

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 2¹

What is the relationship between Sporting Capital and participation in sport and why does it matter?

Introduction

This Resource Sheet explores the relationship between levels of Sporting Capital² and participation rates in sport. It explains how a Sporting Capital Index was created that rates an individual's level of Sporting Capital on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). It goes on to show how the probability of participating in sport increases as levels of Sporting Capital increase and to examine the relative influence of the different domains on overall levels of Sporting Capital. The implications for public policy and practice are summarised.

What is Sporting Capital?

Sporting Capital is analogous to the theory of Human Capital and may be defined as:

“The stock of physical, social and psychological attributes and competencies that support and motivate an individual to participate in sport and to sustain that participation over time”.

It is a theory that can help us to better understand and explain sporting behaviour across individuals, communities and populations. More information about the nature of Sporting Capital and its important characteristics is provided in **Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 1**

The creation of a Sporting Capital Index

The theory of Sporting Capital has been empirically tested using population level data collected through the Active People Survey (APS)³. Sporting Capital is made up of three domains – the 'Physical', 'Psychological' and 'Social'. There are many different ways that Sporting Capital could be measured. The questions included in APS (see Figure 1 below) were designed to provide one way of establishing reliable 'markers' of people's position in relation to each of these domains – and in combination an index of their overall level of Sporting Capital. The results enable us to paint a fascinating picture of the social landscape of sport in

¹ This Resource Sheet was prepared by Nick Rowe with analytical support from Oliver Norden at TNS-BMRB. It was commissioned by StreetGames and published in April 2013.

² Read Resource Sheet 1 to understand how Sporting Capital is defined, its characteristics and why it is important for public policy and practice.

³ Data was used from Sport England's Active People Survey. The analysis in this report is carried out on the household survey sample collected in APS6 (October 2011 to October 2012) of the APS6 survey period. The sample size used in this analysis was 4,527 cases. For more information about the Active People Survey see: http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx

England that provides insight and understanding that could fundamentally change how we view public policy for sport in this country.

Figure 1: Questions included in the Active People Survey

Physical Domain

During the past 4 weeks, to what extent has your physical health interfered with your normal social activities with family, friends, neighbours or groups?

During the last 4 weeks how much did physical pain interfere with your normal work (including both work outside the home and housework)?

I would like to ask you about your abilities and skills and how you would rate yourself compared with people of your own age and gender (General sporting ability and skills; Mobility/flexibility; Strength; Stamina; Running speed; Agility/balance; Hand eye co-ordination)

Psychological Domain

I am going to read out a number of statements and for each one, I would like you to tell me to what extent it is true for you. (I am a sporty person; I would feel a real loss if I was forced to give up playing sport or from ever taking part in sport in the future; I feel completely confident and at ease in situations where people take part in sport or exercise activity; I would be confident about the appearance of my body when taking part in sport or exercise activity.)

I would now like to ask you about how confident you are that you would still take part in sport when other things get in the way. How confident are you that you would still take part in sport when.... You are under a lot of stress; You feel you don't have the time; You have to take part alone or without your regular playing companions; Your partner does not want you to take part; Its cold, raining or snowing

Social Domain

To what extent do you agree with the following? Most of my family members regularly take part in sport; Most of my friends regularly take part in sport; Many of the people I work most closely with regularly take part in sport; While at secondary school I regularly took part in organised sport outside of school lessons

The Sporting Capital Index (SCI) is a composite measure of an individual's Sporting Capital on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being low and 10 being high (at times the Index is collapsed into a five point scale but the same principle applies). The Index is constructed from answers to question items across three domains, the Physical, Psychological and Social domains. The modelling underpinning the creation of the Index is complex⁴ – but put simply it seeks to optimise the combined power of the measures to explain variations in the probability of someone participating in sport at threshold levels of *at least once a week for 30 minutes moderate intensity*⁵.

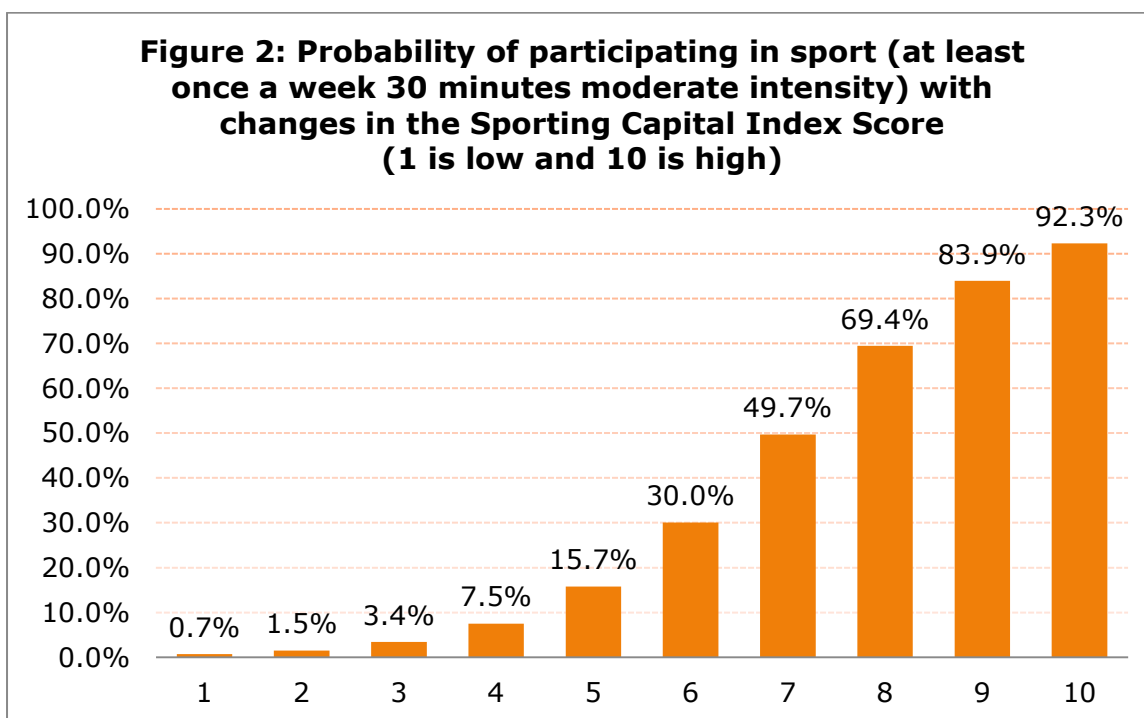
⁴ See the Technical report published separately

⁵ The definition of sport is the same as that used by Sport England. It includes a wide range of fitness related activities but excludes walking

How much more likely are people to participate in sport with increases in their levels of Sporting Capital?

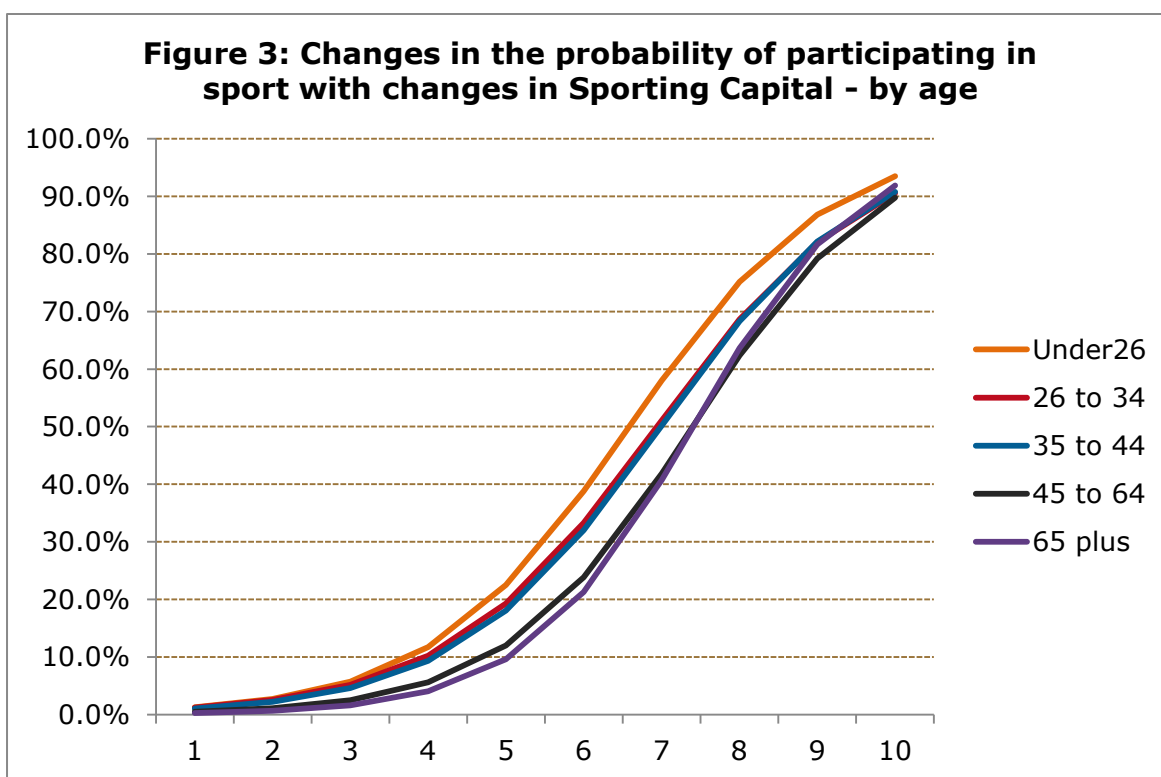
The evidence from the Active People Survey provides empirical support for the relationship between levels of Sporting Capital and rates of participation in sport. The higher the level of Sporting Capital the higher the probability that someone will participate regularly in sport (at least once a week for 30 minutes moderate intensity) and the lower the level the higher the probability of sedentary behaviours and drop out (i.e. of not participating). In fact the relative odds of participating are on average 2.3 times higher with each increase of one Index point in the Sporting Capital score.

Figure 2 shows changes in the probability of participating in sport with changes in the Sporting Capital Index score.



The relationship between levels of Sporting Capital and participation is not a linear one. As the Sporting Capital Index (SCI) scores increase the probability of participating increases more steeply. The biggest increases are seen between a SCI score of 5 and 6 where the probability of participating jumps from 15.7% to 30% and between a score of 6 and 7 where the probability jumps from 30% to 50%. It is between a Sporting Capital score of 7 and 8 that the probability of participating regularly in sport exceeds the probability of not participating (i.e. is greater than 50%).

Further analysis shows that there are subtle differences in the relationship between participation and Sporting Capital with age. Figure 3 shows how the probability of participating at different levels of Sporting Capital changes with age. Although the general shape of the relationship is similar for all age groups the younger age groups have a higher probability of participating at any given level of Sporting Capital than do their older counterparts. This is particularly the case in the mid range levels of Sporting Capital (Sporting Capital Index scores of 5 to 8). These results suggest that as people get older the relative impact of barriers to participating get higher – and hence require a higher level of Sporting Capital to overcome. The good news is that the returns in terms of increased participation are greater for smaller increases in Sporting Capital amongst the young than the older age groups.



The relationship between Sporting Capital and participation – the implications for public policy and practice

This Resource Sheet shows that there is strong empirical support for the relationship between regular participation in sport and levels of Sporting Capital. Put simply – if those designing and delivering public programmes and projects can demonstrate that they have increased levels of Sporting Capital amongst their targeted participants they can say with confidence that they have increased the number of regular sports participants. More specifically the results show that the biggest potential gains for public policy is to shift those with Sporting

Capital levels of 5 and 6 to levels of 7 and 8. Beyond this – the theory would suggest that there is more to be gained from these shifts than a short term increase in participation. For example a move from a Sporting Capital level of 5 to one of 8 would result in both immediate short term increases in participation and the prospects of longer term sustained behaviour change as individuals' capacity and motivation to participate increases and they become more resilient to external barriers and obstacles. Further the theory would suggest the possibility of a positive feedback loop being created with increased participation building further Sporting Capital and increased Sporting Capital in turn increasing participation. The results also suggest that young people's participation is more sensitive to changes in Sporting Capital than older people – and that increases in Sporting Capital amongst the young will deliver bigger immediate increases in participation than the equivalent increase would for older age groups.

ⁱ This is the second in a series of eleven 'Sporting Capital Resource Sheets'. The Resource Sheets are organised in way that move from the general to the more detailed and specific. The common thread is the theoretical concept of Sporting Capital and its application to public policy and practice.

Each individual Sheet has been designed to be freestanding and to make sense in its own right – the series of Sheets has been designed to provide a logical progression that builds knowledge and understanding about Sporting Capital, its characteristics, the relationship it has to participation in sport, its distribution in the population, its variation across different social groups and its potential to influence and shape future sports policy and practice.

The Sheets have been purposefully designed to be succinct and selective rather than long and comprehensive. Each should leave the reader with an interest to think further about Sporting Capital as an idea and what it may mean for their work in sports development whether at the higher strategic levels of policy making or delivering localised programmes on the ground.

All the analysis in the Sheets draws from empirical data collected by Sport England's Active People Survey (6). The analysis in these Resource Sheets is carried out on the household survey sample collected in APS6 (October 2011 to October 2012) of the APS6 survey period. The sample size used in this analysis was 4,527 cases. For more information about the methodology see the full Technical report available from StreetGames.

These Sheets build on earlier thinking and analysis in work carried out for StreetGames and available in the following publications:

Sporting Capital – a new theory of sport participation determinants and its application to 'Doorstep Sport' Nick Rowe, Sport Research Consultant, September 2012, A report commissioned by StreetGames

Part 1. What is Sporting Capital and how can its principles be applied to create a new generation of sustained sports participants?

Part 2. The Sporting Capital Index – exploring the levels of Sporting Capital in the English population and its variation across different social groups.

The following Sheets are available in this series:

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 1: Sporting Capital – what is it and why is it important to sports policy and practice?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 2: What is the relationship between Sporting Capital and participation in sport and why does it matter?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 3: Are we a sporting nation – what are the levels of Sporting Capital in England?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 4: Sporting capital and gender – mind the gap

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 5: Sporting capital and inequality – does social class make a difference?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 6: To what extent do levels of Sporting Capital impact on the frequency of participation and vary by the type of sport people play?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 7: Sporting Capital and ethnicity

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 8: Sporting Capital amongst the young – a focus on 16 to 25 year olds

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 9: Sporting Capital - why it is important to public policy – a strategic perspective

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 10: Doorstep Sport - building Sporting Capital to increase participation in sport – applying the theory to practice

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 11: Sporting Capital – testing and applying the theory - future research requirements.