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ARTICLE

The Impact of a Sport-Based Service Learning Course on Participants' Attitudes, Intentions and Actions Toward Social Change

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Framed in the context of a sport-based service learning program that engages in interdepartmental university partnerships (including athletics), the current study focused on addressing the need to analyze the long-term impacts of service learning on students' intentions and actions toward social change. Service learning courses have been shown to facilitate positive outcomes such as increased cultural competency and future intentions toward civic engagement (Bruening et al., 2010, 2014). Building on this knowledge, the current study used in-depth interviews to investigate the social justice-related attitudes, intentions, and behaviors of alumni of a college service learning through sport course. Individual interviews ($n = 22$) with participants who had completed at least one semester in the course indicated that the course was influential in developing their ability to recognize social inequities. Furthermore, participants indicated future intentions and current involvement in initiatives that address social inequities in their given areas of life. Theoretical and managerial implications for effective academic and intercollegiate

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athletic partnerships, helping to increase impactful civic engagement and learning opportunities for student-athletes and non-student-athletes, are provided.

With the inception of the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program, intercollegiate athletics expressed a commitment to the holistic development of student-athletes across the domains of academic excellence, athletic excellence, personal development, career development, and service (NCAA, 2007). In particular, the initiative's emphasis on service is indicative of the growing trend of character development and social responsibility in higher education as a whole (George, 2001) and reaffirms the opportunity for intercollegiate athletics to play a "catalytic role in social change" (Brand, 2005, p.1). While intercollegiate athletic departments are increasingly emphasizing student-athlete involvement in civic engagement, the amount of service performed is not always reflective of the department's stated service-oriented mission (Andrassy & Bruening, 2011). Likewise, despite their best intentions, student-athletes are not as proactive as their nonathlete counterparts in engaging in service opportunities, perhaps due to the significant time constraints placed upon them (Gayles, Rockenbach, & Davis, 2012). Through programs like CHAMPS/ Life Skills, student-athletes are encouraged to give back to their communities by taking part in civic engagement activities. Yet, despite the best objectives of such programming, shortages in departmental capacity (e.g., funding and staffing) can result in a lack of quality and quantity of service programming (Andrassy & Bruening, 2011). In cases such as these when neither student-athlete nor athletic department is able to fulfill their service-oriented goals, campus partnerships with academic courses have proven effective (Andrassy, Bruening, Svensson, Huml, & Chung, in press).

In a study of student-development initiatives by intercollegiate athletic departments, Andrassy and colleagues (in press) found that campus partnerships with academic courses were integral to the process of increasing student-athlete involvement in civic engagement. Established as an effective structure to engage all university students, service learning courses are credit-bearing courses that combine an organized community service component with designed reflection opportunities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). In this manner, service learning courses have the potential to supplement athletic department capacity (e.g., staffing and funding) as they (i.e., service learning courses) provide structured service opportunities and student-centered learning that do not have to be organized or managed by the athletic department or coaching staff.

Beyond providing opportunities for civic engagement, service learning courses are often used to facilitate social justice-related outcomes in students, including social capital development (Bruening et al., 2014), increased cultural competency and meaningful interactions between students and community members (Bruening, Madsen, Evanovich, & Fuller, 2010), increased knowledge about and empathy toward members of groups different from their own (Bruening, Cotrufo, Fuller, Madsen, & Wilson-Hill, in press), and the willingness to continue serving in the future (Bennett, Drane, & Henson, 2003). These outcomes, among others, succinctly align with the mission of athletic departments to engage their student-athletes in

community service for the purposes of personal development and service commitment (Andrassy & Bruening, 2011), while not placing the onus on athletic departments, coaches, or student-athletes to identify or facilitate the structure for civic engagement and/or student development opportunities.

To fully understand the impact of service learning programs, an examination of how these programs influence behaviors and actions of participants is still necessary. Despite the positive attitudinal-related outcomes of service learning programs, there is a lack of research concerning their ability to influence long-term intentions and behaviors related to social responsibility and civic engagement. Accordingly, continued examination of the lasting impact of service learning programs on outcomes such as social justice is warranted to determine the benefits of such programs as potential partners with athletic departments (Andrassy & Bruening, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to examine one sport-based service learning program to determine how long-term social justice outcomes (e.g., attitudes, intentions, and behaviors toward social change) may have been produced for its college student participants (both student-athletes and non-student-athletes). The research questions were as follows:

1. What influence, if any, did involvement in the service learning course have on participants' ability to recognize social inequities?
2. Furthermore, what influence, if any, did involvement in the service learning course have on participants' intentions and actions toward social change?
3. If applicable, why did involvement in the service learning course influence participants' intentions and actions toward social change?

Although research questions were grounded in social justice orientation (Torres-Harding et al., 2012), we used the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), as a reference to the study of human behavior (e.g., attitudes, intentions, and behaviors toward social justice), to further guide the current investigation.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theory of Planned Behavior

Born out of an attempt to explain human behavior, the theory of planned behavior is a social cognitive framework meant to predict and explain human behavior in specific contexts (Ajzen, 1991), and has been used to understand a range of actions including volunteerism (Hardeman et al., 2002). According to this theory, behavior/ action is predicated on intentions and intentions are predicated on three independent factors: (1) attitudes toward the behavior, (2) subjective norms, and (3) perceived behavioral control. The first antecedent of intentions, attitudes toward the behavior, refers to the "degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Subjective norms, the second predictor of intentions, is a social factor in that it speaks to perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the action (Ajzen, 1991). Finally, perceived behavioral control refers to the "perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior" and reflects "past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Taken together, the more favorable the individual's

attitude toward the behavior, the more the behavior is socially accepted, and the greater the perceived ease of performing the behavior, an individual's intention to perform a behavior (e.g., being an advocate for social change) should be stronger.

Social Justice

Based on commonalities between various conceptualizations, we define social justice as the value or belief that people should have equitable access to resources and society, and when possible, should work toward minimizing social and structural inequities that disenfranchise marginalized groups (Constantine et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2009; Prilleltensky, 2001; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Thus, social justice is more than an attitude or disposition. Instead, it is the encouragement of a type of citizenship that endeavors toward equality, freedom, community building, self-determinism, and a critical approach toward oppressive social, political, and cultural structures.

From a theoretical standpoint, theories describing how one develops commitment to social justice are relatively scarce (Miller et al., 2009). One model for social justice engagement proposes that social justice interest, intentions and action occur when an individual (a) experiences and develops an increased awareness of social inequities, (b) develops a sense of efficacy to bring about change and understands his or her role in relation to that change, and (c) engages in action to bring about change when a deeper understanding of social inequities is acquired (Moeschberger, Ordonez, Shankar, & Raney, 2006). Upon closer examination, this nonlinear process aligns with the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as they both emphasize the influence of awareness/attitudes, efficacy, and intentions on subsequent action. As a result, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) can be applied to social justice as a means of predicting social justice-related attitudes and behaviors.

Social Justice and the Theory of Planned Behavior.   In an attempt to contextualize social justice within the theory of planned behavior, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) developed the Social Justice Scale (SJS) as a means to assess individuals' attitudes, values, and intentions toward social justice behaviors. Corresponding with the theory of planned behavior, the researchers propose four theoretical dimensions of social justice: attitude toward social justice, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and intentions. *Attitudes toward social justice* speak to an individual's attitudes related to awareness, power-sharing, collaboration, and empowerment (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Likewise, *perceived behavioral control*, references whether individuals have social change-related goals and the belief they can be an advocates for social change. Next, s*ubjective norms* assesses whether individuals' social network supports or discourages social change-related activities. Finally, *behavioral intentions*, highlights intentions to engage in activities that foster social change (e.g., talking to others about social inequities or participating in activities that promote social change) (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). In light of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), these dimensions can be used as a means to explain why students engage in social change-related activities, which is of keen importance as social justice education is making its way into university classrooms (Kincheloe, 2005).

Literature Review

Social Justice in Higher Education

A primary goal of educational institutions, including higher education, is that of fostering a sense of democratic citizenship in students (Boyer, 1990; Bruening et al., 2010). In an effort to meet this mission students must be provided opportunities to develop dispositions (e.g., intellectual understanding, attitudes, civic skills, and willingness to engage in civic action) essential to this role (Battistoni, 1997). Engaged citizenship requires students to incorporate a social justice paradigm. Universities and colleges have promoted social justice issues mainly through two pedagogical methods: social justice education and service learning experiences (Bruening et al., 2010, 2014, in press). At various institutions social justice courses may be required coursework in which critical pedagogies (e.g., critical constructionism, critical race theory, multicultural education, antioppressive education) are used to guide student critical consciousness and action toward issues related to social injustice. According to Buckley (1998), learning experiences which incorporate social justice education can foster an awareness, knowledge, and skill acquisition to intervene in human suffering and injustice. For example, grounding coursework in multicultural education has been found to develop and enhance student multicultural competency (O'Brien, Patel, Hensler-McGinnis, & Kaplan, 2006). Recently, attention has been given to the utility of service learning courses in producing social justice-related outcomes.

Service Learning

Service learning programming emerged out of Ernest Boyer's (1990) call to academia for a "scholarship of engagement". According to Bringle and Hatcher (1996), service learning is an organized, educational experience in which students are encouraged to deepen an understanding of their academic coursework, field of study, and sense of civic responsibility through a collaborative engagement with the community. Courses carrying the service learning title usually have three key components: (1) credit-bearing course, (2) participation in an organized service activity that meets a community need, and (3) the opportunity for students to reflect (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

When examining the outcomes of service learning courses, research has focused on the ability of such courses to improve academic-related skills such as critical thinking, writing, grade point averages, and development of complex reflexive judgment (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). However, a growing body of literature is demonstrating evidence for non-academic-related benefits of service learning courses including the mitigation of racial stereotypes, increased cultural competency, the development of social capital, and the desire to change society, among others (Bruening et al., 2010; 2014, in press).

Service Learning and Social Justice

The key to elevating cultural competency and to promoting democratic citizenship in students can be found at the juncture of social justice education and service learning (Butin, 2007). Unfortunately, service learning has come to be characterized

through a "charity" oriented model in which the goals of such programming are only philanthropic in nature. While this approach may be useful it does the least good in addressing injuries in society and for developing the competencies of students. Battistoni (1997) states,

> ". . . charity-based model lacks a focus on the larger society and its needs. . . For many young people, who often lack confidence in the public realm and in their own political efficacy, service is seen as an antidote to politics, not a method of learning how to participate politically as a citizen" (p. 151).

While social justice education is at times characterized as potentially being "radicalized," its change-oriented emphasis on activism is valued in seeking enriched attitudes and increased behaviors related to social justice.

Incorporating social justice into service learning curricula and pedagogy can have a transformative impact upon both student learning and community needs. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and Butin (2007) suggest that effective citizenship can be shaped in very different ways as a result of an educator's emphasis on social justice. Through critical analysis and social action students can move beyond volunteerism to being advocates for social change. The potential transformative nature of a social justice-oriented service learning experience has merit. For example, in a comparison of service learning students to nonservice learning students, Kendrick (1996) found that service learning students believed it was more important to be advocates for social equity, volunteer to assist those in need, and to give time as adults to improve their community. Building upon Eyler and Giles' (1999) claim that effective citizenship can be deepened through service learning participation, Iverson and James (2010) explored involvement in a change-oriented service learning program. Results demonstrated that, although participants did not construct a social justice-oriented framework, they indicated student growth of civic consciousness and cultural competency.

Furthermore, while scant, other investigations reveal sport-based service learning programs can produce social justice-related outcomes such as reduced negative attitudes between groups (Bruening et al., in press), social cohesion (Bruening et al., 2010), and enhanced understanding and interaction with diverse populations (Mumford & Kane, 2006). Particularly relevant to this study, Bruening et al. (2014) explored the long-term impacts of a sport-based service learning course on the outcome of social capital development among alumni of the program. Alumni indicated increased social capital development as a result of their experience through bonding and bridging with similar and dissimilar others, by establishing enduring relationships, and through developing norms of trust and reciprocity (Putnam, 1995). The positive impact on the development of social capital for program participants was sustained beyond the time of the service learning course as alumni indicated an active engagement in their current community, a key component of social capital development (Jarvie, 2003). Thus, within the domain of sport, numerous studies have demonstrated the utility of service learning courses in fostering holistic growth in student-athletes and nonstudent athletes alike (e.g., Andrassy & Bruening, 2011; Bruening et al., 2010, 2014; Bennett et al., 2003).

While it is clear that service learning courses, and in particular sport-based service learning courses, have the ability to enhance cultural competency (e.g., Bruening et al., 2010, 2013, 2014), a first step in the promotion of social justice (Torres-Harding et al., 2012), less is known about the long-term impacts of such

courses. That is to say, although a student may have his or her ideas, perceptions, or stereotypical beliefs challenged, and subsequently altered, through participation in an educational course (e.g., service learning), true social change/social justice does not occur until the individual becomes engaged in social action (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Thus, while research (e.g., Bruening et al., 2010, 2014) has demonstrated that participation in a service learning course can result in changed attitudes, the same research (e.g., Bruening et al., 2010, 2014) falls short in examining whether changed attitudes produces follow-up action, particularly once the course concludes. Once students leave the structure of a service learning course, graduate from college, and become members of the "real world" does their zeal for social change wane? Again, this question is important in light of claims that service learning courses can assist athletic departments in their pursuit of student-development (Andrassy et al., in press).

Method

The current study is part of a larger examination of social justice activity, social capital development, and career paths among alumni of City Sport service learning courses. Data were collected via personal interviews. Utilizing in-depth interviews with participants allowed the researchers to address complex questions surrounding matters related to social justice (e.g., education, social class, race, and social inequities, etc.) (Creswell, 2012).

Setting

The context for this study is City Sport, a sport-based youth development program, operated by School of Education faculty and staff at a large Northeastern university in the U.S. in conjunction with a nearby urban center (Bruening et al., 2014). College students, including student-athletes and non-student-athletes, engage in the program as part of a sport-based service learning course.

City Sport

The faculty leader of City Sport spent a year visiting with community organizations, municipal leaders, and schools to determine the needs of the community, as well as existing programs and organizations that were actively working to address those needs. Those meetings informed the creation of City Sport as a sport-based youth development program using sport as a hook (Perkins & Noam, 2007) to promote its four programmatic pillars (physical activity, life skills, healthy nutrition, and academic enrichment) among youth ages 5–18. City Sport began in 2003 as a partnership between the university's School of Education, its student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC), and a faith-based community organization in a nearby urban community, Hartland. At the outset, the City Sport faculty director attended SAAC meetings to share details of City Sport's upcoming events at the faith-based organization and recruit student-athlete volunteers. By 2005, it became clear that relying on volunteers to provide City Sport's programming in Hartland was not sustainable. Without a structure to organize student-athletes' availability and provide more extensive opportunities to plan and reflect on experiences in Hartland, City

Sport was destined to struggle as many service-based programs for student-athletes do (Andrassy, et al., in press).

Beginning with an independent study for four female student-athletes, City Sport piloted an after-school program for preadolescent girls (ages 8–12) at a Hartland community center. The following year (2006) the faculty leader and a student teaching assistant, and captain of the volleyball team, taught the first iteration of a three-credit service learning course. Students enrolled in the course not only completed 40 hours of service in Hartland, but also engaged in an academically rigorous curriculum aimed to increase their understanding of service learning, the tenets of social justice, and the political and social history of Hartland, its schools and its youth-focused community based organizations. Discussion and written reflection were substantial components of the course.

While it was open to all students, 21 student-athletes and graduate student assistants in the athletic department enrolled in the first iteration of the service learning course due, in part, to word-of-mouth referral by the captain of the volleyball team and the faculty leader's established relationship with SAAC. Similarly, informal participant referrals and testimonials to the effectiveness and enjoyable experiences within the course have served as a primary source of enrollment in future iterations of the course for student-athletes (and nonstudent athletes). This organic process has grown over time leading to sustained relationships between City Sport and student, staff, and decision-makers within both athletic and academic departments throughout the university. And, while student-athletes and students working in athletics as either undergraduate employees or graduate assistants have continued to enroll in the course(s) steadily, non-student-athletes also compose at least half of each class.

Since that first course in 2006, City Sport's expanded core of faculty and staff have added an introductory one-credit course where students are required to participate in at least 12 hours of meaningful engagement with Hartland. The original course then follows. Finally, an advanced course, which requires another 40 hours of service with City Sport, was recently added. All courses are designated as service learning and the in-class assignments and activities reinforce the principles of this pedagogy (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Bruening et al., 2010).

Participants and Procedures

Since inception, City Sport administrators have maintained a database of contact information for students enrolled in the service learning courses. Using this database, invitations to participate in individual interviews were sent to 45 alumni of City Sport service learning courses, with a goal of 20–25 interviewees. With consideration for a diverse sample in mind, potential interview participants were initially contacted based on when they first took the service learning course (2006–8; 2007–7; 2008–5; 2009–6; 2010–4; 2011–7; 2012–4; 2013–4), geography of hometown (Connecticut-19, International-10, New York-6; Texas, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts-3 each, Maryland-1), the type of environment in which they grew up (suburban-27; urban-15; rural-3), race and ethnicity (19 White, 13 Black, 7 Asian, 2 biracial), gender (26 women, 19 men), and social class (upper middle-15; middle-17; lower-13). While dissemination of patterns in feedback related to (a) diversity traits of students and (b) outcomes based on the year students enrolled in the course were not the focus

of this research, we believed it important to capture a comprehensive depiction of the students' backgrounds. Potential research opportunities related to an examination of the interviewees' identities and/or when they enrolled in the course and subsequent responses are addressed in the discussion section.

Out of the 45 contacted, 22 participants consented to taking part in the interviews. Of the 22 participants, 8 had no sport involvement in college and 14 had college sport involvement. Eleven of the participants were college student-athletes (Football—3; Track and Field—2; Soccer—2; Volleyball, Crew, Field Hockey, & Basketball—1) and three were student managers (Men's basketball—2; Women's basketball—1).

Three members of the research team, all whom had been instructors of the service learning course(s) at one point, conducted the interviews. Participants were paired with the interviewee with whom they had the strongest rapport so they could speak freely about their experiences in the course (Creswell, 2012). Interviews, conducted during the summer of 2013, lasted between 45 minutes to 60 minutes and were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the research team. Participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.

Using a semistructured guide, interviews took placed until common themes led to data saturation (Creswell, 2012). Questions were grounded in social justice orientation (Miller et al., 2009; Torres-Harding et al., 2012) and were meant to elicit responses related to participants' awareness, efficacy, intentions and behaviors. Sample questions included "what impact has the service learning course had on your ability to actively support the needs of marginalized social groups," "do you have any plans to engage in social justice activities in the next year," and "how has the service learning course influenced your worldview and attitudes."

Data Analysis

Three members of the research team coded the data utilizing Torres-Harding et al.'s (2012) four dimensions of social justice (i.e., attitudes toward social justice, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions). The researchers independently coded one transcript and then met to compare codes. After discussing the themes, the researchers agreed on the coding for the first transcript. Then, each coded a second transcript independently. Again, the researchers met and found their coding was more closely aligned than with the first transcript. When disagreements occurred regarding the coding of data, discussion ensued until consensus was reached. The three researchers then independently coded the remaining transcripts. Next, the coding was uploaded into NVIVO 10 and any disagreements were discussed until agreement was reached. Finally, the researchers grouped data into axial themes (i.e., "the act of relating concepts/categories to each other," Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 198) and condensed codes into themes and subthemes to give coherence to the associated theory (i.e., social justice dimensions) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Establishing Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is used to assess the methodological rigor of a study and is established through meeting criteria of credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We took several measures to ensure the

trustworthiness of this research. First, to establish credibility we performed member checks by sharing our results with sample participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through member checks, our "analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions" were verified by "members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). Next, we established transferability by providing thick description of the data in the Results section. In doing so, other researchers can determine the suitability of applying our results to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, we established confirmability through triangulation of the data via multiple sources (i.e., interview participants) and investigators (i.e., multiple researchers conducting the interviews and coding the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

Findings from the interviews were organized around social justice orientation. Specifically, social justice dimensions included attitudes toward social justice, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Since it is impossible to present all of the participants' experiences within each dimension of social justice, we selected quotes that are most representative of participants' statements in connection to the three research questions of the current study.

Attitudes Toward Social Justice

Overall, 21 of 22 participants discussed their acceptance of social justice ideals and values. First, 14 students spoke to the importance of social justice in relationship to societal realities (e.g., poverty, racial intolerance) like Aliayah who stated "I just feel like I kind of see inequalities everywhere I look." Other participants elaborated:

> Poverty is such a huge issue. Where I grew up and where I am currently living in a big city, I see on a day to day basis how it affects kids, their performance in school, how it affects their relationships that they have. (Georgia)

> It is extremely important that there is no social injustice toward different races . . .You don't want there to be any inequalities or any intolerance or any prejudice . . .In a perfect world we won't have any of that. (Sam)

> Moreover, 12 of the 21 students showcased an individual awareness of social justice dynamics of larger communities and systems. Ernest spoke about a need to have meaningful connections by "understanding the community you work with" so that he is able to "understand what's right and wrong…when something weird is going on, you just want to be able to help in any way possible." Julian and Penny expressed both awareness and a discontent with a lack of social justice in a practical form:

> . . .it's not just the families acting as one it's the kids that can't get food to eat and they come to school on an empty stomach and they can't learn properly. Makes me think that something is wrong with our system if we can't take care of our starving kids. (Julian)

. . .[youth] aren't given a fair opportunity education-wise . . .the students lack of resources as far as material things, resources for the school, people that really care and are looking to make the difference . . . That's an injustice for the students. 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 it's not expected for [teachers and staff] to deal with that . . .teachers are ill-equipped and it's an injustice to the students. (Penny)

Sam agreed with the need for increased equity across sectors of society in speaking of his own experiences:

I've been fortunate with my chances and opportunities so I feel it's important to expose other people to those. Not everybody has the chance to really learn or experience everything that's out there. Whatever experiences we can give back to the community I think is important.

More specifically related to the first research question aimed at examining if involvement in the service learning course impacted the participants' ability to recognize social inequities, 17 students labeled the service learning course as having a direct stimulus for an initial or increased awareness and of social justice:

(City Sport) opened my eyes to a lot of different things. I knew I was lucky growing up but I guess I didn't realize it until [now]. . .it's important that you see this as a bigger world, as a society in development . . .my awareness is much greater through [City Sport] and the . . .course, which allowed me to realize what really is going on. (Anthony)

I think [City Sport] gave me more of an understanding of why some things are the way that they are. It's not necessarily that person's [individual] fault, but it's a much larger issue . . .every person's experiences and every person's struggles are different. You can't generalize people. (Sam)

The [sport-based service learning] class widened my eyes to the social injustices in the world…there's lot of things you don't see every day . . .you may never really have to think about it. (Liz)

Laura summarizes the impact of the course:

People who are provided with resources, including myself, and a lot of other people that took the class, we . . . never thought for a second [we] wouldn't go to college. It was instilled . . . but . . .that wasn't something intrinsic to me because I'm smart . . . it was because of the people around me and the way that people spoke and the resources that were provided to me . . . I think there's a lot of people that don't even . . . understand there are other ways of living . . . I didn't even realize that until I saw a different way [in the sport-based service learning course].

Perceived Behavioral Control

Nineteen students provided feedback on how they can have an impact on existing social conditions (Torres-Harding, et al., 2012). First, Felix shared not only an

awareness of social injustice, but also a feeling of a need to act: "Complaining is not enough. You have to make a stand and take action." Sam shared a feeling of control related to battling against social injustice as, "tough to overcome, but if you even change one or two people's views on something like that . . .you just helped out." Likewise, other students were able to expand upon this sentiment of having personal control, often with specific examples of taking action, while also showcasing a direct connection to their involvement in the service learning course:

> For me it's really about giving back and developing relationships . . .so important for young kids these days. All they need just one person to look up to, so if I can be that role model, I would hope to make a huge impact on their life and hopefully influence them to make positive decisions in their life… (Georgia)

> That's one of the biggest things in our work [with City Sport] is to go beyond what you can see and from there you provide resources that people might not be able to get. Whether its food, physical activity, a book, or just promote something that is available around town. (Lisa)

> In taking the [sport-based service learning] class, you really received a lot of information about poverty…poverty in the community, not just how people in the community are impoverished and are challenged, but how people in the community have potential . . . I've been able to help young students work towards their potential. Give them the tools that they need in order to succeed. (Penny)

In addition, this particular service learning course and [City Sport] established the role of sport on relationship building. Sam, Julian, and Georgia discussed their feelings of having the potential to have an impact as a role model, with sport as an initial connecting bond with young people, and the influence that the service learning course had on their evolving sense of empowerment (perceived behavioral control):

> . . .There's this one kid always at [the school and neighborhood partner]…I would often talk to him. He's a pretty good basketball player . . .people would say he was struggling in school . . .I would always try to influence him to stay on top of things. Like to play football at [the university like I do] to let him know without academics this would be impossible for me. (Sam)

> I just see [City Sport] as enrichment for kids so that they can see that they could become like us, that they can become collegiate athletes too . . .it has made me really proud to be part of an organization [City Sport] . . .but it also made me aware that, you know, that I could help. (Julian)

> When I got involved in [City Sport] I was able to see that the impact of sports, the impact of education, nutrition, and life skills . . .all involved to make a huge impact on a young person's life…and to be a positive role model, to have all of those aspects myself . . .it really opened my eyes to see what else was out there in the sports industry. (Georgia)

An interesting set of themes developed from the data as nine students from similar environmental circumstances [as Hartland] spoke of an additional sense of empowerment when connecting with youth:

. . .growing up in that environment and seeing both sides from also being educated [at the university level] is that I can relate to these kids from where they come from but I can also break it down to them and talk to them in their own language. (Dario)

I can show kids they can be like me and they can come from nothing and get an education and become a professional athlete and do whatever they want… I can help kids understand that the "sky is the limit" . . .they can accomplish whatever they want. (Julian)

Students from similar environmental experiences as the Hartland community also spoke to their interactions with university peers within the service learning course as both a personal awakening and an opportunity to serve as a peer leader in the building of awareness related to social justice attitudes and actions:

. . .this is how I grew up . . .working with [City Sport], I realized that not everyone knows, not everyone is aware . . .you can live around the corner or in the next town over, and not know what's happening in different communities . . .working with [university] volunteers and taking the service learning classes, it really opened my eyes to the ignorance of the people in this world and how I could have a role [amongst university peers]. (Penny)

[City Sport] was my community . . .I also came from really good [private] schools . . .I really felt like I could understand at least a little bit both sides of that situation . . .I think that allowed me to be patient with folks who weren't from that community . . .when people are coming into your community and a trying to make an impact but don't have an understanding of why things work the way things work . . . I think that was why [mix of home and private school experiences] that was successful for me being a part of that learning process [for university student peers]. (Anna)

Subjective Norms

Fourteen students commented on the level of support, or lack thereof, they experienced related to their grappling with social justice orientation. Rather than support for social justice ideals or actions, many students faced negative pushback from family, friends, and external peer groups. However, the same participants noted when negative feedback was received, they responded with a sense of pride and commitment to social justice attitudes and actions:

. . .when friends and family speak poorly about welfare or the person that they see on the side of the street . . .[City Sport] has impacted my train of thought in what I want to express to my friends and family on those topics. (Aliayah)

When I would first go into Hartland, my father would always tell me to 'be careful, be careful' . . .now, I am becoming almost the black sheep of the family, because I talk about it, pushing them on their limits, and calling them out when they say inappropriate things. I really don't think my family or I expected that when I first went to college. (Lisa)

Twelve of the fourteen spoke to the level of support within the service learning class as having an impact on their awareness, intentions, and actions related to social justice. Felix referred to the "university's brand" as a "benefit…using the power of sport for community work", while Anthony spoke of structure helping to "tie bonds between a lot of different people because of the nature of the work". Similarly, Laura and Carly spoke about the importance of meaningful relationship building as having a profound impact on the evolution of their perceptions related to social justice:

> . . .I feel like now I can put a face or a name or a story [after working consistently with youth], instead of just thinking broadly about the way people are raised or the way people live. (Laura)

> It's a lot easier to not care about improving education in [Hartland], you just know that children in general aren't doing well in school, but if you know specifically a child and you know them well, and you know that they aren't getting the education that they deserve, then that's a little harder to let go. (Carly)

Students also acknowledged the course created opportunities to engage with peers, and this engagement had a positive influence on their increased understanding of self, others, and society as related to social justice:

> (City Sport) teaches you . . .to put your life in perspective and realize how fortunate you really are. It's a different type of course, it's very practical, you're not always in the classroom, you're doing service hours . . .you spend a lot of time in the van rides…which gave us time to reflect . . .The time before and after [in the vans] was very good when you got 3, 4, or 5 different perspectives from peers to talk about [experiences]. (Anthony)

> . . .having the opportunity to discuss issues with fellow [university] students of mine whose experiences might have been similar or completely different than I think was a really important. (Anna)

> . . .a lot of people are nervous, uncomfortable, and want to sweep [social injustice] under the rug. And that's frustrating, because these are serious issues that affect a lot of people deeply. . .Everyone is at their own level of cultural awareness, and mine is different because of [City Sport] and because of the service learning course. (Lisa)

Furthermore, participants spoke to a continuation of social networks formed during the service learning course and how those connections have impacted their current involvement in social justice related activities:

> . . .a friend of mine is mixing training to be become an elite athlete with being an elite student . . .he's doing it in one of the most, you would say the toughest neighborhoods in Hartland because that's where he comes from. But he's well respected so he's the proper person to do it . . .and I want to support that. (Dario)

One of my friends at [my current profession], she's starting up a young women's

sport and empowerment group kind of thing and she's looking at Hartland as a demographic . . .I am going to help her out a little bit with that. (Laura)

I have a very close friend who wants to start a non-profit/community center of some sort and she will directly say that it's because of [City Sport] that she chose to do what she's now doing with her husband. She's looking at a bunch of friends who had similar experiences with [City Sport] and she wants me to be on her board of directors. (Aliayah)

I wouldn't say I am an activist like that [with social justice], but if I have the opportunity to participate in things like [youth outreach] through my team, I will. There is a thin line as an athlete, there is a thin line in terms of how you expose yourself to the public in terms of how it could be seen and stuff like that…(Julian)

Directly connected to their experiences and/or social networks formed during their involvement in the service learning course, it was clear that many students felt a sense of both pride and empowerment in their involvement in social justice related activities. It is also important to note that Julian, as a professional athlete, spoke to the personal struggles related to whether he should freely speak up about social injustices and how taking actions might have a negative impact within the subjective norms of the public arena.

Behavioral Intentions

Finally, nineteen students discussed a wide range of intentions to become more involved in social justice related actions. Five of the students expressed a desire to become more involved with volunteering but encountered professional conflicts. Examples include Daniel who was "having to work so many hours, but I do want to get involved" and Ernest who was "wanting to get back into volunteering once I get settled down a little bit more with my new job".

Nine of the nineteen spoke to the service learning course as not only having a direct impact on intentions, but also on behaviors specifically related to career choices (specific demographics, fields of education and policy-making):

[City Sport] has totally increased my level of involvement. And kind of directed the way I'd liked to be involved . . .with children, especially in underserved areas. (Liz)

I think with [City Sport] . . .being in the school physically and seeing the difference between resources and just the need for good teachers to be there . . .it just reinforced the fact that I wanted to work in an urban school district. (Molly)

. . .through [City Sport] you actually see how service learning programs can go in and make differences and then how you can be a part of that…I want to do something along the lines of reviewing the [educational] policies or the bills that are going to be passed and making sure they are something that doesn't hurt, more than benefit, children and schools in the United States. (Carly)

Eight students spoke to the role of sport in their current behavioral intentions and actions, and in doing so showcased awareness for the power of sport in building relationships and impacting youth and communities:

> … I try to be involved with [kids and coaching] as much as possible so that they're getting proper nutrition, so they're getting that after-school work that they really need. Because let's face it in a lot of low-income areas, you know the parenting isn't all there for supervision. The kids need an extra push from an outside source to try to get them in a right direction, like in a socioeconomic area (like Hartland). (Sam)

> . . .the [service learning course] opened the door for me to do more community outreach through sport . . .so this was what I wanted to do once I graduated. (Felix)

> . . .working with [City Sport] has impacted [me] because it's a way to stay with what I like in sports but also do something rewarding. (Ernest)

> I'm involved in [two organizations as part of my pro team]… that are like [City Sport], but I would like to be more involved with anything just through playing and stuff like that. (Julian)

In the interviews, students almost exclusively (21 of 22 participants) gravitated toward a collective set of attitudes, intentions, and behaviors in advocacy of social justice. Feedback shared indicated that students' involvement in the service learning course resulted in an increased awareness of social justice needs within Hartland specifically and larger society as a whole. Students showcased personal convictions to engage in prosocial justice behaviors, as well as an increased level of empowerment to discuss social issues with peers and family members as a result of involvement in the service learning course. Finally, well after the conclusion of the students' experiences in the service learning course, a continued sense of social justice attitudes, intentions, and behaviors was evident.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine a sport-based service learning course, to ascertain how and to what extent it produced positive outcomes related to the ability to recognize social inequities for its college student participants. Next, we sought to investigate how this program influenced participants to become advocates for social change. Finally, if applicable, we questioned why involvement in the service learning course influenced participants toward social change. Using a social justice framework (Torres-Harding et al., 2012), we discovered that college students taking part in the service learning course experienced increased cultural competency (e.g., ability to recognize social inequities) and that this increase resulted in both intentions and actions toward social change within and outside of sport. Specifically, participants reported both future intentions and present involvement. Furthermore, we found that once removed from the structure of the service learning course, students continued involvement as advocates for change as they sought out social justice-related opportunities within their spheres of influence. This is one

of the important contributions of the current work. The distinction made between intentions and involvement (i.e., action/behavior) is critical as research suggests that student-athletes have similar *intentions* as their nonathlete counterparts to be socially active citizens. Yet, they engage in fewer socially active *actions/behaviors* than their nonathlete counterparts (Gayles, et al., 2012). As intercollegiate athletic departments make student-athlete development their mission, our findings reveal that partnerships with service learning courses can move the student beyond intentions to actual action, not just in college but for life. Moreover, we also contribute to the literature as very few studies on service learning courses (e.g., Bennett et al., 2003; Bruening et al., 2010, 2014, in press) have examined the impact of such programs on future intentions and behaviors of their participants.

With regards to the first research question, the results demonstrated that college students taking part in service learning increased their cultural competency (e.g., ability to recognize social inequities) within and outside of sport as a result of the experience. Our findings revealed that the college students who took the course displayed an array of perspectives related to awareness and/or acceptance of the importance of social justice in relation to societal inequities such as poverty. Likewise, a number of students possessed an awareness of the interconnected dynamics of societal sectors (e.g., education, corporate, etc.), communities and neighborhoods, and opportunities/resources for achievement and quality of life. These results support findings of previous research, which has demonstrated that through sport initiatives, participants can develop a social consciousness by engaging in critical reflection about structural realities that affect their own lives and the lives of others (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010). With its focus on sport, students and student-athletes often enrolled in the course due to their past or current involvement in sports. And with content that was sport driven, students' worldviews expanded to understand sport, in part, as a microcosm of society.

Collectively, our findings demonstrate that the service learning course was effective in providing student participants with the tools and resources necessary to develop as socially aware citizens. More importantly, students explicitly stated that the service learning class was the primary impetus for their increased interest in learning about social change. Our findings are similar to previous research which has determined that cultural competency (e.g., the ability to recognize social inequities) can be increased through participation in service learning programs (e.g., Bennett et al., 2003; Bruening et al., 2010, 2014) and that tangible learning experiences, when coupled with discussion and reflection, can develop interest in social justice efforts (O'Brien et al., 2006). However, few studies have looked at the experiences of college students once they graduate college. Given the context for which sport served as a common denominator for a structured opportunity for civic engagement and learning, the implications of these findings for both intercollegiate athletics and academic departments cannot be understated given former NCAA president Myles Brand's conviction that sport can be and should be a catalyst for social change (Brand, 2005).

In response to research question two, our findings revealed the service learning course was influential in developing its participants into advocates for social change in social justice-related activities, similar to those of social entrepreneurs (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2014). Social entrepreneurs are individuals who use innovative solutions to address major social issues for the purposes of social change (Ashoka

Foundation, n.d.). In a recent study on social entrepreneurship in sport, Cohen and Welty Peachey (2014) found that specific influences, namely sport, perspective-altering experiences, social networks, and opportunities guided individuals to work toward social change. In the case of our participants, sport and perspective-altering experiences occurred simultaneously as they participated in the service learning course. With respect to the influence of people (e.g., social networks), our participants received both encouragement and discouragement from friends and family members as they pursued social-justice related activities. Likewise, available opportunities impacted participants' involvement in social change. Whereas some alumni were readily able to identify opportunities in their current location where they could be involved as advocates for social justice, others expressed that time commitment (e.g., work) were preventing their involvement (though they did intend to seek out opportunities in the near future). Taken together, the combined influence of perspective-altering experiences, social networks, and opportunities guided individuals to work toward social change resulted in our participants exhibiting characteristics of social entrepreneurship (e.g., desire to contribute to society in a meaningful fashion) (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2014) by forming social justice related objectives that included education, law enforcement, physical activity, and health-related initiatives. Thus, when combined with the power of sport, social entrepreneurship has the ability to bring about social change for those in need of assistance (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2014; Hums, 2010).

Yet, one question still stands: why did the service learning course influence participants' intentions and behaviors toward social change? In attempting to answer this question we provide an explanation within the context of theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Theory of Planned Behavior

One answer as to why students remained advocates for social change can be found in Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior. According to this theory, behavior/action is predicated on intentions and intentions are predicated on attitudes toward the respective behavior/action, the ability to perform the behavior/action (e.g., self-efficacy), and the social context/support under which the behavior/action will occur (Ajzen, 1991). When applied to the findings of this study, one begins to see why our participants continued their pursuit of social change well after their involvement in service learning subsided.

First, as previously established, the service learning course was influential toward participants' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions related to social inequities and social change. With respect to the ability to perform the behavior/action, the service learning course provided students with the opportunity to be direct advocates for social change as they volunteered in the Hartland community. This direct involvement helped students "discover something (they) didn't know about (themselves)…(they) really could make things better…make things more equal" (Liz). As a result, efficacy was developed in students such that they believed they could make a real and lasting impact (Moeschberger et al., 2006; Torres-Harding, et al., 2012). The third factor that predicts intentions in Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior is the social context. Although some participants reported receiving the opposite, family, friends, neighbors and significant others were often supportive of

our participants' involvement in social justice-related activities. The examples of positive support from personal networks, in conjunction with the support provided by instructors and student-peers, helped to create a social context that encouraged participants toward increased attitudes and intentions related to social justice.

With the necessary conditions (i.e., attitudes, ability to perform, and social support) successfully met, the theory of planned behavior would predict that our students would possess intentions and then take action toward social change (Ajzen, 1991). Indeed, this was the case as numerous students cited examples of how they were advocates for social change in their local communities, with some even using the power of sport to further engage in social justice activities. Clearly then, there is theoretical support as to why students who participated in service learning continued their pursuit of social justice well after ending their involvement. Likewise, empirical support exists as Bennett et al. (2003) and Andrassy and colleagues (in press) found that participation in a service learning course increased future intentions toward volunteerism for non-student-athletes and student-athletes, respectively.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, our findings support theory on human behavior as it is relates to social justice activity, namely that action is a function of intentions and intentions are functions of attitude, self-efficacy, and the context (Ajzen, 1991; Moeschberger et al., 2006; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). With respect to self-efficacy, one participant (Julian) struggled on whether to act against social inequities given his status as a professional athlete, even though had done so while participating in service learning. Thus, his struggle was not whether he *could* act, but instead whether he *should* act. This finding contributes to the literature by extending the concept of self-efficacy, or perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991; Torres-Harding et al., 2012), to include an ethical dimension (i.e., "oughtness"). Although sport and social action are not mutually exclusive (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010), research has shown that being a "jock for justice" is not without consequences as athletes who use their status (i.e., capital) to promote social causes are often criticized (Candaele & Dreier, 2004; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010). Future research should continue to examine the influence of social status (e.g., university and/or professional athlete) on social-justice related intentions and behaviors.

The study also has key implications for intercollegiate athletics. Gayles et al. (2012) reported that though student-athletes have intentions to engage in social change activities, their level of involvement is significantly less than their nonathlete peers. Likewise, Andrassy and colleagues (2011, in press), identified that though college athletic departments have mission statements communicating the importance of service they did not always follow through due, in part, to limited resources. Our findings indicate that participation in a service learning course holds great utility for both student-athletes and athletic departments due to the nature of the course (e.g., autonomous, structured, funded outside of athletic departments, and credit bearing for students). Furthermore, interaction with peers other than teammates (as experienced by the student-athletes in this study) is beneficial to student-athlete development (Gayles et al., 2012). As the current trajectory of higher education moves toward the holistic engagement of students (i.e., mind, body, soul/spirit), athletic departments that are able to develop their student-athletes through civic

engagement will have a competitive advantage over their counterparts who only commit to development in word only (Andrassy et al., in press). Cross-campus partnership with service learning programs is one specific avenue to assist in the enhancement of capacity (e.g.,., funding, leadership, staffing) that will allow for increased participation in civic engagement and academic learning for student-athletes, while also helping to create opportunities for further integration into the general student body experience.

Limitations

As with all studies, there were several limitations that could have impacted our findings. First, we recognize that all interviewees spoke to their involvement with City Sport in positive terms, particularly with respect to the influence on City Sport on their attitudes, intentions, and behavior. While this is a commendable outcome, we do not know about the experiences of those college students who did not acquiesce to our interview requests. It may very well be that these individuals (i.e., nonrespondents) are not current advocates for social change or have no intentions to be. Likewise, with a topic such as social justice, social desirability and response bias is a potential issue (Creswell, 2012). Our participants could have provided answers they believed we wanted to hear. Furthermore, in most cases, the interviewee had a prior relationship with the interviewer due to their mutual connections with the service leaning program, thus leading to favorable responses. We attempted to address this limitation by pairing interviewees with researchers whom they were most likely to be frank with, owing to previously established rapport (Bruening et al., 2014). In addition, having only one type of data (i.e., postcourse interviews) is a limitation as we were not able to collect precourse data or conduct observations to compare with our interview findings.

Future Research

Several clear directions for future research emerged through this study. First, a worthwhile avenue of research would be the examination of the impact of a service learning course on future career aspirations (Bruening et al., 2014). Our participants revealed that the service learning course significantly impacted their career decisions, with many deciding to pursue service-oriented occupations. Another recommendation for future research includes comparing the long-term intentions and actions of students who take a course with social justice-oriented content but no service component with those who take a service learning course. At this point, we do not have data from other courses with similar content that do not include a civic engagement component. Additional examination of the participant identities within the service learning course, through critical social lenses associated with any age, race, SES, gender, or even just comparing and contrasting the experiences of student athletes with nonathletes, could lead to a range of worthwhile insight. Likewise, we did not differentiate the experience of students who completed earlier iterations of the courses (e.g., 2006 and 2007) against those who recently completed the courses (e.g., 2012 and 2013) as it was not the focus of this research. However, future studies should consider examining how duration away from the class affects sustained impacts and outcomes. Finally, in-depth case studies of athletic departments that

are in fact highly engaged in community service and their subsequent impact on student-athlete development is deserving of future inquiry.

Conclusion

The current study expands the literature on the role of sport, service learning and programs in developing social change. Hums (2010) cautions against dismissing social change efforts as "something someone does somewhere else" (p. 5). Instead, athletics must take the opportunity to implement social change initiatives through cross campus partnerships and in its own local communities and by doing so make a world of difference (Hums, 2010) or as Anthony stated: "although the one person can't change the world necessarily…it's still important for me to go to the Greater [City] Food Bank to make sure as many people are taken care of as possible." Maguire (2009) notes that not only are athletes champions of their sport, they also have the ability to be cause champions (one who fights on the behalf of others), for their local community and nation, and ultimately humanity. Intercollegiate athletics has a role to play in acting as catalyst for social change by cultivating characteristics and traits of cause champions and social entrepreneurs in its student-athletes (Brand, 2005). Partnerships with academic programs such as service learning courses appears to be an excellent vehicle by which athletic departments can uphold their respective missions in developing student-athletes into engaged citizens committed to service and social change (Andrassy & Bruening, 2011).

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