

RUNNING HEAD: Development through Sport

Development through Sport: Building Social Capital in Disadvantaged Communities

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Abstract

Traditional delivery of sport development programs, especially at the community level, face particular challenges under neoliberal ideology. While several issues are evident, this paper addresses the issue of development through sport for disadvantaged communities. It reviews models where sport was employed to develop better community and citizen life outcomes and to deal with social issues previously dealt with through “welfare state” processes. These new models flow out of neo-liberalist state agendas to assist in fostering social inclusion and to building positive social capital in disadvantaged communities. Examples from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Canada are analysed and the implications for the Australian context are discussed. The discussion focuses on best practice success factors such as policy and strategy, partnerships, places and spaces, community/social development, evaluation and monitoring and sustainability. The role of traditional sports clubs and local government in delivering social inclusion programs and the emerging provision of community based sport activities by community/social development organisations is detailed. The implications for sport management, in terms of community development, community sport development, and sport policy, are also discussed.

Introduction

Australians have long held onto notions of egalitarianism and the “fair go”, and yet Australian society is becoming increasingly divisive. In Australia, as with many other western countries, the gap between rich and poor is widening and the divide between those with and without access to sport and recreation opportunities and facilities is increasing (Collins & Kay, 2003). Some argue that the new global policy orthodoxy on economic reforms, such as those inherent and hegemonic in neo-liberalism, has increased poverty, social polarization, and social diversity (Harvey, 2005). The ramification on governments, social programs, and state policy of this ideology demands a new understanding of how social programs are structured and operated, as well as possible implications for sport management.

Although Australia ranked among the top ten nations of the world in terms of economic growth in the 1990s, inequality as evidenced by sustained unemployment, an increasingly casualised workforce, and a return to the working poor was amongst the highest in the industrialised world. Indeed, the richest 20 percent of the population in Australia earned roughly ten times that earned by its poorest sector. This has produced a polarization in Australian society with both the top and bottom of the scale of income or wealth distribution growing faster than the middle, thus shrinking the middle, and sharpening social differences between two extreme segments of the population (Singh, 2006). These outcomes have implications for the delivery of sport, building of sound communities, and for increases in concomitant social ills.

Over the last decade sport and recreation policy-makers have had to adjust to neoliberal and globalisation processes as they impact on social, economic, and state activities, including those of social inclusion and community development. How governments move from financial and policy provision for sport and other “embedded liberalism” (the former “welfare state”) provisions to current neoliberal state ones resulted in major changes (Harvey, 2005). In the “neoliberal state” private-public partnerships, tax advantages (and expectations) for corporate social responsibility (CSR), and the reduction of social solidarity become key aspects of the new institutional framework (Harvey, 2005; Mellor, 2008).

This implies that development or community level sport should operate under market conditions and institutional frameworks inherent in neoliberalism and globalism. This demands that sport fulfil two roles. The first role is in the traditional sport development system for community and elite sport programs, as a function of government legislation, policies, programs, funding, and sport management. A second role, has evolved where sport is

employed as a platform to deal with societal issues and provide opportunities for disadvantaged members of society.

There is a paucity of research on the ways in which non-profit and volunteer organisations partner to provide sporting and recreation services to disadvantaged groups (Cassidy & Gow, 2005; Miller, Mitchell, & Brown 2005) and how sport management professionals and academics can study the broader social implications that engagement with sport offers (Chalip, 2006). While government departments across Australia recognise the role sport can play in facilitating social inclusion (Nicholson & Hoyer, 2007), no Australian research studies to date have yet examined the role of sport in community development *and* in enhancing social inclusion. Yet research suggests that one of the biggest challenges for disadvantaged people is to find a community with which to identify and belong under declining social program provision and the active break down of social solidarity (Cassidy & Gow, 2005).

The Nature of Community

Communities are marked by deep, familiar and co-operative ties between people that often involve a high degree of personal intimacy, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time. Communities are also committed to some clearly defined set of values that guide their behaviour through allied social norms (Field, 2003). That is, they are more than objectively structured geo-spatial configurations with certain demographic components.

A sense of community arises out of the fundamental human need to create and maintain social bonds, to develop a sense of belonging, and to further develop a self-identity. In other words, a social, affective (emotional), and/or a psychological need is met. Key to understanding community is the concept of identity (Zakus, 1999). In social and psychological theory identity refers to the development of a sense of self. This sense of self develops as a result of social interaction. Identity is also formed in a variety of social forums so that individuals learn and take on particular patterns of normative behaviour and senses of identity from those experiences. This need to belong to, and identify with, some broader collective association seems to get stronger in a world where everything else is changing and shifting (Zakus, 1999). This identity formation process is also a fundamental element of sport as well as of communities (Skinner, Zakus and Edwards, 2008).

Membership of a community is a sense that an individual has invested a piece of oneself (central contributor to an individual's feeling of group membership and to his or her sense of community) to become a member and consequently has an entitlement to belong (Skinner, Zakus, & Edwards, 2005). It is a sense of belonging, of being a part of something.

With membership comes boundaries; this signifies that there are individuals who belong and individuals who do not. These boundaries grant the members the emotional safety essential for needs and feelings to be bared for closeness to arise (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Community identity and community belonging is a non-tangible benefit of participation in sport (Collins & Kay, 2003). Sport supplies benefits such as improved self-esteem, community identity and unity, and can facilitate community development and social inclusion (Vail, 2007). Thomas (1995) provides a useful definition of community development for the context of this paper:

Community development is the strengthening of the social resources and processes in a community by developing those contacts, relationships, networks, agreements and activities outside the household that residents themselves identify will make their locality and better place in which to live and work. (p. 2)

Social inclusion requires the accomplishment of social participation and social integration in communities whereby participants might achieve power over their present and the future (Room, 1995, cited in Coalter, Allison, & Taylor, 2000). The definitions of both community development and social inclusion place emphasis on people, social processes, and ways to enhance the capacities of communities which in turn can lead to the development of social capital (Field, 2003; Productivity Commission, 2003).

In exploring how sport can provide a vehicle for contributing to social capital in disadvantaged communities this paper investigates how various organisations have engaged with disadvantaged communities through sport to facilitate community development and enhance social inclusion. This community/social development approach is based on using the activity of sport as a gateway to ongoing personal development where the quality of the engagement is the indicator of success. It is hoped that this investigation will be useful in informing policy and program work at a local level in disadvantaged Australian communities.

Social Capital in Current Thought

Over the last ten years, the concept of social capital gained salience as a means of understanding how communities might operate to become safer and more productive, and places where positive identities and lifestyles might be forged. While the concept of social capital has a long history (Jacobs, 1961, Field, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Spies-Butcher, 2006), in

the last two decades it has gained greater cache with social researchers, government agencies and policy-makers, think-tanks, and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

As Coalter (2007) points out “the diffuse and contested nature of social capital is central to the social regeneration/social inclusion agenda” (p. 159). This diffuse and contested nature that is social capital can be better understood through an analysis of the concept, which has its historical roots embedded in sociology and political science with the notion of social inclusion weaved within the discourse (Coalter, 2007). In more modern times however, we find the debate about what constitutes the discourse of social capital attributed to three main theorists – namely Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam.

The concept of capital was central to Bourdieu's (1991) formulation of social space where: "the kinds of capital, like trumps in a game of cards, are powers which define the chances of profit in a given field" (p. 230). Social positioning is distributed according to "the overall volume of the capital . . . and the composition of that capital" (p. 231).

Bourdieu (1986) identified three main forms of capital. First, economic capital that is intimately linked with and convertible to money and institutionalised into forms of property rights. Second, he theorised cultural capital as a form of capital that if often, under certain conditions, convertible into economic capital and is often institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications and school-ties. Third, and most importantly in the context of this paper is social capital. Bourdieu provides a succinct but encompassing definition of this form of capital by stating: “social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resource which is linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (p. 249).

This form of capital is based on the social connections that people have, have developed, or maintain (a type of circulating elites [e.g., see Clement, 1975; Mills, 1956]), or they exist in institutionalised forms of nobility or other titled positions. For example, an artisan who has no money can be seen to have a high degree of cultural capital but little economic capital. Cultural capital can be observed in the more manifest forms of style, language, taste, disposition, and social grace (Harker, 1984). On the other hand, people with economic capital may well not display appropriate cultural capital, thereby interfering with their ability to employ social capital. Even so, Bourdieu argues that privileged groups in society have the potential to maintain their privileges through the intergenerational transfer of social and cultural capital, as well as economic capital.

It is generally agreed by most commentators that the treatment of social capital by Bourdieu is instrumental (Coalter, 2007). People access other forms of capital through social

capital allowing them to move up the social ladder. In the context of sport, Bourdieu points towards golf clubs as an example of how individuals network to facilitate business, a social practice that is not available to all members of a community given the exclusive nature of many golf clubs (Field, 2003; Wynne, 1999).

Coleman works within underlying theoretical constructs similar to Bourdieu's, but takes a different slant in his definition of social capital. He approaches social capital by two strands of social action. The first strand, from an economic or rational action standpoint, is where the motivating factor for the individual is the maximisation of benefits. Second, he suggests that any individual is governed by sets of social norms, rules, and obligations (Meikle-Yaw, 2006). These contrasting strands are evident in Coleman's definition of social capital. For Coleman, social capital is not a single entity, rather "it consists of some aspects of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure that produces outcomes that would not be otherwise be possible" (Coleman, 1988, cited in Meikle-Yaw, 2006, p. 50). In short, it is what social capital does rather than what it is that is of interest to Coleman.

The distinction between Bourdieu and Coleman becomes clearer when we compare what each theorist considers to be the underlying purpose of social capital. For Bourdieu it is to secure economic capital, but for Coleman it is to secure human capital (education, employment skills, and expertise). Just as Bourdieu used individuals or small groups as his tool of analysis so did Coleman, highlighting benefits that individuals of families gather through their associations with others (Portes, 2000). Coleman (1988) found that high levels of parental investment, family social capital, and community networks reduced the level of school drop-out rates. Coleman suggested that in the context of the development of a child's intellect human capital is essential and is most valuable when there is access to social capital. In this context social capital is:

The set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organisation and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person. These resources differ for different persons and constitute an important advantage for children and adolescents in the development of their human capital. (Coleman, 1994, cited in Coalter, 2007, p. 541)

This emphasis on human capital is something that is strongly stressed in policy statements, which highlight the potential importance the role sport can play in social inclusion strategies (Coalter, 2007).

Finally, the work of Putnam has help shape contemporary definitions and applications of the value of social capital. For Putnam, unlike Bourdieu and Coleman, the primary purpose of social capital is to secure effective levels of democracy and operations of the economy. His theory of social capital is based on “levels of social and political trust and on membership in social networks and community organisations” (Meikle-Yaw, 2006, p. 54). Putnam (1993) highlights participation in communities as a core element of social capital. He underscores social capital as “norms of reciprocity and networks of civil engagement” (p. 167) which are created by participation in civic organisations. According to Rosenfield, Messner, and Baumer (2001), this approach to social capital directs attention to two distinct features of collectiveness; the degree of interpersonal trust and level of civic engagement.

Coalter (2007) points out that for governments the policy attraction of Putnam’s definition of social capital is that he is more interested in the role of voluntary organisations. Moreover, Coalter suggests that:

Putnam views engagement, associational life and volunteering associated with social capital as important because they improve the efficiency of communities and societies by facilitating coordinated actions, reducing transaction costs (for example, high levels of trust means less dependency on formal contractual agreements) and enabling communities to be more effective in pursuit of their collective interests. In other words, social capital is not just a public good, but is for the public good. (p. 542)

Putnam (2000) talks of declining levels of social capital and uses a number of sport related examples to highlight this. In particular, he discusses the decline in participation in team sport and the rise of individual participation as demonstrated by the quest for fitness through individualised activities such as jogging. Similarly, he points to declining levels of youth participation in organised sport leagues; this is clearly identified in his seminal work titled “Bowling Alone”. For Putnam, organised league bowling requires participation with a diverse set of acquaintances and represents a sustained form of social capital that is not represented in commodified recreational bowling that allows the individual to play the occasional game (Coalter, 2007).

A clear distinction that Putnam (2000) does make is between two forms of social capital: bonding and bridging. Putnam suggests that bonding social capital occurs when people with similar backgrounds, values, and interests enter into relationships and collaborate to achieve shared goals. These associations, according to Putnam, are inward looking, close knit and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups. Such associations according to Putnam can have a “dark side” as it can form the basis of collective actions based on attitudes and beliefs that society itself sees as reprehensible (for example, the attitudes and beliefs that bind the Klu Klux Klan) and therefore tends to exclude outsiders. Exclusion of outsiders in the context of sport can perhaps be equated with traditional rugby clubs that tend to include players and supporters from the same social background (schools, socio-economic demographics, etc.) and exclude those who do not have these backgrounds or make it more difficult for them to belong.

Bridging social capital however, has the potential to forge connections. Although social capital is relational, its influence on communities is most profound when relationships are among heterogeneous groups. Heterogeneity of social connections promotes linkages with diverse groups and across a broad range of resources or opportunities (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001). Through it people from different backgrounds (e.g., different educational and ethnic backgrounds) can connect, both within the community or outside of the community to work together for the benefit of their community. These networks and ties are outward looking and comprise people of different social identities. Based on this view, it can be argued that individuals who are connected through bridging capital have a greater range of associates and greater opportunities for broader community engagement (Frank & Yasumoto, 1998; Paxton, 1999). Bridging social capital is therefore not only essential for enhancing social inclusion but also for improving a community’s ability to develop.

Extending the work of Putnam, Woolcock (2001) identified the concept of linking social capital. This plays an important but different role to bonding and bridging capital as these are concerned with horizontal social relationships as opposed to linking capital that is concerned with vertical connections between the different levels of social strata. These vertical connections can include individuals entirely outside the community and provides “further opportunities for access to a wider networks and the potential to leverage a broader range of resources” (Coalter, 2007, p. 547). Linking capital is therefore important because it can play a role in the exchange of power, wealth and status among social groups (Portes & Landolt, 2000; Putnam, 2000) from different hierarchical locations in society. Under neoliberalism, linking social capital has specific policy implications for the social inclusion agenda, although

it is Putnam's (2000) notions of bonding and bridging capital that are discussed most often in policy applications to sport (Field, 2003).

In drawing together the various definitions and encapsulating the contested terrain that surrounds defining social capital, Meikle-Yaw (2006) suggested that:

social capital is broadly conceptualised as a quantity and/or quality of resource that an actor (individual or group or community) can access; or a resource that is located in social networks. The former emphasises the utility of social resources and the latter emphasises the utility of network characteristics. Implicit in definitions of social capital is its ability to generate positive outcomes through shared trust, norms and values; benefits secured by membership in social networks; and the desirability of collective understanding and action. (p. 55)

As a concept, social capital is central to a social inclusion agenda as social capital is seen as a way of expanding empowerment, well-being, and community development toward an improved civil society. Moreover, as Spies-Butcher (2006) writes, following Portes (1998), "social capital theory is little more than the long standing acknowledgement that civic involvement and social networks can have positive implications for individuals and society as a whole" (p. 6).

Sport and Social Capital

Of the various social elements within a community, sport is widely recognised as a way to build positive social capital (Lawson, 2005; Skinner, Zakus, & Edwards, 2005; Zakus, Skinner, & Edwards, 2008). The work of Crabbe and Brown (2004), Collins and Kay (2003), Coalter and Allison (1996), and Coalter (2007) in the United Kingdom (UK), Gruneau and Whitson (1993) and Zakus (1999) in Canada, and Putnam (2000) in the United States of America (US) support this argument. Moreover, some studies found that sporting activities at the grassroots level have the potential to motivate, inspire, and forge a community spirit in face of social ills (Cairnduff, 2001; Zakus, 1999). A report by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC, 2004a) on the impact of sport in the community noted that:

studies have identified how social controls within the community contribute towards counterbalancing criminal activities. Social controls are found in traditional and modern social structures, and participatory activities, such as sport, give people a sense of

community identity and purpose, and help prevent them from engaging in antisocial activities. Sport may provide a means of encouraging a sense of community identity and thereby help reduce antisocial behaviour. (p. 20)

In a review of the Australian Government's involvement in sport and recreation in Australia, the Commonwealth government stated that it gets a good return on its investment in sport and recreation (Commonwealth of Australia Sport 2000 Taskforce, 1999). The review identified a number of benefits from the government's investment in sport, which include: the building of national identity and national pride, community development and integration, crime prevention, health, education, and economics benefits (ASC, 2004a, p. 17). Similarly, a major ASC report, *Pacific Sporting Needs Assessment Studies* (2004b), highlighted, at an international level, "that for every US\$1 million spent on sport and physical activity generates a saving of US\$3.2 million in national medical costs" (Third International Ministerial Conference on Physical Education and Sport, 1999).

In regional and rural areas sports' role in creating social capital is further emphasised. The federal government policy, *Strong Regions: A Stronger Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001) identifies addressing pressing social issues and community development as priority areas for rural and regional development. A vibrant non-profit sector is critical to addressing these development priorities given the emerging policy emphasis on building social capital and the adoption in Australia of a social coalition approach to many areas of community need. Of particular interest to researchers and policy makers are the perceived social benefits from engagement with the third sector, such as the building of social capital and the facilitation of community development derived from participation in sport and community sport organisations. Although social capital can be developed anywhere, its production is most commonly associated with the non-profit sector and when social capital stocks are high. It seems that communities that are more resilient and better able to respond to adversity are those with greater social capital. This may be especially critical in rural and regional communities as they face problems associated with aging populations and with declining infrastructure and services (Costello, 2003).

The work of Tonts (2005) is testament to this situation. Tonts suggests that one of the most unique characteristics of many Australian country towns and regions is the part that competitive sport plays in local, cultural, political, and economic relations. Sport helps to build community identity and a sense of community and belonging. He also claims that the associational nature of sports participation, and specifically sports clubs, is often perceived as

a medium for the generation of social capital. Harris (1998) also suggests that sport is capable of being used to cultivate new friendships and social associations, frequently across class, religious, and ethnic barriers. This includes playing and non-playing members (such as managers, coaches, board members, volunteers) and spectators which can eventually lead to growth in the norms of trust and reciprocity. In other words, sport supplies passages or connections among diverse groups and social networks.

Similarly, Atherley (2006) argues that social capital is important to rural community everyday life. She maintains that district sport clubs are a key focus of community life. Social inclusion in or social exclusion from such organisations can influence the daily life, social networks, community assimilation, and the stream of information that helps a resident create a sense of belonging. Both of these authors offer other references to support the contention that “sport clubs in particular are often regarded as a central element of rural life” (see Tonts & Atherley, 2005, pp. 126-128). Likewise, Pooley, Cohen, and Pike (2005) in their case study on life experiences in urban and rural settings identified three key themes: membership, emotional connection, and integration and fulfilment of needs. They concluded that belonging to and participating in local sport clubs can add to the social capital of communities, whether in an urban or rural context.

Coalter (2007) suggests the centrality of social capital to the social inclusion agenda is highlighted in recent United Kingdom policy developments. A range of UK government departments have produced reviews of this nature for distribution and for shaping the social inclusion policy direction. These reviews focus on how sport can have a positive impact on community connectedness and social inclusion. That is, sport can assist in building positive levels of trust and reciprocity amongst members of a community. These reviews also note how sport could contribute to members of a community developing socially through supportive relationships, education, training, and employment (paid or voluntary).

While much is made of social capital engendered through belonging to a sport club, as a participant or volunteer, this paper is more concerned with how sport can play a role in fostering social inclusion to abet community development. As Coalter (2007) suggests, “there have been two broad sports policy responses - to seek to increase social/sports participation via geographically targeted programs in socially deprived areas, and to emphasise the contribution which sports volunteering can make to active citizenship” (p. 544). While Coalter’s goes on to discuss the latter, sports volunteering, this paper is predominantly concerned with the former.

In summary, sport is frequently advocated as the “glue” which holds communities together although this view is largely based on a traditional and normative view of sport (Barnes, 1998). Cairnduff (2001) suggests that sport can assist in creating communities with high levels of positive social capital which in turn can make them more resilient to negative outcomes as a result of economic, social, and cultural changes. The data on sport involvement suggest that sport is well positioned to impact positively on the building of social capital. For example in 2002, 64% of the Australian population participated in sport and physical recreation and 10% engaged as a volunteer in sport/recreation organisations in roles other than as a player (ABS, 2006). However, while sport may have important cultural and identity characteristics for the nation’s population (Cashman, 1995), sport’s role in the development of social capital and its relationship to the social inclusion agenda and community development in disadvantaged communities has not been systematically studied in Australia.

Improving Disadvantaged Communities: Can Sport Build Social Capital and Social Inclusion?

David Harvey argues that “neo-liberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse” (2005, p. 3). Harvey argues that:

neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (p. 2)

He further argues that institutional frameworks such as the “Washington Consensus” and British Labour’s “Third Way” have diminished the “embedded liberalism” of the post-war welfare state. The implications for social programs and for sport are several under this new ideological position.

In a paper on recent aspects of soccer in England, Mellor (2008) makes several comments on that situation that may have implications for sport managers and for Australia. Third Way policy practices would “promote ‘proactive’ supply-side policies which would encourage everybody to build social capital and thereby have the tools needed to work in the interests of wider social cohesion” (p. 317), based on new values. These policies would not provide direct, traditional government programs and funds but would build “opportunities” so

that citizens could take responsibility over how they live. There would be a “balance between the state and the market in the constitution of public policy instruments” that would encourage “the extension of ‘partnership’ working (*sic*) between the state and the private/voluntary organizations” (p. 317) in society. The models described below focus on such neoliberal social policy practices. They have a point of contact with individuals at the community level and provide ideas for future sport practice. Further, their occurrence in Commonwealth countries has direct implications for sport policy practices and sport management in Australia.

Dealing with Social Inclusion through Sport

The following examples from the UK and Canada were reported by Cowell (2007) in a Churchill Fellowship report. In that report she describes the projects studied, but space here does not allow a full description of those projects. Cowell sought to study what were described as “best practice” models “where sport has contributed to social capital in disadvantaged communities” (p. 4). In this study, Cowell sought to understand how sport was employed to enhance social inclusion and build sustainability through a variety of programs.

Disadvantage, deprivation, and social exclusion are all terms used to describe areas suffering acute social problems such as: increasing population densities, low socio-economic status, high rates of chronic disease, high levels of migration and multiculturalism, and young people at risk of exclusion/disaffection from society. Social inclusion policy, particularly in the UK, has driven to an extent the recent emphasis on sport as a potential panacea for a range of social ills, in particular youth disengagement and crime. In England, PAT 10¹ and Game Plan 2002² justify public investment in sport for delivering other social benefits rather than “sport for sports sake”. While there seems to have been a very strong top-down approach supported by funding, grass-roots approaches have also demonstrated successful local area based approaches. This has created a policy debate where some argue that the sport sector needs to start talking to government about how it contributes to the social agenda, while others believe that sport for sports sake should be recognised and valued. It would appear however that there is room for both and that what may work best is an approach that recognises diversity and flexibility.

An integrated and coordinated policy approach that recognises the role of local government, state and federal governments, community organisations, and the traditional sport sector in the provision of sport, in addition to using sport as a mechanism to engage, is a way forward. This approach would recognise a spectrum of opportunity where outreach sits at

one end of the continuum and traditional sport provision at the other, with structures that support movement along the continuum by participants.

In the UK organisations that have used outreach as a method of engagement include Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme (LOCSP), Lambeth and Southwark Sports Action Zone (SAZ), Positive Futures, and Street League which developed organically over time by responding to local need. Such outreach programs align with neoliberal ideas as they are no longer “welfare state” based ones. Nonetheless, programs such as Positive Futures see sport providing a relationship strategy as “projects need to be set free to operate at the radical edge of this field of work in order that they can attempt to find ways of engaging with and inspiring those young people who have been alienated by more structured mainstream approaches” (Crabbe et al., 2006, p. 25). These organisations operate free from the confines of bureaucratic structures found in local government and traditional sport clubs and, as a consequence, have flourished (i.e., have become sustainable). There is an indication in this that positive outcomes are obtainable from this new style of policy and program. Local authorities are also providing sport programs to their local communities and in some instances delivering outreach programs.

Most often the mandate of sport clubs is not identify or engage directly with hard to reach groups, as clubs are predominantly run by volunteers and focussed on delivering their sport. This is their primary purpose and takes up the majority of their time. Examples do however exist of clubs that provide more of a social outreach program or that work in partnership with community organisations or local governments to provide access to sport. In the UK, Hastings Borough Council, Glasgow City Council, and the Gaelic Athletic Association in Northern Ireland support such initiatives and are evidence of linking social capital at work (Woolcock, 2001).

Moves away from “universal social welfare” programs to innovative local needs-based programs appear to be more successful at engaging priority groups. While this might appear more costly in terms of investment per capita (i.e., reduced economies of scale), it is far more successful at engaging those that are hardest to reach and who will not engage in mainstream programs, and therefore have the greatest impact. Sport England’s report on *Sport Action Zones* suggested that the policy challenge is to focus resources in an even more targeted way in order to deliver the biggest impact in participation terms and that funding should be allocated to facilitate innovation and flexibility to respond to prioritised community need.

Key success factors in servicing the needs of disadvantaged communities involves developing, engaging, and retaining multiple partners that can support the delivery of programs and outcomes through a range of different mechanisms including funding, delivery, expert advice, and referrals; very much within the practices of neoliberalism. Street League is one example of a program that started as a six week voluntary project in 2001 to grow into a charity that now has in excess of 80 different partners, of which 20 are funding partners. Street League is a charity with programs in London and Glasgow. It aims to support disadvantaged (excluded from mainstream) people over 16 years of age including the homeless, drug and alcohol dependent individuals in rehabilitation, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, those with identified learning disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, those with mental health issues, and individuals at risk. It provides a sports program including football, basketball, and multi-fitness sessions which are used as a tool for engaging people in organised sport and as a means for developing their social and other transferable skills in a fun environment. Goals also seek to build informal communities, trust, and networks amongst participants, at the local level with like persons. Partners not only provide financial support, but CSR activities such as volunteering to support program delivery and the provision of office space. Other partnership models used by Street League include: twinning businesses to Street League teams, buddying a Street League player to provide mentoring and coaching support in a professional and sometimes emotional capacity, work experience and employment, sponsorships, and in-kind resource provision.

Part of this philosophy is involving businesses in their communities to achieve sustainability. Street League cites partnerships with over 40 referral agencies and delivery partners in London and relationships with over 50 corporate partners and more traditional funding agencies including: the London Development Agency, Sport England, the Football Foundation, and the Newham Borough Council. This clearly shows the public-private nature of neoliberal projects as funding in the UK has been increasingly generated from non-sport focussed government agencies, with organisations accessing programs aimed at social inclusion and regeneration. Sport England in establishing Sport Action Zones (SAZ) suggested that an organisation should actively encourage as wide a set of partnerships within and outside of sport as possible as this will be the key to delivering sustainable community sporting opportunities.

The Lambeth and Southwark SAZ is another successful partnerships example. SAZ is a local area based program working in the London boroughs of North Lambeth and Southwark. It aims to support people aged 45 or over, women and girls, disadvantaged

socioeconomic classes, people with disabilities, and ethnic minority communities. SAZ are about developing and enhancing existing partnerships, establishing new partnerships, and testing new ways of using sport as a catalyst to bring about the social and economic well-being of local communities within the zone. The SAZ does not directly run its own activities, but works through partners and local groups to enhance existing provision.

The funding philosophy that underpinned the SAZ programs was unlike any other area based initiative. Sports Lottery core funding was kept to a minimum and the SAZ managers were given the responsibility of working to attract funding into their Zone from established sport and non-sport funding streams. It could be argued that this also ensures a more community-based approach with an organisation having to establish relationships and partners within their local community to ensure survival through sustainability.

LOCSP also established strong partnerships. LOCSP is a community based charity operating since 1989 across Northeast London. It started out as a Football in the Community program (part of the Football Foundation's neoliberal CSR; see, Mellor, 2008) before developing as an independent charity. Its aim is to engage with and access young people who are traditionally excluded from mainstream sports, leisure, and education opportunities. LOCSP runs a range of innovative and creative sports and educational projects in Waltham Forest, Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham, and Epping in partnership with a range of agencies from local authorities, regeneration agencies, youth offending teams, and schools to the Home Office.

Similarly, Right to Play is an international humanitarian "sport for development" organisation with operations in the UK and Canada and is another example of an organisation that works successfully to partner with international volunteers, local coaches, and local organisations to deliver sport and play as a tool for development in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. It aims to create a healthier and safer world for children through the power of sport and play. It is athlete driven and uses sport and play as a tool for development in the most disadvantaged areas of the world. A common theme identified by many of these community organisations, and one also identified by Sport England in relation to the development of SAZs, is strong leadership at the local level. This critical success factor is exemplified by committed and enthusiastic people with vision and determination leading the development of LOCSP, Right to Play, Positive Futures, Street League, and Belfast Community Sports Network.

What does become clear is that fostering a diversity of differing partners contributes to the long-term viability, funding, and community engagement of these programs and ensures

that each organisation is not dependent on any one partner or funding group. However, the successful delivery of programs in harder to reach communities appears to be more successful when a social development or youth/community work approach is taken utilising sport as the engagement tool. This is a significant move away from the traditional sport development approach, focussed on developing sport as the term suggests, and has as its primary focus social development as opposed to sport development. As Crabbe et al. (2006) state, “it is the adoption of a personal and social development model which is sacred to sport-based social inclusion programs rather than sport” (p.19).

The Positive Futures through Sport Foundation uses a sports-based social inclusion approach. It is a relationship strategy centred on the principle that engagement through sport and the building mutual respect and trust (which are social capital markers) can provide a cultural gateway to alternate lifestyles. This project recognises that in today’s world many young people face a number of interrelated problems, including poverty, lack of education, unemployment, drugs, low self-esteem, and low aspirations. The program tackles these problems using sport to educate and develop life skills that are transferable into other aspects of life. Positive Futures is not a sports development initiative or a diversionary program. It does not see the participation of young people in sport, the winning of medals or the development of an individual into a professional sportsman or woman as the focus of its work. Rather, the program uses sport as a hook to engage and encourage young people to look at the broader issues that affect them. It is a method for building community participation and citizenship and a pathway to education and employment opportunities, in turn, increasing the social capital stocks of a community (Crabbe et al., 2006).

The development of a community/social development approach raises the question as to what types of organisation/s are best placed to deliver social outcomes. Examples exist of traditional sport clubs, local government, and a range of community/social development and NGO organisations all attempting to deliver social outcomes through sport. Is one type of organisation best placed or do they all have a role to play? While some sport clubs may have this ability it is unlikely that the majority would consider social development their role. Nor would the majority have the appropriate people/skills to achieve social outcomes, particularly in a voluntary capacity. Coalter (2007) warns that imposing this agenda on the voluntary sport sector could be detrimental to its ongoing viability; which is especially salient in the Australian context as sport clubs hold a central role in overall physical activity goals. The key to successful social inclusion programs is their ability to attract and engage. Sport is not the primary focus, but a means to an end.

The emergence of sports-based social inclusion programs should not undermine the importance of sport development. Mass sporting events can engage individuals in sport development and increase their active participation through training for and participating in the event. Events of this nature can also attract the involvement of volunteers and help to create community identity. However, while one-off events are important for strengthening people's connection to their community, sustainable, ongoing development through sport programs and interventions are likely to have the most significant social capital impacts.

The intention however, is not to necessarily move people from sport-based social inclusion programs to sport development, but merely to provide the opportunity to participate at all levels, with pathways which may or may not be taken up by the participant. In the case of social inclusion programs these can achieve social outcomes as well as participation outcomes and, although this is a secondary benefit, participants should move from sport being their development tool to their leisure choice.

Disadvantaged people/communities have been notoriously difficult to engage, partly because policy-makers and sport managers often hold an expectation that "they should come to us" as we have the expertise, but more often as these persons do not have the economic ability to participate. In the UK, place based initiatives where the activity is taken to the community using non-traditional spaces/places, such as the street or community centre, at which to deliver programs and activities appears to have been far more successful. Emphasis has moved from capital to revenue funding with the recognition that buildings alone do not encourage participation. There also appear to be more staff per capita in local authorities in the UK than in Australia with an emphasis on sports delivery.

Trust is a key element in social inclusion programs and the development of social capital, and one that must be established in a safe and familiar place before challenging cultural and physical boundaries. Cost of transport, access, and locality of formal sports facilities can act as barriers to participation and engagement. Ensuring participants do not need to find transport to a purpose built sport facility (where they may feel unwelcome), by providing access in the street, local park, or community centre, allows space to slowly introduce participants to activities. This process can aid in building social capital as relationships can be developed, and, over time, horizons expanded and access to other facilities, programs, and services facilitated through the development of new social capital networks. The role of cultural intermediaries (or catalysts/champions) in this process is vital (Vail, 2007).

Facilities are important nonetheless and need to be strategically located (integrated with a variety of services). Investment however, should be made into programming these facilities to provide broad community access. Strategic location should consider position in relation to safe and convenient access via pedestrian, bicycle, and public transport (note: safety is a key element of social capital). The success of many of the interventions piloted by the cultural and sport programs highlights the importance of ensuring that services are geographically and culturally accessible to all local residents, as well as being embedded within community venues and settings that provides ownership of the programs and those involved in them.

In Australia a major barrier to sourcing funds is the limited evidence base for sports contribution to the social inclusion agenda. Evidence remains largely anecdotal, although the recent 2006 publication of *Knowing the Score* provides evidence on the efficacy of the Positive Futures program and contributes to the evidence base. What differentiates Positive Futures from other sport-based social inclusion initiatives is its commitment to the development of a comprehensive program of research, monitoring, and evaluation that combines both quantitative and qualitative assessments. This was the result of an early recognition of the failure of a succession of similar programs to demonstrate their achievements or provide definitive evidence of a direct causal relationship between involvement in sports and specific social outcomes.

How to monitor and evaluate outcomes is a contentious issue and one that has historically been ignored. Crabbe et al. (2006) suggest a number of reasons for this. These include an inherent belief in the good of sport, a lack of concern to measure, and its apparent difficulty to measure. Fairbridge, a national charity based in fifteen of the most disadvantaged urban areas of the UK also recognised the need for monitoring and evaluation. The charity aims to support 13-25 year olds who are not in education, training, or employment or at risk of becoming “drop outs”. It enables young people from inner cities to meet the opportunities and responsibilities of society by offering them a long-term personal development program that builds confidence, motivation, and personal, social, and life skills. The program consists of different motivating activities including canoeing, cooking, rock climbing, team challenges, and navigation that are used as a vehicle to work with young people on their basic personal and social skills. A three-year independent research project they undertook proved that for young people involved with Fairbridge, the development of personal and social skills significantly improved prospects in education, employment, and training.

The ongoing viability or sustainability of sport-based social inclusion programs is subject to all of the factors demonstrated above. These include: policy and strategy, partnerships, community and social development, places and spaces, and monitoring and evaluation. There also appear to be a number of other elements that contribute to, and a method for achieving long-term viability, that are closely aligned to these factors. The elements include: funding/resources, innovation/flexibility, time, and “recycling” participants through programs to become involved in further delivery of interventions (e.g., toward sustainability). The approach appears to start with a demonstration or pilot project, followed by its escalation and subsequent transition to relative independence either through achieving core funding or through its ability to generate funds through a range of partnerships and revenue streams. Sustainability is strongly linked to partnerships and establishing a variety of partners to support the ongoing delivery of an organisation’s work. Long-term funding over a reasonable period of time is essential to the development of individuals and organisations, and their ability to sustain themselves.

Concluding Comments

The examples provided above indicate that sport is a useful tool, in various ways, to build social capital, foster community development, and build sustainability. That is, many positive outcomes have been achieved by using sport in this manner, even if most of this is reported anecdotally and these follow new neoliberalism principles and practices. This still begs the question of directionality (sport builds social capital, social capital aids sport, or a reciprocity exists). Many of the above examples also indicate an issue saliently identified by Craig (2007). Craig sees such government based initiatives or involvements as being top-down, not clearly dealing with the issues in those localities, wasteful of human resources in the target communities, being ideologically-driven, and promoting current social inequalities (i.e., perpetuating the status quo). Such programs do not connect with the communities for which they are identified. This also provides a strong argument against older state welfare policies and programs, even though ideology is also central in this new approach.

Vail (2007) also emphasises the points raised above by Craig and additionally offers a “traditional” community sport development process. She argued that a sustainable sport-based community development initiative requires four core components: community selection (a community’s “readiness” and capacity to change); the need for a community catalyst(s)/champion(s) to provide process leadership (not *de facto* hierarchical leadership); the need to build a cadre of collaborative group/community partnerships (from a wide cross

section of people and organisations who share a vision and have the capacity to achieve that vision through true collaboration and true shared decision-making); and the need to promote sustainability through community development processes. These elements are variously evident in the examples provided above, but not in a holistic way. Vail argued against the traditional, status quo “sports programming” approach, where programs are dropped-into settings without proper needs assessment in the community, the use of off the shelf programs and marketing, and delivering programs in short-term episodes without ensuring the people and other community-based resources are properly developed. That is, they often miss matters of sport sustainability and true community development.

Here we confront several issues for current and incipient sport managers. One could reasonably critique many current sport management programs and practices. Do current sport managers, or do current sport management education programs, really understand and employ community development models? Is sufficient emphasis placed on community development and the role of sport can play in that development. If sport policy and programs are imposed on communities without the elements Craig (2007) and Vail (2007) emphasise sport managers need to consider what the implications are for creating sustainable effective sporting opportunities that may result in positive social capital outcomes. This critique indicates that sport managers and future sport managers require ongoing education to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to provide sport programs (i.e., deliver properly targeted policy) that can facilitate community development and bring about positive social change in diverse communities. Education programs for incipient sport managers should help students work to employ a community development perspective and develop and deliver sustainable sport interventions, based on the real needs of the communities and on sustainable community development models (Vail, 2007).

While there is currently little direct evidence that sport contributes to social capital through fostering social inclusion and community development, sport does have substantial social value. This is particularly so in Australia, as sport is widely recognised as a core component of the social and cultural fabric of Australian communities (Chalip, Thomas, & Voyle, 1996; Zakus, Skinner, & Edwards, 2008). It provides an excellent “hook” for engaging people who may be suffering from disadvantage and providing a supportive environment to encourage and assist those individuals in their social development, learning, and connection through related programs and services.

As Crabbe et al. (2006) suggested in their review of the Positive Futures program: “we have found that while sport does have social value, this can only be fully realised within a

social and personal development approach” (i.e., Coleman’s human capital argument; cf. Vail, 2007). These approaches are at the heart of the neoliberalist agenda to improve individual freedom and opportunity. Sport and Recreation practitioners are passionate about the impacts their programs have on individuals and their social development. While this is largely anecdotal, new evaluation tools are attempting to capture meaningful data to contribute to the evidence base for this claim.

Long-term viability or sustainability in delivering social outcomes is central to the success of these developments through sport programs. Modern society demands more flexibility and choice and this should also be true of how communities and individuals access a range of opportunities. A one size fits all approach will not meet all community needs. The challenge for the traditional sport sector in Australia is to move beyond current sport delivery practices to provide a range of products including low cost locally developed grass roots opportunities and extended public/private/third sector linking social capital programs. There is a danger however, in relying on this predominantly volunteer based sector to deliver social outcomes.

In Australia, the opportunity exists for community organisations, with government support, to establish long-term viable programs that use sport to engage with communities to deliver social outcomes. Partnerships between the traditional sport sector and community-based organisations could be forged to support participation in sport across the continuum from outreach to mainstream participation. Suffice to say, this could potentially open the way for the development of a ”third way” in Australia where community-based organisations provide local grass-root sports participation opportunities for their communities, with strong linkages, collaborations, shared decision-making capacities, and partnerships with community groups and organisations, including mainstream sport. Donnelly (2007) provides the following summation:

All sport and recreation provision should be based on long term, established funding; should be continually monitored and evaluated in light of ongoing research, and should, for the most part, be offered for the purposes of social opportunity and social development. (Cited in Cowell, 2007, p. 25)

From the above literature and examples, we note the following criteria to effectively use sport in social development and as a vehicle to contribute to development of social capital/social inclusion within disadvantaged communities. First, programs should be

designed with regard to the local assets (e.g., infrastructure, people, revenues, networks; Vail, 2007) available in the target communities. Second, sport-based social inclusion programs should be local area based and address and respond to individual community needs utilising a social development approach. Third, monitoring and evaluation should form an integral component of the program from conception to implementation and should contribute to the evidence base. Finally, development of “third way” sports programs should be explored by all sectors with a view to mainstream or long-term funding ensuring sustainability.

A broad array of positive community networks and relationships can be developed through engagement with sport. This engagement can create opportunities that can foster social inclusion and community development, which in turn, can assist in building high levels of positive social capital. Importantly, future research and education programs should seek to develop the tangible means by which to facilitate these processes.

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¹ PAT 10 refers to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Policy Action Group 10. It suggest that arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education on deprived communities.

² Game Plan 2002 refers to the document by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Game Plan: A Strategy for Delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity Objectives.