Managing sport for social change: The effects of intentional design and structure in a sport-based service learning initiative

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ABSTRACT

The current study focused on addressing a gap in understanding the design, structure, and management of sport-for-development (SFD) initiatives, in this case an initiative rooted in sport-based service learning. Sport, and specifically SFD, has been shown to facilitate positive outcomes such as social capital development through expanding networks and community building. Some studies have focused on impacts on volunteers in sport and SFD programs. These volunteers have developed networks most often through informal relationship building activities. Building on this knowledge, the current mixed methods study investigated the social capital development of alumni of a college service learning through sport course. Survey data ($n = 93$) and individual interviews ($n = 22$) with participants who had completed at least one semester in the course indicated that social capital development was facilitated. In particular, the intentional design, structure, and management aspects of the course and program provided opportunities for social capital development.

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1. Introduction

Sport provides an avenue for relationship and network development among community members (Sherry, Karg, & O'May, 2011; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), especially in ethnically and socio-economically diverse groups (Burnett, 2006; Jarvie, 2003). Putnam's (2005) conceptualization of social capital, which focuses on the development of networks, norms, and social trust within organizations and communities, has been used in sport and leisure research (e.g., Tonts, 2005; Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2013a). Results have indicated that sport allows for the development of bonding and bridging social capital for participants (Sherry, 2010; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012; Tonts, 2005) and other stakeholders (Burnett, 2006;

Schulenkorf, Thomson, & Schlenker, 2011). Sport-for-development (SFD) programs attempt to use sport as a medium to effect positive change in society through promoting intercultural exchange, conflict resolution, peace building, and assisting marginalized populations (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Preliminary studies indicate that volunteers in SFD programs have experienced positive outcomes, including expanded networks (Burnett, 2006) and building community and social capital (Welty Peachey et al., 2013a). Similarly, while not volunteers in the strictest sense, college students enrolled in service learning courses that encompass SFD have also been found to experience positive outcomes, including increased cultural understanding, community connection, and enhanced cooperation among diverse group members (Bruening et al., in press; Bruening, Madsen, Evanovich, & Fuller, 2010).

In volunteer-driven SFD contexts, social capital development is organic. It is often initiated from the volunteers as opposed to facilitated by the structure of the event, which is focused more on the participants the SFD program aims to serve (Welty Peachey et al., 2013a). Thus, many volunteers engage in informal relationship building activities and expand their networks throughout the sport event or activity. However, questions remain concerning the ability of SFD programs to be explicitly designed to further increase or improve the rate of social capital development among all participants. This also includes those the programs serve, volunteers, and in the case of the current research, college student leaders in a SFD-focused service learning course. Service learning programs are one structural design that may allow for social capital development.

Service learning programs are course-based and credit-bearing. They combine an organized community service component with designed reflection opportunities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Service learning programs have been found to enhance student cultural competency (Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007; Enfeld & Collins, 2008) and serve as a possible foundation for social capital development.

Few service learning through sport programs exist (Bennett, Henson, & Drane, 2003; Jackowski & Gullion, 1998; Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005), likely due to the intensive and time consuming nature of building and maintaining sport-based community programs for both students and faculty (Bruening et al., 2010). However, the integration of service learning and sport could enhance social relationships and assist marginalized populations. In this sense, organizations can structure sport programs to facilitate positive outcomes such as social capital (Burnett, 2006) but such outcomes are dependent upon the specific design of programs. Not all program designs will produce desired outcomes (Astin & Sax, 1998). Few service learning SFD programs have been analyzed, and it is unclear how the design and structure of such programs might lead to positive outcomes (e.g., social capital development) for the students involved. Therefore, examining the design, structure, and management of service learning programs that are framed as SFD addresses a gap in the literature. The current study aims to address the lack of understanding of the impact of service learning SFD programs on the social capital development of those who deliver the programs. And, in particular, this study examines the role the design, structure, and management of such programs can play in facilitating positive outcomes.

The purpose of the current study is to examine one sport-based service learning program to determine how positive social capital outcomes may have been produced for its college student leaders. In addition, the study examines how this program has been structured to provide such outcomes. The research questions are as follows:

1. In what way has the service learning experience impacted social capital development of its college student leaders?
2. How have the structures in place through the service learning environment (classroom and service site(s)) facilitated that development?

The context for this study is City Sport, a SFD program operated by School of Education faculty and staff at a large, Northeastern university in the U.S. with a nearby urban center. College student leaders engage in the program as part of a service learning course.

2. City Sport

City Sport is a sport-based service learning program that integrates SFD community service opportunities with a class-based training, education, and reflection component. City Sport's mission focuses on using sport as a hook (Perkins & Noam, 2007) to promote healthy nutrition, life skills education, and academic enrichment. Founded in 2003 and grounded in the principles of sport-based youth development (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2002), City Sport is geared toward positively engaging college students, faculty, and staff with members of a nearby urban community, Hartland. Housed within the university's School of Education, City Sport utilizes deliberate and intentional sport programming in order to facilitate positive relationships with community members (e.g., youth and adults). To this end, through community organizations such as schools and recreation centers, City Sport staff and college students engage with Hartland community youth and families every day of the week. With its more than 100 college student leaders committing upwards of 20,000 h of engagement in the Hartland community each year, City Sport has become a constant presence in the Hartland community and in the lives of its residents.

At its inception, City Sport operated solely as an after school program for pre-adolescent girls (ages 8–12) at a Hartland recreation center. Due to the success of this after school program, City Sport and Hartland community leaders collaborated to expand program offerings to include an after school program for boys, a college preparatory program for teens, a weekend

program at a community faith-based organization, and reading, nutrition, and physical activity initiatives at four area Hartland elementary and middle schools. Currently, City Sport partners with four community organizations to jointly operate after school programs. It also collaborates with two high schools to offer service learning courses for college credit and supports a health literacy initiative at three Hartland public elementary and middle schools (K-8 grade). Finally, City Sport operates its own SFD program during the school day at one of its three partner K-8 schools and continues to partner with the faith-based organization on a weekend program.

In addition, City Sport offers a series of service learning courses for its college student leaders in which they learn about the tenets of SFD, the history of Hartland, its schools, and its children in the context of their health and education outcomes. As a requisite for the introductory one credit course, the college students are required to participate in at least 12 h of meaningful engagement with Hartland youth, family members, and community organizations at one of City Sport's sport-based programs. The next course (3 credits) requires 40 h of service and is a prerequisite for the advanced course, which requires another 40 h of service with City Sport.

3. Theoretical frameworks

To guide the current investigation, we coupled social capital theory (Putnam, 1995, 2000) with Sport-for-Development Theory (SFDT) (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). These theoretical lenses work well in tandem; social capital is an important outcome for SFD programs and the structures, mechanisms, and processes proposed in SFDT can facilitate this outcome (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011).

3.1. Social capital theory

Many sport and leisure scholars (Jarvie, 2003; Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, & Bradley, 2002; Sherry, 2010; Sherry et al., 2011; Spaaij, 2009, 2012; Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2013b) have adopted Putnam's (1995) conceptualization of social capital, which he defines as the "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that can facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1995, p. 66). We, too, use this conceptualization as it allows us to see sport as a mechanism of social capital facilitation. To combat the increasing individualism that has led to a marked decline in civic engagement, and thus declining social capital, sport can be an avenue to build networks, norms, and social trust that benefits individuals and communities (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008).

The benefits of social capital can develop in two ways: bonding and bridging (Putnam, 1995, 2000). Bonding social capital is the value of social networks that are developed between relatively homogenous groups and individuals, such as kin, neighbors, and close friends. The ties between groups and individuals are strong due to familiarity, and these bonds and networks of similar others then produce resources for individuals to cope with life, or to enhance their quality of life. In a service learning setting, college students might bond in at least two ways: (1) with classmates working in the project who share like experiences and beliefs and (2) with youth participants in the community who are presented with opportunities and barriers much the same as the college students were growing up. Specific to service learning through sport, college students can find additional bonds with both classmates and youth participants through a shared affinity for sport. As such, students can form a network of similar others that can aid future career and life choices and community engagement.

While bonding social capital develops among similar others, bridging social capital occurs when individuals expand their networks and form relationships with people different than themselves. These ties between heterogeneous groups and individuals may be looser and more diverse, but provide individuals with the potential to leverage a broader set of resources (Putnam, 1995, 2000). For instance, in City Sport, college students in the service learning course tend to be white and middle-class. Through City Sport, over time these students form ties with the marginalized youth the program services and with dissimilar peers, thereby expanding connections, opening eyes to issues of social injustice, and fostering the civic engagement that Putnam (1995) suggests "foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust" (p. 67). Social capital, then, is a collective property involving reciprocity and the formation of trust, which can lead to greater accrued benefits over time (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008). As such, social capital is the foundation for a more productive, supporting, trusting, and civically engaged society.

Sport has the potential, if designed and managed well, to promote bridging social capital development as it provides connections between diverse groups and builds social networks (Burnett, 2006). However, until recently, little empirical evidence has offered support for this assertion (Coalter, 2007; Kay & Bradbury, 2009). Recent research has found that sport enhances the development of social capital through developing bridging and bonding networks for participants (Sherry, 2010; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012; Tonts, 2005) and other stakeholders (Burnett, 2006; Schulenkorf et al., 2011). Sport programs can facilitate social exchanges between similar and dissimilar others, the development of trust and loyalty between diverse groups, and the integration of learning and individual development opportunities (Burnett, 2006; Sherry, 2010; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012; Tonts, 2005). These outcomes can occur before, during, or after an event or program (Schulenkorf et al., 2011).

Despite the recognition of positive outcomes for participants and other stakeholders, the design and structure of sport programs that lead to positive outcomes has received little attention by scholars. Kay and Bradbury's (2009) study involving social capital development in sport volunteers revealed that the capability of sport to engender social capital is in great part a

function of personal and structural factors. The nature of the structure and program design features emphasizing personal and social development may be more critical to facilitating positive outcomes than the actual sport participation (Sandford, Armour, & Washington, 2006; Spaaij, 2009, 2012). This is because sport intervention program environments that offer opportunities for social connectedness create a foundation for the development of social capital.

However, there are also unintended consequences that occur in the quest to promote social capital. Putnam (2000) cautions that if individuals form strong bonding relationships with similar others to the exclusion of developing bridging networks, they may create an insular group imposing conformity and social division at the expense of tolerance. Therefore, programs must be intentionally designed to form bridging networks so participants avoid such insular norms and gain access to a wider set of resources (Blackshaw & Long, 2005). SFD initiatives hold the potential to facilitate bridging relationships rather than exclusionary bonding relationships (Jarvie, 2003; Nicholson & Hoye, 2008).

3.2. Sport-for-development theory (SFDT)

SFDT evolved through grounded theory methodology from the Doves Olympic Movement Project in Cyprus, a SFD initiative designed to address issues of social exclusion and inter-ethnic conflict among Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Lyras, 2007). SFDT was developed to help understand the structures, processes, conditions, and program components of SFD interventions that can facilitate positive impact and cultivate social capital (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Its applicability is designed to be broad-based, whether the SFD initiative is working with marginalized populations like urban youth, or the intervention targets goals such as fostering inter-cultural understanding and peace among divided communities. At its core, SFDT proposes that blending sport with cultural enrichment (e.g., arts and music) and educational (e.g., life skills, human rights) activities provides a foundation for addressing various social issues and challenges across different contexts (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). When individuals interact in this type of environment, and psychological needs are fulfilled (e.g., self-esteem, altruism, trust), they are then able to think, care, and act beyond themselves (Bandura, 1989).

To achieve positive outcomes, SFDT suggests that SFD interventions should utilize five core components: (a) impacts assessment, (b) organizational, (c) sport and physical activity, (d) educational, and (e) cultural enrichment (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The first component of SFDT, impacts assessment, elucidates that macro, meso, and micro levels of change should be evaluated to assess the effectiveness of SFD interventions promoting social change (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The macro level refers to changes in infrastructure, socio-economic indicators, and systems within communities. The meso level addresses changes in social networks, inter-group relations, values, norms, group cohesion, social integration, and social capital. At the micro level, psychological impacts such as changes to self-esteem, perceptions, stereotypes, and empowerment should be examined (Burnett, 2006; Burnett & Uys, 2000).

The remaining four SFDT components address the processes, mechanisms, structures, and conditions of sport interventions. The second (organizational) component recommends that all stakeholders in SFD interventions should be actively involved in shaping and leading the initiative, merging top down and bottom up managing (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Participants, volunteers, organizers, and community stakeholders should all work together to give shape to the program to best achieve targeted outcomes. As the third component of SFDT, the sport and physical activity aspect should be organized around the principles of inclusive play and centered upon educationally oriented, quality programming. Highly competitive sport may not be best suited to SFD contexts, and actually may serve to defeat goals of inclusivity, enhanced self-esteem, and social capital development (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011; Welty Peachey et al., 2013a, 2013b). Next, the educational (fourth) component of SFDT holds that SFD initiatives should couple sport with educational programming (e.g., life skills training) to help participants and stakeholders transfer knowledge gained through the sport intervention to the real world (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The last component of SFDT, cultural enrichment, advances that SFD interventions should provide opportunities for cultural engagement for stakeholders (e.g., arts, music, field trips) to complement the sport and educational components to best facilitate long-term impact and social capital development (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011).

Taken together, then, social capital theory (Putnam, 1995, 2000) and SFDT (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011) form a complementary lens for examining the structure, mechanisms, and processes of the City Sport service learning program. Utilizing this lens, investigating how City Sport facilitates social capital development among its college student participant base is possible.

4. Literature review

4.1. Service learning

Service learning is increasingly recognized as a pedagogical approach providing benefits to students, faculty, educational institutions, communities, and society as a whole. Currently, at least 25% of all institutions of higher education in the U.S., and more than 50% of community colleges, have service learning programs (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2013). Elementary and secondary schools are also adopting such programs, with 24% of these institutions offering a service learning opportunity. Bringle and Hatcher (1996) provide a definition of service learning with three main criteria. First, service learning is course-based and credit bearing. Second, students participate in organized service meeting an identified

community need. Finally, "students reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, an appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (p. 112).

At the macro level, institutions of higher education have much to gain from offering service learning opportunities. Pedagogically, service learning fulfills the institution's central mission of teaching and learning, increases civic engagement, involves students and faculty in meaningful activities that meet community needs, and can lead to opportunities for further scholarly activities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Additionally, at the micro level, service learning courses provide an enriching academic experience, enhance critical thinking skills among students (Peters, 2011), and cultivate an infusion of diversity efforts (Vogelsang, 2004), all of which enhance social capital.

Service learning programs have led to positive social impacts on beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes among participants (Conway, Amel, & Gerwien, 2009). These impacts can influence future community involvement and social capital sustainability. Kendrick (1996) compared service learning and non-service learning students enrolled in an introduction to sociology course. Service learning students considered it more important to work toward social equality, volunteer to help people in need, donate money to help others, and note the importance of adults giving time to improve their community (Kendrick, 1996).

Research on individual benefits of service learning programs has focused mainly on academic skills (Dario, 2009). Service learning students have greater gains in critical thinking and writing skills as well as higher grade point averages when compared to students not involved in service learning or community service (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). However, Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray (2001) summarized a plethora of evidence supporting non-academic individual gains obtained through a service learning experience. These positive outcomes include increased cultural competency, a desire to promote racial understanding, and a better understanding of fellow human beings. Additionally, the transition from a sense of personal isolation to a place within a community occurs along with increased leadership abilities, increased sense of agency to change society, and increases in the ability to work cooperatively, resolve conflict, and think critically.

While the research is scant, investigations that have been conducted reveal sport-based service learning programs produce positive meso-level outcomes, such as enhanced understanding of and interaction with diverse populations (Mumford & Kane, 2006), social cohesion (Bruening et al., 2010), and reduced negative attitudes between groups (Bruening et al., in press). The ability of SFD service learning programs to impact social capital development is apparent. However, further examination of the concept is needed, specifically with regards to the management and structure of such programs to facilitate positive outcomes.

4.2. Design and structure of service learning programs

It is paramount to examine how service learning courses should be designed and managed to produce outcomes. Many of the individual outcomes cited previously, such as academic growth and social capital development, occur due to the specific design of service learning programs (Astin & Sax, 1998). Bringle and Hatcher (2002) offer points for broader course design and management. First, the program must demonstrate reciprocal, strong relationships between campus and community. This means that the service activity must be designed and organized to meet learning objectives of the course and the needs identified by community agencies. In order to manage the reciprocal relationship, community agency staff must be recognized as co-educators, and strong relationships formed among students, faculty, and the community. This allows the service learning course to avoid the risk of cultivating in students a lack of empathy for those in the community, and a perception that there is nothing to learn from community members (Bruening et al., 2010). Other program components should include planning, orientation, training, supervision, and evaluation in order to produce positive outcomes (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

There are also design features inherent in service learning that must be maintained to yield intended effects. Service learning courses provide opportunities for frequent and meaningful contact with local community members, reflection, and discussions with instructors and other stakeholders involved (Mabry, 1998). Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee (2000) found two strong mediating variables for effects of service. First, specifically discussing service with other service learning peers positively affected students' service plans for next year, commitment to social activism, and commitment to promoting racial understanding. Second, emotional support from faculty facilitated positive effects on students' critical thinking and writing skills. Emotional faculty support is measured by how often faculty provide advice, show respect, and provide encouragement. Additional measures include how often faculty offer honest feedback, intellectual challenges and stimulation, provide the opportunity to discuss coursework outside of class, and take a personal interest in students' progress (Astin et al., 2000). Astin et al. (2000) found that the effects of service are diminished when these mediating variables are removed.

Written reflections are also a key, distinctive design feature of service learning courses that must be managed appropriately to produce intended outcomes. Bruening et al. (2010) suggest that reflection should be scheduled regularly, guided, incorporate experience with class content, allow for feedback, and include some type of values clarification. Written reflections, as well as in-person reflections with classmates and community partners that occur before, during, and after service, are important in attaining the goals defined in service learning programs (Eyler, 2002). Journaling and reflections may lead to conclusions that challenge traditional ways of thinking about one's social world and the experiences in which an individual is engaged (Cooper, 1998). By challenging the way students think, critical reflection may enhance the

development of social capital by encouraging one to become more open to new ideas, people, and cultures, and by developing norms of reciprocity, trust, and bridging and bonding relationships.

Sport-based service learning programs utilizing SFD have the potential to provide many positive impacts for the students, community participants, and other stakeholders. However, the processes, mechanisms, and structures that lead to these positive outcomes still lack understanding. Research is needed to better understand how service learning programs employing a SFD component can be designed and structured to enhance outcomes such as social capital.

5. Method

The current study was part of a larger examination of social capital development, social justice orientation and cultural competency, and career choices among alumni of City Sport service learning courses. Data collection methods for the current study included both surveys and personal interviews. Utilizing mixed methods allowed the researchers to address complex questions influenced by race, social class, educational background, and other social identities. Employing quantitative or qualitative methods alone would not have provided the depth of data mixed methods allow (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

5.1. Surveys

5.1.1. Participants, procedures, and instrumentation

Data for the quantitative portion of the study were collected via online surveys. A recruitment email was sent to all alumni of the City Sport service learning courses who had current emails on file (N = 305) requesting their participation in the study. Reminder emails were sent to all alumni after one week, two weeks, and three weeks from the initial invitation. The initial and follow-up emails yielded a total of 93 responses for a response rate of 30.5%. Twenty-five participants responded to the first email, 22 responded to the second email, 28 responded to the third email, and 18 responded to the final reminder. Early respondents were compared to late respondents on all variables to test for non-response bias (Fink, Pastore, & Riemer, 2003; Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007). No significant differences were found between late respondents and early respondents on any of the variables.

Fifty-five of the participants who responded were female (59.1%) and 38 were male (40.9%). Of the 93 respondents, 60 self-identified as Caucasian (64.5%), 17 as African American (18.3%), eight as Hispanic (8.6%), three as Asian-Pacific (3.2%), and five as Other (5.4%). Eight participants characterized their Kindergarten–12th grade school setting as low income (8.6%), 16 as lower middle class (17.2%), 39 as middle class (41.9%), 25 as upper middle class (26.9%), and five as high income (5.4%). Fifty-nine participants indicated that they had continued their involvement in City Sport as a volunteer or employee after completing a service learning class (63.4%) and 34 indicated that they had not (36.6%).

Social capital was measured with eleven items (α = .91) and one open-ended response adapted from the Social Value of Sport Scale (see Lee, Cornwell, & Babiak, 2013). The items are included in Table 1 and the adaptation was to insert City Sport into each item to make it specific to the context being examined. The Social Value of Sport Scale is a 75-item instrument designed to measure dimensions of social capital, collective identities, well-being, and human capital. In the current study, responses on the adapted nine items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

5.2. Interviews

5.2.1. Participants, procedures, and instrumentation

Invitations were extended to 45 alumni of the City Sport service learning courses with a goal of 20–25 participants. These alumni could have also completed the survey. Potential interview participants were selected with consideration for diversity in the sample based on gender (26 women, 19 men), race and ethnicity (19 White, 13 Black, 5 Latino, 7 Asian, 2 bi-racial),

Table 1
Social value of sport items (Lee et al., 2013).

1. City Sport has influenced me to be an active member of my city or town (e.g., sport, craft or social club);
2. I often attend local community events due to my previous participation in City Sport;
3. I help out local groups as a volunteer because of my previous involvement in City Sport;
4. City Sport taught me to I take the initiative to do what needs to be done even if no one asks me to;
5. In City Sport I learned the importance of multiculturalism which makes life in my area better;
6. I enjoy living among people of different lifestyles (e.g., culture, language, age, region, sex);
7. Being a member of the community (e.g., city or town) where I live or work is an important reflection of who I am and my previous involvement in City Sport;
8. Being a member of the social groups (e.g., sport club, work place, school) I belong to is an important reflection of who I am and my previous involvement in City Sport;
9. I often interact with youth groups because of my previous involvement in City Sport;
10. City Sport has taught me the importance of interacting with youth in my community;
11. I remain in contact with other students who were part of City Sport;
12. In what ways do you remain connected to City Sport alumni?

when they took their first service learning course (2006–8; 2007–7; 2008–5; 2009–6; 2010–4; 2011–7; 2012–4; 2013–4), social class (upper middle–15; middle–17; lower–13), and geography of hometown (Connecticut–19, International–10, New York–6; Texas, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts–3 each, Maryland–1; and suburban–27; urban–15; rural–3) (see Table 2). All ratios were consistent with the overall enrollment in the courses. It was also important to invite a group of potential participants who had varying levels of involvement in City Sport before and after taking the course. Twenty-three of the 45 had either prior or subsequent involvement in City Sport, or both. Once obtaining consent from 22 interested participants, the researcher and participant scheduled a mutually convenient time for a phone interview.

Three of the researchers shared responsibility for conducting the interviews based on their prior connection to the participants. These researchers had all been instructors of the service learning courses at one point. It was important to assign the researchers to participants with whom they would have rapport (Creswell, 1998). However, we wanted the participants to feel they could speak freely about their perceptions of the course. With these concerns in mind, we paired researchers and participants. Interviews were conducted during the summer of 2013, lasted from 45 to 60 min, and were digitally recorded then transcribed verbatim by the researchers. All names and identifying information have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

The interview guide was semi-structured, and interviews were conducted until common themes led to data saturation (Creswell, 1998). Interview questions were grounded in social capital theory (Putnam, 1995, 2000) (e.g., in what ways has your involvement in the service learning course expanded your social network?). Questions discussing the components of the service learning through sport course also included and were based in SFDT (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011) (e.g., were there any structures in place that facilitated your experience in the course? If so, how did they do so?).

5.2.2. Data analysis

Two of the researchers coded the data utilizing a priori themes drawn from social capital theory and SFDT (see Table 3). The researchers independently coded one transcript then met to compare codes. Following discussion on identifying the a priori themes and subthemes, the researchers agreed on the coding for the first transcript. Next, each coded a second transcript independently. The researchers again met, finding that their coding was more closely aligned than with the first transcript. When disagreements arose as to how segments of data should be coded, they discussed the data until consensus was reached on the appropriate code or codes. The two researchers then independently coded the remaining 20 transcripts. From there the coding was merged through NVIVO 10 and any disagreements between the researchers were discussed until agreement was reached. The last step of data analysis was selective coding, where quotations from the data were selected that represented the themes and sub-themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

6. Results

6.1. Quantitative results

The mean social capital score for the entire sample was 4.87 with a standard deviation of 1.23. The one-sample t-test was significant ($t = 38.381$, $p < .001$), indicating that the social capital scores were significantly higher than the midpoint value of the scale (i.e., 4). Next, we used an ANOVA to examine whether participants who continued their participation in City Sport after taking their initial service learning course reported higher levels of social capital than those who did not. The one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in reported social capital based on participants' additional involvement in City Sport, $F(1, 92) = 8.937$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .90$. Power to detect the effect was .841. Since there were only two groups in terms of additional involvement (i.e., additional involvement or no additional involvement), post hoc tests were not conducted.

6.2. Qualitative results

Results from the 22 interviews were organized around social capital theory and SFDT. Social capital themes included bonding, bridging, enduring relationships, formation of trust, and reciprocity. SFD themes included supporting an initiative, power of sport, personal development (cultural), organizational development (stakeholders), professional development (educational), and intentionality.

6.2.1. Social capital

6.2.1.1. Bonding. Overall, 17 of the participants spoke of bonding experiences facilitated by the service learning class. Bonding took one of two forms. The first was bonding with classmates through discussions in class and experiences at the service sites. Thirteen of the students referred to these experiences:

> I think going once a week [to Hartland] . . . you bond with people in the class. We always stop and chat and catch up and I think it's one of those experiences no one really understands what you . . . did unless you are part of it. (Molly)
> There were some social connections that I made. I knew [Genevieve] pretty well coming into the class. We expanded . . . strengthened our friendship through being in the class and learning from each other. (Jenn)

Table 2
Participants.

Participant	Sex	Race/home	Course year	Undergrad major	Grad major	K-12 school setting	Community income level	Pre-service learning course involvement in city sport	Post-service learning involvement in city sport	Current profession/educational path
Penny	F	Black/CT	2010/2011	Business '11	Social Work '13	Urban	Low	Volunteer	Additional course, Employee 3 yrs	Social Worker
Felix	M	Latino/International	2012	Sport Mgmt '13	n/a	Urban	Mid to Upper Mid	None	None	Professional Sport Community Relations
Sherry	F	Black/NY	2007	Psychology '08	Sport Mgmt '10	Suburban	Mid	None	Volunteer	Law Enforcement
Anna	F	Black/CT	2008/2010	Comm '09	Sport Mgmt '12	Urban	Mid to Upper Mid	Volunteer	Additional course, Employee 3 yrs	Professional Sport Community Relations
Aliayah	F	Bi-Racial (Black-White)/MD	2006/2010	Sport Mgmt '09	Sport Mgmt '11	Suburban	Mid to Upper Mid	None	Additional course, Volunteer	Non-Profit Sport Organization
Leticia	F	Black/TX	2009	Kinesiology '08	Sport Mgmt '11	Suburban	Mid	None	Employee 2 yrs	College Admissions Administrator
Sam	M	White/PA	2012/2013	Sport Mgmt '13	n/a	Rural	Mid	None	Additional course	Undergraduate Student
Jenn	F	White/CT	2006	Human Development '06	Sport Mgmt '08	Rural	Mid	None	Volunteer	College Coach
Julian	M	Black/International	2006	Economics '07	n/a	Urban	Low	None	Volunteer	Professional Athlete
Carly	F	Asian/CT	2011	Business '13	n/a	Suburban	Upper Mid	None	Volunteer	Law School
Rachel	F	White/CT	2008	Education '10	Education '11	Rural	Upper Mid	None	Employee 2 yrs	Teacher
Laura	F	White/MA	2011	Comm/Sport Promotion '12	n/a	Urban	Low	None	Employee 1 semester	Just moved locations * Non-Profit
Liz	F	White/CT	2011	Sociology '09	Sport Mgmt '12	Urban	Mid	Volunteer	Volunteer	Sport Media
Molly	F	White/CT	2012	Education '13	n/a	Urban	Mid	None	Volunteer	Graduate School for Education
Ernest	M	Black/International	2010	Sport Mgmt '11	Sport Mgmt '12	Urban	Low to Mid	Volunteer	Employee 1.5 yrs	Sport Media
Elizabeth	F	White/CT	2013	Sport Mgmt '13	n/a	Suburban	Mid to Upper Mid	None	None	Recent College Graduate
Dario	M	Latino/CT	2006	Political Science '07	n/a	Urban	Low	None	None	Law Enforcement
Anthony	M	White/MA	2009	Sport Mgmt '10	Athl. Admin. '12	Suburban	Mid to Upper Mid	None	Employee 1 semester	College Athletics Fundraising
Georgia	F	Black/NY	2009	Comm '08	Sport Mgmt '11 (pending)	Suburban	Mid to Upper Mid	None	Employee 2 yrs	Professional Sport Community Relations
Daniel	M	White/CT	2007/2009	Sport Mgmt '10	n/a	Suburban	Mid	None	Additional course, Employee, 2 yrs	Minor League Sports Management
Joseph	M	Black/PA	2009	Sport Mgmt '08	Sport Mgmt '11	Urban	Low to Mid	None	Volunteer	College Coach
Lisa	F	White/CT	2006	Coaching & Admin. '06	Sport Mgmt '08	Suburban	Upper Mid	Volunteer	Employee 7 yrs	Non-Profit Sport Based Youth Development

Table 3
Themes and example quotes.

Theme	Participants	Segments		Example
Bonding	17	28	Felix	I was already in my second semester in the sport management so already friends with my peers. But it was a different perspective. A different side to see them outside the classroom. To see how we all interacted with each other and in the community outside of [university] at the service learning sites in Hartford.
Bridging	23	125	Carly	you become friends with the kids and you want them to succeed in life and you see the obstacles they actually have to deal with every day.
Formation of Enduring Relationships	18	46	Aliayah	it's super personal like my one of my closest friends to date. We were on the same track team, we had similar classes at one point but I would never consider her as close a friend as she is to date until we took the Sport Hartford class together and we realized how similar we were in terms of how we felt about working with kids or we had similar experiences growing up. That is how we became so close
Formation of Trust	17	26	Anthony	so the discussions between people, it definitely felt, I think with that class we sat in a circle all the time for discussion. Circle of trust and you have to throw it all out there.
Reciprocity	20	42	Anna	To me it was such an awesome experience working with Sport Hartford because I felt as impacted as the people I was trying to make an impact on.
Supporting an Initiative	8	11	Penny	My continued involvement with Sport Hartford is solely because the program stands for, and stands to do, many great things for people that have the potential to do many great things.
Personal Development	23	151	Elizabeth	I think after Sport Hartford and after being in Hartford ... I actually felt more comfortable around pretty much anyone.
Organizational Development	22	105	Rachel	That collaborative effort when we were at [school] or [rec center], the fact that we knew what each person was responsible for, I think that helps with the structure. They saw that when you're all on the same page, you all communicate,
Professional Development	20	62	Dario	So because of my interactions with the kids at Sport Hartford out of college I applied for a job at the Health Council. The Health Council is ... in Hartford ... I applied for a program director there, the title was a Youth Program Director.
Intentionality	23	113	Ernest	That right there was probably something that my other volunteer activities have never had. Going back to talk about what you did

The second form of bonding that four students referenced was with youth and adults in Hartland, as the students had also grown up in similar neighborhoods:

> I also grew up in an impoverished community ... so I am truly connected ... this is my story, so I know that these children, these families have the opportunity to do better things, to reach their potential... (Anna)
> I grew up in poverty. We never had [college students] come to our school and play sports with us and let us see that someone of my skin colour, of my status could become ... could get an education. City Sport opened my eyes ... to ... kids [who] could change their lives also. (Julian)

6.2.1.2. Bridging. All 22 participants mentioned the role of bridging relationships in their service learning experience. Anna summarized how one-way bridging relationships were formed with seemingly dissimilar peers:

> ... having the opportunity to be with fellow students ... whose experiences might have been ... completely different.
> ... I think was a really important part of City Sport ... understanding that people come to the table with their own perspectives and their own backgrounds.

She continued to explain how witnessing the growth of her classmates as they formed bridging relationships in Hartland allowed for her to understand them better, thus furthering connections to her peers:

> having the opportunity to see people grow ... get better and want to continue to be there and
> ... continue to make an impact even though their background wasn't the same as ... [the] kids
> ... to see them grow ... and want to stick with it was a really awesome experience.

Carly's comment about becoming "friends with the kids" addressed a second way bridging relationships occurred. Carly continued "you get to personally know a lot of the families and the kids ... they become a part of your life." And lastly, the students identified bridges forming between students and the Hartland community through expanding the perspectives students often brought with them to the class. David talked about expanding his network through the class: "... it makes you see things from a whole new perspective ... learn about a whole other culture, a whole other way of life." Elizabeth expanded on the barriers she was able to shed through building relationships with the youth in Hartland:

with African-Americans ... I would definitely look at them and I'm like, 'Oh they're a robber, they're this or that' prior to going to college ... [in] my town ... any one African-American I would definitely look at them and probably judge them ... I didn't even know I was doing it ... when I hit college then started going to [Hartland] to play sports with the kids I really started to [think] ... wow, where did I get that and I think it was just the town that I grew up in.

6.2.1.3. Enduring relationships. Eighteen of the participants discussed how both the bonding and bridging relationships they formed through their City Sport involvement endured over time. Anthony demonstrated his belief in the strength of the relationships with his peers:

I've been out of the university since 2009 ... and I'm still very much involved and impacted ... I built lifelong relationships through the people I did [City Sport] with.

Aliayah expanded on why she felt these relationships lasted:

There is something about the atmosphere that the ... class sets up that is so different than any other class that you will take ... you're having these really meaningful conversations ... and you're having these meaningful experiences with an entire class. [City Sport] gives you a bond ... to keep in touch with people more so than my statistics class.

And Ernest elaborated on the enduring relationship he formed with one of the youth participants:

I still keep in touch with [Issac]. I still check ... how well he's doing in school. Being that big mentor and helping him out if he needs help and talking ... it was really cool to see how he's ... turned [into] a role model for the [younger] kids ...

6.2.1.4. Formation of trust. Seventeen participants discussed the role the formation of trust played in their City Sport experience. Georgia spoke to the need to spend time in order to develop trust with the youth in Hartland:

You go every week and you play sports. This is how you get to know each other. You develop these relationships ... but I think the most important thing is that the trust exists. You know, you don't immediately trust a person upon meeting them. But that trust kind of develops over time. And when that trusts develops, it creates a really strong relationship ... (Georgia)

Liz continued the thought on what is possible once trust has been established: "when you have that personal connection and you can actually have a conversation about what's going on in someone's life ... or what they need help with" (Liz).

6.2.1.5. Reciprocity. The participants defined reciprocity as feeling "as impacted as the people I was trying to make an impact on" (Anna) or in Elizabeth's words, "just make it not 'we' and 'them' but like an 'us' environment" (Elizabeth). Twenty of the participants discussed the reciprocal nature of City Sport and how that impacted their social capital growth. Anthony summarized it well:

[City Sport] ... the impact that it has, not only on the [kids] involved in [Hartland] but we always talked in class about how much we learned and grew [too] ... I think that's invaluable for me to learn from a 4th grader and I can honestly say I learned a lot ...

6.2.2. Sport-for-development

6.2.2.1. Supporting an initiative. Eight participants outlined how they believed their involvement in City Sport was supporting a SFD initiative. Penny, who had been part of the program for almost five years as a student and then staff member, talked about how the role of sport in teaching larger life lessons to her, her peers and the children was why she remained involved: "my continued involvement with [City Sport] is solely because the program stands for, and stands to do, many great things for people that have the potential to do many great things." Sam spoke about how having a good experience in City Sport exposed him to a SFD initiative and that exposure: "makes you want to do those things."

6.2.2.2. Power of sport. Sport was a unifying force among the City Sport stakeholders and allowed for the larger health and education goals of the program to be realized. As Georgia noted, "when I got involved in [City Sport], I was able to see the impact of sports" (Georgia). Twelve participants addressed the power of sport:

I think I was always interested in using sport to educate the youth. And I was interested in seeing the [Hartland] community and learning more about it. How to use [sport] ... to benefit the community in that way, too. Using sports for community work. (Felix)
I grew up playing sports so I knew how important it was ... how much [the City Sport kids] loved running around ... [it was] motivation [for them] ... just to see how important sport is in kids' lives. (Molly)

6.2.2.3. Personal development (cultural). All participants mentioned ways in which they were personally impacted by being part of City Sport. The experience of an "ah ha moment" or having one's eyes opened was referenced. As Bill explained, ". . . I definitely didn't know much about how people lived. I was blinded to it . . . it has really opened my eyes to that and I am able to react to certain situations based off of experiences that I have had." David spoke about seeing things "through a different lens" after taking the class then working for City Sport.

The fact that children both in sport and in their educations "do not all have access to the same opportunities" was something the participants were able to appreciate more after taking the class (Felix). The taken for granted assumption that most of the college student leaders grew up with was that they would attend and graduate from college. Prior to the service learning course, they only knew the "percentages" (Jenn) of how few youth from Hartland graduate high school and how even fewer attend college. Following the class, they understood more about the "complexities of the world" (Jenn) and how "education is not equal" (Ernest). The college student leaders began to appreciate that attending college was not a given.

Finally, participants attributed personal development directly to the structure of the course, both the classroom and the service portions. Felix and Jenn spoke to the classroom portion, both the general structure and the segments focused on how sport could be used as a developmental tool for the children and the college students:

> The structure itself with having the movies, the readings, was better than having the regular structure of a class like taking three tests in the semester . . . you aren't just learning the material to get a good grade . . . [but]for the benefit of others. You are learning to help others. Not that getting a good grade isn't important but it was more focused on learning on a personal level and helping others . . . that's the aspect I really loved about the course. (Felix)
> Having a class where we read and wrote about our experiences. I remember I totally learned from what we read and how we applied it to our experiences in sport—from home and in [Hartland]. I remember it being very engaging . . . it was a growth experience for me. (Jenn)

From the service standpoint, Julian compared his experience in his native country to his time in Hartland:

> I'm from a third world country so I've experienced [poverty] like that myself but it was only when I went to [Hartland] [that] I realised it actually existed in the US . . . [City Sport] . . . in that short period of time was the single most enlightening experience of my college career. (Julian)

Finally, Liz echoed how City Sport had a lasting impact on her personal development:

> It's not like I didn't ever care about the community. But when I took that class, it's something . . . it helped [me] discover something I didn't know about myself. I really did have a deep desire to help . . . to make things better. To make things more equal. It's not an equal playing field out there. It kind of identified that desire in me. And, you know, I've been working ever since to fulfill it. (Liz)

6.2.2.4. Organizational development (stakeholders). Twenty-one of the 22 participants identified aspects of organizational development. University students (52), youth in Hartland (41), and community partners (22) were all identified as stakeholders with a role in the development of City Sport. As a student leader, Anthony discussed the amount of responsibility he felt in his role:

> You're treated like adults. You're accountable for things. You automatically take ownership. And when you take ownership you walk into a school in [Hartland] and you introduce yourself to the principal. You're working with teachers and custodians and all these different people. I think you're empowered very much in this program . . . you're treated in a way that holds you accountable. (Anthony)

Aliayah also recalled being put in a position to make decisions about a City Sport event:

> . . . when we were doing the [Hartland] event . . . the [professor] gave each group a certain amount of money to work with then we created sponsorship letters and went to local businesses. I remember asking a friend whose dad owned a restaurant if he wanted to donate some food. We all were asking whoever we could think of who could help out in whatever way to pitch in a little bit.

Aliayah went on to share that she learned everyone had a role to play to support the kids and to build City Sport's capacity: "even though I don't have a need or want to be a teacher specifically, I'm like a true educator supporter. That's something directly from [City Sport]" (Aliayah).

The next group of stakeholders the participants commented on was the youth in Hartland. The program involved the youth as active decision makers. Elizabeth felt she "definitely formed relationships with the children that [she] worked with in [Hartland] in after school program" (Elizabeth). She pinpointed class discussions focused on the approach City Sport promoted "going in and not acting like you are better than them, not even acting like you're older than them, acting like you're on the same page as them" (Elizabeth). And Georgia added, "playing sports with the same kids on a daily basis, [I] definitely saw the impact of . . . interactions that occur and then repeat themselves over and over" (Georgia). Engaging the youth as leaders through building and sustaining meaningful relationships with them reinforced that the program had the best interests of the youth at the forefront.

Lastly, community partners were discussed as stakeholders. Lisa commented on the importance of building relationships as "this is what you have to do with our partners . . . build relationships" (Lisa). Specifically, Penny discussed the role teachers and families played in her position as a program leader at one of the elementary school sites. She had realized that "many students bring in problems from the community. The teachers and school staff are not always equipped to deal with what's going on, or [they don't expect] to deal with that." She then went on to share that she was able to intercede and assist the teachers. The large number of college student leaders in City Sport provided "additional support in the classroom at any given time to be able to help when the teachers needed [it]" (Penny).

Rachel added that the:

> collaborative effort when we were at [school] or [recreation center], the fact that we knew what each person was responsible for, I think that helps with the structure. They saw that when you're all on the same page, you all communicate.

The opportunity to "have met great teachers and mentors" (Sam) and working together with them was valued by the college student leaders. The fact that "everybody puts forth the effort or takes the time out to make an impact in these kids' lives even if it's in the smallest sense" (Sam) left a lasting impression.

6.2.2.5. Professional development (education). Twenty participants highlighted two major focus areas: gaining perspective and starting on a career path with the skills acquired from City Sport. Anthony shared that even after having played sports his whole life he still learned more as City Sport "teaches you priorities, to value what you have and allows you to put your life in perspective and realize how fortunate you really are." Lisa added that before City Sport "I had no awareness" of social inequities. Now, as a City Sport employee, she has mentored others in gaining that same awareness.

Other college students highlighted how City Sport influenced their career choices. Dario felt City Sport "impacted [him] so much that [he] actually wanted to do [sport based youth development] for a career right out of college" (Dario): "[City Sport] . . . it exposed me to something that I still do to this day" (Dario). Then Anna shared:

> [City Sport] helped me to figure out career wise what kinds of things I might be interested in . . . I learned a whole lot about communities, working with people, making connections, and building relationships through sport. I've been able to carry through and really help make an impact [at work]. (Anna)

Georgia also found her career path as a result of City Sport: "So I really wanted to try to pursue working with kids . . . applying those four aspects [nutrition, physical activity, life skills, and academic opportunity] that I learned in [City Sport] to my career path" (Georgia). In addition, Penny attributed her career to City Sport, as it "definitely has had a huge impact. . . . I chose my career path based on that engagement and involvement." (Penny)

6.2.2.6. Intentionality. All 22 participants contributed to the intentionality theme, both those related to the structure of the classroom aspect of the course and instances of intentionality during the service segment of the course. Anna began by highlighting how she valued the classroom environment as it provided the "opportunity to be self-reflective and think about why [the youths'] experience was the way it was" (Anna). Aliayah appreciated being able to have dialogs in class and Joseph took it a step further:

> [the course] made you feel comfortable speaking your mind without being judged. . . . it's the only class on campus [where] you can be open . . . and speak your mind. (Joseph)

Jenn then remembered how the class project, planning an event for the children to engage in sport, pushed her to interact with her classmates in yet another way:

> The class project was really helpful because we had to work together with our classmates. To see their perspective. And to work in a group. I typically preferred to work on my own in classes. This made me work with others. People who saw things differently than me and some who came from different backgrounds, too. (Jenn)

Next, the participants mentioned the intentional structure of their service and that they felt prepared:

> It also was just set up. [Professor] taught us how we can go into these communities safely and comfortably. (Aliayah)

Several participants talked about the van rides to and from Hartland as a time to build relationships. Instructors encouraged students not to disengage during the van rides by sleeping or listening to music, but to interact with their peers. In fact, lesson plans were often reviewed one last time in the van to Hartland and student leaders would debrief on how the lessons were received on the ride back. As Anthony recalled:

> to be honest we built a lot of relationships driving in the van from [campus] to [Hartland] talking . . . you would debrief . . . after the program and [discuss] what we [did] in [Hartland].

David remembered "those 45 minute van rides, the interesting conversations we had." The students found the relationships with each other, as well as with the youth in Hartland, were aided by consistency "[going] on a consistent basis . . . [has] a huge impact . . ." (Elizabeth) as it allowed for the development of mentoring relationships. Like Felix stated, "that's

something that I am really passionate about . . . the mentorship in [City Sport]" (Felix). Through an intentional, continuous presence of the student leaders, positive relationships developed.

7. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine a sport-based service learning program, called City Sport, to ascertain how and to what extent it produced positive outcomes related to social capital development for its college student leaders. Secondly, we aimed to investigate how this program has been structured to provide such outcomes. Fundamentally, we found that college student leaders taking part in this service learning SFD program experienced increased social capital development (i.e., through bonding, bridging, enduring relationships, formation of trust, and reciprocity) and that it was sustained over time. Then we discovered that this impact was even more pronounced for students who stayed involved with City Sport after the service learning course had concluded. From a management standpoint, we also showed how the intentional design and structural features of the program led to these long-term gains in social capital. Using SFDT (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011) as a theoretical foundation, the results demonstrated that it is the intentional design and combination of sport, cultural, organizational, and educational features which contribute to the impact of the program. This is the important theoretical contribution of the current work, as very few studies have examined the structure, design, and processes of sport-based programs working for social change. No studies that we could find have examined the structure and design of service learning initiatives employing a SFD focus.

With regards to the first research question, the quantitative results demonstrated that college students taking part in City Sport increased their social capital as a result of the experience. Those who maintained their involvement in City Sport after the service learning course concluded experienced greater social capital gains than students who just took part in the course. To explore and probe this finding in greater depth, the qualitative portion of the study revealed that the college students in City Sport experienced increased social capital through bonding and bridging with similar and dissimilar others, by establishing enduring relationships, and through developing norms of trust and reciprocity (Putnam, 1995). Collectively, these findings demonstrate City Sport was effective in developing increased social capital over time in its college student leaders, through building norms of reciprocity (Putnam, 1995) to serve as a foundation for enhanced civic engagement (Jarvie, 2003; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008). These findings are similar to previous research in SFD, which has determined that social capital can be increased through participation in a sport-based intervention (Burnett, 2006; Sherry, 2010; Sherry et al., 2011; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2011; Spaaij, 2009, 2012; Welty Peachey et al., 2013b). However, none of these studies have looked at the experiences of college students involved in a service learning program with a SFD focus.

Many of the college student leaders experienced the expansion of both bonding with similar peers and/or youth and bridging networks with dissimilar peers and/or youth. These new networks and experiences then served as a foundation for new thinking and perspectives, and motivated the college students to become more actively engaged in the community, signifying social capital development (Jarvie, 2003). Through this bonding and bridging, norms of trust and reciprocity were formed between college student peers and between college student leaders and the youth. These aspects were related, as increased trust and reciprocity emerged together, and served as important ingredients motivating the college students to become more socially proactive and engaged (Putnam, 1995; Skinner et al., 2008). Finally, and importantly, the enduring relationships formed during the service learning experience were a result of first being able to come together around sport as a common ground, and then through the depth and frequency of interactions the college students had with each other and with the youth. The tenets of intergroup contact theory suggest that quality and quantity of contact with dissimilar others is central to changing perspectives and fostering understanding between diverse groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997). Similarly, then, the quality and quantity of contact with both similar and dissimilar others appears to be pivotal to increased social capital development over time. This finding has important ramifications for the design and structure of service learning courses with a SFD focus.

In response to research question two, the findings revealed that there were four clear design and management elements that facilitated social capital development: academic assignments, classroom culture, service structure, and opportunities to progress through the courses and the City Sport organization.

Service learning environments can challenge academic norms (Cooper, 1998). Felix specifically spoke to the class being like none other he had taken, one where the grade was not the primary motivation. Instead, personal (cultural), professional (educational), and organizational development became the focus (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Through regular, guided reflection (Astin et al., 2000; Bruening et al., 2010; Eyler, 2002), participants were asked to consider how the course readings, their service experiences, and their own backgrounds merged to inform their perspectives on sport as a change agent and their own roles in the change process. The integration of academic learning and personal growth (Burnett, 2006; Sherry, 2010; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012) was intentional in the design of the course, as well as in the fact that the connection between City Sport and the service learning course was intentional from the outset of the City Sport program. And, because of the personal growth the participants experienced, they were better able to form both bonding and bridging relationships as they heightened their understanding of themselves and their similarities to and differences from others.

As the participants explored their individual perceptions and understanding of SFD in the readings, movie viewing, and reflection assignments, they were also part of a supportive classroom culture. Through encouragement from the faculty, and

engaged discussion about both the academic and service portions of the course with their peers, the classroom became a welcoming environment (Astin et al., 2000). Class members did not leave their experiences at the service sites but came together to discuss them. The classroom culture allowed for the college student leaders to form both bonding relationships with similar peers and bridging relationships with those whose differences they came to appreciate (Burnett, 2006; Schulenkorf et al., 2011; Sherry, 2010; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012).

The culture in the classroom spilled over into the service experiences as well. Intentional design elements (e.g., continuous programming at the same sites each semester, students signing up for weekly shifts, van rides with peers between campus and community) all aided in social capital development of the participants. The college students elaborated on how they built trust through being able to return to the same site week after week. Spending time on site provided an opportunity for the college students to form relationships with both their classmates and the youth and families in Hartland. Then, time preparing for the programs in the van rides to Hartland and time debriefing on the day's happenings, as well as connecting with peers on a personal level, on the ride back to campus was another intentional design element that facilitated social capital development.

Participants like Anthony who found they enjoyed the course and City Sport and were interested in more responsibility had opportunities to take an additional course, continue as a volunteer leader, and/or be hired into one of several student leader positions. In Anthony's case, he completed the introductory service learning course and was then hired into a semester-long internship position funded partly by City Sport and partly by a community partner. Through this additional time with City Sport, he formed even more significant bonds with peers, youth, and family "I built lifelong relationships" (Anthony). Anthony's perception was consistent with the survey findings in that those participants who maintained their involvement in City Sport beyond the first course experienced increased levels of social capital development. The structure of City Sport provided avenues for those participants who wished to stay involved to do so.

In examining City Sport as a SFD program, one can see the impacts at the macro, meso, and micro levels (Lyras, 2007; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Through actively engaging stakeholders both at the campus and in the community, City Sport has become an enduring system (macro level) or infrastructure that connects college students, youth, and their families through sport. Change has been reported by the college students in the expansion of their social networks and enhancement of inter-group relations, social integration, and group cohesion through both bonding and bridging (meso level). Additionally at the meso level, their values and norms have also been informed through the trusting, reciprocal relationships formed with the youth and families. Additionally, micro level impacts were reported through changes to perceptions, stereotypes, and empowerment (Burnett, 2006; Burnett & Uys, 2000). One caution drawn from the findings is that some college students commented on the time investment required during the service learning experience, which was considerable. This time commitment may have dissuaded some individuals from taking part in the program, or "turned off" participants to reaping the full benefit from the experience initially. However, as the experience progressed, issues of time became less and less of a concern for the college students:

> . . . 40 hours . . . it seemed like so much and I don't have time for that. I have this, that and the other going on. And then by the end of the year I think we doubled [the hours] because it was fun and exciting. (Aliayah)

Thus, sport managers should be mindful of the time commitment required of participants so as not to undermine program objectives.

7.1. Theoretical and practical implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings demonstrate that the intentional design and combination of sport, cultural, educational, and organizational features of the City Sport initiative contributed to social capital development among its college student leaders. This is an important theoretical contribution, as very few studies have examined the structure, design, and processes of sport-based programs working for social change, and no studies that we could find have examined the structure and design of service learning initiatives employing a SFD focus. Thus, we extend the literature on service learning and contribute to SFDT (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011) by uncovering salient design, process, and structural features of a service learning initiative with a SFD focus which work in tandem to develop social capital and other outcomes. Importantly, we also extend social capital theorizing by indicating that quality and quantity of contact through bonding and bridging networks are crucial for long-term social capital development.

The study also has key implications for sport managers. It is important for sport managers to give intentional and creative thought to the design, structure, and processes of sport-based service learning engagements. As was shown through the current study, social capital is derived not just through the sport experience, but also through the cultural, educational, and organizational design features which complement and enhance the sport initiative. Marrying educational and cultural activities with sport offerings, and involving participants in decision-making and organization of the program, will enhance the effectiveness of the initiative and contribute to a broader set of outcomes. In addition, sport-based service learning programs should be designed so that quality and quantity of contact with similar and dissimilar others is central to the structure. One becomes more active in the community over time through frequent and meaningful engagement among all stakeholders.

8. Limitations

As with all studies, there were several limitations that could have impacted the findings. First, we must acknowledge that the findings from this study are undoubtedly positive—all interviewees spoke to increased social capital development, which was confirmed by the quantitative results. While this is a laudable outcome, we do not know about the experiences of those college students who did not take part in the survey or respond to an interview request. Perhaps these non-respondents did not experience social capital development, and are not currently engaged in community work and efforts. While the college student leaders are not considered volunteers per se, there are similarities between the City Sport service learning program and volunteerism. One of the issues in volunteer research is that we often do not engage in research with individuals who had a negative experience or who left the volunteer program because these individuals are not inclined to participate, or in the case of individuals who left the program, they are difficult to access (Welty Peachey et al., 2013b). Similarly, our results could be biased toward the positive because we only accessed alumni who had a positive experience in the City Sport program.

In addition, the possibility of socially desirable responses and bias (Creswell, 1998) existed. Interview and survey participants could have provided responses they believed the researchers wanted to hear. Furthermore, in most cases, the interview participants knew the researcher conducting the interview through their prior connection in the service learning class. As such, the participant responses could have been impacted by bias toward City Sport or a hesitancy to be critical of their experience. The researchers attempted to address these concerns by pairing participants with researchers with whom they had a rapport but were more likely to speak frankly with, encouraging participants to speak honestly about their experience, and by assigning pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. Additionally, researcher bias also could have occurred in reporting the findings. Having two investigators code the qualitative data and a third analyze the quantitative data created triangulation of investigators. Additionally, the five other researchers involved in the study each played a role in reviewing and critiquing interpretations after data analysis. Finally, the potential for self-selection bias could have occurred (Bruening et al., 2010) as some participants enrolled in the course as an elective and could have been predisposed to engage with others and build social capital before taking the course.

9. Future directions

Several clear directions for future research emerged from the study. First, an informative direction would be examining the impact of the course on the career aspirations and choices of the college student leaders. Service, undertaken through formal coursework at the collegiate level, can greatly impact students' future trajectories, and specifically their commitment to service. When comparing students who take a service learning course to those who do community service (no academic requirement), those who enroll in service learning are more likely to say they plan to pursue a service-related career after completing the service (Astin et al., 2000). A significant number of students who, in their first year, indicated they were not interested in a service career or who were undecided in their career path later indicated interest in a service career after participating in a service learning course (Astin et al., 2000). Hence, understanding how service learning impacts future career trajectory is necessary in designing and implementing service learning classes for the most influential outcomes. In addition, the best ways to connect college student service and SFD programs has yet to be investigated.

Service learning classes may also have a long-term impact on cultural competency, as measured through social justice. Social justice focuses on the values and beliefs concerning equitable access to resources and protection of individual rights (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Okon, 2012). Previous research suggests that service learning opportunities can influence subsequent advocacy efforts (O'Brien, Patel, Hensler-McGinnins, & Kaplan, 2006; Talleyrand, Chung, & Bemak, 2006), such as engaging in SFD. Continued examination of the impact of service learning, and, specifically, which components of service learning have long-term outcomes, needs to be assessed in order to develop service learning opportunities that have the greatest impact.

Additionally, we recommend continuing to examine the design, structures and processes of other service learning experiences that employ sport. Inquiry into how social capital development might vary based on type of program or cultural context is a worthwhile undertaking. And, lastly, another effort to engage student leaders who did not stay involved in City Sport following their service learning course experience would shed light on the results of the current study and thus be a desirable direction for future research.

10. Conclusion

The current study expands the literature on the role of SFD programs in social change efforts. Beyond that, however, examining a service learning setting and the specific design, structure, and management elements associated with that setting also expanded inquiry on how sport can be managed for change. We have made an initial effort to examine how those factors led to social capital development. However, much more work is needed with other programs and in other contexts. It is our hope that the present work will serve as a stimulus for other scholars to become engaged with and extend this line of research.

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