

Idrættens største udfordringer VI - hvordan flytter vi idrætten?

# **Strengthening the foundation for growth in the sports sector**

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## **Sporting Capital**

**Transforming sports development  
policy and practice**

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## Sport: the personal experience

*“Sport has always featured not just as an important part of my life but as something that has defined and shaped it.”*

*“It has been integral to my sense of who I am and what I do.”*

*“It has given me an unending well of enjoyment from both the pleasure of playing and from the camaraderie of time spent with people who share that pleasure with me.”*

## The big questions that increasingly concerned me (in my professional capacity)

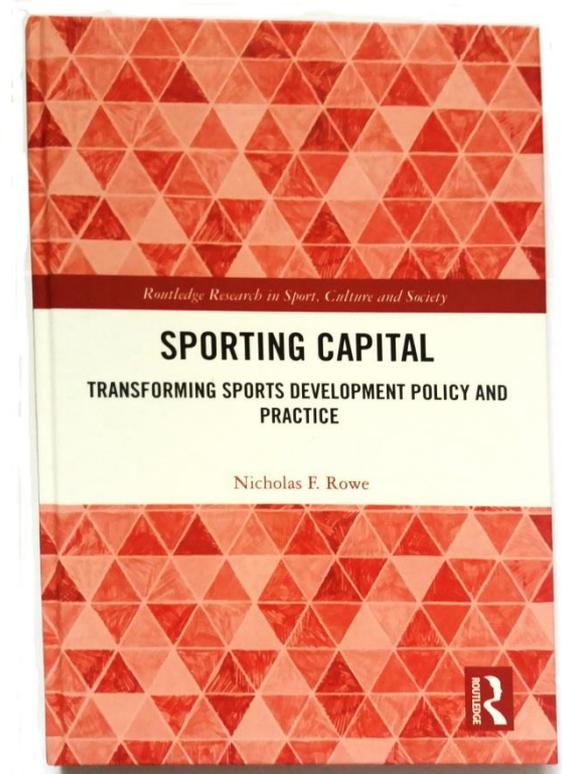
*“...what distinguished people like me who find it difficult to stop taking part in sport from those who it is almost impossible to make participate?”*

*“...for far too many sport is something they find threatening, difficult, intimidating, and unrewarding.”*

## The realisation

*“Sport is a central part of my life and something that has given me so much enjoyment only because I have had the capacities to enjoy it and get the most from it. Those capacities are not simple or easy to define but they may be summarised into the three ‘C’s of competence, confidence and connections.”*

*“It was the realisation, informed by a combination of personal and professional experience that the motivation to take part in sport is driven by a kind of invisible ‘capital’ that people carry around with them that started to open my eyes to the power of this idea.”*



# Sports development: The professional experience

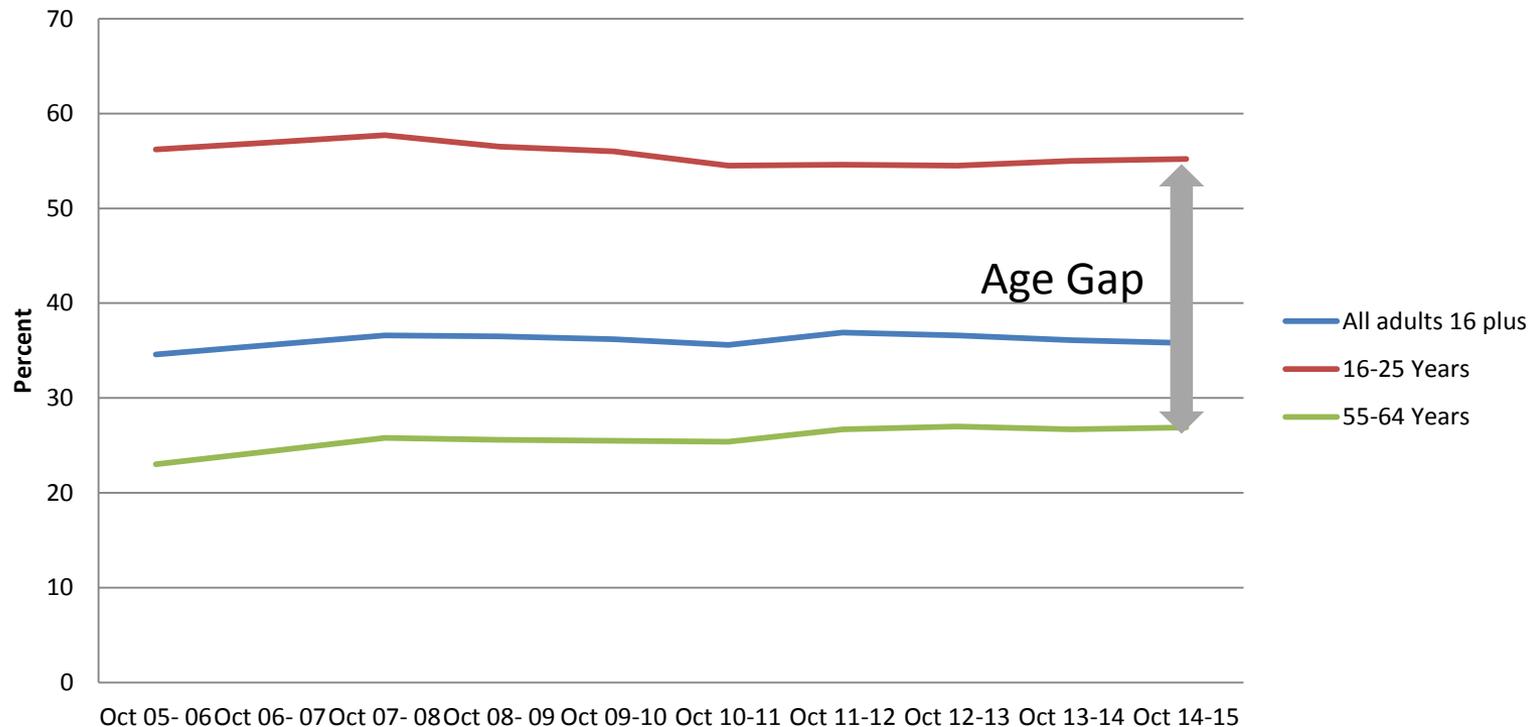
**Over 25 years working in strategy and research for a national sport development agency (Sport England) with the primary focus of increasing participation in sport**

- Devised numerous national strategies
- Spent a lot of money. Over £3 billion of Lottery money since 1995. Even more money spent by local government
- Busily devised and invested in a long list of programmes focused on different groups and different settings: women, disabled, young people, schools, universities, community, clubs, areas of deprivation
- Built or refurbished a lot of facilities – sports halls, swimming pools, leisure centres, multi-sport, specialist, village halls, club houses, pitches
- Employed many sports development officers, sports leaders, coaches, sports co-ordinators
- Funded National Governing Bodies of Sport
- Supported volunteers
- Invested in a number of social marketing campaigns
- Oh....and we mustn't forget the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games!

# What was the impact?

Despite national strategies, significant investment of public money, incredible effort and expertise, rates of participation in sport in England have proved stubbornly resistant to change

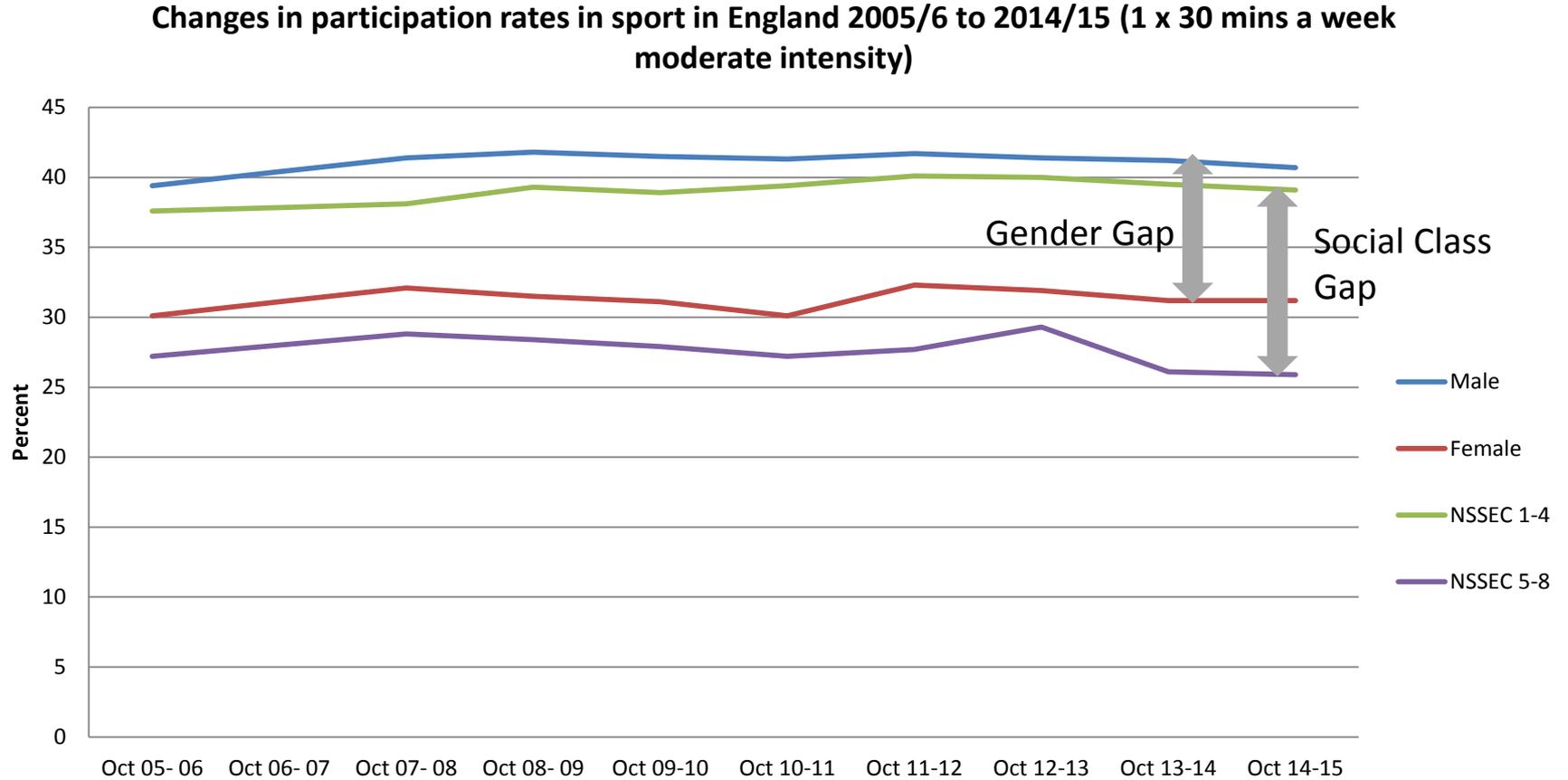
Changes in participation rates in sport in England 2005/6 to 2014/15  
(1 x 30 mins a week moderate intensity)



Source: Sport England Active People Survey

# And what about gender and social class differences?

The structural inequities associated with gender and social class persisted broadly unchanged

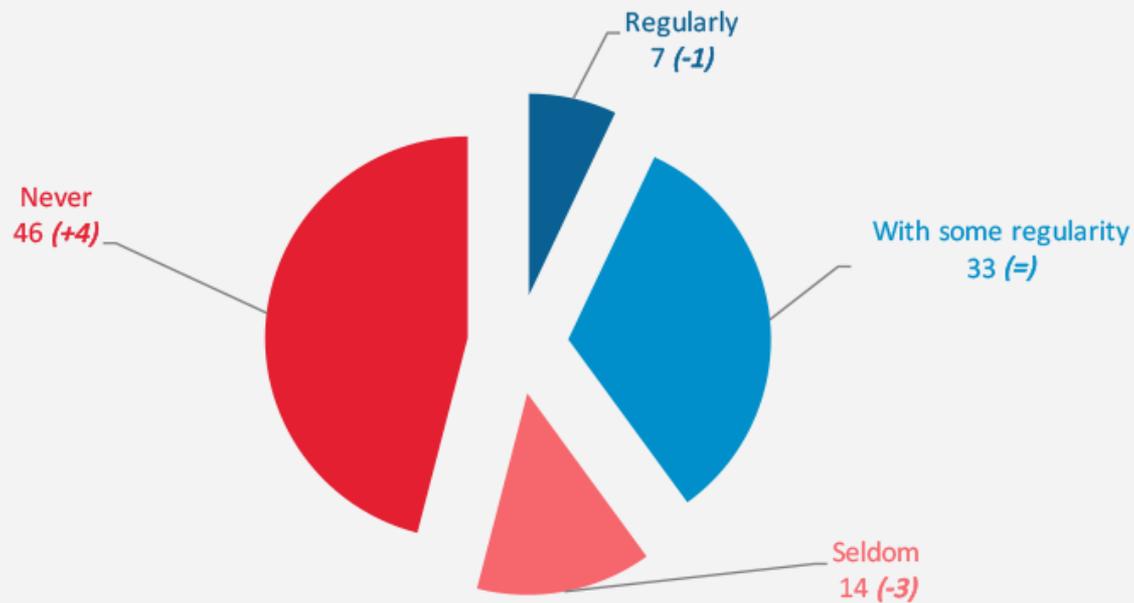


Source: Sport England Active People Survey

# This is not just a UK challenge!

2017 Eurobarometer

QB1 How often do you exercise or play sport?  
(% - EU)



(Dec. 2017 - Nov.-Dec. 2013)

# And what about Denmark?

2017 Eurobarometer

- The proportion of people who exercise or play sport regularly is highest in Finland (69%); Sweden (67%) and Denmark (63%). The UK is 47%



However:

- Between 2013 and 2017 adults in Denmark who participated in sport or exercise 'regularly' decreased by 2% and those who participated 'with some regularity' by 3%



And:

- Denmark was in the top 3 countries in the EU with 23% of respondents likely to spend more than 8 hours 30 minutes sitting down on a usual day! The highest was the Netherlands with 32%. (The UK was 10%)



# What are the big questions public policy for sport has struggled to answer?

## The three Why's and a How

- **Why** is it that some people become committed lifelong sport participants while others drop out from sport in their teens never to return to an active lifestyle?
- **Why** has over 40 years of public policy in sport – accompanied by substantial investment - struggled to 'shift the curve' of participation to reduce drop out and achieve sustained growth?
- **Why** have the inequities in participation between men and women, the more and least affluent, those with and without a disability been so difficult to overcome?
- **How** can we intervene in cost effective and systematic ways to increase participation in sport, narrow or even eradicate inequities and deliver the wider social, health and economic outcomes associated with a more physically active 'sporting' nation?

## My professional realisation.....

### **There is a 'theoretical void' in sports development policy and practice that prevents it ever achieving its stated aims**

- Public policy has been characterised by a 'shopping list' mentality with a succession of programmes and initiatives – often politically driven - that have little if any sound theoretical thinking or evidence to support them.
- Public policy statements and government strategies for sport have made little if any reference to the theoretical basis underpinning any of their recommendations.
- As a consequence public policy has mis-diagnosed 'the problem' as one primarily of opportunity deficiency rather than one of individual capacity building, motivation, enjoyment and empowerment.
- The biggest failing has been to approach community sports development with a limited understanding or perspective of the business it is in, that is the business of behaviour change and behaviour maintenance.

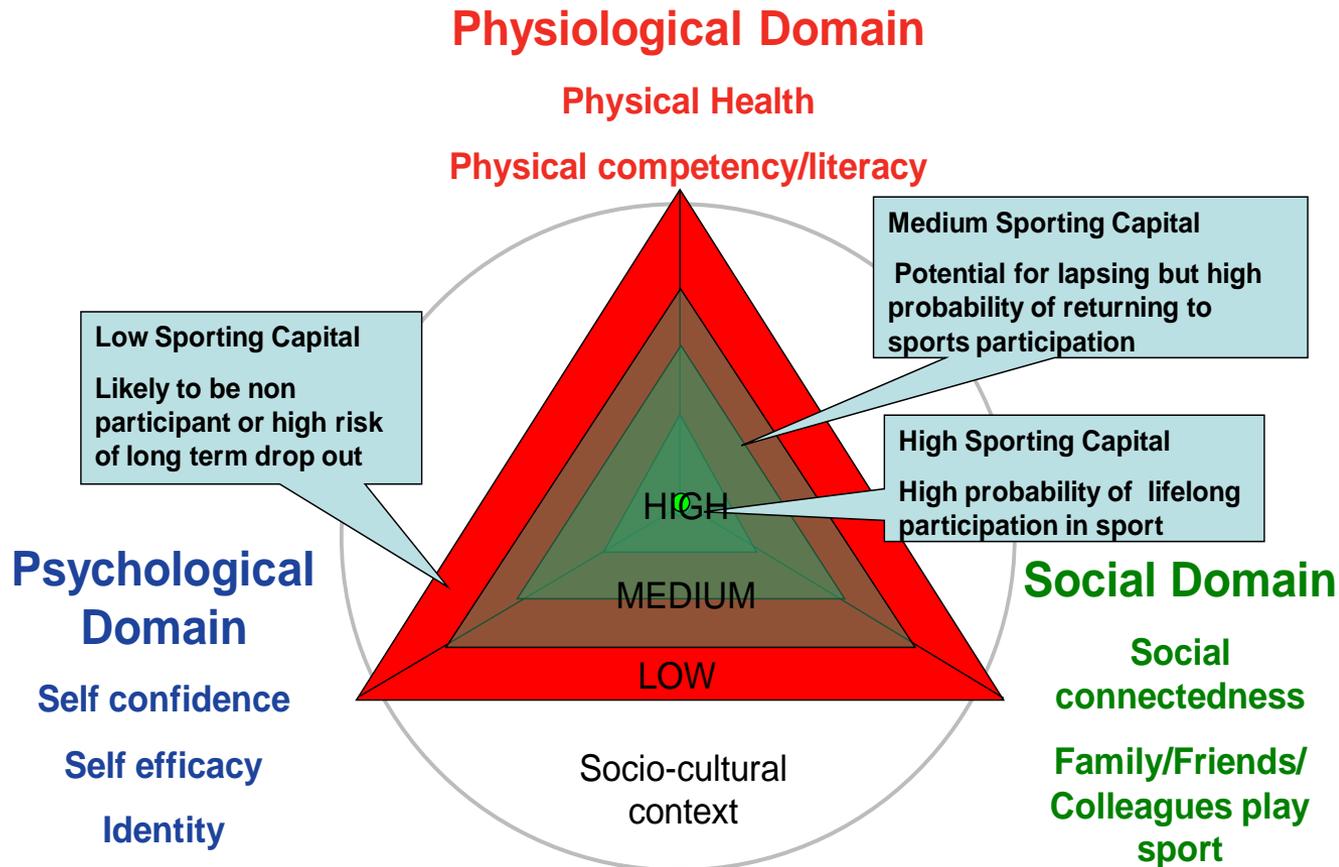
# Filling the void – Sporting Capital theory

Sporting capital is defined as **“the stock of physiological, sociological and psychological attributes and competencies that support and motivate an individual to participate in sport and to sustain that participation over time.”**

- Sporting capital is an integrated (universal) holistic theory that provides insight into the reasons for participation and non participation in sport
- Sporting capital is an overarching theory that joins up policy and practice at all levels from national strategy to local outreach project; from nursery school to care home.
- Sporting capital may be thought of as part of a family of capitals – human, social and cultural – that an individual possesses.
- These capitals have a degree of ‘transferability’ – so for example increases in sporting capital can translate into improved social integration (social capital) and into skills that increase employability (human capital) and vice versa.

# Theoretical model of 'Sporting Capital'

The model suggests a dynamic interaction between physiological, psychological and social factors, all of which play a significant role in determining current and likely future sports participation. It is framed by the wider socio-cultural context in which people live



# What are the important characteristics associated with Sporting Capital?

- **Malleability:** Sporting Capital is a fluid concept – it can be thought of as a ‘stock’ that can be built over time i.e. It can appreciate and, equally with extended periods of non participation, it can decrease i.e. depreciate over time.
- **Durability:** although Sporting Capital can appreciate and depreciate – it is by its nature more durable than participation which is characterised by high levels of short term flux.
- **Resilience:** people with high levels of Sporting Capital are more resilient to the potential negative impact on participation of external barriers associated with changes in life circumstances and, should they drop out, are more likely to return to sport.
- **Positively reinforcing (virtuous circle):** it is anticipated that increased Sporting Capital leads to more frequent and diverse participation in sport and, in turn, more frequent and sustained participation impacts positively to build and reinforce Sporting Capital – i.e Sporting Capital increases with use.

# What are the important characteristics associated with Sporting Capital?

- **Impacted by the quality of experience:** it is expected that high quality sporting experiences are likely to have a more positive impact on Sporting Capital than mediocre ones (i.e. build Sporting Capital) while poor quality experiences can have a negative impact on levels of 'Sporting Capital'.
- **It is socially structured:** evidence suggests that significant aspects of Sporting Capital (such as physical competency and self-efficacy) are developed at a very young age, involve a socialisation process (with boys much more likely to build Sporting Capital than girls and the more socio-economically advantaged having higher levels than those from lower socio-economic groups) and can depreciate (or less likely build) over time and with age.
- **It is never too late:** although most Sporting Capital is built at a young age – and this is the best time to build it – it is never too late to build – but gets harder with age and following sustained periods of inactivity

# How have we measured levels of Sporting Capital?

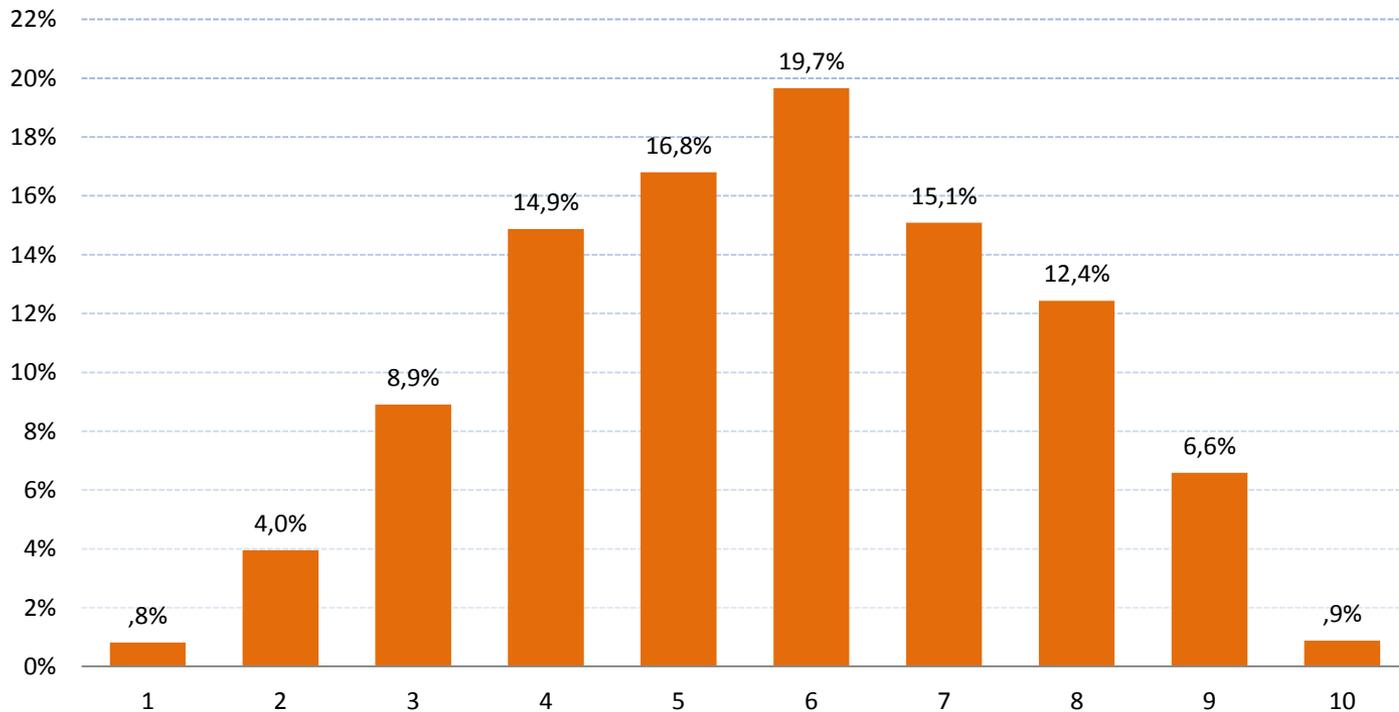
## The creation of a Sporting Capital Index

- The Sporting Capital Index (SCI) is a composite measure of an individual's Sporting Capital referenced on a scale of 1 to 10 with **1 being low and 10 being high.**
- The Index is constructed from answers to question items across three domains, the Physical, Psychological and Social Domains using APS Survey data on a sample of 4,527 individuals aged 16 and over in England
- Logistic Regression was then used to explore the relationship between levels of Sporting Capital and participation rates in sport.

# Are we a sporting nation – what are the levels of Sporting Capital in England?

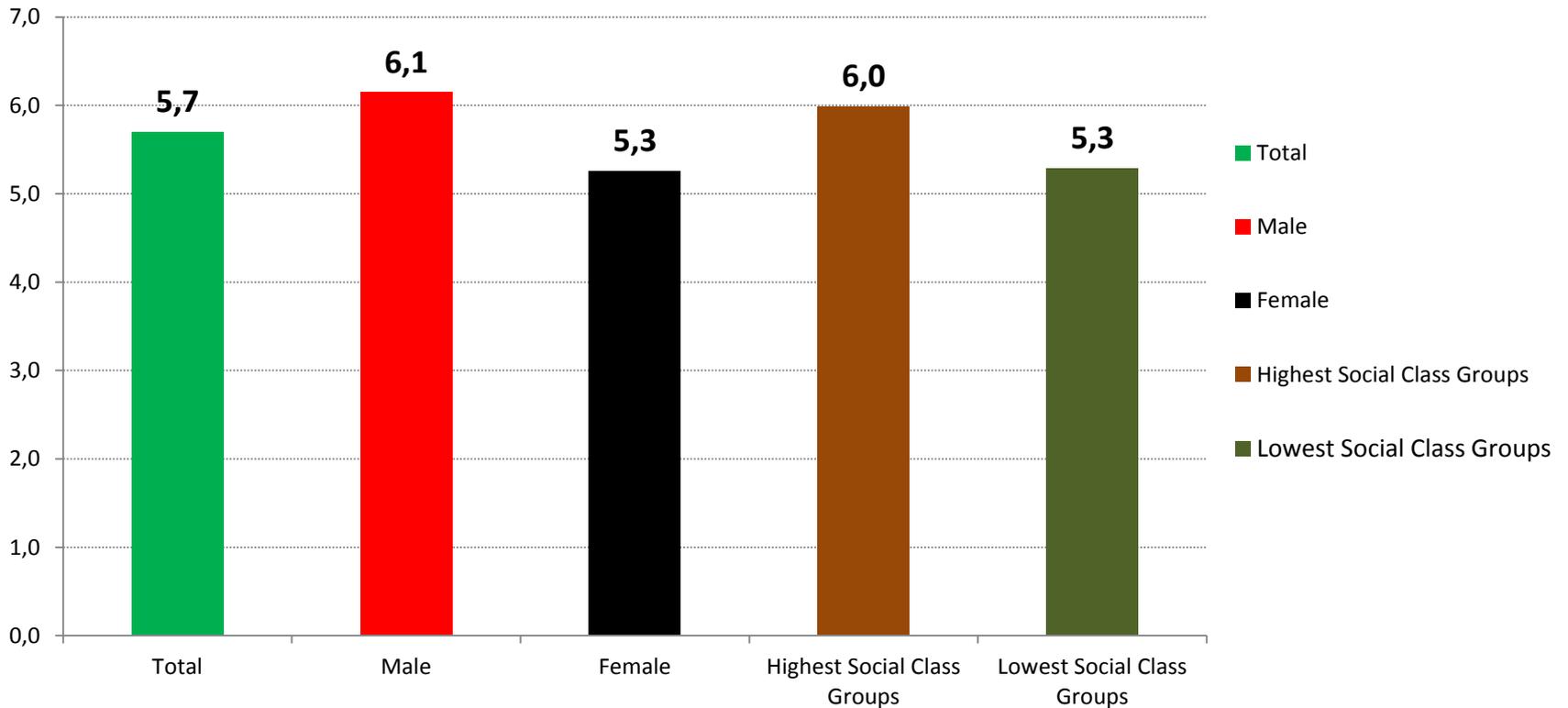
The overall mean score for Sporting Capital in the adult population in England is 5.7.

Figure 1: Sporting Capital Score in the English adult population (1 is low and 10 is high)



# There is a 'Sporting Capital gap' between men and women and by social class

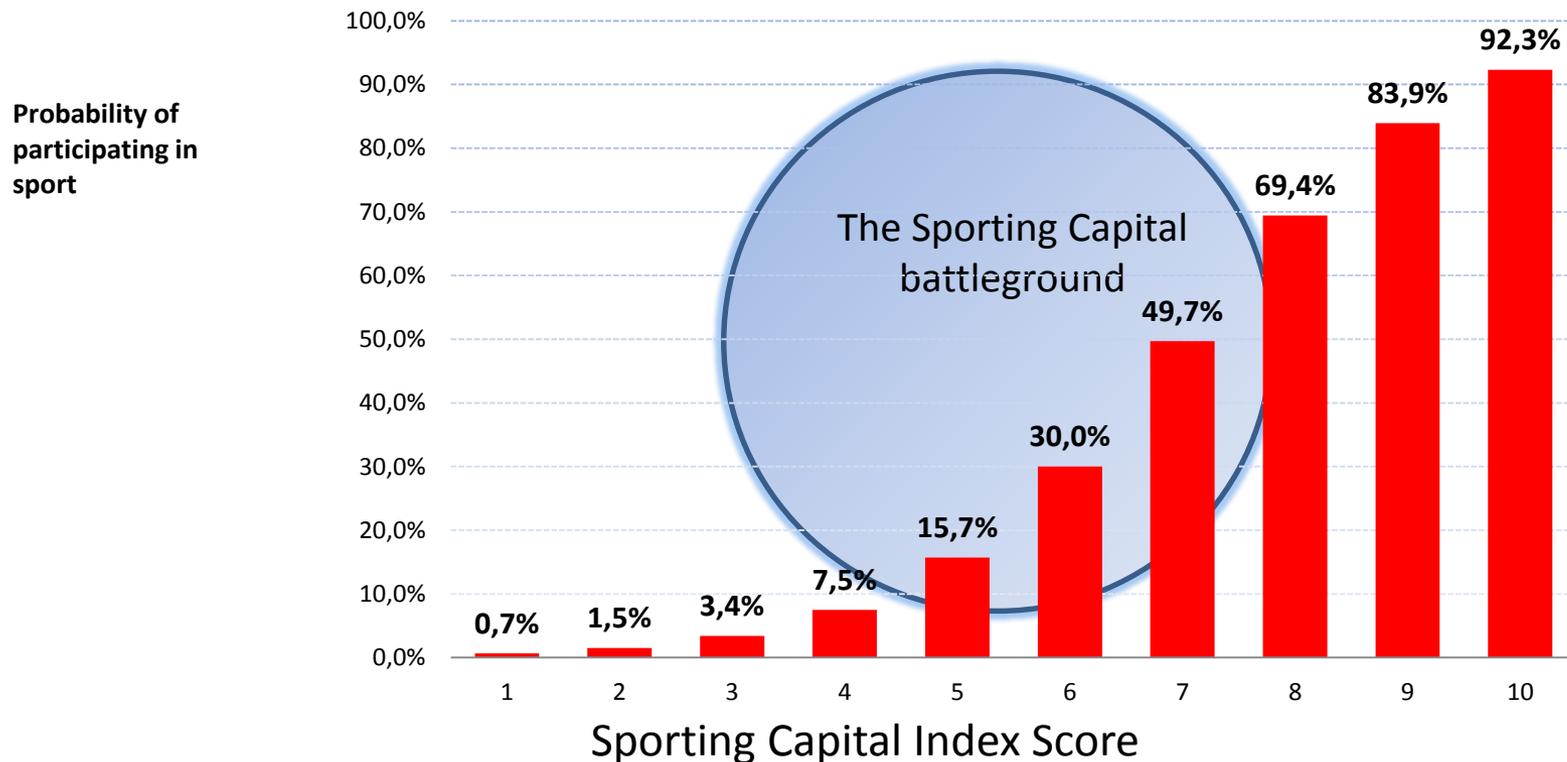
**Sporting Capital Index Mean Score Total and by Gender and Social Class (1 is low and 10 is high)**



# There is a strong correlation between the level of 'Sporting Capital' and the likelihood of regular participation in sport

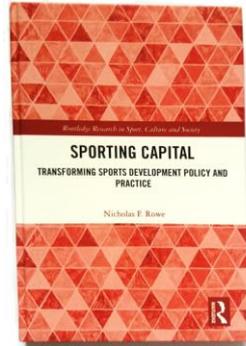
On average the relative odds of participating in sport increase 2.3 times for every increase of 1 in the Sporting Capital Index Scores.

Figure 2: Probability of participating in sport (at least once a week 30 minutes moderate intensity) with changes in the Sporting Capital Index Score (1 is low and 10 is high)



A shared vision: not “Sport for all” but **“Sporting Capital for All”**

# How can we build sporting capital?

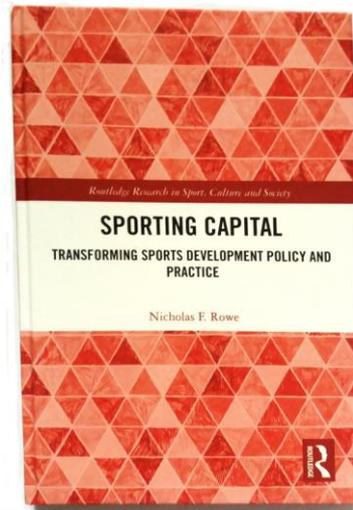


## National Strategy and policy

- A national strategy focused on ‘sporting capital for all’
- Prioritising sporting capital development in the early years
- Pedagogy focused on building sporting capital – intrinsic motivation
- Training the workforce – teachers, outreach workers, sports development officers, facility managers, coaches

## In designing interventions:

- Targeting and recruitment – by level of sporting capital
- Matching and tailoring the approach to meet the needs of the individual – psychological, physiological and social
- Getting the right balance between barrier reduction and building sporting capital
- Focus on the quality of the experience – everything is geared towards building sporting capital
- Definition of success – sporting capital increased (not just short term participation)



- “I (still) believe that ‘sporting capital’ provides the potential to fill a theoretical void in community sports development that could provide a unifying opportunity for transformative change.”
- “I return in the end to the humanising nature of the theory. It is a theory about capability and not deficit. It sees sport participation as a form of self expression that should be made possible for everyone no matter what their age , gender ethnicity, disability, economic circumstances or social background.”
- "My hope is that having read my book (listened to my presentation) you share my optimism that sporting capital can make a difference and whatever your walk of life you become an advocate for it.”

# Supplementary Slides

# Intervening to build Sporting Capital

## The vision the 'The 3 propositions' and the evidence

**A shared vision: not “Sport for all” but “Sporting Capital for All”**

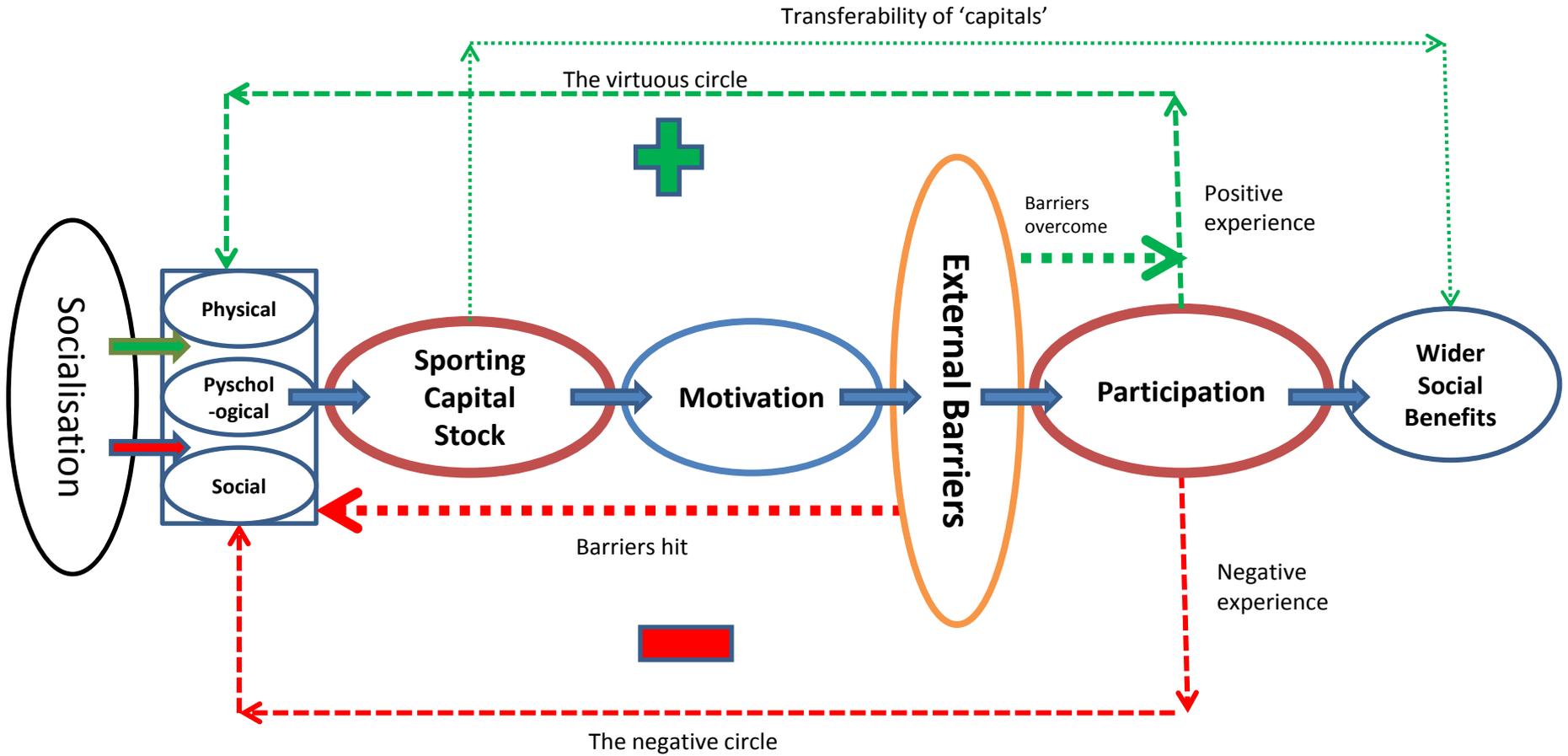
### **The 3 propositions:**

- 1) Public policy intervention can build Sporting Capital if delivered in the right way to the right people at the right time.
- 2) A focus on building Sporting Capital is more likely to be effective in achieving public policy goals of increased sustained participation in sport than a focus on participation per se.
- 3) To be effective all those designing and implementing interventions (at every level) need to have a better understanding of what Sporting Capital is, the processes by which it is acquired, its relationship to sustained participation in sport and the contribution they are making.

### **The evidence:**

- 1) International monitoring and benchmarking of 'sporting capital levels' across Europe
- 2) Testing and refining the theory – intervention based research to establish what works to build sporting capital

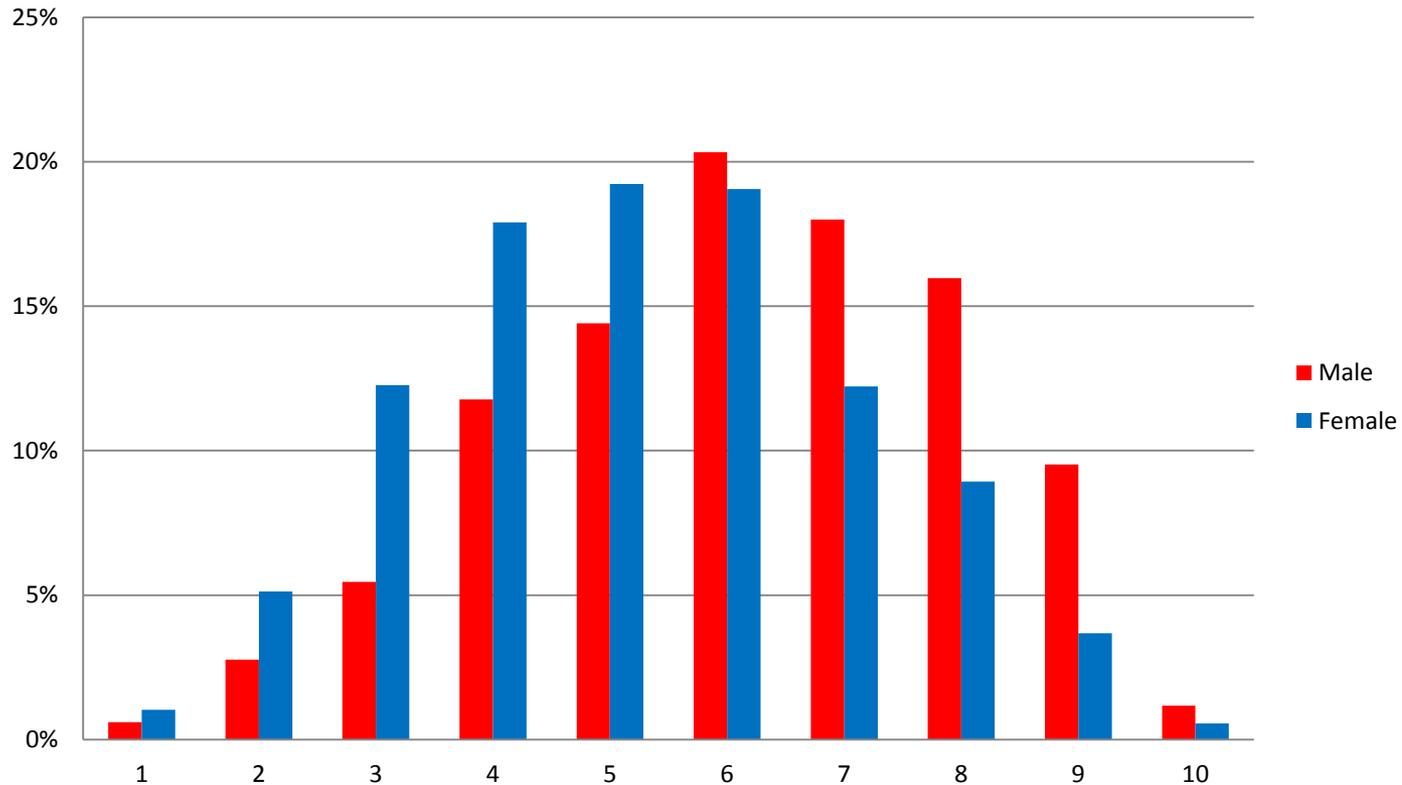
# Sporting Capital theory of change



# There is a 'Sporting Capital gap' between men and women

On average men have a sporting capital level of 6.1 and women 5.3

## Variations in levels of Sporting Capital by gender

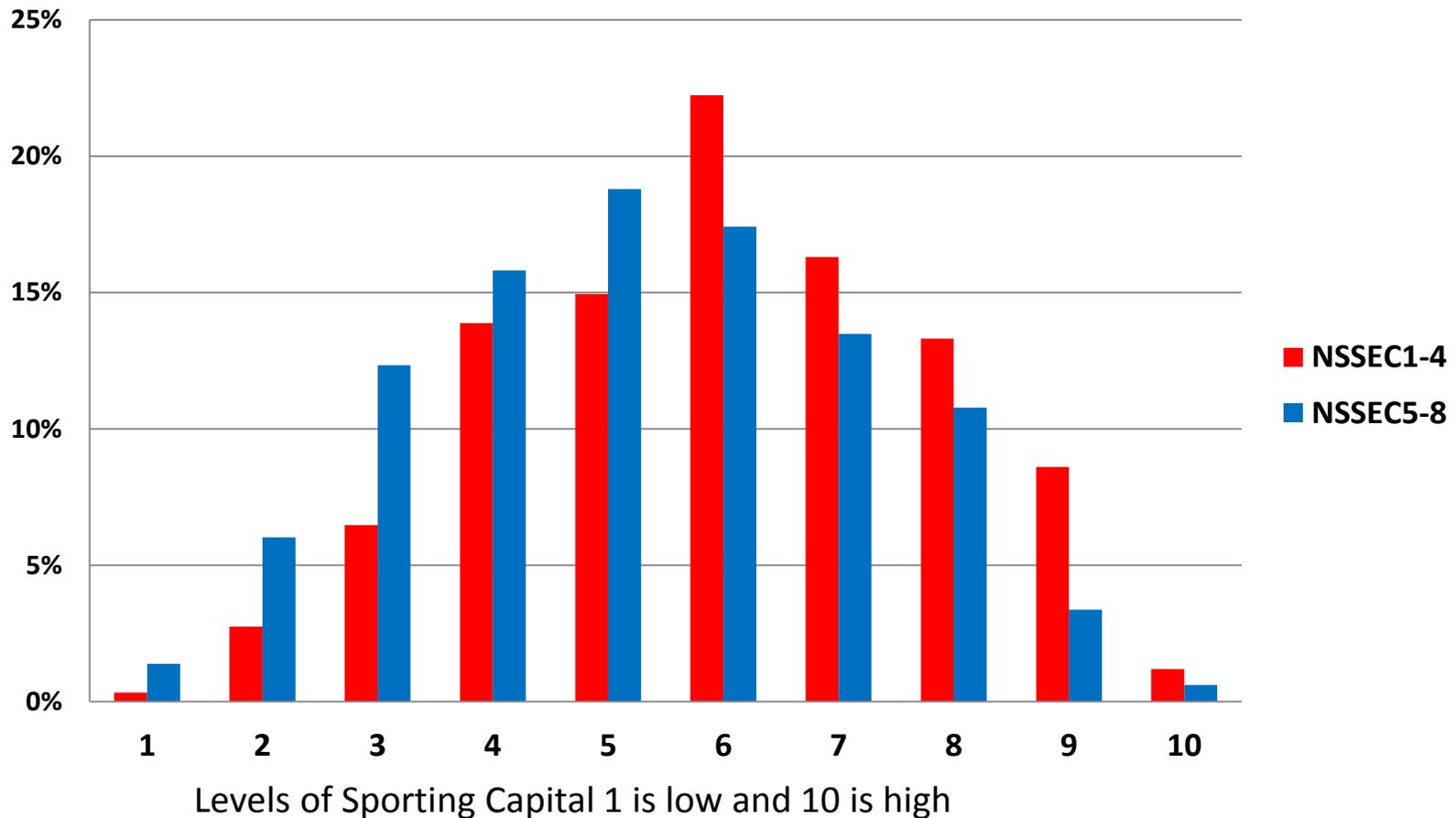


Levels of Sporting Capital 1 is low and 10 is high

# There is a 'Sporting Capital gap' between the upper and lower social class groups

On average those in Upper Social Class Groups have a Sporting Capital level of 6.0 and those in the lowest Social Class Groups of 5.3

## Variations in levels of Sporting Capital by social class



# ‘External barriers – what are they and how do they relate to Sporting Capital?’

- External barriers are exactly that – they exist independently outside of the individual
- External barriers and constraints are factors that “intervene between preference and participation”. They serve to either mediate or prevent participation.
- Examples of ‘external barriers/constraints’ are: availability of resources – money, time (demands of work , family and social care), facilities (quality and access) geography.
- Barriers are relative – the level of sporting capital a person has impacts on their perceptions of barriers and resilience to them
- What is an insurmountable barrier to someone with low sporting capital may not even be noticed by someone with high sporting capital
- Barriers can chip away at sport capital slowly over time or can have a catastrophic impact

# Quality of experience – how does it relate to Sporting Capital

- People are motivated to take part in sport because it is enjoyable
- Positive experiences are influenced by a wide range of factors that includes the physical (e.g. quality of facilities) and social environment (the people you mix with and who operate a service)
- Having higher levels of sporting capital increases the potential to have an enjoyable sporting experience – it opens up opportunities for self expression and mastery
- A positive experience can build sporting capital and a negative one can reduce it – the depreciation of sporting capital from negative experiences can be a slow drip drip drip one or traumatic.
- When the fun stops participation stops

# How to build Sporting Capital

## Individuals with low sporting capital (1 to 3)

- Minority market for National Governing Bodies
- Priority market for those concerned with health outcomes
- Require high intensity one on one support
- Primary focus is usually psychological factors (self esteem/ identity/ confidence)
- Emphasis on relatively low 'technically demanding sports'
- Will not respond well to highly competitive environments
- Focus on task orientation and improvement
- Emphasise open enjoyment and fun
- Introduction (first impressions) crucial must be welcoming and non threatening
- Build supportive social networks
- Group sessions with people on similar levels of sporting capital
- Single gender sessions likely to be important for girls
- Role models are likely to come from peers 'people like myself'
- Success measured by adherence to the programme and ultimately movement into Sporting Capital level 4 plus

# How to build Sporting Capital

## Individuals with medium sporting capital (4 to 7)

- Likely to be a core market for sports development
- Respond well to barrier reduction e.g. opportunities at the right cost
- Psychological factors related to self esteem and self confidence must not be taken as a given – require positive reinforcement
- May respond well to relatively low levels of competition – but need to be mixed with personal improvement and mastery of basic skills
- Some will respond well to being coached and with right support may be fast tracked into performance pathway
- Mixed gender sessions are a possibility- but should be with others on similar levels of sporting capital
- Build camaraderie and use existing friendship networks
- Family connection in sport may be particularly helpful for early years teenagers
- Success will be measured in levels of retention and progression to the 8 plus Sporting Capital Group

# How to build Sporting Capital

Individuals with high sporting capital (8 to 10)

- The focus here is on retaining sporting capital levels
- This is a core market for National Governing Bodies
- This population is relatively self sufficient in terms of having a high probability of meeting their own sporting needs
- Participation for this group must not be taken for granted
- Life stage is an important factor impacting on the participation of this group
- At the lower end of the spectrum (score of 8) they are more prone to dropping out if life circumstances get in the way
- Opportunities should be focused on ways to get back into sport after a life transition break
- The focus for this group is on 'participation maintenance'
- Continue quality experiences will help reinforce their already positive attitudes towards sport
- It is amongst this group that the potential Olympic and paralympic champions of the future are likely to be identified