



# WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN GOLF

## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND GOLFMARK

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Aims

This research was commissioned by the EGU and R&A in 2010. The aims of the research project were threefold:

- 1) To review the academic literature on barriers to participation in sport, especially golf;
- 2) To survey clubs, members and nomadic golfers to describe their perceptions of GolfMark and the issues it intends to address;
- 3) To gather in-depth data from a range of golf clubs to help understand how different club cultures may lead to the exclusion of underrepresented demographic groups.

### Headline findings

Three different yet related studies were undertaken, each of which was designed to satisfy one of the aims listed above.

#### 1. Systematic review on barriers to participation and social exclusion (pp. 9-10)

- Class status is the most important determinant of participation in sport, as powerful groups (usually white, middle-class men) try to maintain 'class homogeneity' especially in 'prestige' activities.
- Historically, golf clubs have selected and segregated members in order to preserve the 'distinction' of the privileged few.

#### 2. Surveys of clubs, members and nomadic golfers re: GM (pp. 13-15)

- Club secretaries and managers felt that GM had its greatest impact on 'gaining funding' and 'creating links with schools'.
- Only 30.6% of members were aware of GM, and 76.1% did not know if their club had GM or not. However, all members felt that the issues addressed by GM were important, especially the creation of junior and beginner-friendly environments.

#### 3. Case studies of golf club cultures, exclusion and approaches to GM (pp. 21-29)

- Clubs who maintain traditional structures, reinforce exclusive cultural conventions and employ key personnel who actively resist change are also unlikely to make progress with GM.
- Rich, exclusive clubs are insulated from the economic forces that are driving change in smaller clubs who must adapt or die.

## Recommendations

Based on the information in this report, a series of policy recommendations can be made with respect to widening participation in golf in general, and to the revision of GM in particular.

### WIDENING PARTICIPATION

1. Although class is the main determinant of participation, changing the class status of golf clubs depends on a long-term and sustained effort to reduce costs, offer a wider range of memberships and change the stereotypical perceptions of golf as a middle-class sport. Engaging young people from urban and working-class backgrounds in clubs will help challenge such stereotypes. Continued support of Golf Roots, particularly those schemes that aim to smooth the transition from schools to clubs (Tri-Golf, Golf Extreme, Street Golf etc.) will be important in achieving this objective.
2. Engaging more girls in golf is dependent on them having early positive experiences in female-only environments (i.e. with same-sex peers). This type of experience, if undertaken with friends, will help girls develop a sporting identity, which is vitally important to their sustained participation, particularly through adolescence where dropout is likely.
3. In order to go beyond 'gestural' policy and appointments, golf's governing structures (including county and club committees) need to ensure that minority ethnic individuals are represented in prominent decision-making positions.
4. Golf clubs need to be encouraged to remove, as far as possible, selective joining processes and dress codes as they undoubtedly present very real barriers to beginners.

### REVISING GOLFMARK

1. As part of the ongoing rebranding of GM, a clear argument as to the long-term economic impact of increasing junior membership, in particular, needs to be made. This could take the form of an extended forecast that details how increasing junior members would affect a club's 'bottom line' over, say, a 10-year period.
2. The number of questions in the GM application should be reduced as far as possible. In line with this, a variety of best-practice case studies could be created to illustrate how different types of club have managed to get the best out of GM.
3. Those club pros and coaches who lack the confidence and skills to deliver golf sessions to beginners outside of the club environment are potentially blocking clubs from applying for GM. In such cases, clubs could support their resident pros in at least two ways: first, by accessing relevant coach education; and second, by appointing an assistant or volunteer coach with the skills and desire to take on external, beginner-level coaching.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Participation in golf is in decline. According to Sport England's Active People Survey (APS), the number of people participating regularly (>once a week) in golf has fallen from a high of 948,300 in 2008 to a low of 860,900 in late 2010. In addition to this downward trend, golf's participation demographic has been shown to be somewhat skewed towards old, white males in higher socio-economic groups. This can be seen clearly by comparing golf's participation profile to the profile of regular sports participants in general (as shown in the final two columns in table 1 below).

Table 1. Participation in golf by demographic group compared to general sports participation

Demographic variable	APS 3 2009 Golf (% of regular golfers)	APS 4 2010 Golf (% of regular golfers)	APS 4 2010 all sports (% of participants)
Female	15.5	14.8	39.8
16-34	15.0	17.9	49.0
55+	53.5	51.2	16.1
Non-white	2.4	2.2	11.3
Limiting disability or illness	6.8	9.8	8.5
NS-SEC 1-4	69.1	59.4	42.5

Although the number of female participants is falling, it is encouraging to see that, with the most recent survey, more young people are becoming involved in golf and that more people from lower socio-economic groups are participating (though this statistical change may be explained by the wider economic context with rising unemployment and falling incomes). However, despite some encouraging signs, golf participation still remains heavily skewed when compared to other sports.

One of the EGU's responses to this situation is GolfMark (GM): a scheme that aims to reward golf clubs for promoting beginner- and junior-friendly environments through the provision of coaching and the development child protection and equality policies. Although GM is a variation of Sport England's ClubMark scheme, which has been in operation since 2002, no research exists on the impact of such policies on the culture of clubs or the extent to which they facilitate changes to breadth and quality of participation. Given this background, this research project was framed around three main questions:

- 1) What are the historical-cultural forces that have led to low participation among women, young people, minority ethnic groups and the working classes in golf?
- 2) What impact is GolfMark having in terms of widening participation in golf clubs?
- 3) What barriers remain to the successful implementation of GolfMark?

The first of these questions was addressed through a systematic review of literature on barriers to participation in, and social exclusions from, sport (especially golf). The findings from this review are reported in **chapter 2**. The second question was addressed through a series of surveys to golf clubs, their members and nomadic golfers in three County Golf Partnerships (CGPs), the results of which are reported in **chapter 3**. The third question was addressed through in-depth case studies of three different types of golf club in a single county. This study is reported in **chapter 4**.

## 2. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW: BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

This review describes the findings of 17 academic articles that focus on barriers to participation in, and social exclusion from, sport (especially golf). The full methodology of the review – explaining how the search terms were defined, what databases were used, how initial returns were limited, and how relevant information was extracted – can be found in appendix A. The chapter is organized in four sections: the first focuses on **class and socio-economic** barriers; the second on **gender** discrimination in sport; the third on **ethnicity** and its impact on participation; with a final section that draws together the arguments and considers the possible **mechanisms of social exclusion in golf**.

### 2.1 Class and leisure

Although class is an emotive political concept, sociologists have been quick to point out that, despite claims by successive political leaders, class still exists in British society and has a very real impact on people's access to, and choices about, sport and leisure (Bairner, 2007). Seven of the studies in the review (Stoddart, 1990; Burton et al., 2003; Bairner, 2007; Cronin, 2009; Vamplew, 2010; Ceron-Anaya, 2010; Lunn, 2010) focused on class and how people from different socio-economic groups are excluded from, or more likely to become involved in, certain sport and leisure practices. The findings from these studies are summarized in the four sub-sections below.

#### 2.1.1 CLASS IS THE MAIN DETERMINANT OF LEISURE CHOICES

Class status, and the capital (of various forms) that comes with it, plays an important role in determining life opportunities. Indeed, one of the main findings from the literature is that class is *the* main determinant of sport and leisure behaviour (Bairner, 2007; Lunn, 2010; Collins, 2010). Unlike sex and ethnicity – explicitly physical variables that can be legislated for – class has a more pervasive influence over leisure choice because some activities are simply too expensive for some. Lunn (2010) and Stoddart (1990) argue that equipment and facilities in some sports (both mention golf specifically) present brute economic barriers to working class people. In the same way, the location of facilities – especially where large open spaces are required – is a further class-related barrier to some sports (Burton et al., 2003). Lunn (2010) also found that level of education is a significant determinant of sports participation (especially in individual sports), a variable that is strongly and historically correlated with class or socio-economic status. Moreover, the softer socio-cultural characteristics that are determined by class – i.e. friends and contacts, knowledge and skills, physical appearance – also heavily condition the kinds of sports and activities young people 'choose' to participate in, especially in late adolescence (Coakley & White, 1992; Lunn, 2010).

#### 2.1.2 CLASS STATUS IS ESTABLISHED AND REINFORCED THROUGH CHILDHOOD

Research on *who* plays sport, particularly the social histories and class situations of sports participants, is very much in its infancy (Cronin, 2009). However, there is sufficient research to suggest that a person's class status and related behaviour patterns are firmly established in childhood (Burton et al., 2003). Children are born into situations and families where access to cultural and economic resources is pre-determined. Their subsequent access to education, schooling, leisure pursuits and so on are therefore limited largely by their inherited class status. It should also be made clear that, beyond the plain economic variables that determine class (as in the NS-SEC system of categorization common in national statistics), a person's access to other kinds of 'capital' – such as their friends and contacts, their education and skills, and their appearance or

even clothes – also defines and limits their class situation (Bairner, 2007; Burton et al., 2003). For example, even if a young person had sufficient money to participate in, say, sailing, without parents and friends with previous experience, without some knowledge of the sport, and without the correct equipment and clothing, they would be very unlikely to even consider trying it. In summary, research suggests that we have very little choice over our class status and that, after adolescence, we have very little chance of changing our respective class situations. Put simply, class becomes engrained in the body.

### **2.1.3 THE DESIRE FOR CLASS EXCLUSIVITY MAINTAINS BARRIERS**

Once a person's class status has been established, one of the main ways through which it is maintained is through participation in activities with people of similar status. Cronin (2009) suggests that sport and leisure pursuits have historically acted as vehicles for maintaining class solidarity as they enable people to sustain social networks and 'fit in' with a lifestyle representative of their class status. Two historical studies by Vamplew (2010) and Ceron-Anaya (2010) explore this process specifically in golf. Drawing on extensive archive material, both studies argue that golf clubs were established by the middle-classes in Edwardian times, particularly by men of similar professions, as exclusive environments that would allow the members to gain social distinction (i.e. to separate themselves from the lower classes). Golf clubs introduced and enshrined into their constitutions a series of exclusionary policies and practices designed to "preserve the socio-economic and racial homogeneity of the [club] community" (Ceron-Anaya, 2010). This led to a social system that excluded the working classes whilst enabling the rising middle-classes to create strong social bonds, and even develop business relationships. Historically then, the desire for the middle- and upper-classes to distinguish themselves from the working classes led to policies and practices that, over time, became barriers to both social mobility (i.e. classes would not venture beyond socially defined boundaries), and to participation in certain sports (i.e. those sports that enabled the middle-classes to demonstrate their greater cultural sophistication).

### **2.1.4 EXCLUSIVE LEISURE ACTIVITIES ACT AS STATUS SYMBOLS FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES**

Following from the previous point, Burton et al. (2003), Stoddart (1990), Vamplew (2010) and Ceron-Anaya (2010) all suggest that aim of such systems and practices is the demarcation and maintenance of an exclusive and prestigious lifestyle. Those from higher socio-economic groups see sport participation, and especially club membership, as part of a broader lifestyle of 'conspicuous consumption' (Burton et al., 2003; Vamplew, 2010). That is to say, the explicit participation in activities that are obviously expensive, time-consuming and enjoyed by others of similar status enable the middle- and upper classes to maintain the distinction between themselves and the working classes. Specifically in golf, Vamplew (2010) and Ceron-Anaya (2010) suggest that the historically embedded systems of private member governance and clandestine admission procedures enabled the middle classes to preserve their superior social status and increase their social mobility through the golf club. Being a member of private club – be it golf, sailing, tennis or cricket – enabled gentlemen (usually) to develop relationships and conduct business with like-minded individuals whilst simultaneously demonstrating their superior taste and social standing.

## 2.2 Gender and leisure

There is extensive literature on the relationship between gender and leisure choices or sports participation. Six of the papers included in the review focused on gender (Hargreaves, 1990; Coakley & White, 1992; van Ingen, 2003; McGinnis & Gentry, 2006; Arthur et al., 2009; van Tuyckom et al., 2010). As with the previous section, most of the papers discuss *processes* of discrimination and disadvantage rather than barriers per se. The common findings and ideas are summarized in the three sub-sections below.

### 2.2.1 PARENTS AND SAME-SEX PEERS INFLUENCE GIRLS' LEISURE CHOICES

Unlike some sports, because there are no physical reasons why women should participate less in golf, the reasons for their marginalization are likely to be sociological (McGinnis & Gentry, 2006). The first important factor is the role played by parents and same-sex peers in the socialization of girls into sport. Coakley & White (1992) have argued that the early development of sporting identity is instrumental to decision making later in life. In order to develop a sporting identity – where a girl sees herself as a challenge-seeking and sporty person – girls need social support from both parents and same sex friends, especially around late childhood and early adolescence (Coakley & White, 1992; McGinnis & Gentry, 2006). With unsupportive parents (likely to be inexperienced in sport themselves) and friends, girls often find the initial movement into sporting environments too intimidating and unrewarding to maintain participation (Coakley & White, 1992). So, without initial positive experiences and social support, even determined and interested girls will often be unable to maintain participation long enough to develop a sporting identity.

### 2.2.2 MALE DOMINATION OF SPORT IS DEEPLY ROOTED

By far the most common theme in the literature on gender and sport is the all-pervasive nature of male domination. The extent of this male domination is highlighted by van Tuyckom et al. (2010) and Hargreaves (1990), both of whom argue that the gap between male and female participation is greater in sport than in any other field of human culture. More specifically, Hargreaves (1990) suggests that male domination in sport is the result of a complex and subtle set of interactions between men and women, or *patriarchal relations*, which have become historically embedded within sporting institutions. Evidence of patriarchy in golf is discussed by McGinnis & Gentry (2006) who argue that domestic and childcare expectations have meant that women have not had time to participate in golf because of the time required to play. Additionally, Arthur et al. (2009) have discussed how the spatial layout of golf courses trivializes women by categorizing tees as champion, regular, or women's (i.e. women are effectively labeled 'irregular'). Interestingly, Arthur et al. (2009) also compared the distances between female tees and greens in different US states and found that courses in republican or conservative states placed the women's tees significantly closer to the greens than did courses in democratic states. A similar point has been made by van Ingen (2003) concerning the gendered spaces of sporting clubhouses, which are often 'off-limits' to women. Further examples of embedded patriarchal relations in golf are cited by McGinnis & Gentry (2006) who interviewed a series of professional and amateur players. They found that women at all levels of the game had suffered territorial discrimination (i.e. being rushed or hit into by men), verbal discrimination and generally felt less able and less confident as a result. In short, many studies have found that there exists in sport, at all levels of organizations, a strong 'old boys' network' that make it very difficult for women to bring about change in the patriarchal relations that continue to form a barrier to participation.



### **2.2.3 WOMEN AND GIRLS FAIL TO RESIST DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES**

Perhaps the most difficult and worrying theme in the literature is that many women fail to recognize, and therefore fail to resist, the discriminatory practices they are subjected to. This point is inherent in Hargreaves' (1990) notion of a 'male hegemony' in sport since the concept of hegemony implies that disadvantaged groups will often actively support the very ideas and practices that are causing their marginalization. In this way, Coakley & White (1992) found that most young women accepted a form of 'protection' (enacted by parents) that limited their participation in sport to passive spectating. "Resistance to traditional cultural practices" Coakley & White (1992: p. 33) concluded, "was minimal". Whilst this partly explains why the male hegemony in sport has been so resistant to change (Hargreaves, 1990), it offers little comfort to policy makers. Indeed, in the conclusion of their extensive European study, van Tuyckom et al. (2010) argue that 'overcoming gender inequalities in sport requires prior, synonymous changes at cultural, political and societal levels'. By way of example, they point out that the EU states with the highest female participation in sport are those with long histories of social-liberal politics and strong welfare systems (i.e. Scandinavian countries).

## **2.3 Race, ethnicity and leisure**

It has been convincingly argued that 'race' is socially constructed and refers only to people's stereotypes of how 'racial' groups may exhibit certain genetic predispositions that make them inferior or superior to others in certain areas. For this reason, the term 'ethnicity' is better suited to this discussion as it refers to the shared cultural (and sometimes religious) characteristics of specific groups of people, which are easier to define and better explain differences in leisure participation. Four of the studies included in the review focused on race and ethnicity in sport (Lashley, 1995; Jarvie & Ried, 1997; Hylton, 2005; Spracklen et al., 2006). The main themes are summarized in the sub-sections that follow.

### **2.3.1 MINORITY ETHNIC CHILDREN SUFFER RACIAL STEREOTYPING IN SCHOOL**

As with women and girls, the marginalization of minority ethnic groups starts in school. Lashley (1995) makes a threefold argument as to how racial stereotyping operates for young black people. First is the 'role model' argument, which states that the only successful role models for black children are in music and sport – activities that require either rhythm or physical prowess (i.e. *not* academic activities). Second is the 'colonization' argument, which states that certain sports – especially sports that require low economic investment and high levels of speed and power – become colonized by minority ethnic groups (e.g. boxing and basketball). Third is the 'filtering' argument, which states that teachers, believing the stereotypes that certain 'racial' groups are better at particular activities, actively direct minority ethnic children into stereotypical sports. This process then becomes reproductive, as the next generation of young minority ethnic people grow up to become successful boxers, cricketers or footballers (i.e. role models), and the myth is perpetuated (Jarvie & Ried, 1997).

### **2.3.2 SPORTS OF HIGH ECONOMIC INVESTMENT ARE EXCLUDED DOMAINS FOR MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS**

Just as low economic investment sports are 'colonized' by minority ethnic groups, so high investment sports, such as tennis and golf, become "excluded domains" for the same groups (Lashley, 1995). In their comprehensive review of previous literature, Jarvie & Reid (1997) suggest

that race relations are a particular type of what they call ‘established-outsider’ relations. This refers to a situation where a less powerful group has fewer chances and is excluded from “high power potential positions” (i.e. administrative and management positions) by those groups with historically established positions (Hylton, 2005). In most cases this means middle-class, white males are in decision-making positions in sport; positions they exploit to maintain control over who plays and who doesn’t. In this respect then, the exclusion of minority ethnic groups in sport can occur at two levels: first, from teachers, coaches and peers who simply recycle racial stereotypes, unwittingly filtering young people into certain activities and away from others; and second, from policy makers and administrators who actively prevent minority groups from taking control over higher management positions (Hylton, 2005).

### **2.3.3 GENERIC EQUALITY POLICIES HAVE BEEN INEFFECTIVE IN COMBATting RACISM**

Following from this final point, Spracklen et al. (2006) have argued that the UK government’s attempts to bring about racial equality in sport, through generic policies like the Equality Standard, have largely failed. In their comprehensive two-stage review of the implementation of the Racial Equality Standard and the Equality Standard, Spracklen et al. (2006) suggest that, beyond the presentation of policy, most NGBs had made “zero progress” and that the Standards had had “no impact in real terms” (p. 298). In summary they argue “all the evidence suggests that little attempt has been made to formally monitor and manage diversity beyond the production of equity policies and the gestural appointments of equality officers” (p. 301). In explaining this failure, both Spracklen et al. (2006) and Hylton (2005) suggest that achieving true cultural change in sports organizations is impossible without a fundamental redistribution of power at all levels. And, without minority ethnic faces and voices in the ‘established’ positions in many organizations, no real change (beyond gestural policies and rhetoric) should be expected.

## **2.4 Common mechanisms of social exclusion in golf**

A number of the 17 papers in the review discuss mechanisms of social exclusion in golf specifically. It is therefore possible to outline potential answers to the first main research question stimulated by the skewed data in table 1:

*What are the historical-cultural forces that have led to low participation among women, young people, minority ethnic groups and the working classes in golf?*

### **2.4.1 PEOPLE OFTEN FACE MULTIPLE MODES OF EXCLUSION**

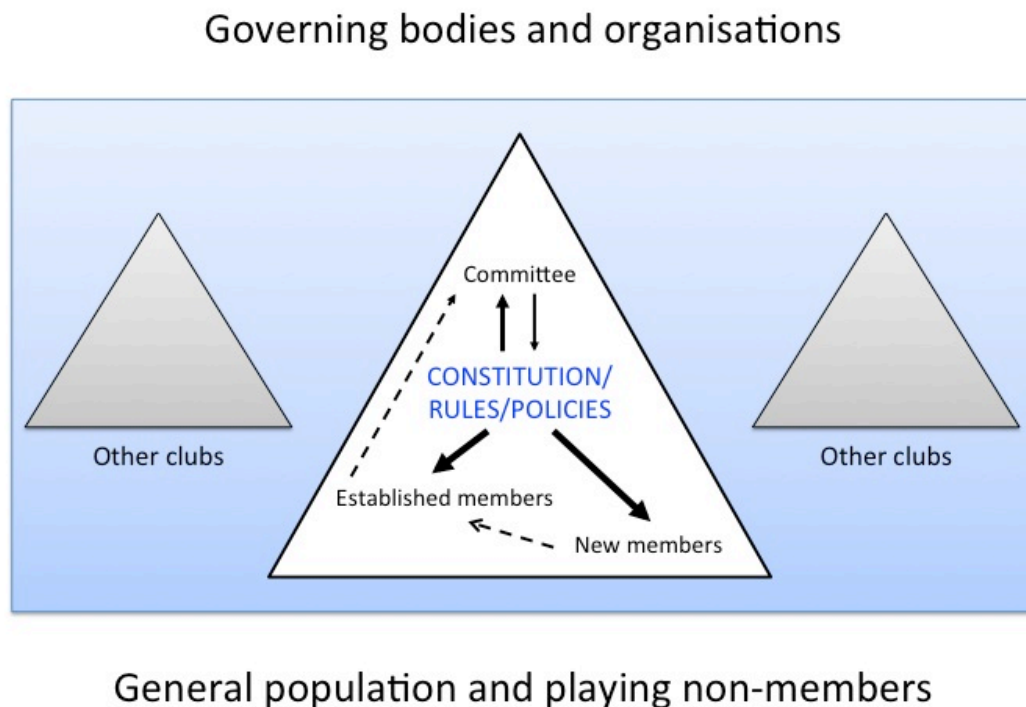
A common theme in the literature on social exclusion from sport is that class, gender and ethnicity often combine to form complex modes of multiple discrimination. A number of the papers in the review (Coakley & White, 1992; Burton et al., 2003; van Ingen, 2003; Vamplew, 2010) argue that it is important to understand the nature of the interaction between these variables in order to properly understand social exclusion from sport. In simple terms, the more excluded or powerless groups one belongs to, the greater the degree of marginalization one is likely to experience. However, the specific mechanisms through which stereotypes are established, through which domination is secured, and through which people begin to reinforce their own powerless and marginal positions needs to be subjected to closer, micro-level analysis.

#### 2.4.2 EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES ARE HISTORICALLY EMBEDDED IN GOLF CLUBS

Since the inception of the first private members' clubs in the late nineteenth century, golf clubs have created and maintained constitutions, policies and practices that aimed to preserve the cultural homogeneity of the membership (Vamplew, 2010; Ceron-Anaya, 2010). Practices such as the nomination and selection of members, the segregation of spaces and playing times, and the creation of separate artisans clubs are illustrative of institutions that sought to preserve an elite (white, male, middle-class) membership that could benefit financially and socially from meeting over a game of golf. More recent studies in the USA suggest that similar practices occurred elsewhere in the world and that they are, indeed, still in operation. The active marginalization of women, especially (the 'class' system in the US is less advanced), is evident in studies that discuss women's experiences of golf.

The sociological theories drawn on by many of these studies conceptualize sports as fields in which 'cultural reproduction' is common. In this sense, sports clubs in general, and golf clubs in particular, tend to operate as closed societies in which new members are slowly socialized into an environment with well established cultural norms, policies and acceptable practices (e.g. dress codes). As members spend more time at the club, they learn to follow and to enforce the rules (written and unwritten) and may perhaps, with time, graduate to committee positions where they may play a role in creating new rules and policies. However, due to the long apprenticeship necessary to gain entry to decision-making positions, nobody is ever likely to question the status quo and bring about any real cultural change (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Cultural reproduction in golf clubs



Moreover, because clubs have traditionally been autonomous institutions, defined almost by their independence from other clubs and from governing bodies (Houlihan, 1991), advice and pressure coming from outside the club (from above or below) is easily dismissed. Sports clubs, in short, are inherently conservative institutions that are often controlled by white, middle-class, middle-aged men who, intentionally or unintentionally, govern in the interests of their own social group.

#### **2.4.3 RESEARCH ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN GOLF IS LARGELY HISTORICAL**

A final important point needs to be made to qualify and conclude the review. Many of the studies that have discussed social exclusion in golf are either dated (Stoddart, 1990), historically orientated (Cronin, 2009; Vamplew, 2010; Ceron-Anaya, 2010) or concern the clubs in the USA (Arthur et al., 2009; McGinnis & Gentry, 2006). As such, the tentative hypotheses derived from this review are based on limited information. So, although the studies are methodologically robust, and the archival material they draw on is accurate, they cannot provide a comprehensive and current picture of barriers to participation or modes of social exclusion in golf in England. Empirical research needs to be carried out to determine the extent to which these hypotheses hold in golf in England today.

### 3. PERCEPTIONS OF GOLFMARK

GolfMark is the EGU's interpretation of ClubMark, a policy response to New Labour's landmark *Gameplan* strategy, the central aim of which was to widen participation in sport (DCMS, 2002). In this respect, every incarnation of ClubMark is explicitly or implicitly designed to make sports clubs more receptive to new and diverse members. However, despite the range of responses to ClubMark across sports over the last 9 years, no published research exists to help us understand the impact of such schemes 'on the ground', either on clubs that hold accreditation or on club members themselves – the purported beneficiaries of the policy.

The second of the three aims of this project was therefore to explore perceptions of GolfMark across three different CGPs. Specifically, the overarching research question directing this part of the study was as follows:

*What impact is GolfMark having in terms of widening participation in golf clubs?*

In order to answer this question, a series of surveys were formulated and sent to every club in each of the three sample CGPs. The three CGPs were selected in order to reflect the diversity of approaches to county-level governance in golf across England. The responses to the survey were therefore more likely to be representative of national responses.

Table 2. Summary of CGPs selected for the survey study

CGP	No. of clubs	Maturity (as a CGP)	% of GM clubs
BB&O	109	Well established	28%
Lincolnshire	56	Recently formed	20%
Bedfordshire	23	Embryonic	22%

A full explanation of the methodology for the survey part of the project – including how the surveys were created, the pilot procedure, the method of distribution and analysis – can be found in appendix B.

### 3.1 Clubs

The clubs survey was sent to club secretaries or managers via email through CGDOs. They were asked to complete two short sections: the first gathered data about the club; the second gathered data about their perceptions of the impact of GolfMark on the club environment. The overall return rate for the clubs survey was 12.8%, which, though disappointing, reflects a normal return for such a survey.

Table 3. Sample characteristics of clubs returning the questionnaire

Variable	Number	Percent
Total clubs	24	100
Clubs in BB&O	7	30.4
Clubs in Beds	6	26.1
Clubs in Lincs	10	43.5
Thinking about GM	3	13.6
Working towards GM	5	22.7
GM accredited	13	59.1
GM High achiever	1	4.5

Table 3 (above) describes the sample of clubs that returned the questionnaire. There was a fairly even split across the three counties, though the return from BB&O was poor given the number of clubs in the area. More than half of the clubs returning the questionnaire were already GM accredited. This may be due to the fact that many secretaries and managers, during follow-up phone calls, assumed the survey was *only* for GM clubs even though there was nothing in the survey to suggest this.

The data analysis that follows describes responses to the 'Impact of GolfMark' questions. The first table (table 4) provides an overview of all responses and the second table (table 5) presents different responses based on GM status.

Table 4. Perceptions of the impact of GM

Question	Mean*	Std. Dev.
Access to CPD	1.91	.668
Access to funding	2.26	.752
Attracting volunteers	1.55	.596
Increasing juniors	1.83	.887
Beginner friendly	1.70	.974
Links with schools	1.96	1.022
Loyalty of members	1.26	.541
Links with EGU	1.83	.717
Average of all responses	1.80	.5334

\* Scale: 1 = No benefit; 2 = Some benefit; 3 = Significant benefit.

The final row in table 4 (Average of all responses) shows that, in general, club managers and secretaries perceived GM to have a marginal impact. The only areas in which they thought GM

would have a clear impact were “Access to funding” and “Links with schools”. The standard deviation figures are of interest here too, since the relatively small figure for “Access to funding” suggests that the responses were tightly grouped (i.e. most people answered in a similar way). However, the large SD figure for “Links with schools” suggests a broad spread of responses with some clubs answering very positively and others negatively.

Table 5. Perceptions of the impact of GM with and without GM

Question	With GM (14)		Without GM (8)	
	Mean*	SD	Mean	SD
Access to CPD	1.79	.802	2.00	.000
Access to funding	2.43	.514	1.88	.991
Attracting volunteers	1.43	.646	1.71	.488
Increasing juniors	1.79	.699	1.75	1.165
Beginner friendly	1.57	.852	1.75	1.165
Links with schools	1.86	.864	2.00	1.309
Loyalty of members	1.21	.426	1.38	.744
Links with EGU	1.79	.579	1.75	.886
Average of all responses	1.74	.672	1.80	.688

\* Scale: 1 = No benefit; 2 = Some benefit; 3 = Significant benefit.

Table 5 (above) compares the responses of clubs with and without GM status. The most interesting finding here is that clubs without GM judged the impact to be greater than those who had accreditation (see final row “Average of all responses”). The three rows highlighted in green are the only areas where clubs with GM perceived a greater impact, and here only “Access to funding” was significantly different (2.43 vs. 1.88).

These findings suggest that clubs are perhaps a little disappointed with GM once they achieve GM status, perceiving little tangible impact, except with respect to accessing funding. This finding can be interpreted more effectively with the assistance of the qualitative data from the case studies in section 4 (below).

### 3.2 Members

The members survey was sent to club secretaries and managers via email through CGDOs. The secretaries and managers were asked to send an email link to all members if their club policies permitted the sending of third party information. The survey again consisted of two short sections: the first gathered data about the individual (their age, sex, membership status). The second section split into two further sections after an initial question about their awareness of GM: if they answered YES (they were aware of GM) they were asked questions specifically about its impact; if they answered NO (they were not aware of GM) they were asked similar questions that didn't explicitly mention GM. It is impossible to calculate return rate in this case, as the total number of members across the three counties is not known.

Table 6. Sample characteristics of members

Number of respondents	134	
Age	18-50 years old	32.1%
	50+ years old	67.9%
Sex	Male	77.6%
	Female	22.4%
Children	Have children	78.2%
	Child age >21	68.3%
GolfMark	Aware	30.6%
	Unaware	69.4%
Club has GolfMark	Yes	12.7%
	No	11.2%
	Don't know	76.1%

Table 6 (above) describes the sample of members returning the survey. The age and sex of the members is consistent with the general population of golfers (see table 1, p. 3) and, as an elderly cohort it is not surprising that the majority have adult children. Just under a third of respondents were aware of GM, though three quarters didn't know if their club had GM or not. This suggests that whilst some members have a broad awareness of GM, very few are sufficiently interested to enquire about GM in their own clubs.

Table 7. The impact and importance of GM according to members

Tangible impact* (Club has GM)		Importance** (No or Don't know)	
Area	Percent	Area	Mean
Junior/beginner friendly	70.6%	Junior/beginner friendly	3.59
Child protection	35.3%	Child protection	3.52
Coaching and playing	82.3%	Equity	3.29
Equity	52.9%	Links with EGU	3.04
Don't know	17.6%	Coaching	3.30
		Nationally accredited	3.12

\* Responses recorded as "yes" or "no".

\*\* Scale: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Important; 4 = Very important.



The two main columns in table 7 (above) describe responses of the two main cohorts in the sample: first, the cohort who knew their club had GM; second, the cohort who either knew their club didn't have GM, or didn't know at all. The first cohort were asked questions about *impact* of GM in specific areas and replied with simple YES or NO answers. The second cohort were asked questions about the *importance* of these factors to the quality of the club environment and answered on a 4-point Likert scale.

With respect to impact, members suggested strong positive impact of GM “Coaching and playing” in the club (82.3%) and on creating a “Junior/beginner friendly” environment (70.6%). With respect to importance of GM issues, members felt that *all* of the issues were important to golf clubs. However, they specifically marked out the issues of “Junior/beginner friendliness” and “Child protection” as especially important. This might be expected given the high percentage of the sample that had children.

In order to explore this phenomenon in more detail, the second cohort was split again into those with and without children. The results of this analysis are described in table 8 (below).

Table 8. Importance\* of GM for members with and without children

Area	Has children	No children	Diff.
Junior/beginner friendly	3.63	3.55	0.08
Child protection	3.51	3.24	0.25
Equity	3.33	3.28	0.05
Links with EGU	3.09	2.97	0.12
Coaching	3.37	3.07	0.30
Nationally accredited	3.21	2.79	0.42
Mean	3.36	3.15	0.20

\* Scale: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Important; 4 = Very important.

In all areas, the members with children regarded GM issues to be of greater importance. However, the issues they considered to be of significantly greater importance were, unsurprisingly, in “Child protection” and “Coaching”. They also thought it important that clubs become nationally accredited. This final point is interesting since this cohort didn't know if their clubs had GM or not.

In summary, the findings suggest that, even though members are generally unaware of GM and rarely know if their club is accredited or not, they believe the issues addressed by GM are important. This suggests that members would perhaps be more engaged with GM if they knew more about its aims and benefits.

### 3.3 Nomadic golfers

Nomadic golfers are obviously much more difficult to contact than clubs and members. However, after a series of meetings and discussions with development staff, it was decided that a three-fold strategy would help get the best return rate.

- 1) Send email link to electronic survey to clubs and ask to forward to societies that have used the club recently.
- 2) Send email link to golf superstores to circulate to customers.
- 3) Distribute through the personal networks of the research team.

As an incentive to complete the survey, PING kindly donated 5 new Hybrid clubs as prizes for a free draw, into which everyone who completed the survey would be entered.

The actual questionnaire was virtually identical to the members survey, though in this case the nomadic golfers were asked about their membership of sports clubs in general and about their awareness of ClubMark (as well as GM).

Table 9. Sample characteristics of nomadic golfers

Total number of respondents	92	
Age	18-21	2.2%
	22-30	15.4%
	31-40	20.9%
	41-50	30.8%
	50+	30.8%
Sex	Male	68.5%
	Female	31.5%
Children	Have children	67.4%
	Child age 0-10	49.0%
	Child age 11-21	51.0%
Sports club member	Yes	30.4%
	No	69.6%
GolfMark (GM) aware	Yes	16.7%
	No	83.3%
ClubMark (CM) aware	Yes	6.7%
	No	93.3%

Predictably, when compared to members, a smaller percentage of nomadic golfers were aware of GM (16.7%) and even fewer were aware of CM (6.7%). Compared to the sample of members, the nomadic golfers were a little younger on average and not as many had children. Of those that had children, their children tended to be younger than the children of the members.

The main comparative analysis undertaken with the data was to compare the cohort who was aware of GM and/or CM with the cohort who had no awareness of Kite marks. Table 10 (below) summarizes this analysis.

Table 10. Importance of GM/CM issues by awareness

Issue	GM/CM aware		Not aware	
	Mean*	SD	Mean*	SD
Junior/beginner friendly	3.93	.258	3.55	.622
Child protection	3.80	.561	3.41	.807
Equity	3.67	.393	3.33	.684
Coaching	3.53	.640	3.37	.632
Displaying accreditation	3.00	1.000	2.68	.896
National accreditation	3.20	1.014	3.05	.769
Mean	3.52	.644	3.23	.734

\* Scale: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Important; 4 = Very important.

Again, somewhat predictably, those who were aware of GM/CM considered the issues they address to be of greater importance than those who had no awareness. However, as with the members survey, *all* of the respondents, regardless of awareness, considered every issue to be important to an effective sports club. In particular, the creation of “Junior/beginner friendly” environments and “Child protection” were considered to be *very important*, to an even greater degree than the members of golf clubs.

It is a little unexpected to see such positive endorsement of the importance of such issues to sports clubs, especially considering that just less than a third of the group were members of clubs. The data to show, however, that most people consider it important that sports clubs in general, and golf clubs in particular, are open, friendly, safe, equitable and effective environments.

## 4. QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES

In order to answer the third and final research question posed in the introduction (see below), and to follow-up on some of the interesting yet enigmatic findings from the first two parts of the project, some in-depth case studies of golf clubs were planned.

### *What barriers remain to the successful implementation of GolfMark?*

The initial plan was to conduct two case studies in each of the three CGPs, but, due to problems with the research personnel in BB&O and Bedfordshire, three clubs from Lincolnshire were eventually selected. The selection of case studies was based on two different criteria:

- 1) The three clubs should be at different stages of the GolfMark process (with, without and working towards).
- 2) The three clubs should be representative of clubs nationally (as far as possible).

In order to satisfy the second criteria, it was necessary to generate a typology of clubs in England, which could be used to classify individual clubs. This was achieved through a 'market segmentation' process, a technique now commonly used to create typologies of participants in sport (e.g. Sport England's 19 segments derived from the Active People Survey data).

### 4.1 Selecting the sample: a segmentation of golf clubs

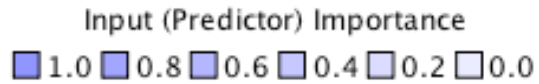
The data set on which the market segmentation was based was the EGU's 2010 Annual Membership Survey. A range of variables were 'fed' into SPSS (version 19) and subjected to a series of trial segmentations (or 'two-step cluster analysis', in technical terms) to determine which variables would return the most robust solution. It was important that the analysis used variables (or questions) that had been answered by most clubs so that the size of the sample could be maximized.

Following this process, the variables used for the final segmentation were:

- 1) Annual adult male membership fee  
(additional analysis showed that this variable was significantly positively correlated ( $P < 0.05$ ) with joining fees and also with female and junior annual membership fees)
- 2) Percentage of male members
- 3) Percentage of female members
- 4) Percentage of junior members
- 5) Number of processes required to become a member

A two-step cluster analysis was then performed which generated a clear three-segment solution and categorized most of the clubs in the data set into one of three types. Figure 2 (below) describes the three segments and details the average values of the variables in each.

## Clusters



Cluster	1	2	3
<b>Label</b>	Cheap male clubs	The typical club	Exclusive family clubs
<b>Description</b>	Male dominated golf clubs for serious players. Basic facilities outside of the golf course. Relatively simple application process.	The 'average' golf club, with mostly male members and two to three application hurdles.	Expensive and exclusive clubs that promote family memberships. Complex application process.
<b>Size</b>	29.1% (247)	64.0% (544)	6.9% (59)
<b>Inputs</b>	PercMaleMem 85.50	PercMaleMem 69.37	PercMaleMem 53.70
	PercJunMem 4.58	PercJunMem 8.21	PercJunMem 12.65
	PercFemMem 9.71	PercFemMem 15.19	PercFemMem 23.26
	AdMaleFee 520.15	AdMaleFee 771.89	AdMaleFee 1068.63

Figure 2. Overview of the segmentation analysis of clubs

Figure 2 (above) shows the three segments, which were labeled descriptively as “cheap male clubs”, “typical clubs” and “exclusive family clubs” respectively. The row marked “size” provides numerical and percentage figures to illustrate how many clubs are in each segment. The four rows marked “inputs” provide mean values for the key variables.

#### 4.1.1 THE THREE SEGMENTS

**CHEAP MALE CLUBS** are so labeled because they have the highest percentage of male members and relatively few female or junior members. They are also approximately £200 per year cheaper than average (see table 11 below) and have 1.73 joining processes or membership hurdles. Just under a third of clubs can be classed in this segment.

**TYPICAL CLUBS** are so called because they closely follow the mean values for the whole sample in each of the main variables (see table 11 below). Around two thirds of clubs can be classed in this segment.

**EXCLUSIVE FAMILY CLUBS** are so labeled because they have the highest percentage of female and junior members – much higher than the overall sample means. They also have the highest number of joining processes or membership hurdles (1.96) and cost, on average, over £300 more per year than the average club. However, this segment only represents around 7% of all clubs in England. It could be hypothesized that these are hotel or country club based resort courses that are exclusive by nature and where people are more likely to buy family memberships.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for the overall sample (number of clubs: 843)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Members	17	2700	541.44	290.3
% Male Members	0	100	73.03	14.0
% Female Members	0	100	14.54	9.5
% Junior Members	0	100	6.75	6.9
Male membership fee	19	3970	713.66	386.7
Membership hurdles	0	4	1.77	1.0

#### 4.1.2 CASE SELECTION AND DATA COLLECTION

Following this analysis, the first and second authors surveyed the full list of clubs in Lincolnshire and the two main selection criteria were considered. Although it wasn't possible to select three clubs the fit the selection criteria perfectly, the final three cases chosen were reflective of the range of clubs in the county and were in different stages of the GM process (see table 12 below).

Table 12. Overview of the three case study clubs

Club	GM Status	Segment	Comments
A	Without	Typical/Exclusive	Proprietary, long history (100+ years), relatively expensive for the area.
B	Working towards	Typical	Private members, built in 1970s, average price for area.
C	High achiever	Cheap male	Proprietary, new club (last 10 years), cheap with no joining processes.

A consistent method of data collection was adopted for each case study. First, one-to-one interviews were convened with: 1) the manager/secretary; and 2) the club professional. Focus groups were then convened with: 3) a group of male members; 4) a group of female members; and 5) some junior members and the club's junior organizer. Every interview was recorded and transcribed

verbatim. The data were then analyzed qualitatively and themes were created that best summarized the responses of the research participants. All of the primary data collection was undertaken by the second author, a club professional with over 25 years experience playing and coaching golf in the county. This experience enabled him to gain access to clubs and also to 'blend in' to the environment during the visits. It also enhanced the rapport with secretaries/managers and coaches, in particular, which is important for gathering authentic and trustworthy data.

## 4.2 Case study A: traditional club

As noted above (see table 12), club A is a well-established proprietary club; relatively expensive for the area; is not working towards GM and has an ageing membership. Throughout the interviews with the manager and coach, it was clear that, although the club has aspirations to modernize and 'move forward', key people lack the knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to make this happen.

### 4.2.1 CLUB STRUCTURES

Although key personnel thought the club was moving forward, and that some of the club structures, such as joining processes, were changing, there was still a lingering sense that the club had some standards to maintain. As the manager explained:

We always used to have a joining fee but we have stopped that now. Equally at that time 10 years ago there were waiting lists and when you joined you needed a proposer and seconder. For the past 2/3 years we have had a lot of people into [the club] from down south, new to golf, so we have a system where we have an interview with the captain and president and myself and we will decide whether they get in or not. (Manager A)

So, although things are changing in the club – they are having to 'move with the times' to a degree – a selective joining process is still in operation. Moreover, as the club professional explained, there were also some more basic structures that helped keep beginners away:

I do not think we are a beginners club; we are not set up for beginners. Our course is difficult and quite expensive... (Coach A)

So, when asked explicitly about starting the GM process, the manager was understandably wary and made excuses as to why the club wasn't trying too hard to change its structures:

Researcher: So Have you looked at the form that goes with GM?

Manager: Not particularly no, only that we need someone fired up to get stuck in and go for it, either me or if we had a pro active professional...that is the driving force behind any club, and between these four walls this man has been here too long – 40 years odd – and he will not make his mind up when he wants to go, he is past his sell by date basically. (Manager A)

Structures such as expensive membership fees, difficult playing conditions and selective joining processes were paralleled by similarly exclusive cultural conventions.

### 4.2.2 CULTURAL CONVENTIONS

Again, most club members and personnel felt that the culture of the club was becoming more modern and open to change. However, there were a number of examples where personnel expressed a desire to 'maintain standards', especially in dress code and on-course etiquette.

The dress code has relaxed and I feel it is more modern, although I do feel that there needs to be standards within the club, I do not wish to see an 'anything goes' approach, although some rules such as shorts in the clubhouse seemed over the top. (Coach A)

Members echoed such sentiments, with many feeling that strict standards in dress and etiquette were important in maintaining the 'appropriate' culture in a club.

I got told off about it [dress] when I first came here so I found out the hard way but that's ok. You learn. In the interview you need to be formal so people know the basic etiquette. At my last club that aspect of it was terrible: half the players did not have a clue. (Male member A)

A number of the members also made references to cliques in the club, something that made it more difficult for juniors and beginners to fit in and feel part of the community.

Researcher: And how integrated do you feel now?

Male member: No not very welcome. It is a cliquey club and if you don't fit you are out. It has continued: when I joined I was 9 handicap and now I am not as good. (Male member A)

We are not accepted. There are too many little cliques at the club: people don't mix and there is stigma [about junior players]. (Junior member A)

It was clear, therefore, that despite a movement away from some of the more serious and explicitly exclusive cultural conventions, restrictive dress codes and social practices remained which some members felt were necessary, whilst others found them exhausting.

#### **4.2.3 EVERYDAY PRACTICES**

These cultural conventions became manifest in the everyday practices of the club. Specifically, women, juniors and beginners all related examples of practices that they felt left them feeling like 'second class' members.

We are still regarded as second-class citizens though. You go and look at the ladies locker room and then look at the gents: theirs is so much better. (Female member A)

We won the junior league last year and we thought that would make us more accepted but it seems that only half the club have recognized our achievements. (Junior member A)

Just look over there at the space near that putting green. A junior, and I know it's a junior, has taken 12 big divots out and left them un-repaired. That sort of thing does not do the majority a favour at all: they [seniors] think *all* juniors do that stuff. (Junior organizer A)

Feeling undervalued or not recognized was a common theme among female and junior members in the club. It was clear that the older, male members with lower handicaps were the dominant party and didn't feel like the women and juniors contributed much.

#### **4.2.4 RESPONSES TO CHANGE**

In response to the ongoing financial crisis, changes to fees, policies, dress codes and membership profiles are have been commonplace in golf clubs over the past few years. Given the historical structures and lingering cultural conventions in club A, many found difficulties with such changes. As the club manager explained:



The old stagers did not want the changes but they have got to realise that it's about getting people playing golf and getting them to have a few drinks to keep the money coming in as much as we can. There is nothing more embarrassing than when grandkids come in and we have to refuse them. (Manager A)

A reluctant or grudging acceptance of cultural change seemed to be common among members. When asked explicitly about what had changed in the club and why, some members struggled to pinpoint exactly what had happened.

Woman A: What has changed Marilyn? I am trying to think what has changed and I can't. Nothing has changed since I came here.

Woman B: The shift of power I suppose has changed, in the women's section towards the younger people.

Woman C: Yes that is what I meant. There is a shift. People are now listening and realising they must change if the club can move forward. (Female members A)

Interestingly, both the manager and professional seemed to struggle most with the notion of doing things differently in the club. In the excerpts below they express their consternation with what they clearly feel are unnecessary changes being imposed from above, both of which are aimed at widening participation in golf.

We've got this damn equality act and we are in the process of coming up to date and we should let them [women] play any time. They should have priority on ladies' day, which they do, but they also want to play when its men's comps... (Manager A)

I certainly wouldn't go into schools delivering to large groups of children of any age. It is not my style. I'm not bothered and I don't have the skills to do that. (Coach A)

So, in summary, although club A was moving forward in some ways, many of the structures, cultural norms and daily practices maintained an exclusive and elitist culture in the club that was reinforced by some members and certainly not challenged by key staff. Given these circumstances, it would be very difficult for such a club to begin the GM process, and even harder to change some of the deep-rooted cultural practices that are alienating to beginners (and also women and juniors).

### 4.3 Case study B: club in transition

As noted in table 12 (p. 20) club B, a private members' club, is very much typical of the area: built in the 1970s, priced competitively and with a largely male membership (with very few juniors). It was clear from the visits that club B had 'turned a corner' two years ago, having nearly gone out of business, which was partly the impetus behind their present drive to modernize, attract more juniors and ultimately to achieve GM.

#### 4.3.1 CLUB STRUCTURES

Compared to club A, club B has gone further in changing its structures to become more junior and beginner friendly. For example, the joining process had been significantly revised over the previous two years, as two members explained:

Your application went to the board, if I remember, and if they thought you would be a good member they would let you in via interview. I think when you got to the interview stage you were normally accepted; it was rare that people got turned away. (Female member B)

These days we have collective meetings of all new members, so not an interview as such but a chat to let them know what is going on and who is who at the club. (Male member B)

Similarly, the club had scrapped its joining fee and created a series of membership options in order to attract a wider range of members. In addition to this, the club understood the importance of getting a strong junior organizer to develop its junior section.

Over the last few years the juniors have been neglected a bit and there has been no one in place to look after them, the role has been voluntary and we are changing that hopefully to a paid position to improve things. (Secretary B)

So, although key structures in the club were changing, they hadn't quite gone as far as they wanted in terms to developing the female and junior membership. This change was also reflected in the cultural conventions at the club, though not all members agreed about the direction of travel.

#### **4.3.2 CULTURAL CONVENTIONS**

With respect to the 'friendliness' of the club, a number of members compared the club to others they'd played at, or to how the club had been some years ago, and suggested that club B had become more open and accommodating.

The whole club is more open now than it used to be. Once upon a time ladies and juniors would be frowned upon, that's for sure, and only be allowed to play at certain times of the day. But that is not the case now. (Female member B)

I also play at [club x] and I just keep my head down there as I know it's quite a strict club and I do that so I don't get noticed in any way. I stick by the book, that's what I do. (Junior member B)

I like this club. There is very little backbiting, which I have experienced in some places. It's friendly and no one tries to be the boss. (Male member B)

Such comparisons were common in the interviews with members and staff, suggesting that people generally thought they were moving in the right direction, at least compared to other clubs in the area and to how the club used to be. Some members did suggest, however, that there remained in the club a 'hard core' of 'dinosaurs' who tried to maintain control of the club and prevent a number of reforms from getting through committee. One example concerned the prospective appointment of a new coach to work with juniors. The coach was qualified but not a PGA pro, which was a problem for some:

It's a no brainer for me: it has to be a PGA pro. I have a 9 handicap and he has a 12 at [club x] so why should he coach kids? It's best if you get someone coaching who can play as well as coach. The benefits of a PGA pro are great. They can show a passion for the game and that will rub off on kids. You can't just go to night school and get the badges; you have to do it properly. (Male member B)

It is unclear to what extent this culture of elitism remained in the club, but in a private members' club such attitudes are certainly a barrier to the club making progress with GM. In addition to some of this 'lingering stuffiness' (as the secretary called it), the junior members were unanimous in their belief that the dress code remained too strict, especially in the clubhouse.

In the clubhouse I would like to wear flip-flops but I'm not allowed which I think is wrong. What's the problem? I am relaxing after a round and that's what I choose to wear. (Junior member B)

Such incredulity was expressed by the other juniors, but they also understood (and in one case appreciated) the importance of an on-course dress code – with the exception of the long socks rule! And, although the dress code was insufficient to deter any of the current juniors from playing, they did suggest that golf has an old and stuffy reputation among their friends who ridicule them for playing “an old man’s sport”. Ancient dress codes may therefore be a barrier to some young people engaging with golf.

#### **4.3.3 EVERYDAY PRACTICES**

As with club A, the cultural conventions at the club were manifest in everyday practices. One interesting tension noted here concerned juniors and the extent to which they had freedom to play on the course. The club pro, for example, thought that the club was going down blind alley in recruiting juniors, who, in his view, contributed little to the club other than ‘clogging up the course’ for the adult (paying) members. Similarly, a male member expressed his concern that juniors wouldn’t know how to play properly and would need guidance:

We can offer the sessions on the range as well as the course and will focus on etiquette and rules as well as playing. They will know how to behave by the end of sessions. (Male member B)

I enjoy the freedom to play pretty much whenever you like. (Junior member B)

The juniors, however, seemed oblivious to this tension and simply expressed how much they liked the free and open nature of the club (as they currently experience it). Clearly, this is a common issue in modern golf clubs and one that is not easily resolved. As the coach explained:

It is really difficult getting the mix of starters and experienced players of any ages playing on the same course at same time. There is bound to be conflict and problems. (Coach B)

#### **4.3.4 RESPONSES TO CHANGE**

This tension between juniors and full paying adult members was referenced frequently in the interviews. As noted above, the club pro felt that the ‘big push’ to bring in juniors and achieve GM was misguided and made his opinions on the matter clear:

The club is struggling for members and they are gonna let people join that don’t pay a penny... that can’t be good. And they are gonna piss people off in the process... To be perfectly honest I have no interest in that form of golf [school taster sessions]. It’s useless. No one wants to be there and the kids don’t carry on. Seems like we are ticking boxes for everyone else and not doing what we want to do. That can’t be right. (Coach B)

Such views held by key personnel were clearly holding the club back from making progress on its GM application. However, this was not lost on the secretary who had plans in place to introduce an assistant pro who would drive the GM process forward by taking on schools and beginner coaching.

On the members’ part, most noticed the tension but felt that the ‘old guard’ were losing the battle for control of the club. They also noted that juniors were very much the future of the club and that, with more juniors, some of the negative stereotypes around golf would start to change.

They [juniors] would be treated well. And although some are intolerant to ladies and beginners they are in the minority. Some need to look at their own game before criticizing others! (Male member B)

It is gonna take time for traditions and beliefs around golf to change - you must be rich to play, drive a jaguar and wear Pringle clothes – but by having more juniors certain stigmas will slowly disappear over time. (Male member B)

In summary, club B was clearly in transition: moving away from a rigid membership structure and towards a more open and junior-friendly environment. As with club A, some key personnel and older members seemed to be holding things up, but the financial reality of waning membership and recent near closure meant that the reform agenda was accepted by most as necessary.

#### 4.4 Case study C: modern ‘feeder’ club

Club C, as outlined in table 12 (p. 20), is a cheap pay-as-you-play type of course, managed in a very business-like way by the club manager. The club earned GM high achiever status two years ago and prides itself on its open and beginner-friendly environment.

##### 4.4.1 CLUB STRUCTURES

Compared to clubs A and B, club C has very different management structures and policies: more like a modern health club than a golf course. Specifically, the club has no restrictions on joining and has more pay-and-play users than full members. In addition to its 18-hole course, the club has a driving range, equipment superstore and restaurant on site. As a proprietary club, the manager runs the business on clear economic imperatives and makes decisions without the encumbrance of a committee. This was evidently an advantage when it came to applying for GM.

All the things that are expected from GM we can do straight away, whereas they [private clubs] would have to go to the committee and seek approval. And then anyone that does not like something can bosh it, whereas here we have the control over that and can get it through quicker. (Coach C)

As a GM high achiever, club C has developed strong links with the local and regional golf development structures and reflected on the extent to which this helped them secure GM and attract new members (especially women).

I found the whole process of filling the forms and pushing it forward quite easy. When I did have difficulty Kelly from the EGU helped me out, and she was very helpful, and Shona (CGDO) helped if needed as well. I did not find it frightening but I know clubs that have and do find it frightening.

The ladies can join the blue tee club and start to play very easily. We will do what we have to do to increase ladies’ participation and hope they carry on... We plan on giving them 6 lessons and then showing them round the club and explaining what is on offer and that is where [CGDO] would get involved. We use lady members to then come and meet the new ones and show them that it is easy to start. (Manager C)

Compared to the two non-GM clubs, club C clearly has good relationships with relevant people in the golf development world and has produced policies and schemes specifically to widen its membership in key areas. What was striking was the confidence with which the club approached such issues, particularly when compared to others clubs who were quick to cite problems with difficult members, committees, lack of knowledge and skills and lack of key personnel.

The members also explained how the lack of joining restrictions made it easier for the club to bring in new members. In general, most members thought this was a benefit, though one male member clearly felt that the pay-and-play members were given undue precedence on the course.

At a proper club we would have to be proposed and seconded, as I have at previous clubs, and then have an interview that would highlight the sort of player you were and what you know about the game, that is at the more expensive clubs. At this club we do not have that sort of formal approach it's just pay and go on. (Male member C)

Structurally speaking then, club C seemed to have clear direction and leadership and an established ethos of being a beginner-friendly environment (sometimes at the expense of the established members). The coach noted that club's ethos and policies meant they were well placed to benefit from GM, unlike some other clubs he'd been at.

At previous clubs it was not the same: high fees, no range, whereas here we can go cheaply so that should not put people off – I think places like this will get better results from GM than the bigger more expensive clubs. (Coach C)

#### **4.4.2 CULTURAL CONVENTIONS**

In keeping with this ethos, the club is also very modern and open in its cultural conventions. Specifically, the club has no real dress code and had few concerns about traditional on-course etiquette.

There is no dress code here. I am trying to think... they have a board up on first tee and they have to wear golf shoes, so there is a dress code, but there are quite a few guys that play regular that wear jeans. (Manager C)

A lot of players here do not know or care about etiquette. There are lots of divots and unrepaired pitch marks out there... the better clubs still have some control systems to check who is playing. We don't have that here. (Male member C)

Although some male members expressed some concerns about this perceived lack of 'standards' they accepted (albeit reluctantly) that this was what they had signed-up for. It was interesting that the male members often referred to the club in comparison to "proper clubs" or "better clubs", suggesting that there was something improper or unusual about this brand of golf club.

Despite some minor concerns however, everyone was clear about what kind of club they were at. They also explained how the culture of the club made it more accessible, especially for beginners and juniors.

I have seen people start then bring in their friends and spread the word for us when they know what sort of place we have got here: open and friendly. (Coach C)

My experience [of joining] here was that everyone seemed friendly and helpful and an easy group to get on with. But I have been to clubs that are snobby and those clubs keep the snobyness and stigma alive. (Junior member C)

This attitude to beginners prevailed and was obvious in the everyday practices on the course. In one interview with the male members they discussed how they were in the process of organizing a friendly competition against some of the junior members.

#### **4.4.3 EVERYDAY PRACTICES**

Again, with specific reference to the juniors on the course, there were mixed views on how the club dealt with potential problems. The established male members cited examples of selfish and unruly behaviour on the part of juniors and beginners:

When they pay a green fee or learn to play here, we have to put up with all kinds of bad behaviour all the time: club throwing, dress, scuffing the greens, divots, pitch marks etc. I am on the committee but I do not go over and ask them to stop. I let them do what they want. It is not my job to challenge people - that is for the owner to do, which a lot of the time he does not bother. (Male member C)

It was interesting to note the deference to the manager in this case, which demonstrates the extent to which the manager maintained control over who played and on-course behaviour. Two other members – a junior and an adult male – gave further clues as to who had the power within the club.

I organised a charity day and some of the teams had to wait before teeing off as some people [pay and play] went off in front of them, which was embarrassing. What you need to know is that people learn the game here and members have little say what goes on. (Male member C)

When you play here do you have equal playing rights on the tee? Junior: Yeah in fact we get better treatment than some adults! They respect us and let us through if they are slow when they are playing. (Junior member C)

It is clear, therefore, that the financial imperative to bring in new members, to be beginner-friendly and to keep players at the club for secondary spend were the governing principles of club C.

#### **4.4.4 RESPONSES TO CHANGE**

Very few of the interviewees discussed problems with affecting change in the club. As noted previously, the management structure, coupled with the open ethos and culture, led to an environment that changed quickly to maintain pace with the demands of modern golf and modern golfers. This situation was discussed by the manager:

Clubs have to tailor themselves to get members and do what they have to do to keep going. When you have a really good club with a large membership they feel that they can make and keep old rules. But when clubs do not have a joining fee or low subs then members can leave and move somewhere else quite easily. The exclusive clubs can set their own rules in a way... (Manager C)

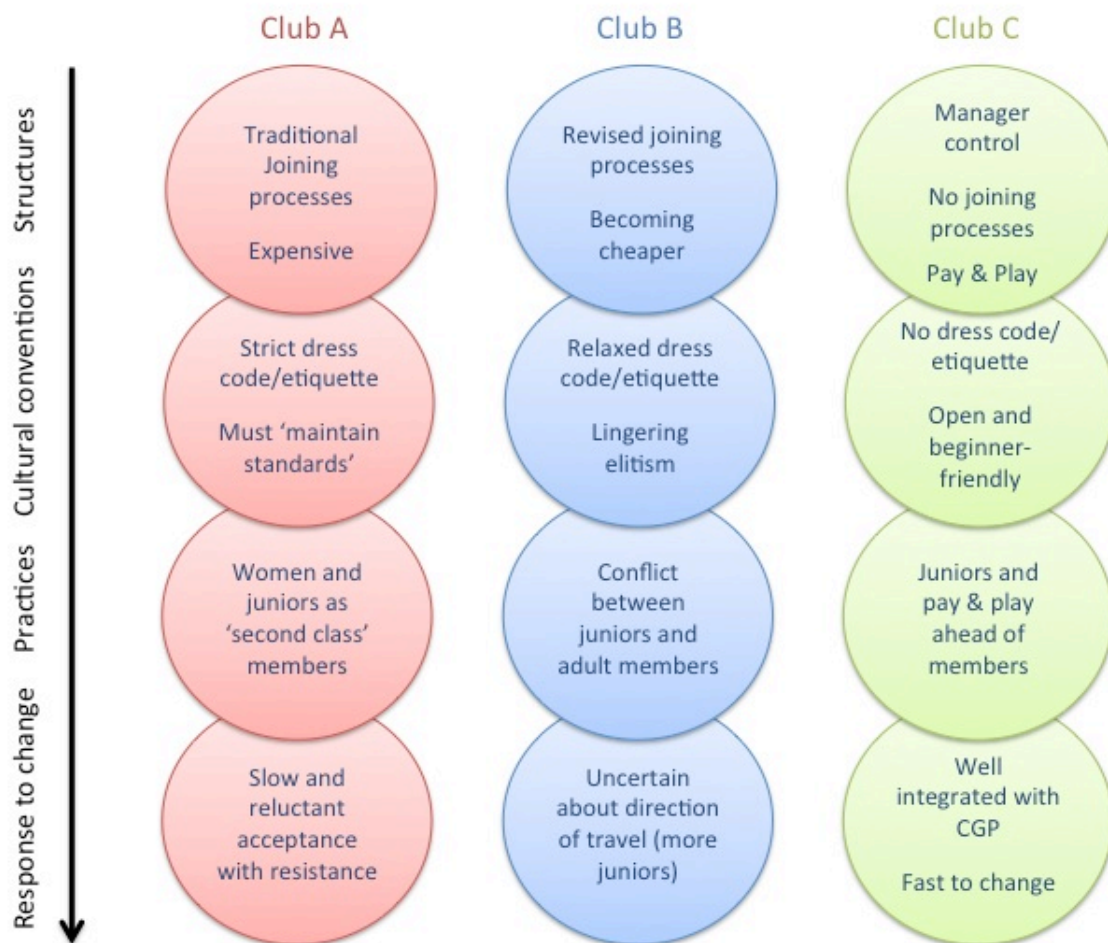
These two brands of golf – the old, secure rather insulated brand and the new, reactive, quickly changing brand – are nicely illustrated by clubs A and C respectively. Whilst some exclusive clubs will undoubtedly retain members and traditions, those who are more exposed to the financial crisis will have to change quickly to remain in business.

## 4.5 Structures, cultures, practices and responses to change

Following sociologists like Bourdieu (1992), the broad method of analysis here was to consider the formal structures in operation in clubs – management structures, joining processes, fees and such like – and how they impact on the less explicit cultural conventions that govern everyday behaviour and, ultimately, dictate how members and key personnel respond to change imposed from outside (e.g. from the wider socio-economic environment, or from national governing structures like the EGU and EWGA). This analysis has revealed how three different clubs, in the same geographical area, are dealing with the changing landscape in English golf and their varied approaches to GM.

To summarise the chapter, figure 3 (below) illustrates the three case studies in abstract, highlighting the main differences in their structures, cultures, practices and responses to change.

Figure 3. Outline of the three case studies



In answering the third research question (what are the barriers to attaining GM?), this analysis suggests that clubs who maintain traditional structures, reinforce exclusive cultural conventions and employ key personnel who actively resist change are also unlikely to make progress with GM. Such clubs also assume they can do little to attract new members, and that juniors (in particular) are 'more trouble than they're worth'. There is, in short, no real desire to become beginner-friendly and such clubs fail to see the long view: that everyone has to start somewhere.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research aimed to investigate barriers to participation in golf and also to develop an understanding of how golf clubs perceive, and struggle to implement, GolfMark. The project consisted of three main parts, each of which aimed to answer a specific research question.

### 1) What are the historical-cultural forces that have led to low participation among women, young people, minority ethnic groups and the working classes in golf?

Following a systematic review of 17 academic papers on barriers to participation in, and social exclusion from, sport, the following conclusions were drawn:

- People often face multiple modes of social exclusion, though the most important determinant of sports participation is social class, which is engrained from an early age and difficult to change after adolescence.
- White, middle-class men tend to hold powerful positions in sports organization and both actively and covertly limit opportunities for disadvantaged groups.
- Those in relatively powerless positions – women, children, ethnic minorities, working classes – often fail to recognize the ways in which they are marginalized from certain sports.
- In golf, exclusive management systems and joining processes have operated historically to keep working class and minority ethnic groups out of golf clubs and to marginalize women within clubs. The extent to which these processes operate at the present time is not known.

### 2) What impact is GolfMark having in terms of widening participation in golf clubs?

Three surveys were conducted with clubs, members and nomadic golfers across three CGPs (BB&O, Beds, Lincs). The surveys had modest return rates but relayed some important information concerning the perceived impact and importance of GM.

- Secretaries and managers of clubs *with* GM believed that it had its greatest impact on gaining access to funding and developing links with schools. However, clubs *without* GM believed its impact would be greater than did clubs *with* GM.
- Around two thirds of members were not aware of GM and only a quarter were aware that their club had GM accreditation. However, most members thought that the issues addressed by GM (especially ‘creating a junior/beginner-friendly environment’ and ‘coaching and playing’) were important for effective golf clubs.
- Nomadic members had very little awareness of GM but felt strongly that the issues addressed by GM (especially and ‘child protection’) were important for sports clubs.

### 3) What barriers remain to the successful implementation of GolfMark?

Based on a market segmentation of English clubs, and a database of the GM status of clubs in Lincolnshire, three case studies were selected that reflected the variety of types of clubs across the region. Interviews and focus groups were convened with the manager/secretary, coach, male, female and junior members in each club over a series of visits. Qualitative thematic analysis of the data led to the following conclusions:



- Even within a very close geographical area, golf clubs have very different management structures, admission processes, cultural conventions and day-to-day practices.
- Clubs with traditional structures that maintain expensive fees and restrictive joining processes also tend to reinforce cultural norms that marginalize beginners, juniors and sometimes women.
- The main barriers that prevent clubs engaging with GM are both cultural (where clubs feel unable to change their own environment) and individual (where key personnel, such as coaches, claim not to have the skills or knowledge to proceed to GM).

It should be noted, in conclusion, that this research represents a relatively small-scale project with limited range and scope. The questions posed in the introduction are difficult sociological questions and more research needs to be done in order to subject the 'hypotheses' generated by this research to further scrutiny. Specifically, future research should attempt to repeat the survey methodology used here in different counties with larger samples of clubs.

Also, in order to develop a more complete understanding of club cultures, more in-depth case studies lasting for longer periods of time could be undertaken, especially with clubs where barriers to modernization are likely to be more entrenched. Case selection would benefit from a repeated club segmentation exercise with a more complete data set. This may require some minor changes to the way in which the EGU's annual membership survey data are collected.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Systematic review methodology

#### Procedure

An initial series of experimental searches were conducted using a set of pre-determined search terms and databases, which were conditioned by discussions between the first and third authors (Smith, 2010). This process helped to identify which would be the most useful terms for returning relevant research (Weed, et al, 2009). The search terms were then sampled for relevance and “mined” for any other keywords that were relevant and widely used in the literature (Weed, et al, 2009). In some instances, certain terms produced a large number of returns, with one search providing over 100,000 returns. This indicated that the terms were too broad and that some further terms and criteria needed to be added. Therefore journals were specifically chosen within each database, a timeframe, and a type of publication was added. By adding the criteria, this reduced the number of results, leaving the articles of most relevance. Thereafter, after consultation, it was confirmed that the databases were not altering the results according to the added criteria; so a second search of the databases was conducted using two search ‘phrases’ at once: Sport\* OR golf\* was the first phrase which was joined with additional exclusion-based terms (e.g. AND gender OR sexism) (see table, below).

The search for the returns was completed on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011 whilst using the electronic search databases: three from EBSCO, (i) SportDiscus, (ii) Academic Search Elite (ASE) and (iii) International Humanities Index (IHI); International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSI); SAGE journals online, as they were deemed best suited for the requirements of the study. It could be argued that more databases could have been used but because of the diversity of a systematic review, there is no accepted number of databases that need to be used (CRD, 2009).

Table. Key search terms and initial returns

Search Terms	Database	Returns	Total
Sport* OR golf* AND gender OR sexism	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	1084	1913
	IBSS and ASSIA	829	
Sport* OR golf* AND gender OR sexism AND barriers	SAGE online	2837	2837
Sport* OR golf* AND ethnicity OR racism	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	226	902
	IBSS and ASSIA	294	
	SAGE online	382	
Sport* OR golf* AND disability	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	N/A	1417
	IBSS and ASSIA	100	
	SAGE online	1317	
Sport* OR golf* AND social class OR socio-economic status	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	161	428
	IBSS and ASSIA	39	
	SAGE online	228	
Sport* OR golf* AND social capital	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	49	142
	IBSS and ASSIA	33	
	SAGE online	60	

Sport* OR golf* AND social barriers	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	13	27
	IBSS and ASSIA	2	
	SAGE online	12	
Sport* OR golf* and inequality or equality	SportDiscus, ASE and IHI	112	889
	IBSS and ASSIA	125	
	SAGE online	652	

The article selection process was conducted in two stages: (i) an initial screening of the titles and abstracts against inclusion criteria; followed by (ii) the screening of the full texts (CRD, 2009). After the initial returns were searched for relevance from the titles, it reduced the original number of returns to 651; they were then transferred to RefWorks (a referencing database), which allowed duplicates to be disregarded, reducing the relevant returns down to 400. In the following stage, the returns were matched against a set of criteria, to ensure that relevant literature was identified. The inclusion/exclusion criteria aimed to provide the review with UK or Ireland based articles, unless specifically referring to the UK or golf, which in that instance allowances were made for the article to be foreign based (see summary of inclusion/exclusion criteria in the table, below). To be accepted into the next stage, articles must have been published within the last 20 years; they had to be more than five pages in length; and they had to be from peer-reviewed journals. Reviews, unpublished studies, replies, magazine issues and book chapters were all excluded.

Table. Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Inclusion/Exclusion Categories	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Age	Less than 20 years old and before January 2011	More than 20 years old
Location	UK/Ireland, unless relating to UK or golf	Non UK/ Ireland based
Specificity	Social barriers to sports participation (especially golf)	Physical activity/recreation; sexuality
Article length	More than 5 pages	Less than 5 pages
Publication Type	Journal articles	Reviews, unpublished studies, replies, magazine issues, book chapters

The abstracts of the remaining studies were then reviewed. At this point, only articles that helped to answer the initial research questions (i.e. relevant to the issue of social barriers to participation in sport, with a focus on golf for non-elite people) were retained. The emphasis was being placed on sport, thus articles that were about physical activity or recreation were excluded. Following the application of these final criteria, the pool of articles remaining for full text retrieval numbered 25. After receiving all the full text of each article, a further six were excluded because they were either too old or didn't pertain to the UK. A further two articles were excluded, based on lack of relevance. Therefore, 17 articles remained for the systematic review (see figure, below).



Figure. Summary of the review process

### Data Synthesis

Following full text retrieval, work was undertaken so the articles could be processed. The relevant data needed to be extracted from the articles; this was done by reading each article thoroughly to attain an understanding and to evaluate quality and relevance. This allowed for an analysis process to begin, which entailed the disassembling of the data into lines, paragraphs or sections, within each individual article, thus identifying the key points of the article in relation to the research question. The analysis procedure that was applied was ‘thematic analysis’, which is a process of encoding qualitative information. The encoding requires an explicit “code”. This may be a ‘list of themes; a complex model with themes, indicators and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms’ (Boyatzis, 1998, pg. vi).

The next stage of the study involved the use of a ‘narrative synthesis’, which is an approach to evidence synthesis that relies primarily on the use of words and text to summarise and explain the findings of multiple studies (Pope et al, 2007). This process followed the guidance framework

developed by Popay et al. (2006), which offered a general framework consisting of four key elements:

1. Theory development
2. Development of a preliminary synthesis
3. Exploring relationships in the data
4. Testing the robustness of the synthesis product

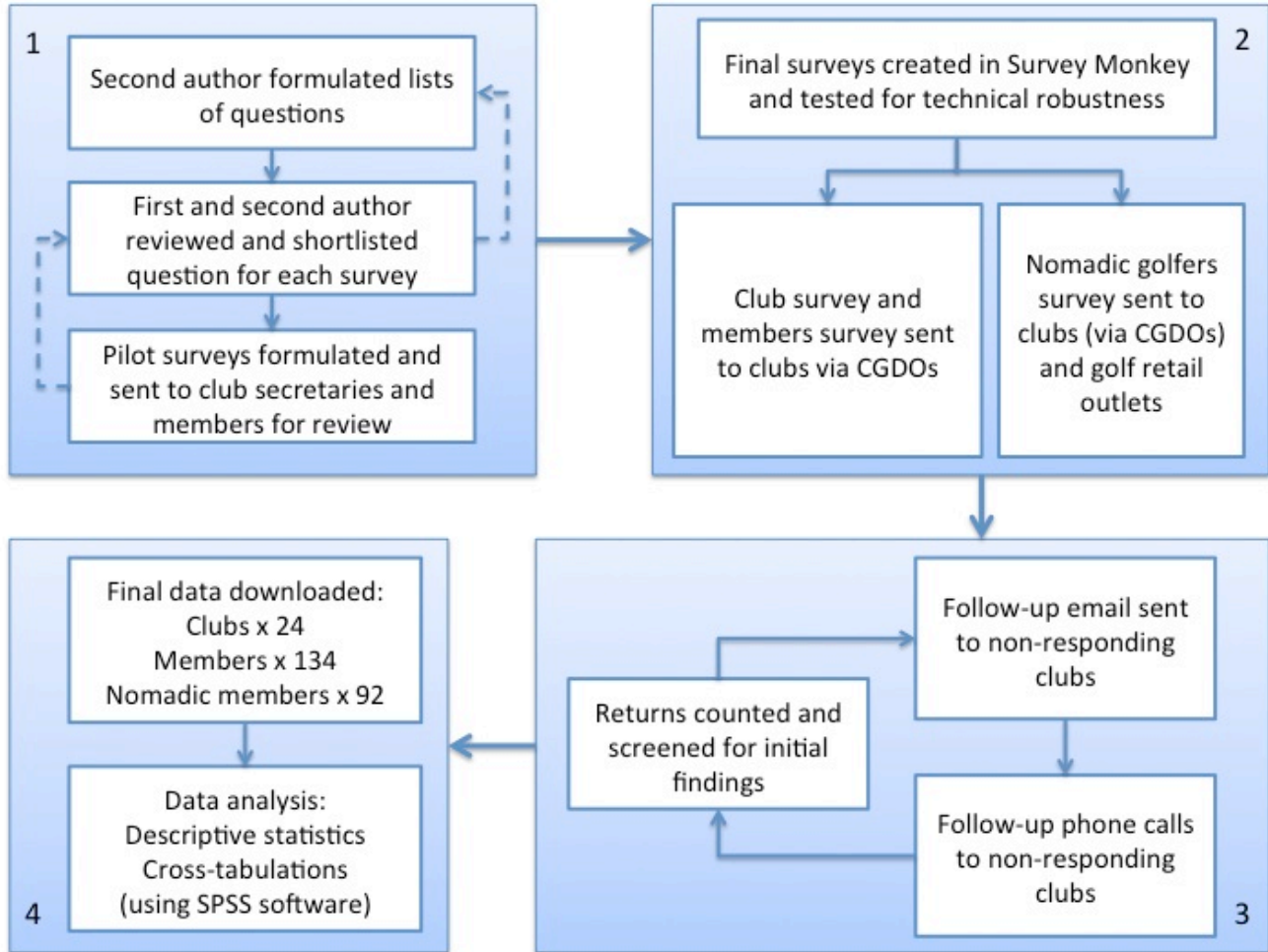
To coincide with the reading of the articles, a preliminary synthesis, (which interlinked with the thematic analysis) was conducted which involved a textual description of each article, and it followed a “who, what, where, when, why, how and conclusions” structure, as this allowed for data to be collated and summarized in a consistent format.

Although descriptions are part of the synthesis (CRD, 2009; Smith, 2010), it is argued by CRD (2009) that descriptions alone are not sufficient and the textual approach needs to provide analysis of the relationships within and between the studies. Thus, an exploration of the articles was undertaken, where they were grouped and then the textual descriptions were colour coded into themes. This allowed for the analysis to become more organised and structured to identify the relationships, new interpretations and understandings that emerged between the studies. After concluding the coding process of identifying the themes/relationships, the data was finally put into tables to allow for the relationships to be seen.

Finally, the ‘assessing the robustness’ stage was conducted to assess ‘the credibility of the product of the synthesis process’ (CRD, 2009, pg. 53). According to the CRD, (2009) this depends on both the quality and the quantity of the evidence-base it is built on, and the method of synthesis and the clarity/transparency of its description. Consequently, to check the quality of the articles and the synthesis, they were reviewed independently by the first author. This provided an opportunity to minimise the element of bias by offering two different views to assess the strength of the articles, which is an essential process when drawing conclusions based on the narrative synthesis (CRD, 2009).

## Appendix B: GM survey methodology

The flow diagram below describes the process by which the three surveys were created, piloted, distributed and analyzed.



### 1. Survey formulation

This process began with the second author reflecting on the initial research questions and generating exhaustive lists of potential questions. The first author then scrutinized these lists after which the second author made further revisions. After two iterations of this process, a final list of questions was created which were then transferred into the three pilot questionnaires. The pilot instruments were sent to two secretaries locally and a collection of members known to the second author. They recommended some minor changes to wording.

### 2. Survey distribution

Once final versions of the instruments had been created they were transferred into Survey Monkey, an online service for distributing and collecting surveys. This service creates links, which can be emailed to intended research participants. In this case, the links to all three surveys were sent to club secretaries and managers via CGDOs in the three sample CGPs along with instructions of how to complete them and how to forward to relevant parties.



### **3. Increasing return rate**

After four weeks, the return rate was checked and deemed insufficient to conclude the survey. Follow-up emails were sent via CGDOs to stimulate return (Gratton & Jones, 2004). After another two weeks, no further surveys had been returned, so the first and second authors made phone calls to every club in the three counties that had not completed the survey. Further follow-up emails were sent and, after another four weeks, the survey was closed as the authors believed that no further response could be stimulated.

### **4. Collecting and analyzing data**

Survey Monkey automatically collects raw data, which was then transferred into SPSS (version 19) for analysis. Descriptive statistics were generated and some cross-tabulations were applied in order to interpret the data.