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Examining the capacity of a Sport for Development programme to create social capital

Abstract

Robert Putnam's conceptualisation of social capital has been commonly associated with, and used to analyse, sport-for-development programmes. This paper bucks this trend and uses James Coleman's rational strain of social capital to examine the use of sport as a component part of a programme to support male adults in addressing connected problems of substance misuse, homelessness and other forms of social exclusion. Using a qualitative research strategy, in-depth and longitudinal data were collected using individual interviews and focus groups with programme participants and key stakeholders over a three-year period. The results suggest the importance of unintentionality for the formation and use value of social capital; indicating that social capital created through this programme was individual, contingent on interactional context and benefitted individuals in line with Coleman's six aspects of social capital.

Introduction

The prominence of sport as a tool for social intervention has increased significantly since the turn of the century with the advance of the 'sport-for-development movement' (Kidd, 2008; Coalter, 2012). In the UK at least, recent interest in sport-for-development builds on a lengthy history of similar interventions: the 'Action Sport' programme was notable in the 1980s for implementing outreach work through a fledgling network of sport development officers; and 'Positive Futures' was a 1990s programme centred on social inclusion and cohesion in areas suffering from deprivation (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013). This paper adds to the increasing academic attention paid to sport-for-development by using James Coleman's rational strain of social capital to examine a programme that used sport as a component of wider support for adult men in addressing connected problems of substance misuse, homelessness and associated forms of social exclusion.

The programme was initially funded for three years by Comic Relief, a high-profile UK charity, and was delivered in a city in the south of England through a partnership between the charitable arm of the city's professional football club and a locally-based homelessness charity. Participation in the programme's sport-based provision was nominally open to anyone who wanted to access it, but the men involved were usually referred by the homelessness charity and other local organisations with a remit to address social and community problems. This approach is in line with sport-for-development programmes that undertake targeted recruitment (Coalter, 2013), with many participants in this programme being on mandatory or voluntary drug rehabilitation schemes and some having spent time in the criminal justice system.

Participants could choose and be supported to participate in a wide range of free, regular, structured and semi-structured opportunities across a range of sports and physical activities including football, boxing, fishing and gym-based activities. These opportunities were delivered through partnerships with local sport and leisure providers, although the 'brand' of the professional football club was leveraged to encourage participation. The activities themselves also served as something of a hook with those participants who demonstrated ongoing commitment then offered further opportunities for progression. Particular individuals were encouraged to become volunteers and leaders within many of the programme's activities, and specific sport and physical activity training courses were arranged and accessed so that these participants had appropriate qualifications to do so. Other participants were encouraged to enrol onto further education courses, for example in fisheries management, and pathways into employment with local leisure and hospitality businesses were developed towards the end of the programme's three year funding period. Overall, the approach of the programme was to encourage participants to engage over time according to individual circumstances and developing aspirations.

This approach represents a crucial distinction with many other sport-for-development programmes in which the adoption of tightly-specified aims, objectives and targets has been both encouraged (e.g. Coalter, 2007, 2012) and critiqued (e.g. Kay, 2009; Harris and Adams, 2016). Distinctively, this programme did not have a predefined set of desired outcomes and nor were any prescribed by the funder, enabling the adoption of a bottom-up orientation, embracing the needs of the participants and developing programme provision organically over time. Resourced through the initial funding for the programme, the independent research on which this paper is based was similarly not

constrained by any specific requirements to evaluate a set of technocratic performance measures (Chouinard, 2013). Rather, the focus of the research emerged from initial dialogue between programme managers and researchers which identified the potential importance of relationships between participants and others involved in the programme. Social capital was therefore chosen as the guiding theoretical framework for the research and this paper. It is, nevertheless, important to reiterate that the development of social capital was not an explicit nor necessarily intended outcome of the programme itself.

The relevance of social capital in this paper also comes from its status as one of the two 'most commonly applied theoretical frameworks' in analyses of sport-for-development programmes (Schulenkorf et al, 2016, 28) and its wider application to related issues of governance, sport development, voluntary associations and facility development (see, for example, edited collections by Groeneveld et al., 2011, and Nicholson and Hoye, 2008). Much of this can be attributed to Robert Putnam and his use of the '*bowling alone*' metaphor to describe the breakdown in social capital in the USA (Putnam, 2000), but also because Putnam signalled that voluntary sporting associational activity was a key driver in the creation and functioning of social capital (see Adams, 2012, Lindsey and Adams, 2014; Skille 2014).

Social capital is however, a contested concept with significant differences across the democratic, critical and rational strains associated with Putnam, Bourdieu and Coleman respectively (Lewandowski, 2006). Although Putnam's version of social capital has dominated social scientific analyses of sport, there are at least three distinctive aspects of Coleman's strand of social capital (Fine, 2010) that signify its potential value for analysing sport-for-development. First, the scope of Coleman's work is more aligned with the individual-orientation attributed to many sport-for-development programmes (Hartman and Kwauk, 2011) and offers a different dimension, as a result of focusing on the micro-perspective that centres on individuals and small groups, to the macro-focused analyses popular with applications of Putnam. Second Coleman always used social capital as a tool within a broader, detailed and conceptually coherent social theory rather than as a stand-alone concept. Third, Coleman asserts that while there can be a public good outcome from social interaction that aids a community as a whole, social capital itself is produced as an unconscious by-product (Coleman, 1990) rather than as a deliberate policy outcome.

It is through the use of Coleman's take on social capital that this paper develops a micro-level analysis of the identified sport-for-development programme. The paper is an attempt to move beyond binary analyses focused on Putnamian bonding and bridging capital, providing instead greater scope in considering the delivery of sport-for-development programmes. Methodologically the voices of participants are presented as valid and legitimate evidence (Adams and Harris 2014; Harris and Adams, 2016; Kay, 2009) enabling depth and clarity in the interpretation of programme outcomes. To inform our subsequent empirical exploration of the sport-for-development programme in question, the following section begins by providing further theoretical interrogation of Coleman's conceptualisation of social capital.

James Coleman and social capital: understanding the social

The value of taking an analytical approach based on Coleman's theoretically rich version of social capital soon becomes apparent once it is clarified and applied within its core conceptual framework, in which he sought to address what he saw as shortcomings in social theory. His particular concern was the apparent over-emphasis on structure in social theory; Coleman's solution was to combine elements of traditional social theory with the agency focus of rational choice theory, which views actors as 'having goals independently arrived at, as acting independently, and as wholly self-interested. Its principal virtue lies in having a principle of action; that of maximising utility' (Coleman, 1988, 95). Essentially Coleman was arriving at a balanced social theory where individuals were neither purely driven by their own motivations, nor controlled entirely by their environment. Crucially, Coleman's conceptualisation thus posits social capital as potentially both functional and utilitarian. This is an important consideration when judging the success of a social policy intervention in creating social capital either directly or indirectly. In a well-cited paper Coleman defined social capital as:

...a useful resource available to an actor through his or her social relationships. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure (Coleman, 1988, 98).

Coleman thus regards social capital as a functional multi-entity that is defined via the actions of actors in terms of what it does productively in developing human capital. For some, this has meant that Coleman's conceptualisation of social capital 'makes it impossible to separate what it is from what it does' (Edwards and Foley, 1997), with causes and consequences becoming confused to the extent that defining social capital 'as equivalent with the resources thus obtained is tantamount to saying that the successful succeeded' (Portes, 1998, 5). However, Coleman was really concerned with the role of social capital in facilitating action; it is arguably via Putnam that social capital as a concept has become stretched to become a 'catch all' in what Fine has called 'Putnamology' (Fine, 2010, 158).

Coleman thus views social capital as a relational attribute that inheres in the interactions of individuals, rather than being the property of individuals. Coleman is logically able to account for the creation of social and public 'goods' by individuals pursuing their own rational desires (their self-interest) in a socially relational context. In a reference to young people that has wider applicability across all ages, Coleman (1994, 300) went on to clarify social capital further as,

...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 can constitute an important advantage for children and adolescents in the development of their human capital.

Importantly, Coleman recognises that there is differential access to 'resources', which tend to operate external to the individual and hence social capital does not tend to be distributed evenly. Coleman thus tacitly acknowledges power relations as important in one's ability to access resources and that social capital itself may reflect actual power differentials.

Coleman's six social capitals

Coleman viewed social capital as a way of explaining how cooperation among individuals related to their motivations to act in particular ways. He identified six ways that types of social relations can 'constitute useful capital resources for individuals' (1994, 306), and despite the obvious contestation that comes with any application of social capital theory, these 'capitals' provide valuable analytic tools for examining programmes such as the one that is the focus of this paper. The first capital of obligations and accompanying expectations is a cornerstone of Coleman's schema. This form of capital originates from a favour that an actor receives, and contributes to expectations of reciprocity that constitute obligations or 'credit slips' (Coleman, 1994). Coleman has argued that these are analogous to financial capital and depend on two elements, 'trustworthiness of the social environment...and the actual extent of obligations held' (Coleman, 1988, 102). The rational actor is therefore likely to consider the trustworthiness of the social environment when he/she considers any potential return on his/her investment. Trust is thus expended by an individual in the expectation that it will be repaid at a later, unspecified date. A norm of reciprocity is consequently generated. The more one willingly engages and is prepared to offer aid and support to others, the more one is likely to have high social capital because of the potential to accumulate large numbers of 'credit slips'.

The second type of social capital is the information potential, and refers to interpersonal trust or reliance that can facilitate information that is used to bring about action. Nevertheless, information potential can also be costly as it needs individuals to pay attention to cues in their social relations. These are not credit slips per se, as information channels are embedded in social structures and can be non-deliberate, given that particular information may come from channels maintained for other purposes. So, for example, athletes A and B both join a sport club committee; however as part of the informational exchange process, it may be that only athlete A capitalises on information that is of particular value to his/her own personal progress. Again, the creation and utility of a generalised background of trust is important – whether one trusts the source of information is fundamental to how that information is perceived in terms of its reliability and usage (see Fukuyama, 1995 for a discussion on this point).

Norms and effective sanctions comprise Coleman's third type of social capital and these largely exist to facilitate a generalised environment of trust, helping to prevent what could be a Hobbesian free-for-all (Coleman, 1987). For Coleman, a prescriptive norm in a group or associational situation may act to reinforce particular behaviours such as forgoing self-interest for the interests of the shared group or association. This is social capital as it is a process that facilitates action and, in the form of a norm, is reinforced by 'social support, status, honour, and other rewards' (Coleman, 1994, 311). In this fashion, collective associations and programmes provided by third sector organisations can provide locations for the provision of public goods, where norms concerning self-regulation become important in overcoming problematic notions of cooperative activity and the production of public goods (Field, 2003). Norms can also be negative in a constraining and restraining way, perhaps reducing diversity within groups and/or restricting new thinking to solve a problem that is not in keeping with the normative confines of a particular group. This form of in-group non-conformism, referred to by Coleman as 'deviant actions' (1994, 311), can also be potentially beneficial to a group and act as a public good if a solution to a problem is in the interests of the many.

The fourth type of social capital is authority relations, which concerns the potential to transfer certain rights of control from one actor to another in order to enable the recipient to have social capital. For Coleman, the more rights one is transferred the greater the benefit, particularly in addressing the inherent 'free-rider problem' of collective action approaches. Although Coleman does not expand much on this type of capital, it is useful for thinking through processes within social programmes, particularly those that involve a relatively disparate group of individuals. If in the operation of a programme, for example, three participants A, B, C transfer rights to actor M then there may be a concentration of social capital that actor M initiates or uses on behalf of the group. In this way group formation may facilitate the identification of a leader – perhaps akin to a community leader acting on behalf of her/his community to ensure that benefits accrue to all, but also giving a collective substance to the member's voices in order to be heard and to act reflectively and reflexively.

Coleman's penultimate capital is referred to as appropriable social organisations, which are those organisations that are formed for a particular purpose and, in so doing, create a legacy of a continuing network that may contain many individual and constellations of actors. Some voluntary organisations may be exemplars in which the organisation itself constitutes social capital. Coleman cites the example of organisations established to tackle poor housing, which through a sustained network centred on babysitting, for instance, remained useful long after the original objective had been achieved (Coleman, 1990). The organisation in this case is the social capital; it facilitates action by channelling information and helping to form obligations and expectations. The context of the sport-for-development programme at hand was one where its location was emphasised to knowingly capitalise on the status of a professional football club and the associated benefits that this could bring. It is possible to read Coleman in at least two ways here. First, voluntary sport clubs and organisations are appropriable organisations as their purpose is to allow people to play a sport of their choice. The formation of such a club or organisation thus creates an attendant network that often sustains and remains and would operate in a Coleman-like way, having information potential and forming obligations and expectations. The second reading, and one that is central to Coleman's position, is that voluntary sports clubs and organisations are not appropriable organisations as they are formed with the intention of providing a networked, normative place and space for like-minded people to participate in their sport of choice. The difference is important as the former is the position adopted by Putnam in his intention to show how public goods could be manufactured, whilst Coleman is consistent throughout in identifying social capital as a by-product of some other action.

The idea of the by-product underpins Coleman's final capital, intentional organisation, which concerns the extent to which social capital is a) intentionally or unintentionally created and b) intentionally or unintentionally invested in. While most social capital is a by-product of other activity, there can also be direct investment in it and in this respect social capital can have a broader impact. Accordingly, Coleman (1990, 113) indicates that social capital's 'creation by one subset of persons makes its benefits available to others as well, whether or not they participate'. This aspect of social capital occupied Putnam in particular, but for Coleman it was only ever a small aspect of his application of rational choice theory where individual investment and resulting reward can become obscured and, as a result, individuals may not want to create social capital 'because it is not in that persons interest to bring it into being' (Coleman, 1990, 317-8). It is worth stressing that

Coleman is quite parsimonious on this aspect of social capital, using the language of costs and benefits and making the creation of social capital (an investment decision) a less than rational decision as 'Much social capital arises or disappears without anyone's willing it into or out of being' (Coleman, 1990, 317-8). Directly investing in social capital can thus lead to potential social benefits, but largely because of the free-rider problem there is a converse rational incentive not to deliberately create social capital. Context or social structure is all important.

Research Strategy and Methods

The research strategy was designed to capture in-depth and longitudinal data from both programme participants and key stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery of the programme over the duration of three years. Qualitative methodology was used to enable exploration of the subjective and social meanings associated with a variety of individuals, taking into account subjectivity and diversity (Flick, 2009). This was a crucial to unearth insight from the participants and programme stakeholders as to how they saw the program working from their subjective viewpoints.

Data collection with participants consisted of interviews and focus groups at the venues where they took part in particular activities. Doing so was important given the nature and characteristics of the participants and the need to ensure they felt comfortable voluntarily engaging in the research process (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). It was the nature of these activities and environments, rather than methodological choice that commonly determined whether individual interviews or focus groups were used. For example, participants' preferences meant that some individual interviews were undertaken as they engaged in, and without interrupting, gym-based exercise. In designing and implementing these data collection methods, a semi-structured approach was taken both out of necessity, given their location, but also purposively to enable a dialogue between the researchers and participant(s) and to enable greater freedom for prompts and responses on issues that were of interest as they emerged (May, 2001). Nevertheless, a common set of issues that explored participants' experiences of the programme, their relationships within and beyond it, and their views on the short- and long-term outcomes of their involvement shaped all of the interviews and focus groups.

Sampling for participant interviews and focus groups encompassed the range of activities delivered by the programme. In total, eleven focus groups took place across the course of the research; football (two focus groups, each of four participants), fishing (three focus groups each of two participants), boxing (two focus groups each of two participants) and gym-based activities (four focus groups, made up of three to four participants per focus group). In addition, eight participants participated in individual interviews, six for gym-based activities and one each for boxing and football activities. The participants involved in the research were all male aged between 19-45 years of age. Their involvement in the research was obviously dependent on their attendance at these activities with purposive sampling further undertaken, with the support of key programme staff, to ensure that the demographics, personal backgrounds and extent of participation reflected the overall range and diversity within the programme. The personal histories of the participants involved in the research encompassed various, and in many cases significant, experiences of drug and alcohol misuse, crime and homelessness. Some participants involved in the research participated in numerous different activities delivered across the programme and there was an opportunity to

undertake a single, repeat focus group with participants involved in fishing activities that enabled some analysis of changes in their experiences over time.

Data collection with participants was complemented by nine semi-structured interviews with key agency representatives, which helped to gain further understanding of the design and ongoing delivery of the programme. Moreover, they enabled key staff involved in the programme to give an alternative view on relationships with and between participants, as well as offering a perspective on the generalised and specific experiences and outcomes for participants. Changes and continuities in these regards over the course of three years were captured through a longitudinal interview process that featured three repeated interviews with the lead project officer from the football club and two repeated interviews with the homeless charity lead worker. A further six interviewees were purposively sampled across all of the partner sport and leisure providers involved with the programme, each of whom had frontline organisational roles ensuring direct and ongoing contact with programme participants.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed and anonymised. The analysis of data employed qualitative content analysis to interpret data in a logical and coherent manner (Krippendorff, 2004; Silverman, 2004, 2005). The explanatory logic of the qualitative content analysis followed an iterative process involving repeated cycles of coding interview and focus group data and comparison against aspects of Coleman's social capital (Gomm, 2004; Titscher et al, 2000). Interviews and focus groups were analysed by each of the authors with codes and representations of social capital cross-checked by all authors for each analytical iteration (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). A further feature of this iterative process was the constant comparison of data from participants and stakeholders in order to assess the trustworthiness of views and validity of overall findings.

Findings and Discussion

The following subsections examine how the programme enabled/facilitated both the creation and use of social capital. The first of these subsections examines relational development and interaction between and among participants, whilst the second examines relations between participants and staff involved in the project. Analytical consideration of Coleman's six types of social capital is integrated throughout both subsections.

Interactions, relations and connectedness amongst and between participants

In promoting interaction and positive relationships amongst participants, the programme facilitated intentions to move away from previously held negative relationships which, from a social capital point of view, assume an implicit reciprocity as a key facet of individuals' social development. The perception of connectedness and sense of belonging that can generate forms of obligation and expectation, giving rise to Coleman's notion of a credit slip was apparent in language that signalled, for some participants, trustworthiness, and a sense of duty towards their fellow participants. This was expressed in the first instance as 'Very important. It's like a team effort, isn't it'. The recurring use of the team metaphor by participants is suggestive of how obligations and expectations can become normatively embodied in the everyday by individuals who, prior to the programme, may have been quite disparate, lacking trust and any sense of obligation and expectation. This is also observable in comments made by other participants:

I'm at a place I think now where I can help others without being so afraid to put myself at risk. .. But yes, there is a social aspect because there's people I knew from my using days that I speak to here that are doing well, so that's got to be a good thing.

There's a camaraderie as well...It's the same group of blokes come down every week, and apart from the gym you wouldn't see them. So it's a social occasion as much as it is a workout.

Yeah we've formed, we've formed new friendships, we've met people and we've made friends and we've formed a bond yeah ... cause you definitely wanna make new friends and get on with people.. 'cause you don't come here not wanting to talk to anyone and keeping yourself to yourself and not getting involved because ... the whole point you want to get involved, you want everyone to come together and enjoy it so .. it has like a domino effect one person starts enjoying it and .. it gets everyone else going and everyone else gets excited and enjoys it more.

These extracts indicate that individuals, through the programme, have begun to recognise themselves as being 'in a place' where they can and want to reciprocate with fellow participants; trusting others, sharing the experience of friendship, feeling safe to be able to help someone else and communicate openly. Such relatively fleeting connections may be difficult to measure, but do indicate the potential for positive outcomes of creating an aspect of micro-level social capital, which should be considered as individual and context specific. Although obligations and expectations are internal cognitive emotional states, they are expressed as interactional capacities that may have an impact on how an individual considers how he could have the capability to be what he wanted to be. For one participant the language of debt appeared to be used as a proxy for obligation:

When you've lost so many years through depression, you feel like you're kind of in debt, and the only way you can get out of being in debt is by helping other people. So through the boxing or through the martial arts or through running, oddly enough, those are the type of activities that can help me to feel that I'm making up for all the things that I have lost so I'm no longer like in debt to myself.

The data indicate a process of social capital creation, and that it inheres in the social structure illustrated here in terms of the relative relational capacity of associational involvement. In the latter instance above, it is perhaps the dawning realisation that a desire to be obligated internally as well as externally can act on one's self-esteem, which in turn may impact on one's ability to interact positively. Critically, whilst the programme was not designed with social capital per se in mind, it is possible to identify its generation among individuals, and this enables action to occur. According to Coleman, this is social capital.

Amongst Coleman's social capitals, the development of interpersonal trust or reliance may be important in bringing about action or in acting as a potential that may enable action in a related or consequent context. In many ways the specific sport-related contexts of the programme provided particular bonding frameworks that enabled action that facilitated some of the positive characteristics associated with social capital, to develop. As with the examples above, the development of trust can be viewed as both an action and an outcome. Whilst this may be problematic for some (Edwards and Foley, 1997), Coleman's conceptualisation of social capital

identifies trust as a social lubricant that can inhere in types of social exchange within sport with the consequence of facilitating action. For one participant it amounted to having

... a few friends who do the football and they've got a really bad attitude, they've got a like a stay away from you attitude. Once you're going into a few tackles and you talk to them and they realise that actually, do you know what, I can trust you, you're all right.

Similar to previous research that has examined empirical analyses of social capital (Fine, 2010, Auld, 2008), Coleman's theoretical and conceptual interpretations of social capital as discrete aspects of social context do not translate cleanly or neatly in practice. Data from the programme point to a more complex dynamic where social capital is formed as a result of the interactional capacity of the separate capitals. This was strongly apparent in the connections between information potential and the development of other capitals associated with obligations and norms. The following comments from a participant and stakeholder respectively indicate the ways that information channels and learning were developed through the sociability that emerged in a trusting environment:

The method that they use in fishing, it makes the team come together and have to work together to solve whatever it is that they set up for us to do ... it helps us because we have to use each other's names, we have to talk, we have to communicate, we have to talk so without, whilst doing the activity, we're getting to know each other.

I think they've done a lot of learning through each other. There's a lot of learning examples in the practises that we gave were working in pairs, working in groups, actually getting them to work together and find out - almost like a buddying system, ones more able to help the less able ones.

Similarly, the following reflection by a stakeholder delivering boxing activities clearly indicates that various forms of social capital had been created through exposure to a wider peer-to-peer network where norms and values have been generated:

So then all of a sudden everybody has got the same background but you are speaking to different people. I think a lot of it is – with the flipped side of it I think the guys like the fact that they are with somebody that is like they are, but from a different hostel or from a different part of the country or a slightly different background. But you are all there for the same kind of reason and I think that's quite nice because it does – it brings people together which is, you can't put a price on that.

There is a certain immeasurability of outcomes suggested in the extract above which is itself implicit in the action potential arising from social interactions featuring an amalgam of Coleman's capitals and ensures that it is almost impossible to discriminate between the creation and consequences of social capital. Indeed, throughout the analysis of interview data, this distinction was tricky to identify. Coleman's insistence that social capital facilitates action suggests that what can be construed as social capital are those things that happen within relationships that allow further things to be achieved. Nevertheless, examples were cited by interviewees that clearly demonstrated particular actions associated with the development of social capital. For example, the following occurrence recounted by a member of staff from the homelessness charity speaks to the enactment of norms within a group of participants developing trusting relations:

One guy snuck off to use [drugs] and some [participants] went into the loo and smelt the drug, he was like, "You've just flipping done that, haven't you?" and took him aside and said, "Listen, you're going to mess this all up for all of us," and then they came and told me and said, "Look, I just need to tell you." Actually, all of them said the same thing, not in judging them because they've been there themselves. But they sorted it out themselves with this incredible social dynamic.

Although the preceding comment is from a member of staff it is indicative of how in-group solidarity developed among participants; a solidarity that was arguably based on trusting relations between participants; the development of norms and effective sanctions with particular obligations and expectations arising. These aspects developed arguably as a by-product of the activity that the participants were engaged in, resulting in a particular social dynamic that had great action potential. What it is not possible to be clear on is which capital came first or whether capitals operate in particular directions, however it is possible to claim that in this instance action came from and was dependent upon the social capital that was developed within this group.

Whilst it should be clear that groups formed amongst participants did not develop immediately, there is some evidence that some of these groups did endure. Once again this form of legacy, itself identified by Coleman as a capital, is attributable to a constellation of Coleman's social capitals, rather than one specific type. Essentially the idea of an appropriable social organisation where participants were able to move into new environments, independent of the programme, to continue certain activities is social capital dependent on the realisation of other social capitals. For example, two separate members of programme staff recounted:

When they were using, drugs was their common ground. But actually they do have interests, but then they will find their new group who actually has similar interests. It happens all the time. We've got three or four guys that all go fishing together and have become friends

...now for example, on the fishery management course, one of the [participants] will pick up the other guys (they're all drug free), the other [participants] on the course and drive there and back. We'll provide the food, they come and pick it up here, and then when they come back they give us the receipt for the petrol. So that is where we want to go with everybody, they become independent.

While the analysis is not about group formation per se, individuals did participate in group activities, apparently enjoying the activities and the company of fellow participants and as Coleman might argue this sociability is the action resource that enables us to understand why people cooperate, look to maintain that cooperative relationship and perhaps facilitates an assessment of their motivations in so doing. We now turn to the second major relationship dimension of the programme – between participants and staff.

Interactions, relations and connectedness between participants and programme staff

Relations between participants and staff were qualitatively different from those between participants, necessarily so when the structure and operation of the programme meant that social exchanges and relations between participants and staff were imbued with issues of power and control. Again, Coleman's focus on the micro-level supports analysis in this regard. For example, the following comment is representative of many participants, who spoke of their appreciation of the

opportunities provided to them by programme staff, with this appreciation, in turn, generating a desire amongst participants to reciprocate with mutual commitment:

I take my hat off to the [programme]; I've got a massive amount of respect for what they've done. Because without them I'd be stuffed, completely stuffed... there is no other way without them, I would never have got the opportunities. And I would never have got the job that I'm in now.

It is clear that this spirit of reciprocity imbued much of the participant-staff connectedness and as the comments from staff below indicate, interactions were not only positive, but built on developing trust so that the information potential of social network development could be used to bring about action – in this way the interaction that occurs can be identified as social capital. Furthermore these comments may also sensitise us to how actions can be embedded within particular social relations, and how staff may disguise utilitarian strategic intentions through soft and inclusive language:

Fantastic rapport with [participants] that basically – it's almost like friendships and the relationships that you build and the trust that you build and the trust that [staff members and I] and anybody else that gets involved builds with the clients – that's where it all stems from ... you have to build that trust with some people to gain the information that you want from them to be able to support and help them.

We try and encourage them and we're always in contact with them, week in, week out, so it's very relational. So it's very easy to see whether someone's doing well and when they're not. If they turn up drug affected or hammered, or they turn up looking like they've been dragged through a hedge backwards, or they turn up looking well.

I built friendships with these guys that they haven't really got at home. They haven't really got a good group of friends, they come to me and they can cry in front of me, they can say, "I feel insecure about this, I've got problems with my girlfriend", they couldn't say things like that to that group of friends.

Whilst it might appear that utilitarianism has trumped Coleman's unintentional capital, we argue that this would be a mistake on at least two accounts. First, the sporting activities in the programme were not specifically aimed at directing and conditioning clients and, second, the programme itself was not specifically geared to developing social capital. We counter that sport activities were incidental in providing opportunities to develop trusting relationships through which information could flow and that staff were concerned for the fidelity, rather than the outcomes, of the programme.

The last of the preceding quotes, in particular, is indicative of the possibilities of relationships with staff that are imbued with social capital, enabling individuals to be empowered to act when hitherto, they had felt unable to. The importance of reciprocal and trusting relationships between staff and participants were vital even, or especially, when staff felt it necessary to challenge forms of behaviour:

We do make sure we try and challenge negative thinking, we challenge negative behaviour, we challenge anger particularly in football, we'll take people aside, take them off the pitch, chat to them, we challenge racism, we challenge stereotyping, we challenge all that sort of stuff, we're not just a soft touch. But I think because of the nature of the project, it is quite

fun, so it makes it easy for us to have therapeutic relationships with them. So their relationship is very good, and obviously we always have staff and volunteers there to try and manage that, so if some guys who have anger management or other issues, we challenge that behaviour in front of everybody else. Not shaming, we'll take them aside, but they can see that we don't tolerate that, and they begin to reap the benefits of that and then once they start doing them themselves. I think we do try and encourage that sort of dynamic between them, they do take it on.

What is clear from the above comment is that the programme was both dynamic and normative, setting out some of the prosocial behavioural expectations and how negative behaviour maybe normatively challenged by staff and participants themselves. Ostensibly sanctioning sporting behaviour is referred to, but also indicates how self-sanctioning behaviour is hoped for but not necessarily expected. Participant comments discussed earlier suggest that self-sanctioning behaviour became part of a repertoire of normative processes that ensured that action was in accordance with in-group customs.

The evidence also indicates that, although positive experiences of participation in sporting activity were repeatedly remarked upon, it is in the context of potential action that some of the experiences of participants may give rise to the potential for social capital creation. Thus participation in a sporting activity that leads to the attainment of a qualification is potentially opening a door to possible networks that would not be available if that person did not have that qualification. Potentialities have thus been created and it is these that could lead to further action on behalf of an individual who is able to capitalise:

Because the guys that have done the fishing qualification, they said they have never had a qualification in their whole life. It is called an ASDAN award. They got a certificate; they got a rod...so they have actually got a bit of papers that says "you have succeeded in something".

Indeed this excerpt was representative of a sense of obligation among programme staff in promising participants opportunities to progress and to gain rewards, which amount to credit slips if they demonstrated commitment within the programme. For example, the following interviewee, who both participated and volunteered on the programme, indicated that participants found this reward system very different to encounters with 'authority' during their previous history of substance abuse:

I think [the programme staff member] has got that sort of like, not a father figure, but as a relationship there where he is authority. The clients who come, some of them who come have got a lot of problems with authority and I think they learn that not all authority is bad and a lot of it they learn that you treat people how you want to be treated.

In respect of obligations and any attendant expectations among both participants and staff, it was mutual respect, interpersonal trust and general trustworthiness of the social context fostered within the programme that was arguably creating social capital as an action resource.

Fundamentally for many of the staff members a key element of the programme was the potential for its transformative impact. Indeed the perceived trustworthiness of the programme's social environment, ability or potential to facilitate obligations and packaged within a sporting framework

ensured that any normative framing held on behalf of both staff and participants was both expected and desired. From this perspective action and action potentials were enabled ensuring that the acceptance of social behaviour in relation to authority and the implicit acceptance of norms, values and sanctions was an expectation held by all:

It shows them that another world is possible, and learning to have fun without using drugs. So often you can think, well, I'm getting this extreme high from this drug, how can I ever do normal life again, how can it ever be interesting again, it is not just boring. But you're learning to have fun again in ways that are legal.

Conclusion

Overall, this paper has explored how a sport-based social intervention programme can be understood via the use of Coleman's rational strain of social capital. Using the six types of social capital that Coleman identified, and taking a micro-analytic approach, the paper has explored the creation and outcomes of social capital through the relationships that participants had with other participants, as well as the relationships they had with staff involved in delivering the programme and its activities. It is apparent from the analysis that many of the six capitals identified by Coleman are pertinent across these two sets of relationships but, in line with other research concerning the operationalisation of social capital concepts, there is some blurring and imprecision in moving from the conceptual to the empirical. In regard to relations between participants, obligations and expectations, information potential and appropriable social organisation were prevalent examples. However, each would not operate in isolation. Further, staff and participant relationships demonstrated key examples of Coleman's obligations and expectations, norms and effective sanctions, authority relations and information potential. Again, none of these capitals operated in isolation and were entirely relational.

Social programmes such as this may arguably be acting on a 'win win' basis. First, a context that favours the development of manufactured-type social interventions (Hodgson, 2004) has to be in tune with political sensibilities, economic rationalities and cultural sensitivities. Second, those individuals to whom the programme is aimed need to be ready to change (Miller and Rollnick, 1991) and, finally, circumstances need to be such that readiness to change can be facilitated by structural capacity within which change can occur. So when Hodgson poses the question 'does it really matter where help comes from' (Hodgson, 2004, 145) the obvious answer is no. However, in the broader context of programmes such as this one, where aspects of identity and legitimacy of a manufactured group become matter of opinion, then what passes for social capital is open to question. This is an important point given our Colemanesque analysis and his insistence that social capital is a by-product of other activities.

Certainly within and throughout the operation of the programme social capital was formed and used as a facilitative device to enable resources to be mobilised. In particular, the evidence indicates the importance of unintentionality, particularly as the programme was not aimed at creating social capital, as a formative condition for the creation of social capital as something that facilitates action. Moreover, the social capital created would appear to be individual, contingent on the interactional context and aimed to benefit the one who stands to gain from any action initiated. Given that there were no predefined requirements associated with social capital, a strength of this programme concerns its flexibility in allowing and facilitating these social capitals to become manifest. This is

opposed to many top-down sport-for-development programmes that are often constrained and guided by predefined outcomes that must be adhered to (Harris and Adams, 2016). It would seem that it is this aspect of this social intervention programme – eschewing many of the top-down, evidence-driven, tick-box approaches and breaking with accepted norms – that has perhaps elicited particular results. Nevertheless, only longitudinal analyses of social programmes undertaken over a longer period than this research will ultimately be able to report on long-term success and what indeed success actually means for all participants on those programmes. We also acknowledge that the data presented in this paper may present a largely positive appraisal of the programme. Quite simply, what is presented is what was empirically derived from the methodology. However, we do recognise that more diverse and potential critical insights may have been identified if it had been possible to collect data with, for example, participants whose engagement with the programme had been minimal or discontinued.

Nevertheless, we argue that the use of Coleman's version of social capital as the basis for our framework for the preceding analysis is both pragmatic and in-tune with the 'cut and thrust' of the programme's aim to improve the lives of the participants. In particular, the analysis clarifies the nature of social relations among participants and between staff and participants, indicating how perceptions of social relationships, interactions and exchanges differ between the factions. Bottom-up peer-to-peer relationships characterised by interpersonal trust were vital in enabling outcomes for participants. Relations between staff and participants necessitated a different balance on the part of staff members. This balance was recognised by participants as a necessary part of the programme's processes and engendered obligations from participants to staff as a result. Certainly, the sport contexts and attempts by staff to balance authority and friendliness provided a context for the development of generalised trust.

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