests that three quarters of people (76%) felt a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and local area but only half (50%) felt that many of the people in their neighbourhood could be trusted and four in ten people (38%) are worried about being a victim of crime (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011), suggesting that social cohesion could be stronger in the UK.

In a literature review of the evidence for how leisure time physical activity contributes to community development, or social cohesion, Long and Sanderson (2001) detail the most commonly noted benefits as being: enhanced confidence and self-esteem, empowering disadvantaged groups, improving the capacity of the community to take initiatives, reduction in crime, vandalism and delinquency, increased social integration and co-operation, encouraging pride in the community, improving employment prospects, generating employment and income, increasing productivity through a fit and healthy workforce, improving health, and improving the environment. These improvements are difficult to isolate and formally quantify and are often neglected by project evaluations, so, as a result, much of the relevant literature is theoretical only. However, other chapters in this review evidence how sport and recreation can contribute to better physical and mental health, positively influence education and employment and contribute to reducing antisocial behaviour and crime – all factors that contribute to social cohesion.

Researching the contribution of sport and recreation to social cohesion is fraught with methodological difficulties given the differences in the definitions of social cohesion, the conceptual nature of the parameters that need measuring and problems comparing research from other countries where societies operate differently. For example, a Japanese study compares the effect on social capital of two types of sports clubs that are found in Japan: comprehensive and traditional community sports clubs. Comprehensive clubs include non-sporting activities and have a broad age range for members whilst traditional clubs are single sports focused and more inclusive, making members more alike. The former type of club had significantly higher aspects of social capital (Okayasu, Kawahara and Nogawa, 2010). Whilst these findings suggest a positive relationship of some degree, it is difficult to relate them to sports clubs in the UK, which are different in structure.

The United Nations Sport Development for Peace International Working Group (2008) produced a policy document on harnessing sport for development and peace. It recommends that sport is included in government strategies as a way of addressing the challenges faced by excluded populations and to prevent conflict arising as a result of these. The report highlights that sport can be used to build relationships, connect individuals to communities, act as a communications platform and create a space for dialogue, but that there is also the possibility for sport to be used to promote conflict through hooliganism or terrorism. Ultimately, however, the report concludes that, *“when Sport for Development and Peace initiatives are well-designed, holistic and sustained they can help marginalised people to acquire the skills and self-confidence needed to both overcome personal barriers and advocate for the elimination of structural barriers to their full participation in community life”* (Sport Development for Peace International Working Group, 2008, p.213).

SPORT AND RECREATION CLUBS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital⁵⁹ is essentially the beneficial result of networks and relationships; it is the totality of actual and virtual resources accrued from having a resilient network of relationships that are mutual and positive and of differing extents of formality. Key components of social capital are trust, reciprocity and engagement and there are different types of social capital with respect to the relationships formed. Bonding social capital provides a sense of belonging and occurs with family and friends to help ease daily life; bridging social capital links with those who are outside of our usual circle and can help to progress opportunities; and linking social capital occurs with people in positions of power, which is useful for accessing support from formal institutions. The more cross cutting bonds that exist between different individuals in society, and the stronger these bonds are, the more cohesive a society will be. These various relationships are able to translate into opportunities and support for people, therefore a lack of social capital results not only in a lack of opportunities but also in the modern day malaise: loneliness. Nearly half (45%) of people aged 75 and over think of the television as their main form of company whilst 6% of all adults say that they have no close friends and a further 32% state they have only one or two close friends (Cabinet Office, 2010). It is important to note that typically social capital is accrued in an unconscious way and is not a motivating factor in individuals' actions; it will also have different benefits and impacts on different people.

Putnam (1995, 2000) is renowned for his work exploring social capital in America. He argues that through face to face interactions with people from a diversity of backgrounds, trust is established in society. Putnam suggests that civil and social organisations such as sports clubs play a key role in creating associations and so are important for creating social capital precisely because they are a form of what Putnam terms associational life – a way of committing to social cooperation and public wellbeing. In one of his most famous papers, *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (1995), he hypothesises that social capital is declining in America, as evidenced by declining membership in voluntary organisations and clubs. In particular, Putnam cites the rising number of Americans participating in bowling alongside a decline in bowling club membership to show increasing individualisation as people must be bowling alone.

⁵⁹ Social capital has historically been widely theorised by Bourdieu who describes it as, "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.119).

In response to Putnam's 1995 paper, Hall (1999) examined the situation in Britain, claiming that membership of voluntary or associational organisations, including sports clubs, was high in Britain and equivalent social erosion was not occurring here, although social trust was declining (from 44% to 30% between 1990 and 1995) as a result of changing values, government policies and social integration. However, there are significant gaps in Hall's analysis, which, for example, focuses on participation only amongst employed members of society. Grenier and Wright (2001) argue from a critical review of Hall's analysis that in fact Britain may well have experienced a similar decline in social capital as depicted in America by Putnam, with participation concentrated in the more affluent social classes and gulfs between minority ethnic groups and the majority population in Britain largely being overlooked.

Using European data, Delaney and Keaney (2005) examined the relationship between sports club membership in the UK and social capital. They found that membership has an equivalent effect on life satisfaction and happiness as moving up approximately one and a half household income categories – around £3,600 – and that sports club members in the UK are more likely than non-members to be politically engaged, meet socially with friends and have trust in civil institutions, all indicators of social capital. Similarly, research utilising data from 1,589,266 American adults and their self-reported life satisfaction found that life satisfaction is greater amongst those who participate in physical activity and that these benefits come from an initial joy during participation in the activity and from the longer term health benefits (Huang and Humphreys, 2012). The average sports club has a membership of 104 adults and 98 juniors (Sport and Recreation Alliance, 2011), but networks extend beyond the members alone to parents and supporters of other participants and volunteers at the club – the average club has 20 volunteers (Ibid).

Unlike many other forms of volunteering in a sports club, many volunteers will not only volunteer to support other people but will also work alongside other volunteers and in a number of roles, creating additional opportunities for interaction and the acquisition of social capital.

There is not enough research evidence into the relationship between sports club membership and social capital to understand causality fully. Coalter (2007b), for example, concludes that the contribution of sports clubs to social capital and the formation of social capital in sports clubs is unclear. Similarly, Delaney and Keaney (2005) could not establish whether sports club membership made individuals more trusting or if this higher level of trust made someone more inclined to be a member of a sports club. Seippel (2006), on the other hand, found that membership in a Norwegian sports club involved social capital that was conducive to trust and political commitment, however it is difficult to compare Seippel's findings given that Norway is very different from the UK socioeconomically and this will significantly influence social cohesion, trust in society and political commitment. It has been argued that Scandinavian countries have particularly high levels of social capital as a result of high degrees of economic equality, low levels of corruption and strong welfare system (Rothstein and Stolle, 2003).

**THE AVERAGE SPORTS CLUB
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ADULTS AND 98 JUNIORS**

This may partly explain Seippel's finding that membership of a sports club has less impact on social capital than membership of other voluntary organisations, and that the impact was greatest when individuals had memberships in additional organisations – a greater diversity of relationships. A similar finding was made by Stolle (1998) when looking at voluntary associations in Germany and Sweden, where more diverse and more engaged organisations were associated with people who were more trusting.

VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Volunteering can play an important role in creating new networks and relationships for people by bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds whose paths may never otherwise have crossed and creating trust and reciprocity between them. The life experience, confidence and knowledge gained through volunteering opportunities can also make it easier for people to access any resources and opportunities that may come their way. There are more volunteers in sport and recreation than any other sector (Office of the Third Sector, 2007): between April and December 2010, 23.7% of adults in England had volunteered and 19.8% of these volunteered in sport (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2011). The economic value of sports volunteering in England is estimated to be just under £2 billion a year⁶⁰ – this is what it would cost to employ full time workers to carry out the work of sports volunteers, based on the median hourly wage.

Harvey, Lévesque and Donnelly (2007) examined a sample of 271 Canadian sports volunteers to establish the relationship between social capital and volunteer involvement. Social capital was measured through access to people with different social statuses or occupations and the resources available to an individual through their social networks. Volunteer involvement was measured through the number of months in the previous year in which the participant had volunteered, and the average duration of volunteer involvement per month during the previous year and over their lifetime. Whilst it was not possible for the researchers to establish causality, they found that long term volunteer involvement was related to social capital as relationships and networks needed time to develop and accumulate. Interestingly, relationships accumulated over time were less diverse than those from short term volunteer involvement, but were also stronger and associated with greater resources.

⁶⁰ Based on calculations from data within NCVO (2010) *The UK Civil Society Almanac 2010*.

Volunteering also allows for the acquisition of skills that can be reinvested in society (see the chapter on education and employment for more details); an obvious example within sport and recreation is coaching qualifications but all the traditional skill acquisition associated with volunteering also remains applicable. It is widely believed that volunteering can lead to community engagement and greater citizenship, embodied by the Conservative Government's National Citizen Service initiative. This scheme, in its early stages at present, aims to ensure that all 16 year olds take part in a two month summer programme involving volunteering and will be delivered by independent charities, social enterprises and businesses. Noting a growing emphasis on the value of volunteering for young people, Kay and Bradbury (2009) focused on youth sports volunteers in the Step into Sport Volunteer Training Programme to examine the impact on personal and skill development and community involvement. The programme offered five different progressive courses for people aged 14 to 19. Training and experience in sports leadership and volunteering could be gained through sport education, level one sports leadership, top link, level two community sports leadership and community volunteering. All courses were facilitated by physical education teachers at school with the support of the Youth Sport Trust and SportsLeaders UK. Additionally, the programme involved building capacity to place volunteers within local networks. With regards to the community volunteering course, secondary analysis was conducted with data from 160 of the participants (all aged between 17 and 20) and this was expanded by ten qualitative volunteer interviews and 33 qualitative interviews with sport and education professionals.

Three in ten volunteers (29%) completed 200 hours of volunteering whilst one in three (34%) completed 100 hours. Levels of volunteering did however range from just seven hours to more than 200, and the median across participants was 113 hours.

In support of Harvey, Lévesque and Donnelly (2007), Kay and Bradbury (2009) found that the greater benefits were seen with higher levels of volunteer involvement of 100 hours or more, however additionally the researchers saw benefits from the most diverse volunteer involvement at a number of venues or for a number of activity types. Overall, a large majority of the participants reported increases in leadership skills (87.5%), confidence (85%) and communication skills (80%). Half of the participants demonstrated a greater sense of altruism and increased citizenship in their quantitative answers, with 49% stating that participating had made them want to do more voluntary work and the same amount stating that it had made them think more about people in different groups. Qualitative data from the experts involved in organising and delivering the training supported the notion of increased social connectedness from the volunteer placements. The researchers conclude that the programme was, "*effective in facilitating 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital: teaching staff reported that young people interacted more with their own peers than previously, and young people themselves spoke of the benefits and satisfaction from helping others in their community. These forms of capital formation were rarely singularly manifest or mutually exclusive, but, rather, were subject to a range of competing identity constructions and the contextual framework in which volunteering took place*" (Kay and Bradbury, 2009, p136).

From secondary analysis on data from 653 participants in the American Survey of Midlife Development, an increased sense of community was seen to be associated with an increased likelihood to volunteer amongst American 60-74 year olds (Okun and Michel, 2006). This is an interesting finding given that the sample was older participants. It is possible that volunteering is associated with high levels of social capital because only those who already have a strong sense of community will volunteer, however this does not explain the affect that a youth programme such as Step into Sport can have.

It may be that there is a possibility that such programmes can create higher levels of social capital and contribute to social cohesion, and this will increase the likelihood of these young people volunteering later in life and thus further contributing to their, and others' social capital.

The association between volunteering and social capital and subsequent effects on social cohesion needs to be better understood, and this understanding will require evidence-based analysis as well as theoretical considerations of the issue. Given that there is considerable divergence within social capital theory already, this is far easier said than done. The methodology used by Harvey, Lévesque and Donnelly (2007) in their research of social capital in Canadian sports clubs would make a good starting point if conducted with a sample drawn from both participants and volunteers from sports clubs in the UK. It would be fascinating to compare similarities and differences in social capital by those who are simply members of clubs and those who volunteer too, and additionally by those who are involved with more than one sports club.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social exclusion and social inclusion are the converse of each other. Social inclusion is a value-based goal of how society could ultimately be; it is about people being able to realise their full potential and participate in society in the fullest sense. Donnelly and Coakley (2002) describe the "cornerstones" of social inclusion as value recognition, human development, involvement and engagement, physical and social proximity and material wellbeing. Social exclusion on the other hand is a result of actual inequalities and the unequal opportunities in society, for example because of education, employment, health, discrimination or poverty. It can be helpful to think of social exclusion and inclusion on a vertical continuum with a mid-point of social cohesion: being too near social exclusion creates inequality and prevents social progress, whilst being at the extreme of social inclusion runs the danger of an overly regulated society.

In the European Year for Combatting Poverty and Social Exclusion, the Coalition Government in the UK stated that, "*addressing poverty and inequality in Britain is at the heart of our agenda for Government. It is unacceptable that, in one of the wealthiest nations in the world, millions of adults and children are living in poverty. Whole communities are existing at the margins of society, trapped in dependency and unable to progress. In these areas aspiration and social mobility disappear, leaving disadvantaged children to become disadvantaged adults*" (Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in Cabinet Office, 2010, p.3).

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This begins to paint a picture of the extent of social exclusion in the UK, as do facts such as 5.3 million people in the UK suffer from multiple disadvantage or that nearly one in ten people (8%) live in persistent relative poverty (Cabinet Office, 2010), creating a risk of social exclusion and poor health. Perhaps more shocking still is the fact that the richest 10% of the British population are more than 100 times wealthier than the poorest 10% (National Equality Panel, 2010). This divide and the notion of an unequal Britain are not new news, but following the global economic recession and significant changes to the Government budget, in the UK unemployment and income inequality are currently extremely prominent on the policy agenda. Unemployment levels in the UK are amongst the highest they have been for more than 15 years with 2.63 million people unemployed as of May 2012 (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Not only is unemployment an indicator of social exclusion, but it also drives other aspects of social exclusion such as poverty, homelessness, social capital and poor physical and mental health. Conversely, these aspects of social exclusion can also be a barrier to employment (Bradshaw et al., 2004).

In addition to unequal employment opportunities and uneven income distribution, other factors affecting social exclusion include ethnicity, gender, disability and health. For example, in 2008/2009, black and ethnic minority families accounted for 11% of the total population in England but 27% of all households found to be homeless⁶¹. We have already reviewed the evidence for physical activity being able to improve physical and mental health, and given that people who live in the poorest areas in England die on average seven years earlier than those living in the richest areas (Cabinet Office, 2010), the value of addressing poor health through affordable physical activities is significant and should not be ignored.

⁶¹ Shelter website, *Homelessness*, http://englandshelter.org.uk/campaigns/why_we_campaign/the_housing_crisis/homelessness, last accessed 14.05.2012.

For example, one study found that 15 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day or 90 minutes over a week resulted in a three year increase in life expectancy compared to inactive counterparts (Wen et al., 2011). For those who are excluded from society, sport and recreational activities are able to promote a shared sense of belonging and participation and can represent a valuable opportunity for inclusion and support. The rules that govern sport and recreational activities are not based on faith or belief systems, therefore participation in sport or recreation easily opens itself to creating links between people from different cultures, countries and backgrounds (European Commission, 2009). This in itself is beneficial as the most commonly cited barrier to cohesion in a Government review was lack of social contact of meaning with people from different backgrounds (25%) and different standards or values (15%) or cultures (13%) (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010). Sport and recreation can be used to reach out to at risk groups in society (as evaluated in the chapter on antisocial behaviour and crime), integrate immigrants and refugees with other members of society and can play a role in promoting gender and disability equality. For example, more than 90% of the 61,175 young people who took part in Change 4 Life School Sports Clubs stated that they, *“respected other people regardless of their ability”* and also that they, *“felt respected”* (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2011).

Donnelly and Coakely (2002) identify six broad benefits that sport and recreational activities have for those who are socially excluded, unintentionally or otherwise. Firstly, they can provide a safe environment and create a philosophy of nonviolence, even when it may be a contact activity. Secondly they provide an opportunity to develop skill and demonstrate competence; where the activity is in a community setting this is even more beneficial as participants can translate their physical success and confidence boost into society at large – the place where they are traditionally marginalised.

As covered under the section on social capital, leisure time physical activities also provide opportunities to create networks that can not only be supportive but also helpful for introducing new opportunities. Fourthly, where activities are delivered through specific programmes, moral and economic support can be provided: as seen in the chapter on antisocial behaviour and crime, utilising sport as a hook can ensure young people are taught valuable life skills. Fifthly, participants are given autonomy and control in the activity and this is something that is typically lacking in the lives of those who are socially excluded. Finally, it can create hope for the future where previously it did not exist – evidence supports that multiple disadvantage is intergenerational, with 27% of children from families where the parents have six or more disadvantage indicators experiencing three or more indicators of disadvantage compared to just 4% of families where parents experience none of the factors of disadvantage (Cabinet Office, 2010).

Some 100 million people worldwide are estimated to be homeless, with the United Kingdom having one of the highest levels of homelessness in Europe⁶². In England in 2010/2011, 65,000 households were accepted as homeless with another 50,000 in temporary accommodation (Aldridge et al., 2011). The Homeless World Cup first took place in 2003 and aims to energise homeless and excluded people to change their own lives by using football as a catalyst – their impact analysis reports that over 70% of players significantly change their lives. The tournament takes place at an international level after players are selected from grass roots level street teams and all participants are given access to support and services. Men and women who are homeless or in substance abuse programmes are eligible to participate and be in with a chance of representing their country. The Homeless World Cup Foundation explains that football specifically was chosen because it facilitates communication and relationship building with others, working as teammates, trusting, sharing and taking responsibility for attending training sessions and games. All of these skills and attributes are transferable to daily life and demonstrate to homeless people that they can change their lives⁶³. For example, 29% of the 381 homeless people who took part in the 2007 Homeless World Cup found employment within six months of the event, whilst 32% went into education⁶⁴.

62 The Homeless World Cup website, *Homeless Statistics* <http://www.homelessworldcup.org/content/homelessness-statistics>, last accessed 14.05.2012.

63 The Homeless World Cup website, *Why Football* <http://www.homelessworldcup.org/why-football>, last accessed 11.05.2012.

64 The Homeless World Cup website, *Copenhagen 2007* <http://www.homelessworldcup.org/our-impact/impact-research/copenhagen-2007>, last accessed 11.05.2012.

Drawing on the benefits outlined by Donnelly and Coakely (2002), the Homeless World Cup amongst other things clearly demonstrates how through recreational physical activity participants can be given autonomy, confidence, useful skills and, perhaps most importantly, hope for the future.

Not only does this event change the lives of the homeless players involved, but spectator feedback from the 2011 Homeless World Cup revealed that 80% of their 129 spectator sample (not representative) were interested in sport as a means of social inclusion, whilst 97% agreed that the event promotes good values and 90% agreed that it breaks down stereotypes about the homeless community (O'May, 2011). The staging of the events as part of the Homeless World Cup therefore also aims to break down barriers and perceptions around homelessness to work towards a socially inclusive society. This was explored by Sherry, Karg and O'May (2011), whose research focused on changes in social capital and spectator attitudes as a result of the Melbourne 2008 and Milan 2009 Homeless World Cups. The evaluative data from the Homeless World Cup Foundation could be more detailed and robust, with a greater focus on the outcomes for participants in order to demonstrate the true value of the work they do. Academic interest in the role of the Homeless World Cup in tackling social exclusion provides additional insights but only utilises existing data. For example, Sherry (2010) has focused on how the Australian Homeless World Cup re-engaged participants through facilitating social capital, concluding that sport alone cannot be held responsible but has certainly contributed to these benefits; Magee and Jeanes (2011) conducted a critical evaluation based on a group of young male players from the UK, and Owen and McLuckie (2009) have examined the street football model more generally for its use as a tool to engage homeless and excluded young people through fun, fitness and friendship.

In the year ending June 2011, 241,000 people were granted settlement in the UK and 195,000 people were granted British Citizenship (Home Office, 2011). More than half (56%) of people surveyed in the Government's Citizenship Survey believe that the number of immigrants coming to Britain should be reduced a lot whilst a further 21% feel it should be reduced a little (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). This accords with the Coalition Government's strategy to reduce net migration with a more targeted approach that aims to fill gaps in the labour market and see the number of immigrants fall to tens of thousands a year. It is expected that there will be fewer non-EU migrants entering the UK in coming years and the focus on employment for their arrival

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may result in not all sectors of society welcoming migrants. Migrants will be unlikely to have all of their family with them in the UK and there will be an increased potential for them to feel isolated, either highlighting the resilience of communities or the disconnections between people, groups and institutions (Hickman, Crowley and Mai, 2008). Social cohesion will be more important than ever, and yet may also be more difficult than ever. The complex interaction between sport and identity politics on both a national and local level puts sport and recreation in a position where they are both capable of helping or potentially hindering social cohesion. A systematic review of the evidence for sport and recreation creating social inclusion amongst refugees and asylum seekers was conducted in 2005 but substantial research evidence was found to be lacking, whilst case studies provided a flavour of the benefits but were based on qualitative or observational evidence (Amara et al., 2005).

A study of 388 new East European immigrants and 402 long-term resident East European immigrants in South East England included community participation in their considerations of community cohesion. Whilst the sample was not representative of immigrants in the UK, it was found that amongst this group 60% of immigrants and 70% of long-term residents were involved in a group, club or organisation, and of these, immigrants were more likely to be involved in a sports club (Markova and Black, 2007). If this is true across the UK then not only is sport and recreation a useful tool for social inclusion because it isn't based on faith or belief systems, but it is also useful because of its wide appeal.

Norwegian research with 1,585 fitness centre customers and 1,205 voluntary sports club members found that social integration occurs as a result of the social part of exercising rather than the physicality of the activity itself and that integration occurred more frequently in sports clubs than in commercial fitness centres.

In commercial centres, social integration was largely restricted to existing friendships instead of establishing new relationships, with four in ten (81%) sports club members stating that they made friends through their exercising compared to just 14% of fitness centre users (Ulseth, 2004). Factors thought to affect the increased ability for sports clubs to foster social integration included the physical presence of more meeting spaces for members, the role of volunteering, conducting activities in groups and the size of groups. In addition, sports club members placed a greater value on the social dimension of exercising, with 38% stating that the social part is most important and 2% stating the physical part is most important, compared to 1% of fitness centre members prioritising socialising and 64% prioritising the physical element. High levels of sports club membership amongst immigrant communities could therefore be an appealing and effective way of making meaningful connections with others in the local community.

Football United in New South Wales, Australia is a football-based health promotion intervention seeking to foster social inclusion and cohesion in areas with high refugee settlements. In order to achieve this, newly arrived refugees and settled community members participate. Current monitoring of the project shows that in 2011, 705 young people born in 43 countries and living in 59 suburbs participated in the programme. Football has been chosen specifically because it is enjoyed worldwide, is relatively inexpensive, is intended to be a non-violent, sport played by both genders and is often the sport of choice amongst refugees in Australia, again demonstrating the appeal of sport and recreation to wide audiences. The programme focuses on skill and leadership development, mentoring and creating links with local communities, corporate leaders and organisations. It has three main elements: the football activities themselves at weekends, after school, as holiday camps and gala days; capacity building courses in coaching, mentoring and life skills, leadership,

first aid, project management and volunteering; and fostering involvement with local football clubs. A prospective impact cohort study intends to assess the effect of the programme at an individual, school and community level using qualitative and quantitative measures (Nathan et al., 2010). It is disappointing that the findings of this research are not yet available, but once completed the findings will be enlightening for the role of sport and recreation to influence social cohesion in communities with high proportions of immigrant or refugees.

Outdoor recreational activities should not be overlooked for their ability to influence social inclusion and community cohesion. They offer opportunities for interaction and take place in open spaces and natural environments that can play a valuable role in an individual's sense of attachment to the area in which they live and the local community more generally (Kim and Kaplan, 2004). In support of this, enjoyment of living in the local neighbourhood has been found to be higher in rural areas (80%) than in urban areas (65%) (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). From a sample of 437 schoolchildren in Zurich, Seeland, Dübendorfer and Hansmann (2008) studied leisure activities in urban forests and public green spaces to establish their ability to influence social interaction between Swiss and immigrant youths. The research found that these spaces had a positive and significant role for making friends across cultures, providing a base for social inclusion. It has also been suggested that the additional advantage to outdoor recreation is that the spaces in which it occurs are typically more accessible for immigrants and people from ethnic minorities than other leisure facilities (Ravenscroft and Markwell, 2000).

Sport at an elite and international level is also capable of fostering national identity and pride and can create bonds between different groups of people brought together as supporters of teams (Delaney and Keane, 2005).

International sport offers the tools for building social solidarity: for example, a BBC poll revealed that seven in ten people (71%) say that the performance of Team GB at the Olympics affects their national pride⁶⁵ whilst 58% of British people state they take pride in British sporting achievements more generally. Involvement with a sports club has also been found to influence national pride, however, with three in ten respondents who strongly agreed that they were proud to be a British citizen having engaged with a sports club, either by taking part, coaching or watching. This is compared to one in four of those who neither agreed nor disagreed and less than one in five of those who strongly disagreed (Wind-Cowie and Gregory, 2011). Support for the home team in international competitions such as the Olympics can cross cultural and political boundaries in a unique way, but differences in allegiance at national or local levels such as between football teams also have the potential to create hostility.

Women are almost twice as likely to be low paid than men, with 26% of female employees paid less than £7.50 an hour compared to 14% of male employees, and even the highest paid women are paid less than their male counterparts. The hourly wage for the 10% most highly paid men is 220% of the median male full-time pay whilst the 10% most highly paid women earn 178% of the median male full-time pay (New Policy Institute, 2011). Women are also at high risk of persistent low income (Bradshaw et al., 2004), increasing their chance of long term poverty and social exclusion. Although gender equality is still high up on the agenda for sport and recreation, which historically has been a male domain, as gains have been made the role of sport and recreation for addressing gender issues has come to the fore.

⁶⁵ Poll of 21,061 people across 21 countries surveyed in 2011, available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-16245075>, last accessed 17.05.2012.

The health benefits of physical activity have already been noted; these of course apply to men and women, but given that there are gender inequalities in health, specifically targeted activities could have more resonance. For example, 66% of men and 57% of women are overweight or obese (The Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2011) but more women die of respiratory disease than men (British Heart Foundation, 2011). Three quarters of all suicides in the UK in 2010 were male (Ministry of Justice, 2011c) but women are more likely than men to suffer from common mental disorders (The Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2009).

As noted by Donnelly and Coakely (2002), a benefit of sport and recreation is the creation of safe spaces which can create a feeling of affiliation and sense of belonging. Alongside this feeling of inclusion, for girls reaching adolescence safe spaces outside the home are vitally important for exercising control and ownership outside of traditional restrictive domestic settings; this is particularly important in developing countries. The Sport for Peace curriculum was created to address concerns around student violence, fighting, profanity and physical and sexual harassment in six American urban high schools on the East Coast. The curriculum emphasised responsibility, conflict negotiation and care and concern for others through playing and coaching football and included a taught unit on Sport for Peace. Analysis of the programme suggests that the structure and delivery of the sessions fostered shared responsibility for learning, trust, respect and a sense of family, with participants of both genders and all skill levels feeling successful and positive about the experience. Furthermore, Ennis et al. concluded that the programme, *“created a safe place for both high and low-skilled girls and boys in the physical education curriculum... those in which students can affiliate with others and know that their emotions and sense of self will be protected”* (1999, pp.283-284).

In addition, by tackling imbalances in participation levels for certain activities, both male and female gender norms can be broken down to establish healthy attitudes towards gender equality. For example, values such as competitiveness or assertiveness are valued in many sport and recreation activities, providing a suitable arena for women to demonstrate these qualities and society to place a value on women who display them. This was confirmed by Anderson (2008), who qualitatively assessed a representative sample of 68 self-identified heterosexual male university cheerleaders in mixed gender teams who had previously been high school football players and were part of male only teams. Approximately 70% of the male participants reported beforehand having had no idea that women could be so athletic and almost all expressed a new-found appreciation for the leadership skills and coaching abilities they had seen exhibited by women in cheerleading. In addition, qualitative evidence suggested that some of the men with previously misogynistic attitudes had rethought these, seeing the female cheerleaders as more like their sisters than as sex objects.

Acquiring attributes such as confidence and assertiveness during leisure time physical activities can also provide women with a sense of confidence and additional skills to take into the workplace, where they may find their gender to be a barrier to opportunity or progression (Huggins and Randell, 2007). Additionally, sport and recreation itself may provide opportunities for women to develop their leadership skills and realise a sense of achievement. However, the number of women in leadership positions in sport is currently disappointingly low, with women accounting for one in five positions on the boards of national governing bodies and seven out of the 46 funded national governing bodies without any women on their board (WSFF, 2010).

During the 1970s in America a portion of the Education Amendments stated that no American should be excluded from participating in physical activity, causing high school and collegiate athletics to become entrenched in the American way of life. Utilising the subsequent increase in female athletic participation between 1972 and 1978, Stevenson (2010) assessed the impact of increasing athletic participation amongst girls on their later life chances. The research found that a 10% rise in state-level female sports participation was directly responsible for a 1% rise in female college attendance and between a 1% to 2% rise in female labour force participation. Overall, Stevenson concludes that the increased participation in physical activity following the Education Amendment explained about 20% of the increase in women's education and 40% of the rise in employment. Furthermore, after controlling for underlying ability and resources, Stevenson found that women who had participated in athletics had wages that were 8% higher as adults.

The disability charity Scope highlights that disabled people are on the fringes of society, with nearly 40% of people not knowing any disabled people (excluding those who are disabled or have a disabled family member) and only one in five (21%) Britons having ever worked with a disabled colleague⁶⁶. Families with at least one disabled member are more likely to live in relative income poverty than those with no disabled members: in 2009/2010 the figures were 21% and 16% respectively on a Before Housing Costs basis (Department for Work and Pensions, 2011). Disabled people are also far less likely to be employed than non-disabled people, with employment rates of 9% and 78% respectively⁶⁷. As with gender equality, disability equality is also still a priority on the sports agenda; disabled participation in sport and recreation and in

volunteering is lower than in comparison to non-disabled people. In 2010 35% of disabled people had participated in sport at least once in the previous four weeks to being surveyed compared to 60% of non-disabled people (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2011) and in 2009/2010 26% of non-disabled people volunteered formally at least once a month. For disabled people this fell to 22% (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011).

In the same way that physical activity can create meaningful interactions between different people from different backgrounds, it can bring disabled and non-disabled people together, increase confidence and provide a new level of understanding and cooperation in society. For example, wheelchair basketball can be played by disabled and non-disabled people together at an equal level. The 2009 Sport England satisfaction survey for wheelchair basketball found that 17% of the players they surveyed were not disabled (English Federation of Disability Sport, 2009). The 2011 survey doesn't report on this but does show that the social aspects of the game are important to participants with an average score of 8.7 out of 10, and that satisfaction with the social aspects is high at an average score of 8.4 out of 10, making it the second highest scoring element for satisfaction (Sport England, 2011). At a theoretical level it has also been highlighted that disabled people who wish to effect positive change may utilise sport as a means of gaining notoriety in order to direct attention to the issues they wish to address (International Disability in Sport Working Group, 2007). Although many community inclusion projects exist, little research has been conducted in this area, with Thomas and Smith surmising that, "*there exists very little systematically collected and published data on disability sports development*" (2009, p.60). Analysis of data on the role of wider leisure activities (not just sport and recreation) for a group of young people with cerebral palsy led Aitchison (2003) to conclude that for many young disabled people the role of leisure

⁶⁶ Scope website, *Disabled People Invisible in Britain Today*, <http://www.scope.org.uk/news/comres-poll>, last accessed 16.05.2012.

⁶⁷ Office for Disability Issues website, *Disability Facts and Figures*, <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/disability-facts-and-figures.php#7>, last accessed 16.05.2012.

time activities in tackling social exclusion exists largely as a political concept rather than as a daily reality. Clearly there is an enormous research void around the relationship between sport and recreation and tackling disability exclusion. Theory suggests that there is a positive relationship and this has been evidenced for others marginalised from society by race or gender, for example. It would stand to reason that similar benefits could be found for tackling disability exclusion; conclusive research into this topic would be warmly welcomed.

Whilst not addressed in this chapter, it is also worth noting that social exclusion can include exclusion from participating in sport and recreational activities and furthermore physical activities can exclude others and create further divides in society. Numerous international conventions recognise the right of access to and participation in sport and recreation as it is generally agreed that this is essential for the development of physical, intellectual and moral powers, and thus the personality more fully. In particular, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 states in Article 12 that State Parties (of which the UK is one) recognise the *“right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”* Ensuring that leisure time physical activity options are made available to all will aid the full development of individuals within society, which in turn will contribute to a better, more developed and more cohesive society.

CONCLUSION

It is widely recognised in society that sport and recreation can be used as a tool for peace and social cohesion, yet social cohesion and its associated concepts are difficult to evidence in a robust manner. Much of the work in this area is theoretical: for example, there are thought to be six broad benefits that sport and recreational activities have for those who are socially excluded, unintentionally or otherwise. Where research is empirical, it's usually difficult to fully understand causality and the relationships evidenced, although research is suggestive of a range of mechanisms through which sport and recreation can have a positive impact on enhancing social cohesion, increasing social capital and reducing social exclusion. What is easier to demonstrate (as shown in the other chapters of this review) is that sport and recreation positively contribute to many of the factors that build social cohesion, such as better physical and mental health, high educational attainment, reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, creating better employment opportunities and earning potential, and ensuring a fit and healthy workforce.