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RESEARCH REPORT

The 'Goalball Family': A exploration of the social value of Goalball amongst players and communities in the UK.

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and Daniel Madigan**

In collaboration with Goalball UK



York St John University

School of Science, Technology and Health

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Abstract

This research was commissioned by Goalball UK in partnership with York St John University to explore the social value of the under researched sport of Goalball. Goalball UK is the National Governing Body for the sport and whose aim is to 'raise the profile of Goalball throughout the UK, promote participation in the sport and achieve success on the international stage' (Goalball UK 2020). This research is arguably the first of its kind in the sport and therefore an important step in providing a voice for those with visual impairments to speak about their lives and the impact Goalball has had on them. One aim of the research was to explore the role of Goalball as a sport in aiding disabled people to be engaged in sport to allow them to fulfil their potential and lead rewarding lives. By providing this marginalised group with an opportunity to voice their thoughts and reflections, it was envisaged that a more nuanced understanding of the benefits disabled people gain from sports participation could be achieved. Additionally, the research was designed to calculate the social return on the money spent to fund the sport, by providing a monetary value to accompany the voices of those engaged in the sport. It was hoped that this would aid current knowledge in disabled sports participation, whilst explicitly exploring the under researched sport of Goalball.

The initial focus of the literature search was to identify any existing literature on Goalball; the little literature available often proved to be from a scientific and quantitative approach (see Karakaya and Ergun 2009; Furtado et al. 2016). However, research in disability sport has seen a rise in interest, with key author Hayley Fitzgerald paving the

way. In 2015, Sport England produced a new strategy to tackle physical activity levels across the UK with a specific focus on aiding those who are underrepresented members of society to be physically active. By tackling inactivity, which is particularly prominent amongst those with a disability, Sport England (2016a) state that encouraging those who are completely sedentary as well as those who are moderately active to become involved in physical activity will reap substantial health benefits by reducing the risk of diseases. Therefore, sport is defined as a critical vehicle for improving the lives of people throughout the UK.

The research adopted a mixed methods approach to answer three research questions: two qualitative and one quantitative. As previously stated, the views and thoughts of visually impaired individuals are largely unknown in Goalball, therefore semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Additionally, a Social Return on Investment (SROI) that was adapted from the work of Davies et al. (2019) was conducted using data from Goalball UK to calculate the ratio of money invested to social value output. The qualitative interview data was transcribed and analysed to identify common themes and patterns, and these were then reported.

The data from the interviews demonstrates that Goalball plays a significant role in the lives of VI individuals. The uniqueness of the sport in that it was created for VI

people as opposed to an adapted version of a sport, was highlighted as particularly significant for those who participate as it perpetuated a sense of solidarity and a sense of belonging. The benefits of participating in Goalball were numerous; physical, social, mental health and wellbeing benefits were cited, as well as the acquisition of new skills that were transferable to other areas of life. Perhaps crucially for this marginalised group, was the sense of connectedness they felt with other VI's when they discussed the notion of the 'Goalball family'. Goalball arguably aids in the development of social capital; in particular, bonding and bridging capital as the sport provides participants with the opportunities to integrate with both VI and non-VI individuals. However, despite the numerous positives and benefits the sport has, it remains largely unheard of, with a distinct lack of awareness in the UK. This arguably has a knock-on effect on the availability of funding, resulting in clubs and participation being in constant jeopardy. Finally, the SROI calculated that for every £1 invested in the sport, £4.31 is generated in social value, which provides statistical evidence that Goalball is significantly worth investing in due to the sports ability to aid both individuals and wider societal issues.

Introduction

The role of sport in the life of a person with a disability is vastly becoming a hot research topic (Sport England 2016a; Labbe, Miller and Ng 2019). Sports such as swimming have begun to pave the way by conducting research into the value of the sport for those with disabilities (Sport England 2018) and thus the purpose of this commissioned report is to investigate the value held by those involved within the sport of Goalball. Goalball was developed as a rehabilitation programme for visually impaired veterans in 1946 and is a ball-based game where two teams of three attempt to score goals by bowling the ball across the playing area and into the oppositions net (Goalball UK 2020). Each player is blindfolded, and the ball contains a bell to alert players to its location during movement. Goalball UK is the National Governing Body for the sport and whose aim is to 'raise the profile of Goalball throughout the UK, promote participation in the sport and achieve success on the international stage' (Goalball UK 2020). Goalball UK has several values which underpin the charities objectives. These include: 'to ensure all our people are valued; to promote integrity, responsibility and endeavour; to be inclusive in everything we do; to encourage the development of our players from playground to podium and to continually strive for sporting excellence' (Goalball UK 2020). Their vision as the National Governing Body for Goalball is 'to be recognised nationally and internationally as creating the best possible environment, structure and facilities for the development of Goalball players in the UK to compete both domestically and internationally'. The role of Goalball as a sport is fundamentally to aid disabled people to be engaged in sport to allow them to fulfil their potential and lead rewarding lives.



Contemporary Issue

In 2016, Sport England produced a statistical review entitled *Mapping Disability: the facts*. This comprehensive document details the number and types of disabilities prevalent in England with 1 in 5 people in England have a long standing, limiting disability or illness. Of England's population of 53 million, 18.4 million or 34.9%, have a long-standing disability or illness, of which 9.4 million (17.6%) have both a long standing and limiting disability/ illness (Sport England 2016a). Sport England (2016a) define a long-standing disability or illness as something experienced over a long time, whilst they define having a long standing and limiting disability or illness as something that restricts the activities of daily life. Within this population, 9.8% have a visual impairment, which translates as 959,919 people, with this being 60.7% females and 39.3% males (Sport England 2016a). With nearly a third of England's population categorised as disabled, it is perhaps not surprising that within Sport England's (2016b) *Towards an Active Nation* strategy, that demographic groups such as those with disabilities featured heavily as part of their priority intervention strategy. By tackling inactivity, which is particularly prominent amongst those with a disability, Sport England (2016b) state that encouraging those who are completely sedentary as well as those who are moderately active to become involved in physical activity will reap substantial health benefits by reducing the risk of diseases such as type II diabetes, coronary heart disease, cancer and mental health conditions. Rimmer and Wang (2005) highlight that approximately 66% of people with disabilities have a higher rate of obesity than those without disabilities, as in their study of 306 adults with disabilities, 84% were identified as obese or extremely obese. With research repeatedly outlining the relationship between obesity and mortality, it is once again not surprising that tackling inactivity for groups such as those with disabilities is high on the government's agenda (Sport England 2016b; DHSC 2019). Thus, sport is being defined as a critical vehicle for improving the lives of people throughout England.

In addition to perceived health benefits that participation in physical activity can provide for those with disabilities, there are significant social, emotional and wellbeing benefits

attributed to physical activity participation (Martin 2013). However, it is the view of the abilities of disabled people by non-disabled people that are often the root cause of inactivity and a drop in participation levels, with Fitzgerald (2012) arguing that to understand disabilities purely through a medical model approach provides only a limited understanding of a disabled person's life. This is due to the medical model's factual approach. For example, people have a disability, this is what it means, i.e. they are fully blind, and they need to be supported to live their lives (Fitzgerald 2012; Martin 2013). Contrastingly, the social model of disability is holistically more encompassing as it is socially constructed and allows the viewer to understand how the social environment can influence behaviour and action. Martin (2013) does state however, that acknowledgement of both models is arguably the way forward when working towards engaging people with disabilities in physical activity.

The benefits to participating in sport are suggested to be distinctly higher for disabled people than for those without a disability (Martin 2013; Sport England 2016b; Brian et al. 2019). By defining disabled people by their disability, non-disabled people's perceptions are often wide of the mark and inaccurate in terms of what a disabled person can achieve. Thus, successful participation in physical activity for those with disabilities has been found in various research studies to improve self-esteem, improve physical abilities and therefore confidence, as well as improve enjoyment and relationships with others (Taub and Greer 2000; Fairas-Tomaszewski, Jenkins and Keller 2001; Allen et al. 2004; Martin 2013; Labbe, Miller and Ng 2019). Findings from Labbe, Miller and Ng's (2019) study on recreational leisure activities in the community found that of the 3 groups interviewed (players, staff and volunteers) many spoke of feelings of belonging and connectedness to the wider community. This will be discussed in further detail in the literature review.

Disability Sport

According to Fitzgerald (2009) a key author in the field of disability sport, sport is a field where the physicality of the body is often appreciated and viewed in terms of the level of possible sporting success. This places those with disabilities at an immediate disadvantage when disability is defined as 'the restriction of opportunities to engage in community life because of physical and social barriers' (Fitzgerald 2012, p.245). Barton (2009) argues that too often it is the language used by non-disabled people that can influence whether disabled people try new activities or take up new sports. He states that by assuming disabled people lack the capabilities of others can transpire as the disabled person feeling overwhelmed and incapable of achieving their aspirations. It is possible, that through the lack of education surrounding disabilities, disabled people are often discriminated against, excluded and subject to stereotyped stigmatisation. For example, lack of employment opportunities; building accessibility; a small percentage of the British population being able to use sign language and so forth (DePauw 1997; Barton 2009; Martin 2013). According to Liberman and MacVicar (2003) and Martin (2013) in their reviews on barriers to physical activity for disabled people, more barriers to physical

activity were listed by children with visual impairments. However, this was the case when explicitly compared with other disabilities and therefore this statement arguably lacks clarity, thus providing this study with a rationale to explore the prevalence of barriers to sports participation and physical activity that is or has been experienced by players of Goalball. Furthermore, DePauw (2009) notes that disability sport is now heading towards being viewed less as a form of rehabilitation or reintegration programme but more as pure sport for disabled people. Given Goalball's reason for conception, it will be interesting to explore how and why Goalball players participate. Sport is often viewed as a global activity that unites and inspires people to be physically active. Through increased media presence such as the coverage of London 2012 and the success of team GB at the Paralympic competitions, disability sports are slowly becoming recognised as 'normal' sports where individuals are viewed as athletes, not lesser-abled players (Fitzgerald and Kirk 2009). It is hoped that this case study will provide recent experiences of those who have joined the sport of Goalball to present another lens to disability sport and to explore whether these statements are the case for those involved.



Key terms used in the study

There are key terms that will be frequently used within this report and thus this next section will briefly outline these to provide contextual understanding to the reader. Firstly, 'disability sport' refers to specific sports for, or adapted sports for, those with disabilities. For example, seated volleyball or wheelchair basketball are adapted games for disabled people and Boccia or Goalball are games designed and aimed at those with disabilities (Fitzgerald 2012). Fitzgerald (2012, p.245/6) argues that disabled people are usually considered in one of 3 groups in sport. These are the 'Invisibility of disability in sport', that more commonly assumes exclusion of disabled people from sport; 'visibility of disability in sport' where disabled people are acknowledged but considered inferior to those who are not disabled; and '[in]visibility of disAbility in sport' where disabled athletes are wholly considered and accepted as athletes.

Secondly, 'Social Capital' is a sociological concept that will be used throughout this report as a tool for aiding the explanation of how the sport of Goalball provides its players with exchangeable capital that can be used in other areas of their lives. Social capital can be defined as production

and reproduction of social networks, or links with others from which reciprocity and trust are outcomes of the interdependent relations (Bourdieu 1984; Putnam 2000). This will be discussed further in the literature review.

The research questions for this project have been outlined to include the ideology of 'Bonding Capital'. At the forefront, bonding capital describes the network of relations formed by members within a group that centre on trust, norms, behaviours and practices that are cohesive and encompassing (Nicholson and Hoye 2008). Comparatively, 'Bridging Capital' is another concept by Putnam (2000) that can be outlined as the social interaction between members of a group and those outside of a group, perhaps in another community. Bridging capital is a notion of connection whereby values and behaviours of each party are viewed and accepted as the norm as opposed to different or separate. An example of this could be a disabled person participating in a sport with non-disabled people and this not causing a division; rather it is accepted as the norm (Nicholson and Hoye 2008).

Research Questions / Statements

Within this project there are 3 research questions/statements to be addressed. These are as follows:

1. To explore the potential of Goalball to instigate 'bonding capital' amongst members of the visually impaired community who participate in the sport.
2. To evaluate Goalball's potential to act as a form of 'bridging capital' to integrate visually impaired participants with non-visually impaired participants.
3. Measure Goalball's social return on the money spent to fund the sport.

The aim of this research is to investigate the social and economic benefits that participation in the sport of Goalball brings for visually impaired individuals from a variety of age ranges within the UK. It is hoped that through this research, Goalball UK will gain a valuable insight into how their players recognise the value of and engage in the sport. Additionally and more broadly, this research aims to learn how Goalball can aid visually-impaired people to integrate with wider communities whilst reaping social benefits such as improved wellbeing and health, as well as economic benefits such as sustainable employment, improved confidence levels and communication skills.

Overview of the Project

This report will now turn to a review of the existing literature covering three subheadings: Sport and Social Capital which will include a discussion of the Sport England's (2016b) Towards an Active Nation Strategy and an explanation of Putnam's theoretical concepts of bonding and bridging capital. This will be followed by a review of the literature on sport and the economic return on investment. Following this, a methods chapter will discuss the research approach, design, data collection and analysis of the project which will include how the Social Return on Investment (SROI) was conducted and analysed and the findings from this will be presented. This will be followed by a results and discussion chapter which will be split into two sections to answer the two qualitative research questions respectively. Part one will focus on life with a disability and how the uniqueness of Goalball has given VI individuals the chance to meet and bond with fellow VI people. Exerts of the data will be discussed in relation to Putnam's work on social capital and more specifically, bonding capital. In part two, the benefits of Goalball will be outlined, whilst presenting how the participants feel Goalball can be used as a social tool to integrate VI and non-VI people. A discussion on how Goalball acts as a form of bridging capital will be included here, whilst the issues facing Goalball will also be acknowledged. The quantitative findings of the social return on the money spent to fund Goalball will then be discussed. Finally, a conclusion of the findings with suggestions for future interventions and further research will conclude the report.



Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the existing knowledge in Goalball which will include how sport in general is being used as a vehicle for tackling wider societal issues, such as health and physical activity levels. Following this, there will be a discussion on the limited number of Goalball studies available, before Putnam's notions of social capital and bonding and bridging capital are discussed. Social capital is a paradigm that is receiving increased attention as a framework through which conceptualisation of how changes to society and the impact of these changes can be examined and explained (Hoye and Nicholson 2008). More specifically, bonding and bridging capital are useful tools for exploring how social networks operate and how people within these networks accrue and use capital to enhance their lives. Finally, this chapter will provide an overview of a recent Social Return on Investment conducted by Davies et al., (2019) that will provide the base and methodology for this study's smaller scale version for Goalball.

Sport as a Tool for Social Development

In 2015, for the first time in a decade, the UK government produced a new strategy aimed at increasing access and participation levels in physical activity (Sport England 2016b). This new strategy is simple in its pledge; to inspire a range of people from young to old, disabled to non-disabled to become (more) physically active. Using key indicators and investing in research with stakeholders, Sport England (2016b)'s Towards an Active Nation key aims are to improve health and wellbeing both physically and mentally, inspire individual development as well as community and social development by investing in areas that will reap the most benefits. The policy aims to tackle inactivity, invest in providing positive opportunities for children and young people to participate, aid those currently active to remain so, whilst helping the underrepresented members of society to be physically active. Sport is continually being used as a vehicle for improving or intervening in other areas within society where it is believed that wider social benefits will be achieved. This literature review will now explore some existing literature where this is/has been the case.

During the initial search for literature for this project, it was evidently clear early on that there is very little literature available on the sport of Goalball providing a rationale for the study. The limited number of studies that have been conducted have been undertaken in Turkey and Brazil to name two and to the researcher's knowledge there appears to be no studies on Goalball in the UK which provides the study with an additional rationale. By undertaking this project, it is envisaged that the findings can not only begin to fill this void on Goalball research, but also add to the increasing number of studies on specific disability sports. Of the studies that have been conducted, all agreed that there are distinctive physical benefits for visually impaired individuals who play Goalball compared with their counterparts who do not play Goalball (see

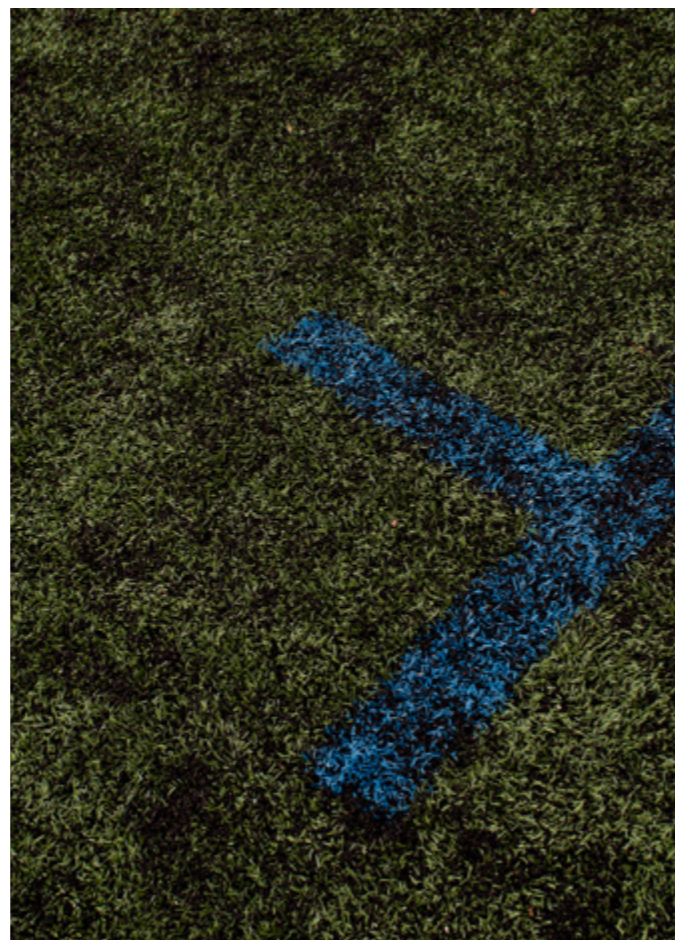
Karakaya and Ergun 2009 and Furtado et al. 2016 for details.) Comparatively, in a study in Turkey by Caliskan et al. (2011), 26 boys and 20 girls aged between 10 and 15 were divided into two groups to undertake either Goalball or Movement Education for 3 months. All participants were recorded as severely visually impaired. Percentage Body Fat (PBF) and Body Mass Index (BMI) were tested on all participants at the start and end of the study. Although the findings suggest that PBF reduced for girls and boys in both groups, the reduction in PBF for girls in the Goalball group was significantly higher than the Movement Education Group, whilst boys reduced their PBF in Goalball more than the girls did. Caliskan et al. (2011) suggest that for visually impaired girls, Goalball is perhaps a preferred way of taking part in physical activity to reduce the risk of obesity and other diseases associated with inactivity and can be used as a tool to improve physical wellbeing. The discussion section of this study is very limited however, and there is opportunity for further exploration into the role of Goalball.

In comparison and in more detail, Furtado et al. (2016) also suggest an improvement to physical abilities of visually impaired individuals in their study of young Brazilian Goalball players (aged 13-19) when they tested their health-related fitness through push-ups, sit and reach and one mile walk/run tests. Over half of the participants passed most of the tests. Whilst the one mile run test was achieved by only a small percentage of females, the boys performed as well as their sighted counterparts from a similar study using the same methods (see Brusseau et al. 2014). As highlighted by the authors, sprints/runs of a long distance are highly unlikely in Goalball, therefore the appropriateness of this particular test may be questionable. However, the other movements such as push ups are more often used as tactics for defending the goal and whilst the percentage of girls and boys who

passed these movements was also low (30% for males, 25% for females), this was still regarded as a significantly higher achievement than visually impaired youths who participated in a sport camp in Lieberman et al. (2010). In conclusion, although passing rates were low in certain tests conducted, participation in Goalball is likely to provide a reasonable attempt at achieving the Chief Medical Officers (DSHC 2019) guidelines for physical activity participation (i.e. participating in 60 minutes of moderate physical activity for 5-18 year olds over a week and 150 minutes of moderate physical active for adults over a week). However, this is not inclusive of those with all kinds of disabilities and so should be acknowledged tentatively. Thus, Goalball could be an important, inclusive sport that could be high on the government's agenda given its potential at tackling wider social issues.

Aside from physical benefits, sport has been extensively researched as a method for improving community cohesion and development (Vali 2007; Misener and Doherty 2012). In their study on the socialisation differences of visually impaired student athletes and non-athletes, Movahedi, Mojtahedi and Farazyani (2010) define socialisation as the attitudes, values, skills and behaviours that individuals learn to become informed consumers within society. They found by completing Weitzman's Social Maturity Scale with two groups totalling 107 visually impaired male students aged 13-19, that the group of student athletes who participated in Goalball, had a significantly higher social development score (M-14.58) compared with their non-student athlete counterparts (M-10.23). The authors argue that Goalball provides visually impaired individuals with the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging and reap the benefits that participation in sport can bring, such as improved confidence, enjoyment of competition, building bonds with others and feeling a sense of achievement (Movahedi, Mojtahedi and Farazyani 2010). However, of these studies discussed, none offer any details on the perceptions of the individuals who participate in Goalball in a qualitative, interview or focus group way. Whilst statistical data quantifies information

such as participation levels and physical abilities such as the ability to perform push ups or runs in the case of the existing literature, this data is not sufficient to gain a substantial understanding of the value of social capital that sport can discern (Nicholson and Hoye 2008). Social capital requires functional analysis, i.e. it requires in depth analysis of the how and why an action can be influential. Thus, interviews on the experiences of Goalball players, family members and coaches will provide a more holistic understanding of exactly how this participation transpires into social interactions and how these influence an individual's life. This literature review will now partially turn away from Goalball literature, towards sport and social capital that will provide the theoretical lens for this study.



Social Capital

Whilst the physical wellbeing benefits of Goalball participation appear relatively straightforward and clear, the social connections formed through engagement are largely unknown. As previously discussed, social capital is a term used to explore social relationships and the resources that are produced as outcomes of these liaisons (Nicholson and Hoye 2008). Pierre Bourdieu is a sociologist whose ideas surrounding capital have been used more recently in sports research as he states that capital can be exchanged into other types of capitals to be used (Bourdieu 1984). Additionally, his ideas on habitus are useful when a researcher seeks to use a theoretical framework with which to understanding the continual evolvement of an individual's identity (Bourdieu 1984). Another sociologist is Robert Putnam (2000, p.18-19), whose view of social capital is that 'social networks have value' and as such Putnam's work tends to lend itself towards community level work and developmental strategies (see Vermeulen and Verweel 2009). Putnam (2000) was keen to suggest that sport can be a tool that can rebuild a community as it is a cultural resource that can connect people through shared interests, supporting the same team and engaging in activities socially with others. Whilst Bourdieu segregates his capital into 'physical', 'cultural' and 'economic', Putnam (2000) views capital as 'bonding' or 'bridging' capital. This provides a rationale for using Putnam's theoretical ideas to analyse the data in this study.

Bonding capital refers to the connections between people of similar social backgrounds where relations are built upon trust and familiarity of those within the network (Putnam 2000). For example, this could be a local sports club where people with similar interests come together to play a certain sport or engage in a certain activity. By learning to communicate and collaborate with others of a similar discourse, Nicholson and Hoye (2008) state that bonding capital has the ability to empower individuals into understanding others with empathy and openness, providing all with a sense of connectedness and belonging.

This was evident in Walseth's (2008) study of immigrant women in sports clubs in Norway. 15 female athletes were interviewed on their perceptions of acceptance, making friends and providing a sense of belonging through mutual similarities such as immigrant background. By joining a sports club, the young women were able to develop their sense of bonding capital through shared demographics, which provided conversation starters during the game that then led to spending time together outside of the sport (Walseth 2008). Putnam's bonding capital is arguably a measure of social cohesion as he believes that those communities or networks that show larger proportions of social capital are more likely to produce social cohesion. According to Vermeulen and Verweel (2009) this includes a triangular model of social, cultural and physical substructures that together, form the backbone of social cohesion.

In contrast, bridging capital describes a network where individuals with less similar or no commonalities exist and thus the relations that form within this network can create new communications and collaborations (Putnam 2000; Nicholson and Hoye 2008). An example of this could be when a non-visually impaired individual participates in a disability sport and internalises the norms of disability with acceptance, ultimately broadening their understanding, compassion and empathy with equality. Whilst there are undoubtedly several positives that can stem from bonding capital, Putnam (2000) asserts that bonding capital can seek to isolate like-minded individuals further into the safety of their known network. Comparatively, quality bridging capital can be notoriously hard to create when the very notion of it seeks to take in individuals into a non-familiar network which can outlie and exclude others through its process (Putnam 2000; Nicholson and Hoye 2008). Furthermore, bridging capital relies on diverse groups where members interweave from various cultural and socio-economic levels. The chances of this occurring are only as high the network producing the opportunity

is running, yet those that do have the potential to gain bridging capital are more likely to experience 'broader community engagement' that 'assist(s) communities to build capacity and resilience in the face of dynamic and rapid change' (Nicholson and Hoye 2008, p.153).

Bridging capital has been used as a theoretical framework by many sports sociologists. One example of recent research is that of Richardson and Fletcher (2020) who interviewed 5 participants and coaches of an initiative known as Premier League Kicks, a Football in the Community programme funded by the Premier League and Sport England. This programme is designed to reach vulnerable young people by using sport to teach education, employability skills and encourage personal development through the interest of football. The findings showed that participation in the programme positively contributed towards bonding capital development through establishing relationships with people in similar situations and providing a support network for the young people. However, bridging capital was more difficult to determine due to some of the participants use of the programme as a route into professional football. Whilst their relations with their programme coaches developed and became stronger, their pursuit of a professional career was both enabled and constrained due to their restricted bridging capital levels.

The formation of positive social networks with academy coaches that could provide them with an opportunity to sign for a professional football club was dependent on their own programme coaches and making good impressions, which was difficult and unlikely due to the lack of opportunities to connect with these people (Richardson and Fletcher 2020). The authors surmise that bonding capital in this context is highly valuable despite Putnam's caution around it isolating marginalised individuals to withdraw further into their comfort group. Bridging capital is more complex to achieve but not completely impossible (Nicholson and Hoye 2008; Richardson and Fletcher 2020).

The theoretical framework of social capital is largely becoming a more popular perspective from which to underpin sporting policies and interventions, yet it is strikingly difficult to measure the depth to which bonding and bridging capital emerge and exist. Despite this difficulty, this research is important not only to contribute to the gap in this knowledge area, but to provide a voice for a marginalised group of people where they can discuss their perceptions and experiences of this unique sport. As such, this project will utilise the concepts of social capital to attempt to measure the impact of Goalball through both quantitative and qualitative methods of enquiry.



Sport and Return on Economic Investment

According to Bailey (2005) and Davies (2012) sport is continually being viewed as a vehicle by which wider social, economic and physical benefits to communities and individuals can be achieved. In her analysis of the legacy of London 2012, Davies (2012) suggests lessons that can be learnt from the planning, implementation and future development of hosting the Olympics in 2012 on a broader scale that encompasses the local community of East London. Urban regeneration is described as an underlying yet vital potential outcome of the building of the Olympic stadium for the 2012 games due to historically long-standing levels of poverty in the area dating back centuries (Davies 2012). Through the building of sports venues, existing literature positively describes the benefits of higher availability of employment, footfall into shopping areas and provides an atmospheric quality that attracts investors and consumers to the area and an increase in the sense of community (Gratton and Preuss 2008; Davies 2012; Karadakis and Kaplanidou 2012; Chen and Henry 2016). However, despite these positive assumptions of the impact sport can provide holistically, there existed a common agreement on the lack of empirical evidence that provided justifications for why this was the case. To partially eradicate this, Taylor et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review of the literature on the benefits of sports participation for wider society. Their focus was broad and covered health improvement, crime reduction, increased social capital and better education. In the sub-section on social capital, 27 studies of the relationship between sport and exercise and social capital were examined. One study by Holt et al. (2009) conducted 40 interviews with young people at a university in Canada on the learning of life skills through sport participation. They found that the sport itself is not responsible for improving life skills, rather the interactions with others such as those playing / coaching the sport and their parents for taking and involving them, were the sources of improvements to life skills. Comparatively, in Hanson et al.'s (2001) quantitative

study on community integration for disabled people with spinal cord injuries, the authors used CHART (Craig Handicap Assessment and Reporting Technique) to discern an individual's level of community engagement. Within the CHART were 27 criteria designed to explore behaviour and included self-sufficiency, employment, mobility and so forth. The 22 adult participants were divided into two groups of athletes and non-athletes. Hanson et al. (2001) found that the athlete group scored significantly higher on at least four of five of the CHART criteria than the non-athletes did, supporting the understanding that physical activity is a tool through which wider social benefits and thus, social capital can be achieved. The overall finding of the systematic review by Taylor et al. (2015) is that sport has an influential effect on possession and accumulation of social capital. However, little is still known on specific sport input and the values associated with specific sports, particularly from the qualitative perspective of those involved in the sport.

In an attempt to quantify the monetary value of the impact of sport and thus its social impact, Davies et al. (2019) conducted a social return on investment (SROI) for the value of participation in sport in England. Justifying its conception by stating there is a distinct lack of understanding of the social outputs that are generated from sport for society, the authors used the 240 references from the previously cited systematic review by Taylor et al. (2015) as their literature on 'health, crime, education, social capital and subjective well-being' to apply to the model (Davies et al. 2019, p.588). Firstly, their findings confirm the successful use of an SROI to determine the value of sport participation for society and the subsequent benefits, thereby providing this study with a rationale for conducting a smaller-scaled SROI for Goalball. Secondly, the findings highlight that social return on investment in sport is significantly important with the social value of sport placed at £44.8 billion (Davies et al. 2019). More specifically, the value of one of the areas of outcomes-health- was a positive outcome of sport participation and placed at £5.18 billion, whilst the

overall SORI ratio was calculated by adding the total value of the 5 outcomes mentioned and dividing it by the value of inputs. These included, for example, Sport England, UK Sport, DCMS, participants and volunteers to name a few. By doing this calculation, Davies et al. (2019) were able to determine that for every £1 spent on sport, £1.91 is generated in terms of social impact.

Whilst this SROI undoubtedly sheds statistical light on the turnover of the money invested into sport, the authors sight some limitations that it is hoped that this project can go a little way to aiding. For example, Davies et al. (2019) once again highlight that such an analysis fails to recognise individual sports and thus the different types of sports participants that have been consulted for this analysis. Furthermore, this is based on certain criteria that the authors chose to include in their literature search and therefore does not include the measurement of social capital as an output. By limiting the extent of the criteria included, it is therefore difficult to reach causal finality; however, it should also be acknowledged that to conduct an SROI on every single sport available in England, whilst considering every possible input and output would probably be logistically impossible. However, what this SROI does achieve, is to place a monetary value on social impact and thus, on a smaller scale, this study will conduct an SROI on Goalball itself. It is hoped that this will be combined with the qualitative data from the participants to produce a holistic understanding of the lives of Goalball players, family members, coaches and referees, whilst evaluating the SROI that Goalball receives for their funding and ultimately placing Goalball more prominently on the literature map.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how sport is used as a development tool through policies such as Towards an Active Nation (Sport England 2016b). With tackling physical inactivity one of the key aims of this policy, alongside opening up sporting opportunities to the hard to reach members of society such as those with disabilities, it is perhaps surprising that there is such little research on the sport of Goalball; the only specifically designed sport for VI people. The lack of available literature in the UK has been highlighted further through a discussion of the sport science research on Goalball that has been conducted in Turkey and Brazil. Following this, Putnam's notions of social capital, specifically bonding and bridging capital concepts have been outlined with examples of their use in other sport sociology literature also highlighted. The evidence from this study suggests that sport is indeed an avenue that can facilitate social capital, however, the depth of this is sport and environment dependent and requires further exploration in specific sports. The limited available research on Goalball is also evident in terms of social value and as such, by acknowledging Davies et al. (2019) SROI, this can provide this study with a base and rationale on which to evaluate Goalball's social value and ability to develop a marginalised group of disabled people's social capital potential. This study will now turn to the methodology used to collect and analyse the data.



Methods Chapter

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the methodology of the study and will include a discussion on the research design and approach, sampling and criteria, data collection methods, ethical considerations and data analysis. Firstly, the researcher's epistemological position will be outlined as this project has undertaken a mixed methods approach and justification for this is necessary at this point. Following

this, a discussion on the specific methods and the rationale for these methods will be discussed and then how the semi-structured interviews were conducted. This chapter will then discuss in detail the approach to the quantitative aspect of the project, introducing the methods of the Social Return on Investment in stages before presenting the findings of this.



Epistemological position

Firstly, during planning, it was clear that a mixed methods approach was the only viable option due to the forms of inquiry the commissioners of the research wished to take. This included a measure of the social return on the money spent to fund Goalball (quantitative) and an exploration of the potential of Goalball to act as an instigator in forms of social capital production (qualitative). Whilst mixed method approaches attract a degree of scepticism from some researchers due to ontological and epistemological beliefs, Sparkes (2015) asserts that the use of different methods within one study should not be problematic. Rather, the switching of paradigms from interpretivist to positivist to suit a proposed study is where the issues may arise and that simply borrowing a technique for gathering data from either quantitative or qualitative does not necessarily make a researcher a positivist or interpretivist (Sparkes 2015). This acknowledgement does not mean that the researcher here is adopting a non-paradigmatic stance; it is the aim of the sociological researcher to inform the reader that whilst interpretivist beliefs are the stance predominantly taken, it is necessary to consider positivist paradigm beliefs to create a valid and succinct mixed methods approach to answer the research questions (Atkinson 2012; Sparkes 2015). The design of the research questions means that whilst mixed methods are necessary, the use of three

separate questions means that each question results in quantitative or qualitative methods (an SROI for the former and semi-structured interviews for the later) as opposed to one research question that attempts to mix both.

However, it would be naive to not consider the potential mixing of the two that could occur during the results and discussion chapter given that the overarching aim of the study is to evaluate the social impact of the sport and thus, Sparkes (2015) suggests an air of caution to avoid using interview data for example to cement causal relationships that could result in a blurred mess of analysis. Furthermore, for the purpose of the qualitative aspect of this project, it is important to utilise the interpretivist paradigm to its full potential as this approach allows the researcher in this project to examine and give voice to a marginalised group; in this case, disabled or visually impaired people (Fitzgerald 2009). Fitzgerald, Jobling and Kirk (2003) assert that more often than not, disabled people are not asked for their views and reflections on their participation in sport, rather, the views of able-bodied people are explored and as such, it is imperative that if we are to aid inclusivity, that we consider the voices of those who are disabled if we are to understand their needs correctly.

Data collection methods: the rationale

The main focus and approach of this study was from a qualitative perspective to gather knowledge of the lived experiences of those involved in Goalball. As previously mentioned, this study used semi-structured interviews with 16 participants to explore their own experiences and reflections of their involvement within Goalball. Interviewing is considered one of the main methods of qualitative data collection given that it allows for standardisation through the questions that are asked to each individual as opposed to using a survey that is rigid and asks exactly the same question of each participant (Atkinson 2012). By writing an interview guide to cover relevant themes and topics, the researcher was able to use this to delve into the participants thoughts whilst manipulating the order and wording of the questions according to the responses given (Chantler 2014). Sparkes and Smith (2018) assert that this is a very valuable and rich method for gaining data. Although research specifically in the field of Goalball is very limited, other disability sport and social capital and sport studies such as those by Fitzgerald and Kirk (2009) and Holt et al. (2009) used both focus groups and semi-structured interviews to tease out the experiences of those involved.

However, semi-structured interviews are also considered difficult to plan and execute given that the environment can be difficult to manage, nerves can feature for both the researcher and the participant and how the questions are asked can influence how they are answered (Atkinson 2012, Neuman 2014). Atkinson (2012) argues that a participant responds to a question but also to the person asking it which can evoke over-exaggeration for impression purposes. Due to the logistics of the placement of the interviewees all over the UK, telephone interviews were deemed the only viable option, thus, the building of rapport was discussed as being a potential challenge. This was achieved by providing the participants with anecdotal stories of the first authors own participation in Goalball, which provided a commonality between the researcher and participant. Matthews (2010) argues that rapport is an essential criterion for a successful interview and so, the research commissioners decided that an introductory letter

from the first author to all participants was necessary. This was sent to 35 possible participants and their voluntary contribution was requested. It was decided that to be integral and ethically appropriate, the first 16 to respond would be interviewed. In total, 16 answered the emailed letter offering their participant and were subsequently interviewed. Although based on the researcher's own opinion and therefore subjective, all participants were enthusiastic in terms of the research and none expressed any concerns about the nature of being interviewed by someone they had never met. This may be due to the fact that most of the participants were visually impaired and thus, in line with findings from Nandi and Platt (2017), it could be argued that a telephone interview was not particularly different to how a face-to-face interview would be conducted. Furthermore, the participants were asked for their availability to contribute to the research and were therefore in an environment of their own choosing and comfort for the interview to take place. It was hoped that this would aid in mitigating any rapport / trust issues.

In addition to the main qualitative aspect of this study and to answer the third research question, it was decided that a Social Return on Investment (SROI) would be carried out for Goalball. As there is little available statistical data on the sport of Goalball, the only viable option to conduct this part of the study was to use readily available data from Goalball UK itself and conduct the SROI based on the work and methods of Davies et al. (2019). A Goalball UK document was therefore used which included a financial overview of the current place of goalball in a 4-year funding cycle. Also included within this document were principal funding organisations, participation numbers, diversity levels, talent and income revenues. According to Davies et al. (2019) an SROI attaches monetary value to different social outputs that are results of investment in sport. These can include health, wellbeing and tackling crime for example, as well as enabling stakeholders to assess the value of their input in making valued contributions to interventions and policies (Banke-Thomas et al. 2015). Of the two types of SROI that can be conducted, this study used the evaluative method

as opposed to the forecast method and measures the impact of Goalball in the United Kingdom for 1 year. It was decided that year 2 of Goalball's 4-year funding cycle would be analysed as this was the most established and best available data at the point of analysis. Thus, the 7 principles of SROI were considered when conducting Goalball's social return and the six stages of progression were used in this study (Davies et al. 2019). These will be explained in further detail later in this chapter.



Qualitative data: semi-structured interviews methods and rationale

The demographics of Goalball participants covered the entire UK. Thus, given the timescale of the project and logistics of travel and cost, it was agreed with the project commissioners to conduct 16 telephone interviews with both Goalball players, coaches, referees and family members. As the researcher was dependent on Goalball UK to provide the access and contact details of potential participants, convenience sampling was the only appropriate option (Sparkes and Smith 2018). Furthermore, the commissioners wished for participants to meet certain criteria, thus purposive, non-random sampling was also used (Walliman 2011). This criterion included a mixture of elite and recreational players, their families and friends and Goalball officials. By emphasising voluntary participation in the introductory letter, the researcher made contact with each individual who consented to participate. They were sent via email or post (their preference) a consent form and information sheet which was subsequently returned via their chosen method of email or post. This meant that they could consent to participate in a method that suited them regarding their visual impairment. After this, telephone interviews were arranged at a time and date that suited the participants and the researcher telephoned them, placed them on loudspeaker and used a Dictaphone to record the interview. Prior to the interview starting, the participants were reminded of the key details from the consent form, such as their right to withdraw without penalty, the safe storage on a university OneDrive account of the audio recordings and transcriptions and the use of pseudonyms to protect themselves and any others mentioned in the interviews in terms of confidentiality. In total, 11 visually impaired players were interviewed, 3 of whom were also coaches; 1 non-visually impaired referee was interviewed, and 4 non-visually impaired family members were interviewed. There were 8 males and 8 females aged between 15 and 55. The interviews ranged from 16 minutes to 52 minutes.

The interviews followed a semi-structured guide where topics such as themselves and their introduction to

Quantitative data collection: the SROI process

Goalball, their current participation in Goalball, the Goalball community and life outside of Goalball were discussed. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. At the end of each interview, each participant was asked for any further contributions, before being thanked for their participation and being sent a debrief sheet via their chosen receipt method. The debrief sheet contained the details for the charity 'Mind', should the participants wish to discuss anything that had arisen during the interview. No participant alluded to any signs of wishing to terminate the interview or subsequently asked to withdraw from the study.

This following section will discuss the approach, methodology and results of the six-stage process of SROI based on Davies et al. (2019). This process followed six stages which were to: stage 1- identify the stakeholders; stage 2- map the inputs, outputs and outcomes; stage 3- measure and value the outcomes; stage 4- to establish the impact; stage 5- to calculate the SROI ratio and stage 6- to report the findings.

Following the six stages, the aim of the first stage was to identify the stakeholders for Goalball. Given the nature of Goalball and its relatively small footprint in the world of sport, we identified stakeholders directly from a consultation with Goalball UK and as such a list of those who influenced change were included in this SROI. In the review of literature by Taylor et al. (2015), evidence of social impact and sport was identified in health and wellbeing for adults, a reduction of mental health issues for children as well as a reduction in health care costs associated with disease and physical activity.



Figure 1: Stakeholders.

Given the scope of the levels of impact across different age categories and the limited details of age categories in Goalball participation, it was decided to include the full number of listed participants across all ages. As such, from management records, 729 participants and 100 volunteers were used.

The purpose of the second stage is to determine the inputs, outputs and outcomes of how Goalball makes a difference to the lives of visually impaired individuals and so a mapping exercise of the inputs (resources from stakeholders, of which £1,484,465 was provided for the 2017-2021 funding cycle), outputs (sports activities) and outcomes (for stakeholders) was facilitated through collaboration with Goalball UK and previous interviews with stakeholders (n=10, of which 5 were government/ public sector; 1 was private/commercial sector; 3 were consumer sector and 1 was charity/third sector). This is a calculation of a one-year snapshot of Goalball's funding cycle and as such, additional expenditure in other financial years such as consumer expenditure on Goalball participation may have been missed. Figure 1 shows the mapping of these stakeholders.

It should be noted that the evidence for the outcomes of sports participants was taken from scientific research of which there is a substantial amount in Taylor et al. (2015) as opposed to interviews because of the overlap between aims. As previously mentioned, the data on the outputs was taken from Goalball UK's records as there is no data on Goalball currently available from the Sport England Active Lives Survey or the DCMS Taking Part Survey. Figure 2 demonstrates the impact map as per Davies et al. (2019) that has been tailored to Goalball

The aim of stage three was to measure and value the outcomes. Table 1 below is based on the search of Davies et al. (2019) who already identified eleven social outcomes for the nature of the relationship between sport and social outcomes, which summarise the changes in outcomes as a result of participation. In this regard, 17 studies provided causal relationships between sport and health, 23 studies provided the evidence for crime and sports participation, and 25 studies were used for education and sport (see Davies et al. 2019 for further details).

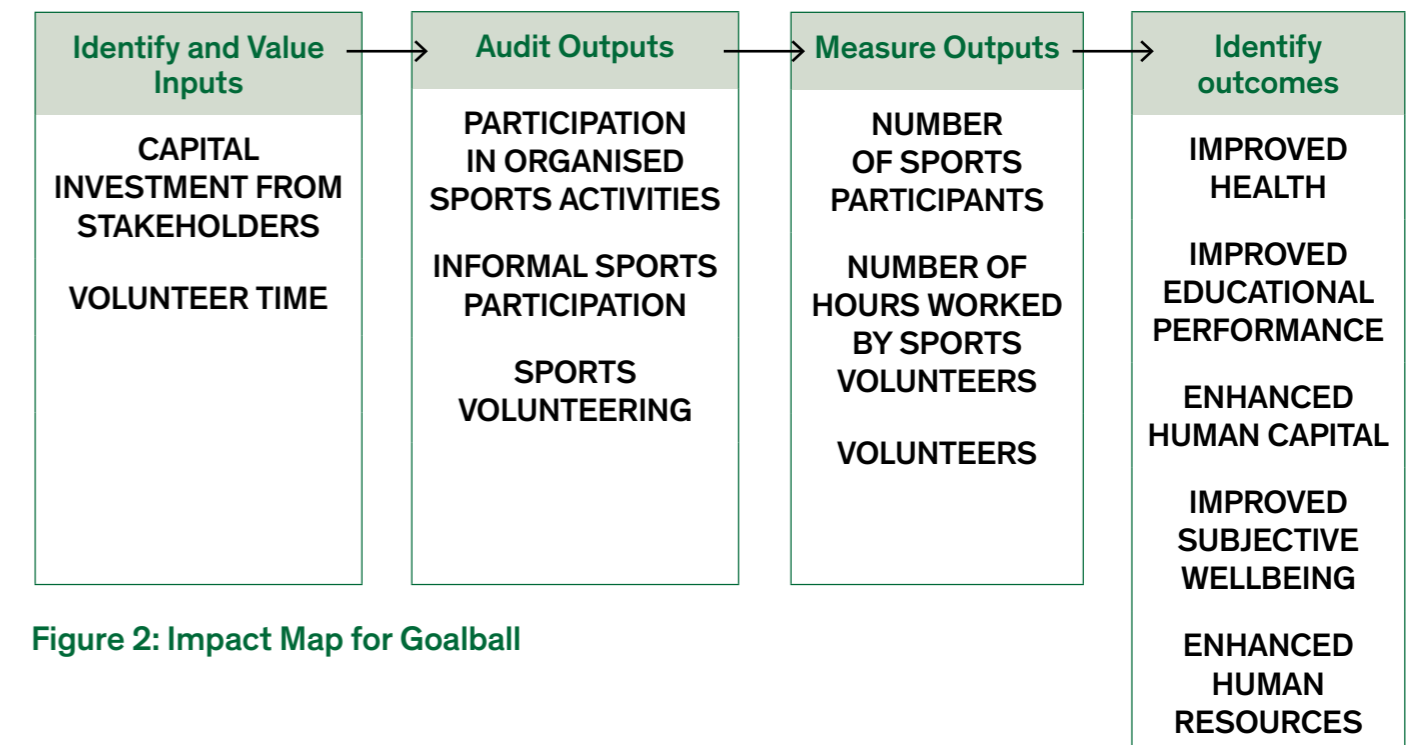


Figure 2: Impact Map for Goalball

The SROI undertaken by Davies et al. (2019) then calculated the valuation of the 11 social outcomes using data from sources such as Social Value UK, Cancer Research, British Heart Foundation, Dementia UK, Diabetes UK, the Office for National Statistics, Ministry of Justice and Department for Education. Table 2 shows the value of these health outcomes which Davies et al. (2019, p.595) calculated as 'the number of sports participants with a reduced risk of developing the health condition and multiplying it by the average annual cost per person diagnosed'. The Good health outcome was calculated by sports participant numbers multiplied by the annual NHS cost saving per person according to self-reported health. It is worth noting, that it would be beneficial in the future to include the social outcomes specifically for disabled people; however, without any current figures regarding mapping disability in terms of types of conditions vs sport participation vs perceived outcomes, it is not currently possible. Furthermore, a different framework would need to be created to analysis this specific data.

For education, educational attainment and human capital were valued and Davies et al. (2019) calculated the number of sports participants versus the level of qualifications achieved, as well as the number of participants graduating

from university in a sports capacity multiplied by their starting salary in their first paid role. Additionally, the valuation of subjective well-being was calculated by multiplying the number of people participating in sport or volunteering by the financial value placed on improved well-being (Fujiwara et al. 2014). Finally, the human resource benefits were valued by taking the number of volunteer hours worked and multiplying it by average hourly earnings (Sport England 2003). These social outcomes relevant to Goalball are displayed in table 3.

Table 1: The relationship between sport and social outcomes adapted from Davies et al. (2019)

OUTCOMES		CHANGE IN OUTCOME	KEY REFERENCES
Health	Coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke	Participation in sport and exercise at moderate intensity in adults reduces risk of CHD and stroke in active men and women by an average of 30% (range 11-52%).	Grau et al. 2009; Held et al. 2012; Houston et al. 2002; Sattelmair et al. 2011; Shiroma and Lee 2010.
	Cancer (breast)	Participation in sport and exercise at moderate intensity in adults reduces risk of breast cancer in active women by 20% (range 10–30%)	Eliassen et al. 2010; Leitzmann et al., 2008; Lynch et al. 2011; Monninkhof et al. 2007; Peters et al., 2009; Warburton et al. 2006.
	Cancer (colon)	Participation in sport and exercise at moderate intensity in adults reduces risk of developing colon cancer by 24%	Warburton et al. 2006; Wolin et al., 2009.
	Type 2 diabetes	Participation in sport and exercise at moderate intensity in adults reduces risk of type 2 diabetes by 10%	Warburton et al. 2006; Warburton et al., 2007.
	Dementia	Participation in sport and exercise at moderate intensity in adults reduces risk of developing dementia by 30% (range 21–52%)	Bowen 2012; Buchman et al., 2012; Larson et al, 2006; Xu et al., 2010.
	Good health	Sports participants are 14.1% more likely to (self) report good health than non-participants	Fujiwara et al. 2014a.
	Crime	Criminal Incidences	Sports participation reduces criminal incidents for males aged 10–24 years by 1%
Education	Educational attainment	Sports participation increases educational attainments (aged 11–18) by 1%	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010; Newman et al., 2010.
	Human capital	Participation in sport at university develop enhanced knowledge skills and abilities (human capital).	Griffiths, et al., 2017.
Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction	Sports participants have higher life satisfaction than non-participants Sports volunteers have higher life satisfaction than non-volunteers	Fujiwara et al. 2014a. Join in. 2014; Trotter et al., 2014.
Human resources	Non-market benefits	Volunteers create non-market benefits to the organisations they give their time to.	Sport England. 2003.

Table 2: Health valuation summary 2013/2014 adapted from Davies et al. (2019)

Outcomes	Persons	Value per person (£)	Total (£m)
CHD & Stroke	15	£3,635	£54,525
Breast Cancer	2	£47,908	£95,816
Colon Cancer	1	£47,908	£47,908
Type 2 diabetes	1	£3,545	£3,545
Dementia	1	£32,887	£32,887
Good health	729	£100	£72,900
			£307,581

The aim of stage 4 was to establish the impact of Goalball by using the participation numbers for players (n=729) and volunteers (n=100). Table 3 shows this data.

Table 3: Other outcomes valuation summary 2013/14 adapted from Davies et al. (2019)

Outcomes	Persons	Value per person (£)	Total (£m)
Crime	1	£1,599	1,599
Human Capital enhancement	2	£5,824	11,648
Subjective well-being			
Participants	729	£1,127	821,583
Volunteers	100	£2,357	235,700
Human Resources	100	£1,429	142,900
		Total	7,472,499

Based on the previous stages, stage 5 calculates the SROI ratio. This ratio was calculated by adding the total value of the outcomes and dividing it by the value of the inputs. The outputs were calculated as health benefits [£307,581] and the other benefits [£1,213,430], providing a total of outputs of £1,521,011. Total inputs are £352,170 which gives an SROI of 4.31. In other words, for every £1 spent on Goalball in year 2 of the 4-year cycle, £4.31 worth of social impact was generated*. The final part, stage 6, is a discussion of these findings which will be included later.

*A sensitivity analysis has been conducted to account for participation rate of 50% which adjusts the SROI to 2.15.

Ethical considerations

The purpose of this study was largely to explore the experiences of visually impaired individuals in Goalball. Thus, the ethics proposal form needed to consider the nature of inviting participants to study and also the methods through which the data would be collected. By using Goalball UK staff knowledge on players, family members, coaches and referees, a comprehensive list detailing many participants was drawn up. All were invited to participate so that the decision was purely voluntary from those who felt comfortable enough to participate. Furthermore, the introductory letter was also sent to parents and guardians of those on the potential participation list to ask for their consent/to be a gatekeeper should the player wish to be involved. Each participant was reminded of their voluntary participation and option to withdraw from the study without prejudice, should they choose to do so. The interview guides were written and used in a way that allowed the researcher to judge the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed, placing questions such as those regarding their sight loss after building rapport with the participants (Neuman 2010). By using this approach throughout each

interview, the researcher was able to utilise the semi-structured nature of the interview guide to steer the conversation away from any areas deemed sensitive. No participant raised any concerns during or post interview. Participants were also informed that their information would be stored for a minimum of six months on a password protected university OneDrive account and pseudonyms would be given to all participants and any others discussed.

For the quantitative aspect of the study, only data readily available to the public in terms of Goalball's expenditure and participation numbers were used as part of the SROI as the methods were taken from Davies et al. (2019). This project was granted ethical approval by the York St John University Ethics Committee in January 2020.

Qualitative Data Analysis and Rigour

The analysis of the data collected and used for this study would take the forms of thematic analysis for the interviews. Thematic analysis is described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a six-stage process through which large amounts of data can be worked and reworked into themes and patterns. Given that there were 16 interviews completed and arguably a large amount of transcribed data, NVivo 12 was used to manage this data as it allowed the researcher to place relevant evidence into similar themes whilst considering the six stages (Jackson and Bazeley 2019). Using NVivo 12 offers transferability to the reader as they can have access to the data and are then able to draw their own conclusions on the data (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Likewise, the researcher kept a reflexive journal where notes were taken during the interview of any key words or perceptions that the researcher received from the participant. This technique lends itself to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) credibility as a method for increasing the confidence in the demonstration of the findings.

During the transcription of the interviews, the researcher completed stage 1 of thematic analysis: Immersion. This involved the repetition of listening to the audio recordings whilst re-reading the transcripts to improve familiarity with the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). In stages 2 and 3, the data was placed into themes due to its similarities and 46 nodes were applied (nodes are the term used in NVivo12) (Jackson and Bazeley 2019). In stage 4, these nodes were reworked into hierarchies that allowed the researcher to develop key themes. In total, there were 16 themes. Stage 5 involved the renaming of these themes into appropriate terms, which included: 'Life with a disability'; 'the uniqueness of Goalball'; 'the Goalball Family'; 'Bonding Capital'; 'the impact of Goalball'; 'Goalball as a social tool'; 'Bridging Capital'; 'Benefits of Goalball'; 'Issues in Goalball' and 'future progress in Goalball'. Stage 6 provided the opportunity to present the findings using extracts from the data and given the vast quantity of data, 5 overarching themes were created that form the basis of the results and discussion chapter (Braun and Clarke 2006). Prior to stage 6, a detailed discussion with the other researcher of this project also provided credibility to the study as this allowed for the checking of understanding (Guest, Namey and MacQueen 2012). Stage 6, if done in detail, provides transferability as once again, the reader is able to form their own opinions on the data presented (Braun and Clarke 2006; Jackson and Bazeley 2019).

Quantitative Data analysis: validity and reliability

For analysis of the quantitative data, plus to ensure validity and reliability, the calculations of the value of sport were based on published estimations of the social return on investment for sport by Davies et al. (2019). In addition, the data used was collected directly from Goalball UK and shows that adapting the SROI framework to measure Goalball's social value impact is possible and could aid policymakers in making investment-based decisions in the future. However, it should be acknowledged that the SROI model used is in the early stages of development. Although it provides a starting point from which key stakeholders can learn the importance of the outcomes measured, the final calculations should be regarded as an estimate and this could be either an underestimate or overestimate of the actual value of sport (Davies et al. 2019).

This research highlights that the return on investment for Goalball is significant and positive. Based on the methods used by Davies et al. (2019) the value of Goalball in terms of outputs was £307,581 for year two of the four-year-cycle. Davies et al. (2019) SROI calculation was 1.91 for general sports in England. As Goalball's SROI is above this, it highlights the potential Goalball has for individuals and wider society. However, further research is required using Goalball data to understand the patterns of the social value and thus, there should be more detailed data collected on participation rates, frequency, intensity, as well as volunteer data for Goalball in the future. Perhaps including Goalball within Sport England's Active Lives Survey would be beneficial to understanding Goalball's social value over time. Despite this and arguably low participation numbers in

relation to sports more generically, this SROI demonstrates Goalball's ability to be a worthwhile financial investment based on the depth of outcomes present.

Based on Davies et al. (2019) the literature used to create the list of impacts was limited in terms of a lack of high-quality empirical evidence in some areas. These included, the quality of crime and education research, sports injuries, reduced depression as a result of sports participation and social capital. Furthermore, with the model in the early stages of development, it is unable to incorporate the types of frequency, intensity and duration of sports participation that would provide a more holistic understanding of the value of sport in relation to meeting the government guidelines of physical activity levels in adults (DHSC 2019). Additionally, the data for Goalball in relation to education and attainment value was not significant and below one, therefore it was not included in the final SROI calculation. Finally, this SROI is based on an analysis of one year of Goalball funding and as such should be reviewed with some caution. This model does not account for the inputs of participation and volunteering of the years prior to the year analysed and thus cannot say for certain what the benefits of future years will be, as according to Davies et al. (2019, p.600) for 'benefits to accrue in a given year, continuous investment is required in previous years'. As such, although this is a useful tool for measuring sport in terms of value to wider society, further research is required to improve the accuracy of the SROI for sports policymakers.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a detailed outline of the steps taken to gain and analyse the data. A mixed-methods approach was necessary to answer the three different research questions and therefore a mixed interpretivist and positivist perspective was required. Purposive, convenience sampling was the appropriate method for gaining participants as the researcher was reliant on Goalball UK to provide access to the players. Through them, the voluntary option of participating in the interviews was given and the first 16 respondents to the initial welcome letter were interviewed. From these 16 interviews, 5 overarching themes were determined through thematic analysis to answer research questions 1 and 2. These themes broadly encompass 'Life with a disability'; 'the uniqueness of Goalball'; 'the Goalball Family'; 'Bonding Capital'; 'the impact of Goalball'; 'Goalball as a social tool'; 'Bridging Capital'; 'Benefits of Goalball'; 'issues in Goalball' and 'future progress in Goalball'.

For the quantitative aspect, an SROI based on work by Davies et al. (2019) was conducted using the best available data from the second year of a four-year funding cycle of Goalball UK. By adapting the six-stage process to include 729 Goalball participants and 100 volunteers, we were able to measure and value the total outcomes and divide this by the inputs, which gave an SROI ratio of 4.31. In other words, for every £1 spent on Goalball, £4.31 is generated in social impact*. Given that Davies et al. (2019) study's ratio was 1.91 for sport in general in England, this SROI highlights that the potential Goalball has of making a positive contribution to individuals and wider society is significant.



Results and Discussion Chapter

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to report on the qualitative findings from the 16 semi-structured interviews with various individuals involved in Goalball. To answer the two qualitative research questions, themes and patterns within the data were organised into overarching codes and thus this chapter will be organised into two main parts with various subsections to discuss these themes. The first part will focus on research question one and explore the potential Goalball has of instigating bonding capital amongst members of the visually impaired (VI) community. There will be discussions on 5 main themes that will include: Life with a disability; the uniqueness of Goalball; the Goalball 'Family'; Bonding Capital and the impact of Goalball. It will be argued that Goalball plays a significant role in the lives of VI individuals and that the sport perpetuates the solidarity and sense of belonging for its members, providing the opportunity to develop bonding capital. Part two of this chapter will focus on the benefits of Goalball participation and how Goalball can be used as a social tool for development in the wider community. This part will also be divided into subsections to answer research question two on the potential of Goalball to act as bridging capital for VI and non-VI individuals. This will explore the benefits of Goalball broadly and specifically; Bridging Capital; Goalball as a social tool and issues in Goalball. It will be argued that Goalball's ability to offer a substantial number of opportunities to its members for new skill acquisition alongside numerous health, wellbeing and physical benefits mean that the value of Goalball to both the VI and non-VI community is high. With this in mind, it is argued that this sport should achieve the same national and international recognition as other sports in the immediate future.



Part One

Life with a disability

Of the participants interviewed, 7 were registered VI and 4 fully blind whilst the remaining 5 participants were fully sighted. To gauge the possible potential of Goalball to facilitate bonding between VI individuals, it was deemed necessary to establish how long each participant had lived with their disability and the impact of their disability on their lives. For some participants, they were born with a VI, whereas others had tragically lost their sight due to accidents or degenerative conditions in recent years. To keep in line with the topic of sport, the participants were asked at the latter stage of the interview, if they were willing to discuss any barriers to sports participation they had prior to finding Goalball. Participant 11 had been a Goalball player for one year at the time of interview and had their parent (P11a) take part in the interview to ease nerves. The parent described their child's love of sport but spoke of their exclusion in school PE as their child's sight deteriorated through the years at school:

P11a: [name] has always been very, very sporty and in some ways an athlete, and that was what the school actually used to call her, say that she was an athlete, maybe when she was about 12 and 13. But school was never inclusive, so [name] very quickly as her sight deteriorated, was excluded from gym class, from PE. [name] went from being one of the pupils that everybody wanted on her team, when she had more sight... to the girl that stood, that nobody wanted on their team. She would take the cruel comments in the locker room and if they had just got a ball with a bell, she would have been able to continue to play all sports.

Participant 13, a Goalball player for 8 years at the time of interview, spoke of similar exclusion during school years:

my "favourite" memory at school was probably tennis. So, they'd got one of these big light tennis balls, like really big, like football size sort of things. but I'd had just the normal sized tennis racket, so my 1 to 1, she was just like, 'I'll tell you when to swing the ball', so I just stood there, randomly swinging the bat. Next thing I know, she's going 'don't worry, I'll get it', and I've not got a clue what's just happened. I just stood there, just waving the bat, I hate this, I cannot stand this, I hate this so much. I hate tennis.

Similarly, although not in sport, participant 9, a fully blind Goalball player and coach for 8 years, spoke of their barriers to restaurants through having a guide dog and also stated 'I've also been passed over for promotion because of my disability'. These quotes and more beside them from the other participants, highlight that the barriers Sport England (2016b) are trying to tackle through their Towards an Active Nation strategy are still very much evident as the two participants quoted above had only recently finished in mainstream education. This finding agrees with Barton (2009) who states that the assumption of non-VI individuals on the capabilities of those with a disability are often miscalculated and the results are exclusion and victimisation, as per participant 11. As stated previously, Liberman and MacVicar (2003) and Martin (2013) found that children with visual impairments were more likely to face physical barriers to sports participation than other disabilities, yet this statement lacked clarity. This evidence demonstrates the prevalence of barriers facing VI individuals in their pursuit of sport. The barriers to sport faced by these participants led them to discuss not only the importance of Goalball, but what made them participate in Goalball specifically as opposed to any other disability sport.

The Uniqueness of Goalball

When asked about their reasons for joining Goalball, 8 of the 16 interviewees were influenced by the 2012 Paralympic games. With many having never heard of Goalball prior to these games, or without a fellow VI introducing the sport or even a charity such as Guide Dogs describing the game, the participants of this study were all very keen and quick to describe the logistics of the game. The appeal of the game for many was that it was designed for VI individuals which makes it completely unique from all other disabled sports:

P5: it's the only game that has been specially designed for blind people or visually impaired people.

P9: I just happened to be watching the Paralympics on tele and I saw Goalball and I saw the other visually impaired sports as well but I thought they're just adapted versions of the normal sport, but Goalball's something special, it was something that specifically invented for blind servicemen to help them with their rehabilitation.

P14: Well it's a game of its own isn't it? There's a lot of sort, blind football, blind rugby, blind tennis, you know you can't compare it to anything, it's a complete game in its own right. There's no sighted equivalent.

The importance of Goalball as its own game, in its own right, gave all involved a heightened sense of belonging to a community where their disability was not discussed or even considered particularly important. More significantly for these individuals, if their sight loss deteriorated or was lost completely, this would not impact on their ability to play the game, due to the equipment (eyeshades) that are worn by everyone. This somewhat relatively simple act of placing on eyeshades was highlighted by all interviewees as significant in that they all felt on a level playing field where they were included and did not need to justify themselves to anyone:

P9: I thought I wanna be part of that, I quite fancy having a go at that, that's something that my eyesight deficiency, or deterioration is not going to be a problem.

P11: a sport that you wear blindfolds, so that everybody with eyesight problems can all play at the same level; it doesn't really matter what sight you've got. Cos everybody's the same.

P13: You feel included. It's Goalball sort of things and especially if they do a warmup where everybody has to wear their blindfolds. Because everyone is on the same exact level, no matter what sight level you've got... if you feel like an idiot, just imagine, you've got about 10 other people who are feeling the exact same way.

P14: Yeah because in the Goalball community everybody knows someone who is visually impaired. you go to Goalball you don't have to explain anything, oh sorry mate I can't see you, you've never gotta say any of that sort of stuff. If you bump into someone it doesn't matter.

DePauw (2009) suggests that the use of disability sports as less of a method of rehabilitation and more as a form of enjoyment and engagement for leisure reasons is on the increase and the findings from this study support that ideology. These participants spoke enthusiastically of their involvement within Goalball by suggesting that it offers the opportunity to be equal to others even though they have one sensory element less than fully able people. This alone develops the individual's volume of bonding capital as their participation allows them to meet fellow VI people and engage in something recreational. By wearing eyeshades and having to use other senses such as hearing to a higher degree, these Goalball players are able to improve their communication and empathy towards others. This, according to Nicholson and Hoye (2008), is a result of the development of bonding capital, which demonstrates Goalball's capabilities in doing this for the VI community. The sense of community within Goalball was the most discussed theme of the interviews with most participants describing it as the Goalball 'Family'- a term created by the participants. This theme will now be discussed.

The Goalball 'Family' and Bonding Capital

Given the lack of existing literature on Goalball, very little is understood about the logistics of the sport as well as how social connections and networks between individuals are enabled and constrained. Putnam's (2000) notion of sport as a tool to rebuild communities is strikingly evident in Goalball. For many of these individuals and their families, their disability brought a heightened sense of isolation and loneliness. The finding of Goalball and the sense of belonging that they were immediately met with upon arriving at a training session was valued extremely highly by all players and their family members. Participant 1, a fully sighted parent of one of the players, describes their child's involvement with Goalball:

P1: And at home, he doesn't you know, no one understands him. He doesn't feel like he can be himself, whereas Goalball, the 'have a go' weekends, you know, [name of family member] is now connected up with those. And through doing the residential with Goalball, he's made so many friends. He's not judged.

Other participants discussed their sense of belonging as crucial to the ethos of Goalball and how they feel included and valued with the sport:

P3: so think that's really valuable and I think the community is again, just being able to exchange information and just being able to be part of a community where for once you are not the only person to be using a white cane.

P5: we call it the goalball family and it isn't just the UK family, once you're part of that, if you travel abroad, you become part of the Goalball international family.

P12: that's what Goalball gives you, it gives you that goal scenario but also, I would call it a family kind of sport. Everybody around you, you know everybody in Goalball they're very socialised, you know what I mean, they watch out for everybody else.

P13: you all help each other, and it just helps everyone in general and in your Goalball game and it is like family.

Movahedi, Mojtahedi and Farazyani (2010) found that the control group in their study who participated in Goalball

scored higher on Weitzman's Social Maturity Scale, suggesting an opportunity to increase their levels of social capital. However, their study did not provide details from the participants perspectives; in comparison, this study has, and the evidence arguably demonstrates the potential Goalball has of enabling new networks between VI individuals in an extremely welcoming and encouraging community. This also aligns with Fitzgerald's (2012) argument that to understand disabilities we should look to use the social model of disability that provides a more holistic approach as it takes into consideration how the social environment influences behaviours. With the Goalball community being so open and welcoming, even those new to the sport such as participant 11, would travel for 8+ hours in a round trip to training. This shows their level of dedication and commitment to the sport with the lengths and financial costs they are willing to go to, just to feel socially and sportingly included.

It is worth noting and acknowledging at this point, that perhaps unfortunately, given the positives already discussed yet the relatively low participation numbers, that there is a distinct lack of awareness of Goalball across the UK. This will be discussed in more detail later. However, what should be considered here, is that given the relatively small numbers that take part in relation to the 959,919 people who are visually impaired in the UK, several interviewees stated that the Goalball sense of 'Family' will still be evident if the sport were to grow significantly. This is due to the uniqueness of the sport; there is no other sport like it in that is not adapted from an able-bodied sport and that no matter the level of disability there are grassroots and elite opportunities:

P9: I think you will always have an element of that family feeling in Goalball because of the nature of the people who take part in it. Because one thing that blind people do, they do look out for one another.

This quote is particularly interesting and highlights not just the potential, but how Goalball instigates bonding capital amongst members of the VI community. Participant 9's use of the phrase 'look out for one another' is also an interesting

play on words given their disability. The level of support offered to one another both on the Goalball court and off the court is highly evident:

P7: there's the stuff it's given me off the court, I've learnt so much off the court, not just on the court.

With being around the lads with a similar disability, just seeing how the lads deal with things and adapt and do things, you know, I've taken and learnt from that and it's really given me a lot of -obviously when you lose your sights, one of the main things that is hard that goes is your independence really.

P9: It's also given me a sense of belonging to a team again... and one thing that I said was the sense of belonging that gives to a visual impaired person, that sense of belonging to a lot of visually impaired people is priceless.

P12: when you're in Goalball, you're a Goalball player, you're a coach, you're a referee, you're not blind. You're not a non-sighted, know what I mean, just a Goalball player.

NH: You're just who you are?

P12: And that's the thing with the community of Goalball.

P13: Cos Goalball's about not just the club and stuff, well if there's not a training session, I'll try to do a social session or something. In training, you have your own teams, you have your coach, you have your players, but if we're going for dinner say, everybody just talks, there's no difference between who you are and what you do.

P4: it is quite funny because after training we've all got our [name of club] hoodies on and we go down to Weatherspoon's, we have food and every single time people will say 'oh what's this [name of club] then?' You know and they'll ask that of any of us and you know we are a club and we've got that sense of belonging to- at the club. You know we are [name of club], we're not

[name] the visually impaired [club name] and [name] the sighted [name of club] we are just that sense of community. We've got all of our kit, we've got home kit, we've got away kit, off court kit. We've got our team flag, it's that real sense of belonging.

Once again, this demonstrates that this sport is vastly different from being used as a rehabilitation sport (DePauw 2009) and is being used as a tool for bonding VI individuals together, which is increasing their potential to gain social capital (Putnam 2000). Furthermore, perhaps unlike other sports such as football where your position or team ranking, i.e. first team vs youth team determines your social status within the club and acceptance by others (Roderick 2006), Goalball demonstrates how inclusive it is through the fair, level treatment and acceptance of everyone, regardless as to their position in the club. Despite the apparent abundance of ways in which Goalball can instigate bonding capital amongst VI individuals, which considering Putnam's (2000) notion that increased social capital can benefit a community to leading a better, easier life, Goalball remains a sport that is underacknowledged and under examined. Sport England are still to analyse Goalball as a sport for their recurrent Active Lives Survey and thus this begs the question of how many visually impaired individuals are in the UK that are unaware of Goalball's existence, despite it's potential to be extremely impactful? For simple arguments sake, Goalball had 729 participants in 2018/2019, which means there are possibly still 959,190 people in the UK who are visually impaired that may not be aware of the sport. This alone stresses the importance of marketing the sport. It should be noted here, that naivety is not the aim of the game here and consideration must be given when assessing these statistics that a percentage may be elderly visually impaired people; some may not wish to participate in Goalball and some may already participate in another VI sport. However, the point being made, is that Goalball has such a broad scope to bond VI individuals with others in a positive, impactful way, as will be further explored next.

The Impact of Goalball

A common theme that was described by many participants, but particularly by family members was the impact of Goalball on their lives. Participant 10, a parent of one of the players who lost their sight in an accident, said 'the meeting people, people like himself, which understand you know? It's like anything in life, you don't really understand till you're going through it yourself'. Although Goalball was designed for VI war veterans, a reoccurring commonality within the data was the learning that each of the interviewees and their families achieved regarding understanding disabilities:

P11a: : You know, I was sitting talking to a dad, whose daughter's gone blind and he loves Goalball and her brother is fantastic and he's quite a guide for her, so he was going to sit for 3 hours with his dad, watching. And I had said, 'does he not want to take part?', he said, 'I don't think he could', and I was like 'of course I think he could!' So... it made one or two of the other siblings who were sitting waiting, so before we know, we had these first time Goalball players, scoring their first goals!

P9: It's given me a new, a broader outlook on people who are visually impaired.

With no existing literature available on the opinions and reflections or experiences of their Goalball involvement, the participants were asked to voice their thoughts on how they would feel if Goalball were to no longer be available, for whatever reason. In other words, how much would this impact on their lives? The unanimous answer from all 16 participants was that it would massively impact them. One parent got particularly emotional at the thought now that their spouse is a coach, their youngest child with another disability has started playing and they have travelled around the world as a family to play:

P1: [name of family member] wouldn't be the person he is now. No way.

NH: No?

P1: That's a scary thought. Life without Goalball, that's no... I don't even wanna think about that question.

Others cited how much their mental health would suffer should Goalball be no longer available:

P7: I love playing the game, but it would be more to be honest, the thing I'd miss the most would be the team camaraderie you know, the social aspect of it.

P13: (large intake of breath) quite a big impact actually, cos even though I don't get to train very often, definitely one of the biggest things for me is for my mental health. So, if I've had a really, crappy week or whatever, I get all my frustration out at Goalball.

P16: HUGELY. hugely. You know, there's so much being lost there that I think that is, that would be devastating.

The potential scale of Goalball being unavailable was prevalent regardless as to the individual's age or playing level. Once again, the opportunities Goalball has provided these players and their families is hugely significant that the sport has become a family sport and one where all members are involved. The following quotes demonstrate the views of family members on how Goalball has impacted on their lives:

P1: And he [child] did a tournament that I couldn't make due to work commitments so [name of spouse] actually went. And he come home and he was like 'oh I helped on the table and doing the scoreboards' (laughing)

NH: Yeah?

P1: And then he finally said, 'now I really understand what Goalball really is about'. He could never get it before, my excitement, you know when I come home from a tournament or training or just an event with Goalball and now, now he gets it.

P5: we've learnt about Goalball, which we didn't know anything about, I suppose you do learn, don't you, you learn from others, you learn from the game, you learn from the people. It's definitely added to our lives. And it's definitely become a part of our lives, all of us as a family.

P11a: I think the fact that there's nothing locally for [name]. That can give her what Goalball can give her

and as a parent who has struggled to try and make their child fit in anywhere. We've tried every sport, we've tried every activity, anything that [name] could connect with, we're behind it 100% and if we have to travel all-round the UK or anywhere round the world, for her to put a smile on her face and to connect with other young people and feel positive about herself- what parent wouldn't do that?

This is purely a small sample of the vast quantity of data that supports the positive impact Goalball has on the lives of players, family members, friends, and technical staff. Some family members such as coach and parent participant 4, stated they were not involved in any kind of physical activity at all prior to their child's involvement in Goalball. With the Chief Medical Officer (DHSC 2019) stipulating that adults should be engaged in 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week, the fact that Goalball is a disability sport helping non-disabled people be physically active, should not be a fact that is ignored. However, the benefits of Goalball extend past purely physically ones; this chapter will now turn towards a discussion of the wider benefits of participating in Goalball, in an attempt to answer research question number two.



Part Two

The Benefits of Goalball

The benefits of participating in sport have long been documented in the world of research (Roberts and Brodie 1992; Kirk 2010; Green 2010; Lawrence 2018). However, for those with a disability, access to sport and exercise can prove to be a much harder challenge particularly participation in team sports (Fitzgerald 2012). Several of the interviewees described a love of sports and a desire to play team sports, but also alluded to exclusion from team sports due to their alleged capabilities. Participant 3 stated that they 'wanted a team sport' after playing Rugby at university and having to leave the team due to their visual impairment and being unable to catch the ball consistently. Participant 12 also suggested that the opportunity to play the sport as part of team was what appealed significantly:

P12: you're part of a team, you've got peer support, you've also got a challenge, you know you're trying to be the best the can, trying to win that game. Your teammates are there to support you and you're there to support your teammates, so it's a bit like a band of brothers.

According to Richardson and Fletcher (2020), Putnam recognised that team sports offer an increased opportunity to create bridging capital. For example, a Goalball tournament means that teams from around the UK or indeed the world in international championships, allow participants to meet other people that would otherwise be outside of their network. These liaisons are incredibly valuable to social capital building and given that several of these players were not involved in any sport prior to Goalball, they have been presented with the opportunity to increase their bridging capital, thereby further cementing Goalball's position as an instigator of social capital (Richardson and Fletcher 2020).

The list of benefits of the sport was plentiful with each participant describing a comprehensive list of physical benefits that they gained from playing Goalball. These included, losing weight, making healthier food choices,

exercising more frequently and a desire to make themselves a better Goalball player in terms of technical and tactical areas such as attacking, scoring and defending. What was perhaps interesting, was that all of the participants regardless as to whether they were a player or a family member or a coach, started by explaining the physical benefits to the sport before immediately linking it to their perceptions of the mental health and wellbeing benefits:

P10: They may have lost their sight, they may be visually impaired, but at the end of the day, they are still themselves and they have great fun together. I think it's really good and I think it's great that they go away and social aspects of them going away I think is great. Team building, it's just it's good. and I think they build that bond. If you play sport it's good for your mind, it's good for your wellbeing, it's good for your train of thoughts.

P15: Having a purpose, getting involved in training, getting involved with team, with like-minded people in a team atmosphere, it just, it's just a massive improvement to your mental wellbeing and your wellbeing overall.

P4: So, from a like kind of mental health and wellbeing perspective, it makes you feel good that you're actually doing something... The good thing that it's done for me is that it's allowed me to kind of reassess what's important to me.

P6: I think I've come to terms with my anxiety levels and how that did make me a lot more anxious. I think you know there were times when that came out on the Goalball court... but I think it has helped kind of work on that sort of thing. And the shock, the reason, to lose the eyesight to the degree that I have...

These findings further cement the ideology on which Sport England's (2016b) Towards an Active Nation is built; that sport can indeed improve physical and mental wellbeing, but what should be highlighted here, is how significant this is for disabled people. Those with disabilities are noted

to often feel a heightened perception of the benefits to sports participation and these participants are no exception to this (Martin 2013). This ultimately highlights that using sport as vehicle for tackling other wide societal issues such as inclusion and mental health is a justifiable method. However, as will be discussed later, there is still plenty of opportunity for further improvements in this area.

The benefits of Goalball were not limited to the players as parents and coaches also outlined their reflections of the game:

P5: it's that sort of confidence and they grow within themselves, you know, it's almost like seeing them become 2 inches taller throughout the day and it's the strings, parents are very overprotective at first... and it's watching the parents gradually let go and say do you know what they can do this, you know what, I'm going to go and have a coffee! I'm not going to sit and panic anymore, so there's seeing families develop. It's the realisation that you know my children could develop enough to represent their country.

For those whose family members had lost sight only recently, knowing how to help their loved ones by sharing advice with others in a similar situation was crucial:

P10: Yeah and for us as parents its nice because we got to meet the other parents obviously that everybody's case is different, and everybody has a story to tell. And we've met them, and we've chatted and you kind of say 'well what's happened to your child?' and you say, 'well what's happened to yours' and its people understanding. It always helps when you're talking to somebody that kind of understands what you've gone through as a parent.

This demonstrates the sports ability to facilitate bonds between non-VI people and those VI people involved in Goalball. As 5 of the 11 VI players had full sight earlier in their lives, their resulting sight loss arguably threatened their identity and evolving habitus. Participant 7 for example, lost their sight 3 years ago in an accident. For their parents (P10), the world of blindness was completely new and isolating. Bourdieu (1984) states that our habitus

is embodied social learning where practices and behaviours become second nature. Participant 7 arguably experienced massive changes to their identity in that what were once normal daily interactions and behaviours were suddenly more complex or unachievable. Through involvement in Goalball, participant 7 and their family (P10) were able to gain bridging capital via the opportunities presented to them through the formation of new networks. Once again, this demonstrates Putnam's (2000) ideas that sport is a cultural resource for connecting people and making life better. This was also evident through the description of the new skills that Goalball gave the participants that were transferable to other areas of their lives.

Skills such as increased confidence, team building, making new friendships, understanding disabilities more broadly, increased maturity, organisation, setting goals, improving listening skills, communication skills, public speaking, resilience, independence, patience, tolerance, learning to compromise, mobility, how to approach someone who is VI and assist them were just some of the skills mentioned by all the participants. Participant 13 said:

P13: Yeah and it's just explaining to people that it's not just a sport. It's VI awareness, it's team building, it's a great thing in employment, it's a team building exercise, it's this, it's that, you learn listening skills, you develop communication skills... I could go on all day.

The accumulation or enhancement of this range of skills was stated by some participants to have helped them in other areas of their lives. For example, participant 16 said, 'I think Goalball and the people have given me the confidence to kind of pursue what I want to do... hopefully going to Oxford to go study political journalism'. This suggests that participant 16 could integrate more prominently with non-VI individuals in a globally recognised university, with the opportunity to increase and develop their bridging capital/ social capital as a whole; all as a result of Goalball. This discussion will now turn to how Goalball has the potential to be used as a tool for social development whilst evaluating how Goalball can act as an instigator for developing bridging capital.

Goalball as a social tool and Bridging Capital

When asked in the interview what their views were on using Goalball as a social tool to develop communities more widely, there were some mixed answers. The majority suggested that it would be a positive and useful tool for finding and engaging isolated individuals whether they are visually impaired or not. Additionally, one coach suggested that access to Goalball could aid wider society in gaining a better understanding of how to work with disabled people. They said, '[it's] making sure that we as non-visually impaired people begin to understand what it is they need, rather than what we think they need'. By opening Goalball up to be more readily available to schools and communities in the UK, all the participants felt that the benefits they described would be available to a whole host of other disabled and non-disabled people. Participant 7 suggests Goalball can be used to facilitate bridging capital between VI and non-VI people:

I think just really bringing it into schools, but really open, pushing to open it up for different disabilities as well, it just brings so much you know, so much more benefits to other people as well, than just visually impaired and blind.

Likewise, participant 8 suggests that by using Goalball in organisations and companies as a team bonding exercise to improve communication and other skills that it could 'open doors for Vis into work', thereby offering the chance to gain bridging capital. However, it should be noted that Putnam (2000) states that bridging capital is only possible when members from culturally diverse groups interweave. Thus, the chances of this are only as high as the network is running, which given the issues and challenges facing Goalball on a regular basis, could put this into doubt. This will be discussed in more detail in the latter stages of this chapter.

Returning to the positive aspects of Goalball's potential to create bridging capital between VI and non-VI people, the game is available for both sighted and non-sighted people to play across the different levels of novice, intermediate and elite. Participant 10 said:

you can play it fully sighted. It's not really just for people that are visually impaired... once you're goggled out and you've got your blackout stickers on your eyes and you're all blacked out, you're all equal.

Similarly, participant 4 said:

P4: The first thing I would say, is I'm fully sighted, you know it's not just having the physical impact on the guys who are visually impaired, it's had an impact on me and we've also got a number of other fully sighted players in the team. In Goalball, but in our club, so it's not just getting people who are visually impaired activity. Because of the boy's visual impairment, being involved in goalball as a fully sighted person, I've become active. We've got another family where the girl is visually impaired- her mother now plays. Her mother's similar age to me, she wasn't physically active, so it's not just you know getting those who are visually impaired active.

Participant 12 stated that Goalball brings out the jokers and the humour where VI people feel naturally comfortable to make jokes regarding their disability, which puts non-VI people at ease:

when we talk to sighted people we joke about our impairment with each other, 'oh you're not blind' you know what I mean? And loads of people go, I can't believe they're saying that! and it's like whose got the rarest eye condition- that's always a good game, so if you've got a group of VI's will say 'well I've got a rare one' [condition], 'oh i've got RP' 'oh nobody cares about you...' (laughing) so yeah, and sighted people will come in and they'll relax around us more and I think we then relax around them more and I think communication between the visually impaired and non-VI is easier.

According to Taylor et al. (2015) sport can have an influential effect on the possession and accumulation of social capital but little is known in terms of specific sports. This data suggests that Goalball provides individuals with opportunities to develop their identity and habitus through interactions with both VI and non-VI people to the point where they are able to accumulate larger volumes of social

capital. However, according to Nicholson and Hoyer (2008) the volume of social capital available depends on the size of the network. As a relatively small sport then, it could be argued that without growth and expansion, Goalball's potential to aid others will reach a point of saturation, where further development is in jeopardy. This discussion will now turn towards the issues Goalball faces in its day to day operation and a lack of awareness throughout the UK and the world.

The Issues in Goalball: Lack of Awareness and Funding

Towards the end of the interviews, all participants were asked what they would like to see in the future for Goalball. There was a unanimous outcry that Goalball is still so relatively unheard of, despite the 2012 Paralympics and the vision of the legacy of those games (Green 2012):

P12: Because we don't have it on social media, we don't have it on the TV, magazines or anything like that. Nobody cares it, nobody understands, they'll see VI football, wheelchair basketball, running, athletics in with VI, but Goalball they'll go what's Goalball? and they don't understand... because I remember the early days in 2014, they hadn't got no money. And they were fighting for it, there was [name], [name], [name], struggling to set up things and this came off the back of 2012, the legacy of Paralympics, but for me, the legacy failed.

P13: the first thing that comes to my head is that I just want people to have a knowledge of goalball.

P15: I didn't know anything about Goalball until, it's surprising actually because I've been visually impaired for some time now. About 25, 30 years.

P16: I think if it's promoted because amongst visually impaired people it's an amazing sport to have and I think as I talked about before, I think getting more sighted people involved, both as an experience to see what it's like to have that blind fold on. But also, just as a sport in its own right. It has huge potential, to be a really, really positive thing. Both as a sporting element and as you know, a physical activity. But also, awareness raising of visual impairment as well.

The fact that participant 16 states that Goalball has such potential to impact on so many people's lives begs the question as to why it is so underrepresented. One reason for this that was alluded to by all participants was due to a distinct lack of available funding. This lack of funding was the reason cited for infrequent training opportunities, clubs struggling to get off the ground and participants using their own financial resources and time to travel hundreds of miles to their nearest club or competition. Participant 4, a coach



and founding member of one of the larger clubs in the country said:

P4: well I talk about running the club, it's constant, I'm constantly fundraising, since 2016, I've had to like raise funds through grants, applications, trusts, of 35 grand just to keep [name of clubs] going... you know the £3 subs you get from people isn't going to keep it going.

Participant 5 added:

P5: The hardest thing for them is the funding and the worst thing for people like me is the travelling to and from events. I've started using the train, because I was finding that you know doing 8 hours tournament and then trying to drive home for 5 to 6 hours. It's sad when things come down to funding... Funding is based on chances of medals; the thing is there are so few that can go to represent a country... I think it's that we've got to look at the add on value to an individual, knowing full well they won't ever do it other than pleasure.

Given the calculations of the SROI, Goalball has the potential to create positive and substantial social impact, but this can only be the case if funding is continuous (Davies et al. 2019). The measurements of social capital were excluded in Davies et al. (2019) SROI due to a lack of empirical evidence; however, this data from the participants of Goalball demonstrates the potential of Goalball to create social capital. If this is combined and considered with the return on financial investment, arguably, an increase in funding for Goalball will result in larger scale benefits for wider society and be more impactful for VI individuals in particular. However, this vicious circle is arguably problematic as it is imperative that Goalball sees a rise in the number of participants, yet it can only do this if there is a rise in available funding to provide sessions consistently around the country. Furthermore, the lines of provision between grassroots Goalball and elite Goalball are blurred, with the same financial investment covering both sides of the sport. This, as suggested by the participants, makes growth and development of the sport particularly challenging.

Of the 11 Goalball players, there were some that played for team GB and some that played for pleasure only. Therefore,

some wished for more access to elitism, citing financial barriers and an expectation that Goalball GB players act like GB players of other sports but without any or very limited financial backing:

P4: that Goalball UK expect [name] and [name] and the other GB athletes to be as dedicated and to behave and act as if they were paid athletes and with that comes an awful lot of restrictions things you can eat, things you can't eat, when you need to train, all that kind of stuff, so they're basically doing a full-time job for free.

With a small percentage of the UK aware of the game and even fewer participating, it perhaps no surprise that the number of players good enough to be part of team GB is very small. As such, the chances of winning medals and tournaments is arguably slim, therefore the chance of bringing in financial support to the game is reduced and the inevitable is a vicious circle. When considered in relation to Putnam's (2000) ideas on social capital accumulation, the lack of team GB on the international scene is detrimental to the sport overall. This is due to Goalball being an economically disadvantaged network despite having very strong social networks and potential to create social capital, as is shown in this study. Social capital, according to Putnam, has the potential to sustain communities where 'members are socially, financially, culturally, mentally and physically prosperous' (Nicholson and Hoyer 2008, p.7). Given the findings from this study, Goalball as a community has solidly demonstrated its substantial ability to provide opportunities to develop social capital through social, cultural, mental and physical aspects. However, what is devastatingly clear is that the lack of financial support this sport has, could be enough to exclude or create significant disadvantage for all involved. Although it takes more than money to ascertain social capital, the potential of Goalball to increase bridging capital for these participants is unquestionable and thus Goalball needs financial assistance on a continued basis as per other sports (Richardson and Fletcher 2020). The quantitative data analysis supports this further, as the calculations show the impact Goalball has on a variety of health, education, and human capital outputs. The fragility of clubs surviving from one year to the next, the limited online and media outreach

and the distinct lack of inclusion of Goalball in the school PE curriculum were more issues that were highlighted by these participants. Goalball provides visually impaired people with the chance to belong, be considered equal, be physically active, be a part of a team and to be a better version of themselves. If Goalball has any chance of sustaining the fantastic progress they have made and the huge impact the sport has made on the lives of these 16 participants but with the rest of the 53 million people in England alone, substantial, sustained input from key stakeholders is desperately required.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to portray the findings of the 16 interviews with players, family members and coaches in Goalball. By discussing living with a disability, the uniqueness of Goalball, the Goalball 'Family', bonding capital and the impact of the Goalball, the first part of this chapter shows the depth of the potential of Goalball to instigate bonding capital amongst its members. For some, Goalball has been a life changing activity, where they have learnt what it feels like to be considered an equal in a sporting context. In part two, the benefits of Goalball were outlined, including physical benefits, mental health and wellbeing, benefits for parents and new skill acquisition. This section then turned towards bridging capital and using Goalball as a social tool for development of wider communities, which was suggested to be an extremely positive opportunity. Finally, the issues that Goalball faces in its day to day operation regarding the sad fact that the sport is largely unknown, as well as a potentially devastating fact of financial constraints that Goalball is struggling to combat were highlighted. The vast quantity of data here could not unfortunately be discussed, but it is hoped that this study has opened the doors for further research into Goalball and the huge potential the sport has for being a successful, global, Paralympic and grassroots sport for both fully sighted people and the visually impaired community.



Conclusion

Overview of findings

The aim of this study was to explore the potential of Goalball to instigate bonding capital amongst its members which are the VI community, as well as to evaluate the potential of Goalball to act as a form of bridging capital to integrate VI and non-VI participants. This study also sought to measure Goalball's social return on investment and as such a mixed methods approach was adopted to answer the three research questions. With a distinct lack of existing literature available that explored Goalball player's experiences and perceptions of the sport, the aim of this study was to provide a voice for an underrepresented and under-acknowledged, but highly valuable sport. The findings were unanimous in terms of the ability of the sport to allow participants to develop social capital; however, the sport desperately requires wider attention and financial support to sustain the great work it has already achieved.

By conducting 16 semi-structured telephone interviews with a mixture of Goalball players, coaches, referees and family members across the UK, this study was able to outline several aspects of Goalball that positively develop participants' social capital and bonding capital. The participants were able to describe how life with a disability has often led to exclusion of participation in sporting activities. For some participants who were born visually impaired or blind, this was common place despite strategies introduced by Sport England (2016) such as *Towards an Active Nation* that is striving to tackle inactivity and increase participation for those in vulnerable groups, such as the disabled. Research by Fitzgerald (2009) and DePauw (2009) suggest that sporting participation is significantly important for those with disabilities and this group of Goalball participants is no exception to this. One particularly prevalent theme throughout the interviews was the uniqueness of Goalball as a sport specifically designed

for VI people. The difference of Goalball to other sports that are often adaptations of able-bodied versions of sports was of high importance to these interviewees. By wearing a simple piece of equipment, the eyeshade, players were immediately equal on the court, regardless as to the level of sight loss. Furthermore, no player ever felt the need to justify why they missed a shot, did not 'see' a pass or such like examples to any other players. This sense of belonging was significant for the players in raising their self-esteem and confidence levels to participate, so much so, that their level of dedication to travel substantial distances to play the game were considered normal practice. It has been argued therefore, that Goalball has a unique selling point and can positively contribute to the development of bonding capital for its VI members with other VI's. As there is no existing literature on the reflections and experiences of Goalball players, this is a key finding, particularly given that there is no statistical data within Sport England's recurrent *Active Lives Survey*.

The Goalball 'Family' was another prevalent theme running through the data. The term 'family' was one composed by the participants and was repeated by the majority of the 16 participants. This alone demonstrates Goalball's capacity to be welcoming and inclusive and provide players and their families the opportunities to meet other VI people and share their experiences. This was particularly impactful on family members who have described seeing huge positive changes in their children due to their Goalball involvement. The impact of Goalball stems as far as that the thought of Goalball no longer being available for hypothetical reasons turned several participants cold at the thought. The negative impact of not being able to play or more importantly in some cases, socialise with fellow VI's who were established as good friends, was a thought many did

not want to consider. Additionally, the list of skills acquired by all 16 participants due to their involvement in Goalball, provides another clear justification for how important Goalball is and how it should be more accessible across the country. According to Putnam (2000) accruing more social capital makes life in communities significantly easier so long as the social networks have value. The data from this study shows undoubtedly that these participants value the sport which has provided opportunities for them to gain networks with others in terms of reciprocity and trust; two of the important elements of social capital (Nicholson and Hoyer 2008). However, Putnam (2000) also asserts that bonding capital can be problematic when developed as it can result in groups with similar interests to retreat further into their network without branching out. Although this cannot be ignored, this is certainly not the case here. Neither is Putnam's thoughts that bonding capital is more important than bridging capital. For these people who are marginalised within society because of their disability, the opportunity to form social bonds with other like-minded people who are experiencing the same life-changing events is huge (Richardson and Fletcher 2020). The data from this study demonstrates the value these people place on Goalball and how much it has changed their lives; this cannot be ignored and thus Putnam's ideas on ranking of capital have to be set aside in this sport.

The development of bridging capital within Goalball is also a positive result of participation or involvement in the sport. The very nature of the sport as a team game arguably produces the chances for players to engage in tournaments and competitions where they can meet other VI and non-VI people that without the sport they would not have had the chance to, thereby evolving their habitus (Bourdieu 1984; Putnam 2000). However, whilst Goalball has been highlighted by these participants to be a tool that can positively develop social relations in the wider community, there are several issues that face Goalball and potentially restrict the level of bridging capital that it can accrue. Putnam (2000) states that bridging capital can only develop when members from diverse communities interweave

and this can only happen when the network is operating at a high level. Unfortunately, Goalball remains a largely unknown sport in the UK with a distinct lack of awareness of what the sport is. This is despite nearly 1 million people in the UK being visually impaired (Sport England 2016a). Furthermore, a lack of funding has resulted in the governing body, Goalball UK, being unable to advertise the sport, help new clubs to form and regular training to be held. Without regular training and accessibility, the sport cannot hope to attract and retain new members. Sadly, with few players in the UK, the number of players who are able to play at elite level in team GB is also limited. This has resulted in the success of team GB fluctuating and according to the participants a lack of medals being won. This lack of medals has resulted in reduced funding, which limits training opportunities and those willing to financially support themselves as a team GB athlete. The overall result is a vicious circle that ultimately places a ceiling on the ability of Goalball to develop its members' bridging capital. If the UK is waging a war over exclusion in communities, sports and other networks as is suggested by policies such as *Towards an Active Nation* (Sport England 2016b), then influential sports such as Goalball can no longer be afforded a back seat in priority.

Goalball had 729 members in its second-year cycle, yet for every £1 spent by stakeholders, Goalball generates £4.31* in social value. This begs the question, if these figures can be attributed to such low participation numbers, what can the sport achieve if it is to make headway in increasing participation to the other 959,190 visually impaired people in England? As previously stated but perhaps of incredible importance in the concluding remarks of this study is that social capital, according to Putnam, has the potential to sustain communities where 'members are socially, financially, culturally, mentally and physically prosperous' (Nicholson and Hoyer 2008, p.7). The missing piece of this puzzle is more sustained and substantial financial support. With this backing, arguably Goalball's potential amongst the VI and non-VI is a community rich in social capital that can aid in other aspects of life.

Limitations and future research recommendations

Upon reflection, there are some possible limitations to this study. The original intention of the researcher was to conduct face-to-face interviews to build rapport having never met the participants prior to the study being conducted (Matthews 2010). However, logistically, the participants were situated across the entire UK and this would have not been financially or time possible in the study. As such, the researcher was able to use her own anecdote of her participation in Goalball to break the ice which was humorous and relatable to the participants. For the quantitative aspect, the SROI model is in the early stages of development and thus, the ratio produced should be viewed as an estimate. This is due to this project adapting the SROI model from Davies et al. (2019), who state that a lack of high-quality empirical evidence in some areas means that the depth of evidence to support outcomes is varied, as well as limited available participation data on Goalball. Further research in the area of social value impact in sport through different sports as this research has done, will aid the development of the SROI model.

Future research could take a variety of pathways in Goalball due to the very limited knowledge that is currently available on the sport. An ethnographic study where observations of player interactions would be particularly useful to add to our understanding of bonding capital in how it plays out both on and off the court. Furthermore, an experimental study into how successful including Goalball as part of the PE curriculum would be would aid the sports cause and improve the lack of awareness of the sport as a whole. Finally, it is without doubt imperative that Sport England include Goalball as part of their future Active Lives Survey given their aims in the Towards an Active Nation policy to increase inclusivity and improve access to physical activity for disabled people. At present, there is arguably an incomplete picture on the success of disabled sports, despite Fitzgerald (2012) stating that the benefits gained by disabled people when participating in sport are more significant than for non-disabled people. There are many avenues still to be explored and this study demonstrates that Goalball should no longer remain in the shadows.



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