

The Influence of High School Extracurricular Coaches and Activity Advisors  
on Student Social Capital

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## **Dedication**

To my wife Michele and my children, Michaela, Abby, Conor and Colin—for their love and support throughout the course of this study.

To my advisor Dr. Karen Seashore—for her wisdom, guidance and patience.

## **Abstract**

Extracurricular activities have long been an integral part of the K-12 educational experience in the United States, yet little is known about how the athletic coaches and activity advisors of these activities contribute to student development. There is a widely held belief that coaches are the prime contributors to the development of self-discipline, character and leadership skills among student participants. Social capital theory suggests that athletic coaches or activity advisors might be valuable contributors to student development by reinforcing positive social norms, fostering trust, and opening access to other information sources that would otherwise not exist. This study attempts to provide information regarding that claim. It focuses on students who have participated in varsity athletics, fine arts or school sponsored clubs in high school. It examines whether athletic coaches and advisors in these activities develop social capital in students. The study is a multiple case study replication design. It consists of an exploratory case study design of 24 separate cases. Twelve of these cases represent the impressions of student participants; twelve represent the impressions of coaches and activities advisors.

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## **Chapter One**

### **The High School Extracurricular Experience: Genuine or Romanticized?**

#### **Introduction**

High school extracurricular programs have been an integral part of the high school experience for decades. Many Americans participated and recall fondly their time as high school athlete, thespian, editor or musician. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity in my education career to work with the individuals who manage those programs and with the students who participate in them. I have also had the opportunity to manage public expectations surrounding extracurricular participation and programs. My involvement with extracurricular activities in public high schools spans over twenty years. I have served as an assistant and head athletic coach for both boys and girls' athletic programs. I have performed the duties of a high school activities director, responsible for overseeing all of the school's athletic, club and fine arts programming. I continue to work with those activities in my current capacity as a central office administrator through the oversight of issues that arise regarding student participation and program management at both of our district's high schools. Throughout these experiences, and particularly during difficult economic times, I have often been told how incredibly valuable participation in these programs is for students and the community.

While many parents, alumni and community members laud the value of extracurricular programs there are others from each of those stakeholder groups who share a different view. These individuals do not believe that extracurricular programs are

critically important to the high school experience. Rather, they believe these programs are unnecessary and siphon valuable financial resources from other more academically centered programs. They believe that school-based extracurricular programs could and should be eliminated and the responsibility for them delegated to community groups or municipal park and recreation departments. These divergent viewpoints raise a basic question: What is really known about the impact of extracurricular activities on participating student development?

The benefits of participation in high school extracurricular programs have not been studied as extensively as other areas related to student development and learning in the K-12 education system. The research that has been done in this area suggests a strong correlation between participation and student development in several key areas. Those areas include: enhanced self-esteem and self-concept, higher political aspirations, higher educational aspirations and attainment, greater school retention and lower delinquency rates to name a few. However, virtually all of these studies are cross-sectional and quantitative and have yet to demonstrate a causal connection between participation and student development. Their quantitative focus leaves room to examine what the quality of the activities experience has been like for students as they go through them.

It is assumed that a key aspect of the quality of the experience for student participants is their relationship with the adults who run those programs. Yet, to date there have been few studies, either quantitative or qualitative, which examine the role an athletic coach or activity advisor plays in student development (Turman, 2000; Snyder, 1972; Stewart & Sweet, 1992). Through qualitative analysis, this paper's focus is

concerned with initiating an examination of the influence athletic coaches or activities advisors have on student development and their social capital.

Briefly, social capital refers to the benefit that an individual receives from membership in a group. This paper examines whether extracurricular activities, as group endeavors, provide social capital development for students and whether the coach or advisor has any impact on that development.

### **Participation Rates and Economic Impact**

Extracurricular activities are an integral part of the K-12 educational experience in the United States. For purposes of this study, extracurricular activities are defined as all athletic and fine art programs--as well as club activities such as science club, foreign language club, chess club, literary magazine, yearbook and other activities that involve students in the creation of works that are to be appreciated for their aesthetic or intellectual content. Student participation in these activities continues to be popular. The number of students taking advantage of extracurricular opportunities has grown steadily over the last several years reaching an all-time high for participation during the 2011-2012 school year. In that year, over 7.6 million students participated in extracurricular activities nationwide (National Federation of High Schools Participation Survey [NFHS], 2012).

In athletics alone, Minnesota ranks as one of the top 10 states in participation in the nation. In the areas of athletics and fine arts combined, Minnesota reported a participation rate of over 310,000 students from over 535 high schools. Of the 310,000 participants, approximately 227,000 were comprised of athletes and 83,000 were fine art

participants (Minnesota State High School League Bulletin [MSHSL], 2012). In addition, these levels do not include the countless number of students who participate in clubs and other activities such as yearbook, school newspapers, and literary or foreign language clubs that operate in schools everywhere and are not reported to either the MSHSL or the NFHS.

While a high number of student participants are generally viewed as positive, it does not come without an economic cost. In Minnesota, it is estimated that school districts spend from one to three percent of their general fund budget on student activities programming. Minnesota's K-12 proposed general fund budget for fiscal year 2012-2013 was \$14 billion. A conservative one percent estimate suggests a minimum of \$140 million for extracurricular programs. A significant portion of funding for extracurricular programming consists of athletic coach and activities advisors salaries. In Minnesota, there are 22,200 athletic coaches or activities advisors (MSHSL, 2012). Salaries for athletic coaches and fine arts advisors can range anywhere from \$1,000 to over \$5,000 per activity. Again, using the conservative \$1,000 figure, \$22.2 million is the cost of coach and advisors salaries annually.

### **Problem Statement**

As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, substantial amounts of public resources are being designated for coaching and advising in student activities. This investment is made despite the fact that virtually nothing is known about what contributions these adults make to the development of the students who participate. There are no studies that examine how students who participate in these activities view their coach or advisor.

Likewise, no one has studied the quality of the student experience from the perspective of coach/advisor-student relationship. This reality exists despite the fact that researchers have studied participation in high school extracurricular activities for many years.

The absence of research in this area narrows the focus of this study to the role of the coach/advisor on social development. Gathering student and coach/advisor perspectives calls for a qualitative study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to provide an exploratory analysis of the role the athletic coach or activity advisor plays in student extracurricular participants' social development at the high school level. As a result of the lack of research on this topic, the study seeks baseline information. It will be focused on one area: social capital development. Social capital refers to the benefits that an individual receives from membership in a group and the relationships that form there. Social capital development can occur at a micro-level (which consists of social capital development by an individual person) or at a macro-level (which consists of the social capital developed by nations and states). This study's emphasis is on the individual or micro-level.

Coleman (1988) identified three key social capital terms that are used throughout this study: (1) trust and reciprocity, (2) access to information and (3) acceptable social norms and sanctions. Trust and reciprocity are two conditions of social capital. Those conditions develop when members of a group act on behalf of each other in a consistent manner. Acting for the benefit of other group members creates trust and it tends to lead to a sense of obligation on the part of group members to respond in kindness or with

reciprocity. Access to information refers to the diversity present in groups. Each member brings with them unique prior relationships or experiences that become accessible to other members of the group through the affiliation. Finally, and closely aligned with trust and reciprocity, are acceptable social norms and sanctions. This refers to the unofficial and sometimes official group norms and behavioral expectations. As members act within those norms, they reinforce behavior expectations from members of the group. These three conditions or terms are central to this study's analysis of the coach/advisor and student participation relationship.

Millions of students participate in extracurricular activities every year. Their participation provides students with a social network within the activity of their choice. Social capital develops through relationships built with other members of the chosen group. As the leader of the group, a coach or advisor is arguably in the best position to help create an environment where the greatest development of social capital can occur. These two factors, high participation numbers along with organized group activities makes the study of the role of the coach or advisor in extracurricular activities ripe for review.

### **Research Questions**

It is generally recognized that student development can occur in a variety of ways. However, the focus of this study is narrow in scope and twofold. First, it attempts to examine whether there is evidence to suggest that student participants are gaining enhanced social capital development by virtue of their participation in extracurricular activities. Secondly, it examines whether coaches and advisors feel that social capital

development is part of their charge as a coach or advisor and, if so, can they identify conscious actions that they take to carryout that charge.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do student participants in extracurricular activities report the presence of social capital outcomes: developed trust and reciprocity, access to information and adherence to acceptable social norms in their relationships with their coaches and advisors?
2. Do coach/advisors see their role as developing social capital beyond that needed to develop or produce successful student performance in their activity?
3. What specific strategies do coaches/advisors utilize to assist them in creating social capital?

### **Study Design**

This study consists of a multiple-case study replication design. It utilized an exploratory case study design of separate cases. Twelve student participants were selected, as well as 12 athletic coaches or activities advisors. The case, or unit of analysis, was the individual student participant and the individual coach/advisor. Five of the students who participated identified their primary extracurricular activity as involving fine arts or a club. The remaining seven students identified athletics as their primary extracurricular activity. In correlation, five fine art or club advisors participated in the study with the remaining seven participants consisting of athletic coaches. The participants were a mixture of females and males at both the student level and athletic coach and activity advisor level.

### **Conclusion**

Many parents and other adults report that high school coaches and advisors can be

prime contributors to the development of self-discipline, character and teamwork in a student. In addition, social capital theory suggests that coaches and advisors might be valuable contributors to student development by reinforcing acceptable social norms, fostering trust, and opening access to other information sources and opportunities that would otherwise not exist. These claims are founded on the notion that a coach or advisor can have a relationship that is different in some way than those a student develops with other adults in the school setting. This notion is supported by several assumptions. These assumptions include: students self-select the extracurricular activities they engage in rather than being assigned them such as a math or history class. Also, students tend to choose their activities because they find them enjoyable. And finally, students spend more time with their coaches or advisors compared to other school staff and they usually enjoy the activity and often want to continue the activity beyond high school. These assumptions presume that coaches or advisors can be differentiated from other school staff because they provide a unique opportunity to influence student growth.

While the foregoing discussion provides a foundation for the belief that participation in extracurricular activities has positive benefits for student development, it remains to be seen as to whether that belief can be substantiated. This study's goal is to begin to provide evidence as to whether that belief is well-founded (at least in terms of social capital development) and serve as an embarking point for future research that may ultimately shed greater light on the impact of high school coaches/advisors in overall student development.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

The previous chapter describes why it is important to determine whether a high school athletic coach or activity advisor contributes to the development of social capital for students who participate in extracurricular activities. This chapter begins with an overview of the literature regarding social capital theory that is most relevant for this study. The overview will include the varied definitions of the term social capital and the different contexts in which it is potentially produced and utilized. In addition, the purported benefits for the individual and society resulting from involvement in social groups will be examined along with the identification of key drawbacks that may exist through involvement in social groups. It finishes with a discussion of issues focused on how social capital is measured and how it may be applied for youth development in the K-12 system.

Subsequent to the review of literature on social capital will be an examination of available research on the benefits of student participation in high school extracurricular activities. This examination will be from both a student academic achievement and a developmental perspective, including the prominent conceptual frameworks associated with each perspective.

## Social Capital

### Historical Theories

A uniform definition of social capital is elusive. Social capital can be viewed through a variety of lenses, each of which results in slightly different definitions. All lenses, however, assume that humans benefit from membership in groups. The roots of the concept are deep, emerging from social contract theory. Early political theorists from the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, regardless of their views on man's state of nature, espoused theories around a social contract among individuals as leading to a set of pro-social norms of behavior that were necessary for a orderly and civilized society. In "Leviathan, Second Treatise on Civil Government, The Social Contract and Discourses" (Sibley, 1970). Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about democracy in America during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and concluded that Americans,

...meet together in large numbers, they converse, they listen to one another, and they are mutually stimulated to all sorts of undertakings. They afterward transfer to civil life the notions they have thus acquired and make them subservient to a thousand purposes. (Field, 2003, p. 30)

Later, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, John Dewey alluded to elements that have come to be associated with social capital, though not providing a specific definition. For example, while writing about ethical socialization he linked individual choices and development with social connectedness when he said:

For every act, by the principle of habit, modifies disposition--it sets up a certain kind of inclination and desire. And it is impossible to tell when the habit thus strengthened may have a direct and perceptible influence on our association with others. Certain traits of character have such an obvious connection with our social relationships that we call them "moral" in an emphatic sense – truthfulness, honesty, chastity, amiability, etc. (Dewey, 1916, p. 364)

This quote reflects Dewey's underlying assumption that membership in groups is advantageous and can foster individual development. Social capital theorists have expounded on that belief and sought to demonstrate an interconnection between involvements in groups and enhanced individual or even group socio-economic advancement. The notion that one can gain not only personal growth, but also economic advantage through social networks, is one that reflects a common sense perspective and is embodied by the old adage "it is not what you know, it is who you know." The concept of social capital as an economic benefit gained a foothold in intellectual thought during the early 1970s and has continued to build momentum since that time. These two perspectives—social capital as a major component of personal development, and as a contributor to socio-economic advantages—are prominent but distinctive strains in the literature that will be explored below.

### **Varied Definitions**

John Field offers, perhaps, the simplest approach to the social capital concept when he asserts:

...relationships matter. By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could do only with great difficulty. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks; to the extent that these networks constitute a resource, they can be seen as forming a kind of capital. (Field, 2003, p. 1)

This is, however, only one of many definitions. It has been described as, “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, p. 119). Another definition states: “The ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of their membership in social networks or other social structures” (Portes, 1998, p. 6). Yet another definition purports that social capital is:

...the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organizations 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. (Coleman, 1994 p. 300)

In sum, caution must be exercised when using the term social capital because scholars have used and defined the term differently from academic arena to academic arena.

### **The Emergence of Contemporary Perspectives**

Variations in the definitions of social capital have evolved over time, just as the potential value of social associations has been discussed for centuries. Yet many credit public educator, Lyda J. Hanifan, as having introduced the term social capital in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While discussing the importance of community networks on student performance, Hanifan wrote:

The tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit.... If he comes into contact with his neighbor and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of *social capital*, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors. (Hanifan, 1916, pp. 130-131)

Nonetheless, social capital as a term was largely invisible until the late 1960s, when Jane Jacob, while conducting urban studies, reintroduced the term in the context of neighborhood self-government and the formation of social networks (Jacobs, 1961).

Robert Salisbury in 1969 incorporated the term and advanced the concept through his discussion of interest group formation and exchange theory in the business of agriculture (Salisbury, 1969), thus linking it with political power.

Pierre Bourdieu, in 1977 discussed social capital in the context of materialistic social interactions and exchanges but linked economics, in turn, with the emergence of symbolic power in social formations (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu developed and refined his approach to social capital in later years. In 1986, he discussed the concept of social capital through an examination of alternative forms of capital existing apart from purely economic capital. He asserted that capital actually takes three forms: economic, human (education and skills), and social. As one of the most influential theorists of social capital, he shifted the emphasis from the general value of networks to a focus on relationships as access to resources. He defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu,

1986, p. 248). Bourdieu asserted that social groups allow members to draw upon the resources of the group for their current or future benefit.

Unlike other network theorists (Granovetter, 1973), Bourdieu further argued that these benefits are not fortuitous, rather they are enhanced through deliberate actions or investments in the group to which one seeks membership. Bourdieu also considered social interaction along with education and skill attainment as social and human capital because these concepts ultimately were attributable to economic capital. In other words, social capital can provide access to otherwise unattainable personal contacts, expert opinions and cultural values, which in turn are utilized by the individual to increase their earning potential or access to economic vitality. Bourdieu's ideas focus on the benefit to the individual through membership in social groups and are at the core of the concept of social capital theory as an economic resource.

The American sociologist James S. Coleman departs somewhat from Bourdieu's focus on individual benefit in his article "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." In the article, he states that social capital "inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors, rather than being an attribute of an individual" (Coleman, 1988, p. 98). He emphasizes a benefit to the individual, as well as for other members of the group. He asserts that society as a whole benefits when social capital is developed. This position alleges a benefit through the creation of resources, a benefit that goes beyond the aid of the individual or social group and extends to all of society.

Coleman identifies three primary ways social capital is of public value. The first of these can be described as the trust that is created by membership in social networks—

trust that ensures promises will be kept and obligations will be paid. Mutual trust is inherent in social structures that arise when actors do things for each other. Each time an actor does a favor or performs a service for another member of the group, a form of credit is created. At some later point, the actor will call in that credit where he or she deems it most appropriate. Coleman notes that this type of social capital is dependent upon the trustworthiness of the society to its members that debts will be paid back and upon the extent of the credit in hand. This idea is most commonly referred to as “trust and reciprocity” (Coleman, 1988, p. 102).

A second benefit of social capital as believed by Coleman, is the generation of accessible information and opportunities that social networks make available. He refers to these as “Information Channels” (Coleman, 1988, p.104). Different actors within any social structure typically have different knowledge bases and life experiences. Members of a group can call upon one another to tap into the information they each possess to enhance their own development and potentially transform the information into human and economic capital.

Finally, Coleman returns to Dewey’s theme of relationship as a source of social norms. He describes “norms and effective sanctions” as a benefit that social networks create and enforce, which allows for an orderly society (Coleman, 1988, p. 104). This benefit is closely aligned with trustworthiness of social structures, in the sense that, if a norm is acceptable and effective it typically requires trust from all members that the norm will be followed. Coleman cites, for example, that societies that establish norms regarding crimes against persons. If a society frowns upon those types of crimes

collectively, each member can walk outside with confidence that he or she will not be harmed. In a school setting, norms regarding student behavior and achievement socialize students into consistent behaviors, so long as the trust within the school body is strong enough.

Not all social capital theorists are as focused at the micro-level as Bourdieu and Coleman. While Coleman suggests a public value of social capital, he is still primarily concerned with the individual. Other theorists, however, depart from a focus on the micro perspective and argue that social capital is an asset to communities, states and even nations first and foremost, with individual benefit secondary. Social capital at the macro-level is embodied in the work of political scientist, Robert Putnam. Putnam has taken the position that communities or nations that have strong aspects of civic involvement generate larger amounts of social capital than those that do not. This social capital enables those communities to have stronger government, safer communities, and greater development of collective economic resources. Putnam classifies social capital as a community asset rather than an individual asset. Putnam's most famous work is the 1995 article in the *Journal of Democracy*, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," and his follow-up book in 2000, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. In those works he describes connections between lower voting rates, less economically vibrant economies and efficiencies of information and trust with the decline in membership of traditional civic institutions such as: the Elks Club, PTA, Red Cross, and so on. His point is that where membership in these groups wane, social capital is eroded. This erosion leads to isolation in communities and stagnation of trust,



economic growth, and participatory government.

The three authors discussed above form the bedrock of social capital theory. Others have incorporated their ideas in an effort to assert that social capital, in one form or another, benefit every level of human resource development. At the individual or micro-level, social capital helps people enhance their access to information, opportunities, safety, and so on. At the group level, social groups can develop intra-group and inter-group networks that allow for formation of trust, and opportunities to further develop human and cultural capital. On the macro-level, strengthening social capital reserves assists in the economic development of the community, region and country.

It is clear that different researchers have applied the term social capital to differing disciplines, forms and contexts. The disciplines span economic, political, and sociological (to name a few), while the forms range from economic, physical, cultural and human capital perspectives. The contexts vary from being individually focused, community focused, and internationally focused. Regardless of the foregoing variables, what are the identified attributes of strong social capital that run through each context?

### **Attributes and Social Promise**

Regardless of context, social capital offers a variety of potential for the enhancement of individual, group, and societal development. On the individual level, it is clear that relationships between individuals within a group hold promise that at least three things will occur: information will be exchanged, access to expertise will be gained, and access to opportunities will be created. The latter allows individual members to grow and enhance their status; this growth may be intellectual, economic, emotional, spiritual, or

cultural. In this way, social capital is a resource for the potential development of greater human, economic, or cultural capital. This potential can manifest itself through greater income, influence, educational attainment, political aspiration and participation, and even assimilation. All of these aspects correlate either directly or very strongly to enhanced economic resources.

The potential for economic benefit described above does not happen in the same way for every individual or for every affiliation--context plays a critical role. The role context plays is addressed in the discussion below regarding equal opportunity legislation and its impact on racial inequalities:

The merit notion that, in a free society, each individual will rise to the level justified by his or her competence conflicts with the observation that no one travels that road entirely alone. The social context within which individual maturation occurs strongly conditions what otherwise equally competent individuals can achieve. This implies that absolute equality of opportunity...is an ideal that cannot be achieved. (Loury, 1977, p. 176)

While the quote is not specifically discussing social capital, it stands for the proposition that society has a profound effect, regardless of innate skill possessed by an individual, on opportunity and access. This idea around the role of context is important to understanding the role social capital plays, and can play, in individual and group development.

On the group dynamic or community level, it is argued that social capital leads to increased trust between members of the group and facilitates expectations of follow through and meeting obligations. It improves efficiency through knowledge of information and resource sources and it reinforces social norms so members of a society know what to expect and what is expected of them. These social norms lead to reduced

transaction costs and enhanced efficiency.

Alejandro Portes (1998) summarizes the foregoing and the prominent potential of social capital into three functions. The first is social capital for the enhancement of social control. An example of this function is the development and reinforcement of behavioral norms that promote a common understanding of expected behaviors among members of the group. These expectations are useful to those in authority (ie. parents, school officials, law enforcement) in promoting compliance with expectations.

The second function is focused on social capital as a source of family support. This function concerns the role the family plays in social capital and holds that the closer the family, the greater support offered to an individual and therefore the greater the likelihood of individual development in other areas. In short, the greater the connection is between the individual, their family, and the larger community, the greater the likelihood of the generation of useful social capital as a resource for all. Portes' assertions, supported by Coleman's work, suggest that social capital developed through the family support function is even more important where the social norms of the entire community are not as well established. In a sense, if the first function of social capital is weak, a strong secondary function of strong family support can make up for it.

The third and perhaps most important function is focused on social capital as a source of benefits, that extends beyond the immediate family. Simply put, this function allows the individual access to employment and career ladder opportunities, educational attainment and entrepreneurial opportunities to which they might not otherwise have been given access. It is the promise of potential upward mobility in a variety of ways that

holds the greatest promise for the role social capital can play in individual, and ultimately, community development and resource attainment.

### **Limitations of Social Capital Perspective**

Increasing individual access and opportunities for personal and community development through networking is the fundamental premise and promise of social capital. But, what are the limitations of that promise? Though Portes summarizes leading authors and their conceptions of social capital, he is quick to point out that the various functions of social capital may produce results that are much less positive than social capital proponents typically acknowledge or discuss. He outlines at least four negative consequences of too much reliance on the promise of social capital for individual and societal transformation in positive ways. They are: “exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward leveling norms” (Portes, 1998, p. 15).

The exclusion of outsiders reflects what occurs when group identity, norms, and culture operate to shun outsiders. Any group with a social identity has the potential to exclude. In this sense, while social capital in most cases extends some benefit to members, it also siphons beneficial opportunities through its propensity toward exclusivity. An example of this occurred in New York City in the 1840s; Irish, Italian, and Polish Americans in New York City operated with extreme intention to exclude one another from neighborhoods, customs, and job categories (Waldinger, 1995).

Relationships between members of a group enhance the potential for the development of social capital. However, those same social interactions can also produce

negative outcomes by potentially placing excessive demands on individuals within the group. For example, acceptable norms within a social group might require an individual member to sacrifice personal opportunities of development or advancement in order to fulfill obligations to the group. An example would be a familial expectation that an oldest child take over a family business rather than have the freedom to pursue personal interests in the same way a younger sibling might. Thus, this expectation becomes a potential hurdle to that child's ability to grow economically, culturally, or socially. Another example would be a cultural expectation that only male family members attend college. Female members of the family are expected to contribute to that end with no opportunity for equality of access to educational opportunities. In these ways, group membership and social capital can actually limit personal growth and development.

Strong community ties that can promote social capital can also work to thwart expression of personal freedom. Where group norms are tightly adhered to, individuals have less opportunity to express themselves. This is often demonstrated when young members of an established group who were born into existing norms, reject the group's long lived norms and leave the group. Where all citizens intricately know each other, any variation of norms can lead to anxiety and separation--choices are limited to stay and assimilate or be ostracized and leave the group.

Finally, group identity and solidarity can act to drive the group norms downward. This is manifested when one member of a group achieves a level of success that is rare for members of the larger group. When this occurs, the group often reinforces the norms by pointing out the rarity of this level of success and driving out the group member who

has succeeded beyond expectations.

Whether the outcomes of social capital are positive or detrimental, context plays a major role in the type and extent of social capital available to individuals within a society (Loury, 1977). This reality is shared by Edwards, Foley and Diani (2001) who pointed out that social capital is not equally available to all members of a community or society in just the same way other forms of capital are not evenly accessible. In addition, they correctly point out that geographic location and isolation play a prominent role in the extent or type of social capital available.

Social capital can be a double-edged sword. At its core is the benefit of close societal ties and benefits that members and the group attain by virtue of their membership both internally and through external networking. However, an over reliance on the closeness of the group or group norms can lead to negative consequences. Context also plays a leading role in whether the benefits will outweigh the negatives or vice versa. At any rate, the role of culture, in any future studies on social capital, is a critical variable to examine.

### **Measuring Social Capital**

The foregoing discussion has introduced a variety of ways that social capital theory has been defined, applied and studied. This variance has generated different attempts at measuring the amount of social capital that is developed or is present through membership in social groups. These attempts have yielded no real consensus on how to measure social capital and the measurement tools that are employed are very limited and narrowly tailored toward the particular context being examined.

Generally speaking, there are two traditional methods for the measurement of social capital and both are quantitative in nature. The first consists of ascertaining through survey, the type, amount, and level of group involvement in a given society or subset of society. This approach is particularly applied by (and potentially useful for) theorists that ascribe to social capital theory as espoused by Putnam. It takes stock of the types and number of groups individuals are involved in. The second attempts to utilize survey data to ascertain levels of trusts, civic engagement, rational choice, etc.

Measuring the structure, form, or resource value of social capital in a consistent way has proven elusive. This stems, in large part, from the broad nature of the application of the theory. Social capital exists in social relationships within groups and between groups. Social capital can exist at the individual, group, community and national or international level. A researcher must be very clear about how they define social capital, within what conceptual framework they are viewing the theory, and at what level they are attempting to measure before they can begin to review available data, or create reliable data measurement methods. As this continues to be done, perhaps consistent and verifiable tools will be developed that can be applied at the various levels where we believe social capital to reside. Measurement, however, is clearly a work in progress.

### **Extracurricular Activities and Social Capital**

To date, the value of student participation in extracurricular activities has not been examined through the lens of social capital development. However, many other aspects of student involvement in extracurricular activities have been studied and have produced meaningful results. A review of available research on student participation in

extracurricular programs begins with the 1987 article “Participation in Extracurricular Activities in Secondary Schools: What is Known, What Needs to be Known?” by Alyce Holland and Thomas Andre. The authors point out that researchers who examined the effect of extracurricular programs on students have generally fallen into two categories. One consists of those who focus on the value of participation to an educational achievement perspective, while the second is comprised of those who view that value from a developmental perspective (Holland & Andre, 1987). As I will discuss later, both of these perspectives can be tied to the generation of social capital.

The educational achievement perspective emphasizes the relationship between participation in extracurricular programs and gains in student academic achievement. It stresses linking participation to gains in formal knowledge and looks for tangible, typically quantitative, empirical evidence of that linkage (i.e. grades and test scores). These represent important forms of capital because they help to determine students’ post-graduation success.

The developmental perspective, in contrast, focuses on participation in extracurricular activities as experiences that further the overall development of students as members of society. Rather than stress a direct link from participation to academic achievement data, this area of research focuses on the effect of participation in areas such as: school retention, level of educational attainment, socialization, peer groups influence and self-confidence. It is believed that these types of youth development enhance the lives of students, contribute to their maturation, and often pave an easier path to academic and professional success.



## **Educational Achievement Perspective**

Early work originating from the educational achievement perspective suggested that participation in extracurricular programming actually had a detrimental effect on academic achievement (Coleman, 1961). In his seminal work *The Adolescent Society*, Coleman concluded that emphasis by students on extracurricular participation worked against the purported goal of schools, the transmission of formal knowledge. His theory is often referred to as a zero-sum model. To summarize this model, it is based on the notion that all adolescent activities are in competition with each other from a time perspective. Typical categories of activities include: academic study, socializing, employment, or participation in extracurricular activities and volunteer work. He based his conclusion relative to extracurricular participation upon the self-reported value adolescents placed on participation in extracurricular programs. Subsequent research work was done in tandem with the High School and Beyond data from 1988. This research indicated that participation in extracurricular activities, while perhaps not operating against achievement, did little to advance student achievement except among small groups of students and did not benefit achievement for the general student body (Melnick, Sabo & VanFossen, 1992; Sabo, VanFossen & Melnick, 1993).

Researchers have utilized two primary theoretical frameworks when examining the effects of participation from the educational achievement perspective. The zero-sum model discussed above is one theoretical framework. The second theoretical framework is goal-conflict theory. This framework is closely related to the zero-sum model and holds that non-educational student goals conflict with and adversely affect student

achievement. The key distinction between the two is that the zero-sum model is on *time* spent on other activities, whereas the goal-conflict model focuses on the *commitment* of the student to other interests or goals. The emphasis on commitment to educational achievement pursuits creates a tension then with extracurricular activity participation; the theory therefore minimizes opportunities for the development of student social capital in the K-12 setting. It is possible that relationships students have by virtue of their membership in a particular academic class may provide opportunities for social capital development but that development clearly is not a concern for theorists operating from the goal-conflict perspective.

### **Developmental Perspective**

Departing from an educational achievement perspective are researchers who have chosen to examine extracurricular participation through a student social development lens. They assert that social development through participation helps students in ways that cannot easily be measured through an examination of test scores or grades. Many researchers have examined participation effects with emphasis on various areas and have identified positive correlations between participation and their topic. These topics include: race relations, self-esteem and self-concept, political aspirations, educational aspirations and attainment, school retention and connectedness, and lower delinquency rates.

Researchers have also identified positive correlations between extracurricular participation and greater school retention and connectedness (McNeal, 1995). Research has shown that extracurricular participation reduces the likelihood of dropping out of

school (McNeal, 1995). Further, it has been proven that extracurricular participation lowers dropout rates for typically at-risk students at a higher level than mainstream students (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997).

Several studies have also documented a connection between participation in extracurricular activities and greater self-esteem (Grabe, 1976,1981; Yarworth & Gauthier, 1978). Participation has also been positively linked to greater political and occupational aspirations and attainment (Hanks, 1981; Otto, 1975,1976). More recent research has supported these results finding that over all, participation in extracurricular activities has a positive correlation to a myriad of developmental outcomes, including: lower dropout rates, greater identity with school, less involvement with risky activities, greater self-esteem, higher level of educational attainment, occupational attainment, and income (Eccles & Barber, 1997, 1999); Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003; Videon, 2002; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Research on the connection between extracurricular participation and race relations indicates participation in socially integrated athletic activities promotes positive racial attitudes and behaviors (Slavin & Madden,1974; Crain, 1981). A significant body of research has investigated the association between participation and level of educational attainment: generally (Speitzer & Pugh, 1973; Spady, 1971; Otto, 1975, 1976; Otto & Alwin,1977), in males (Rehlberg & Schafer, 1968) and in females (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1977; Hanks and Eckland, 1976). In addition, more recent studies have produced similar findings for black males. Braddock's (1981) findings held true even when controlling for such variables as socio-economic status (SES), parent involvement and academic success

(Snyder & Spreitzer, 1992). Evidence has also been produced that regardless of race, student participants in extracurricular activities had higher grades, better attendance, and less reported disciplinary incidents (Whitley, 1999).

Two important frameworks shape much of the research that focuses on student development. One focuses on peer relationships, while the other emphasizes a broader set of personal relationships in which a student may be involved. Both are important for studying how extracurricular activities may affect students.

The peer-focused framework is referred to as the leading crowd framework (Broh, 2002, pp. 71-72). It emphasizes the relationships between students who participate in activities together and how they benefit from their association. It suggests that students who lack resources or capital can benefit through their relationships with peers by focusing on academics or educational attainment in a manner consistent with those peers who perform well or have access to resources. The personal relationship framework focuses on social capital theory and social networking; this focus is not limited to the examination of the role peers play in student development. It also examines the role that parents, teachers, community, and other adults play in student growth. Students develop social capital when their access to people and networks expand via association (Broh, 2002).

Broh's (2002) study focused, from a developmental perspective, on a larger body of extracurricular participation: the role participation plays in the development of social capital. The conclusions reached by Broh demonstrate that there is evidence to support both the leading crowd and social capital theories as linked to student

development. Her research supports a link between the intensification of student attachment to the school. Further, the evidence supports that students have access to greater resources than had they not participated. Finally, there is evidence to support a link between participation and adherence to positive school norms. The strength of those links is variable dependent upon activity. While Broh's research provides evidence of these links, it does not provide information with any real specificity of *how* social capital is developed. Her study is important because it explores links between teachers and students, parents and schools, yet leaves room as to the link between students and the role of coaches or advisors.

Two additional frameworks have also been utilized by researchers when studying the effects of participation in extracurricular activities from a developmental perspective. These frameworks are also tied to social capital development. The first is referred to as the identification framework. It has also been referred to as participation-identification or commitment to school (Marsh, 1992), investment in school (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986), and integration in school (McNeal, 1999). The focus of this framework is on assessing the factors that promote school connectedness among students. Once identified, the central concern of these frameworks shifts to an examination of the role participation plays in a student identifying with and wanting to be in school and correlating this identification with overall student development that leads to success later in life.

## **Limitations and Emerging Trends**

Extracurricular participation can be critical to aspects of student development. However, it is remiss not to acknowledge weaknesses with many of the studies mentioned above. For example, much of the research to date has focused on a small segment of extracurricular participation, like football or basketball singularly. It is often a mix of results that has had difficulty controlling different contextual variables such as SES, race, family context, IQ, number and type of activities involved in. Another problematic aspect of extracurricular participation study is the fact that self-selection plays such a prominent role. Students choose to play a sport or engage in an activity and that choice likely affects the benefit, which potentially affects their development. This hampers the ability to generalize results to larger populations.

Fortunately, some of these drawbacks in the research discussed above are beginning to be addressed. Eccles and Barber (1999) undertook a large study in Michigan that not only included a large sample, but also accounted for a variety of in-school and out-of-school activities, in an effort to link participation between leisure activities and positive youth development. Their findings reinforce the research findings presented above, correlating participation with positive student development. There has also been some important work done regarding the role context plays in the correlation between participation and student development. In these studies, context has varied but included: location of the school, size of school, type of activity involvement, level of activity involvement, community values and community SES.

Relevant results have been produced by studies attempting to measure the impact

of context on student development through participation. For example, Guest and Schneider (2003) conducted a study on the role that school context plays in the relative benefits derived from extracurricular participation. The study was premised on the theory that participation in extracurricular activities does not have uniform positive effects for all participants. Rather, the benefit is determined by the context of participation regardless of whether the context is shaped by individual differences or differences in school climate, SES, or school and community values relative to participation. The study established differences in outcomes depending upon the variables listed above. Its core finding is simply that “development through participation...is an intangible process of assuming an identity that takes on the particular values in relation to the social context” (Guest & Schneider, 2003, p. 105). In other words, what it means to be a basketball player in one school may be entirely different from what it means to be a basketball player in another school. The difference determines the type and extent of student development that occurs through participation.

The Guest and Schneider study is significant, because it can inform the adults involved in the school setting and extracurricular activities on how they might maximize the value they bring to student development. They can do this by understanding that development can take many forms and may look different in their school as opposed to other schools. It may even look different for different students in different activities within the same school. In this sense, understanding context, coupled with knowledge of their community and culture, are critical for school staff in shaping student development opportunities.

## Conclusion

Research using social capital theory, a concept that can be traced to early philosophy regarding democracy and political science, has grown steadily since the 1970s. The fundamental assumption is that humans benefit from the social interaction of membership in groups and between groups. This benefit can be identified as a tangible resource possessed by individuals to produce a benefit in the future. Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam are three seminal authors on the topic, and they focus on social capital development for the individual, individual and group, individual and society as a whole respectively. Their theories and conceptual frameworks are the backbone of current research by their disciples.

The broad applications of social capital theory have given rise to numerous, yet not entirely consistent, definitions of the term. The shifting nature of the definition, coupled with varied levels of application, has made development of consistent and comparable measurement methods difficult to create. This issue proves problematic when one attempts to ascertain how social capital is developed, as well as how and where the resource is manifested in long-term production of value. Difficulty measuring longer term production has, along with some of the other properties associated with social capital, led some to question whether or not it can be classified as capital at all. In addition, some scholars skeptical of the promise for individual and societal benefit from social capital theory and development have rightly pointed out some dangers associated with the theory. Most notably, isolation and exclusion, excess demands on group members, loss of individual freedom, and lowering of behavioral norms.



Despite the identified drawbacks, the potential of social capital development for individual and societal growth discussed earlier is so strong that the theory demands further research and refinement. There is a strong emotional investment in extracurricular participation by students, coach/advisors, parents and school community. In addition, there is a substantial financial commitment to these activities on the part of school districts and state governments. Student aptitude and ability levels will vary among members of the activities, but membership in the group is a shared experience by all students who participate. Therefore, it is important to examine what impact that membership has on the students involved.

Schools and community youth groups, outside of the family and churches, provide the greatest opportunity for networking in a formalized setting for the purposes of social capital development for adolescents. Attempts have been made to measure social capital development in schools and the effect that capital may have on academic achievement and overall student development. While that research has been applied to all students, the focus has been on equity and minority, immigrant, and at-risk students. These studies have primarily concerned the connections that may exist between family and school, as well as the role teachers and guidance counselors play in the social capital process. Millions of students, however, participate in extracurricular activities involving a coach or advisor. While there is limited literature attempting to measure social capital that may result from student participation in these activities, there is no empirical literature on what role the coaches or advisors play.

While there have been few attempts to measure the interaction between student

participation in extracurricular activities and social capital theory, there have been ongoing attempts to assess the overall value of participation in those activities for students. Those who have studied extracurricular participation and student achievement have done so through two distinct conceptual frameworks. Whether students benefit from participation has typically been viewed from either an academic perspective or developmental perspective. Through either lens, no causal relationship has been established between participation and achievement or other student development. There is, however, a large body of data that demonstrates positive correlations between participation, achievement and student development. Self-selection and the complexity of large studies hampers research, but we need to continue investigating it in light of the high levels of students participating in extracurriculars. A more thorough understanding of the relationships between variables and positive student development is necessary to structure programs that best enhance student growth. This concept is critical, in particular, for the development of adults who staff these programs. A greater knowledge base of the processes that enhance and potentially detract from student development is key to the usefulness of these programs and the promise they hold for students.

There is little debate that further analysis of social capital development is warranted. Where it exists, it is properly identified as a resource an individual can draw upon to enhance his/her life. Students, by definition, have access to a variety of formalized social network possibilities. Schools bring people together in the common pursuit of social development and educational growth. How and what do the adults who interact with students in schools (support staff, teachers, principals, coaches, volunteers)

contribute to that growth? It is this question, particularly in the context of social capital development that is the focus of this study. Significant economic resources are dedicated to coaching and advising salaries every year. In addition, parents and booster groups raise large additional sums of money to support these programs. A coach or activities advisor can spend more time in one season with a student than a classroom teacher does in a student's entire career, yet we have not examined how they add value. This paper examines the role of coaches and advisors in development of social capital and will be a catalyst to greater interest in their role as student developer.

## **Chapter Three**

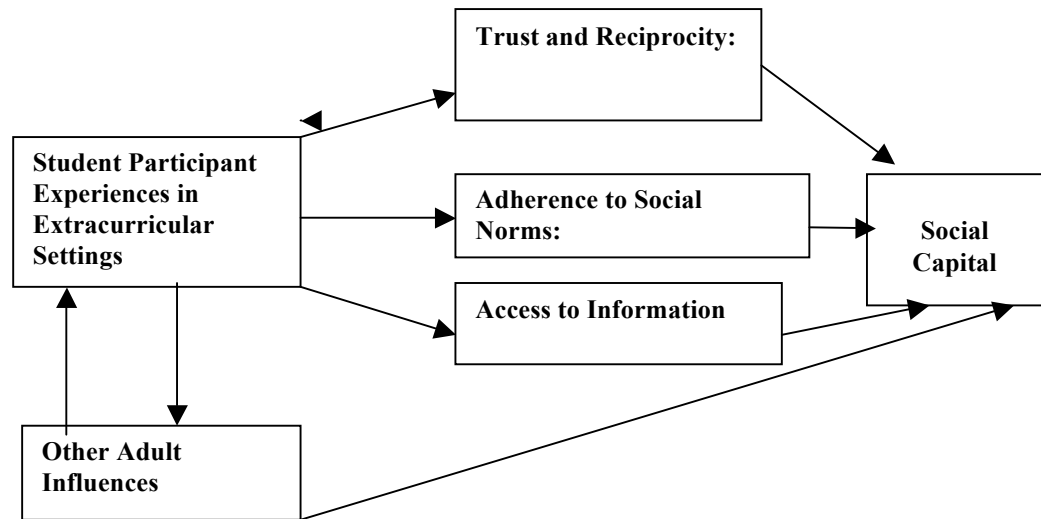
### **Methodology**

The previous chapter outlines prevailing social capital theory and lays the foundation for its creation through participation in group activities. High school extracurricular programs, as group activities, should provide an environment that is conducive to the development of social capital for participants. This study sought to identify whether social capital is in fact developed for students through their participation. As pointed out in chapter two, there are differences in the way social capital is defined and differences in the contexts in which it may exist. This study was concerned solely on the role a high school coach/advisor played in that potential development at the individual level. The following questions guided the research:

1. Do student participants in extracurricular activities report the presence of social capital outcomes: developed trust and reciprocity, access to information and adherence to acceptable social norms in their relationships with their coaches and advisors?
2. If present, can those outcomes be attributed to the coach/advisor relationship?
3. Do coaches/advisors believe they have a responsibility to develop social capital for their student participants?
4. Do coaches/advisors utilize specific strategies to assist them in creating social capital?

The emphasis on the individual coach/advisor and student experiences drove this study to center on the examination of three areas of social capital development: (1) trust and reciprocity, (2) creation of access to information networks and (3) adherence to acceptable social norms. The underlying assumptions that guided the study are shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 The Production of Social Capital in Extracurricular Activities



The study sought to identify whether student participants reported three key components of social capital: trust and reciprocity, access to information and adherence to acceptable social norms--as it related to their coach/advisors. If so, the study sought to identify whether coach/advisors consciously employed strategies to accomplish that end. The study addresses the question of what role a coach/advisor plays, if any, in creating opportunities for participants that would otherwise not be available to them. The study also aimed to identify whether coach/advisors positively influence decisions made by student participants regarding acceptable behaviors within the group, the school, and the larger community. Identifying the role coaches/advisors play in student development is critical in shedding light, at least in the area of social capital, on the actual impact a coach or advisor's role has on student development.

The data gathering process began with an examination of the experiences of the student participants in extracurricular activities in high school. Their answers provide the

foundation of the study. Equally important, data gathered from the adults who manage these activities was crucial in determining their role in the development of social capital. The information discovered through the collection of this data provided the basis for potential implications to coaches, advisors and perhaps other adults in the school setting who interact with extracurricular students.

Figure 3.2 Logic Framework of Data Collection and Analysis

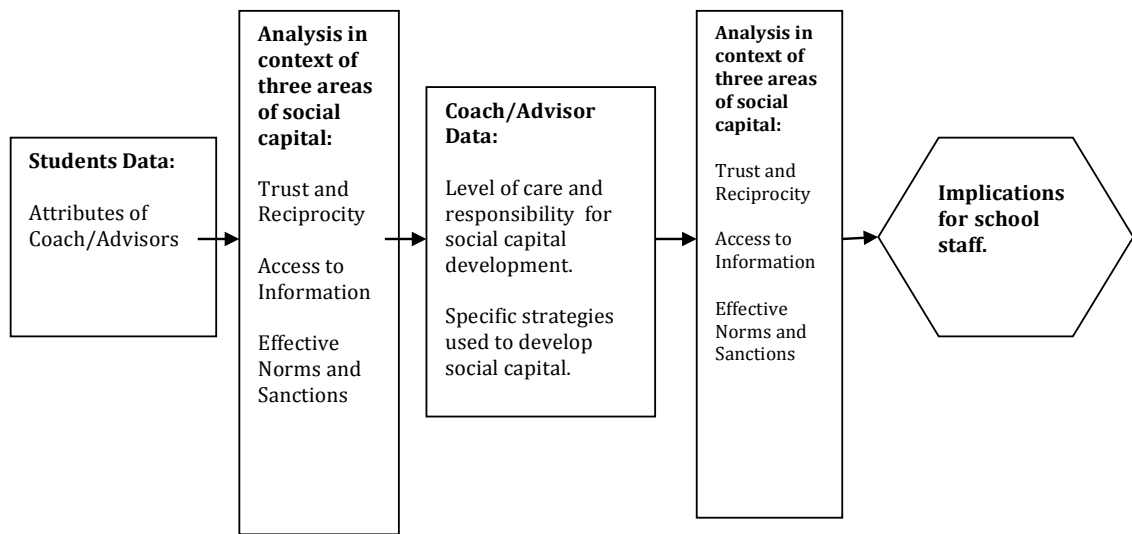


Figure 3.2 outlines the focus of the study by identifying the student perspective as the catalyst and indicates the anticipated association between key features of social capital and a student’s experience in extracurricular activities. Their perspective identified whether outcomes of social capital development were present in the coach/advisor and student relationship. This diagram also identifies the coach/advisor responses as the key component of the study. If aspects of social capital development were present in those relationships, then it was to be considered: why are these

components there and to what level do they exist? And, finally: did coach/advisors consciously use strategies to aid in the development of social capital?

### **Research Design**

This project consisted of a multiple case study replication design. It utilized an exploratory case study design of separate cases. Yin (2003) discusses three types of case study design: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. Exploratory is concerned with exploring the dynamics of a context or phenomena. Explanatory, on the other hand, seeks to explain the phenomena and looks for causal links between variables and the unit of analysis. Descriptive case studies are utilized to describe richly the phenomena or case. The current study has elements of description but because of the lack of previous information on the topic, its primary emphasis is that of exploration. As noted, there has been relatively little, if any, research on this topic from a student or coach/advisor perspective. This study is a starting point for further analysis.

The primary advantages of a case study design include the ability to examine the role of context in the development of the student. A case study design offers the opportunity to gain insight through the eyes of the student and coach/advisor within a specific context. The relationship between a coach/advisor and student participants is inherently unique and a case study design allowed for consideration of that quality. It offered the potential for student insights as to whether social capital is created and to what extent. It also allowed the coach/advisor participants to articulate his or her perceived role in the process, as well as explain specific strategies they utilized. The need to describe the relationship is what favors the case study approach. A case study method

is often most useful when the issues regarding the case are relatively recent and the factors contributing to the phenomena are vivid (Merriam, 1998).

This study was concerned with the relationship between the student and coach/advisor over the ninth through twelfth grade experience. Recent high school graduates were targeted for participation in order to examine contemporary events rather than distant history. All participant memories are relatively fresh and unaffected by years of maturity and reflection. This richness and immediacy of the experience was central to the analysis.

A multiple case replication was chosen because of the likelihood that coaches/advisors developed social capital in different ways, for different cases. By studying multiple cases, I gained insights relative to cross-consistencies. This approach also allowed for the consideration of context relative to any inconsistencies. Yin describes this concept as replication logic and states that “each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (*a literal replication*) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (*a theoretical replication*)” (p. 47).

The original design of this study focused on student athletes only. However, it became clear as data was being gathered that the study would be strengthened if participants in other extracurricular activities not associated with sports such as drama, band, yearbook, foreign language clubs were include as well. This conclusion is based on the belief that it is participation in extracurricular activities that offers potential for the creation of social capital not the type of activity involved. Through the inclusion of participants from all types of activities, literal replication would be enhanced as



additional contexts involving extracurricular participation would be examined. Also, in an effort to strengthen theoretical replication it was determined that student data regarding their perspective should be compared and contrasted with coach/advisor data relative to their perceived role and responsibility for developing students through participation in extracurricular activities. Linking student expectations with coach/advisor perceived responsibilities for student development strengthens theoretical replication as it allows an analysis of why results in one case might be different from case to case depending on how student perceptions and coach/advisor responsibilities align.

Therefore, in this study, the case, or unit of analysis became the individual student participant and the individual coach/advisor. In some cases, coach/advisors were chosen from the same school as a given student participant. However, no coach/advisors who participated in the study coached or advised any of the student participants in this study. The replications were both literal and theoretical and will be discussed more fully in the next section. Table 1 outlines how the data were organized and analyzed.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Strategies

CONCERN	TACTIC TO ADDRESS CONCERN	PHASE OF CASE STUDY
Internal Validity	Interviewees review transcript for accuracy of impression.	Data Collection
External Validity	Peer review of data Replication Logic a) appropriate # of cases b) literal applications c) theoretical applications d) consistent questions	Data Analysis Research Design
	Critical attention to the details of the contexts and connections to the data Use of data coding for consistency	Composition Data Analysis
Reliability	Peer review of data and conclusions	Data Collection and composition
	Follow established case study protocol Development of case study database	Data Collection Data Analysis

### Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with twelve student participants who graduated from high school between 2007 and 2011. In addition, interviews were conducted with twelve athletic coaches or activity advisors. Student participants consisted of 80% male ( $n = 8$ ) and 20% female ( $n = 4$ ). Students identified their primary extracurricular activity as athletic in 70% ( $n = 7$ ) of cases while 30% ( $n = 5$ ) identified their primary extracurricular activity as a school club or fine arts. Coach/advisor participants consisted of 50% male ( $n = 6$ ) and 50% female ( $n = 6$ ). Athletic coaches comprised 70% ( $n = 7$ ) of participants while activity advisors comprised 30% ( $n = 5$ ).

The student and coach/advisor sample is one of convenience and includes only

graduates and coaches/advisors from Minnesota public high schools within a 75 mile radius of the University of Minnesota. Originally, this study employed a random sample of this population. Lists were generated from several high schools of students who participated in selected extracurricular activities. Public data requests were made of those districts asking for student addresses. Randomly selected students from those lists were then sent consent to participate requests. This approach yielded zero responses from students and resulted in the change to a convenience sample.

For the convenience sample, students were identified through personal contacts of the researcher. These contacts consisted of activities advisors from various high schools in the Minneapolis area and a select few from outside Minnesota, as well as employment contacts. After students had been identified and contact information procured, they were contacted via phone or email and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. Those who agreed to participate signed a consent form agreeing to provide a taped interview. Coaches/advisors were identified by referrals from high school principals and activities directors who are associates of the researcher. Once identified, the coach/advisors were contacted via their school district email or school phone and asked if they were willing to participate. Coach/advisors likewise completed a consent form and were subject to taped interviews. A copy of the consent form is attached as Appendix A.

A weakness of a convenience sample is that it does not provide as broad of a potential scope of participants as a random sample and is limited to contacts of the researcher. Nonetheless, attempts at a random sample for this study proved unsuccessful. However, two strategies were employed to help offset this reality. Initially, the study was

broadened to include all types of extracurricular participation. In addition, the study was expanded to include not only the perspectives of student participants but also the perceived responsibility on the part of coach/advisors for student development through participation.

The primary source of data for this study was open-ended interviews with students and high school coaches/advisors. A copy of those interview questions is attached as Appendix B. For student interviews, a set of predetermined questions focusing on the areas of trust and reciprocity, access to information and establishing and reinforcing positive social norms was utilized. The structure was necessary to promote external validity through adherence to a set protocol and replication logic.

As a case study, however, each context had varying degrees of divergence and that context was the essence of the research method. Early on in the research, it became clear that probes were necessary to explore more deeply with students particularly as they attempted to define what makes someone trustworthy. After a couple of initial interviews, these probes were included into future interviews to assist with replication logic and protocol.

### **Process of Analysis**

Interview responses were first globally reviewed to identify themes of significance. In the case of students, themes emerged regarding fairness, trustworthiness, equity, communication, respect and knowledge. In the case of coaches and advisors, responses were identified involving their perceived responsibility for student development. Each interview was then coded and interpreted using an inductive theory

that drew on aspects of grounded theory. Grounded theory is an inductive reasoning tool utilized to interpret data. It uses the results of the data to generate theories or hypothesis regarding the phenomena being studied rather than testing a predetermined theory against the data.

In this study, a limited organizing framework based on social capital theory was employed (Figure 3.1). At the same time, I sought to be open to alternative influences on social capital development in order to allow analytic categories to emerge naturally in a context in which social capital theory had not been previously applied. Thus, I drew on the analytic tools developed by grounded theorists, but did not attempt to apply the full grounded theory method. Strauss, Anselm and Corbin (1990) as well as Orcher (2005) list several techniques the qualitative researcher can utilize to analyze data. They include: enumeration, use of quotations, intercoder agreement, diagramming, peer debriefing, auditing, member checks and identifying the range of responses using emotional tone. All of those methods were employed. However, intercoder agreement was limited to one peer review of the data and was undertaken to verify the coding of responses and internal validity.

The coding began with open-coding, a process in which distinct themes or categories are identified in the interview responses and assigned codes. When that was completed, selective coding was used to cluster the participant responses under the coded categories and then relationships between categories were cross-examined. Student responses were coded for aspects that related to identified aspects of social capital, namely: trust and reciprocity, access to information and effective norms and sanctions.

This technique is a modification of the purest form of grounded theory approach to qualitative data analysis. In its purest form, the data would be analyzed with no theory in mind and the data would speak for itself.

The data obtained from interviews with coach/advisors was analyzed in a more traditional grounded theory approach. Their interviews focused on what they believed their responsibilities to students were as an extracurricular coach or advisor. Their questions were open-ended and data obtained was coded according to three areas. The first of those areas consisted of identifying whether they felt as though they had a responsibility to develop their student participants in any way other than assisting them to become the best athlete, artist, or writer they could. Secondly, they were asked why they felt they had the responsibility to develop students beyond the skill they needed to participate in that activity. Finally, they were asked to identify ways in which they carried out that development.

In the case of both students and coach/advisors, responses were coded into two categories, which can be described as first order and second order responses or values. These responses cannot be categorized as first order or second order through a literal reading of the transcript but are based on the observations of the participant made during the interviews. Responses that demonstrated clear reflection (ie. a sigh, a look off in to the distance, passion in the respondent's voice, inflection in their answer, other visual verbal and non-verbal clues that indicated that the answer was important to them) were classified in the first order category. Other responses that were offered more quickly and with less perceived reflection were classified as second order.

## **Validity and Reliability**

A case study design, like any research design, must be concerned with addressing the concepts of construct, external, internal validity and reliability. Yin discusses construct validity in terms of “establishing correct operational measures for the concept being studied” (Yin, 2003, p. 34). The selection of multiple cases for this study was an effort to address construct validity, as was maintaining consistency in questions asked of each participant.

Merriam defines internal validity as “matching research findings with reality” (Merriam, 1998, p. 201). She outlines six strategies that may be employed to address this concern. They are: triangulation of sources, member checks, long term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative research methods and researcher biases. In this study, both member checks and peer examination were utilized to address this concern. Interviewees (members) were provided the opportunity to check the transcripts for accuracy. In addition, an experienced researcher (who was not a part of this project) confidentially reviewed the data and reported what they believe the data was saying as a check on articulated interpretations.

External validity refers to the ability to generalize findings. Merriam defines this concept as “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). Case study findings are more difficult to generalize as the case is usually chosen because the researcher wants to explore in-depth that unique or particular case. However, Merriam offers several strategies for addressing external validity. Two that were used in this study include: concrete universals and naturalistic

generalizations.

Concrete universals consist of studying a case in meticulous detail and comparing it to another case of equal detail. It aims to apply the lessons learned in one case study to a similar case, and identify those aspects of which occur across all of the cases.

Naturalistic generalization refers to fully understanding the particulars of a case and then seeing or sensing the similarities in other contexts. The selection of multiple cases to study employs aspects of concrete universals and naturalistic generalization. It does so by allowing several cases to be studied in detail so that cross comparisons can be made. These cross comparisons reveal aspects of each case that are universal to all. When present they strengthen the likelihood that the aspect is generalizable. Employing a detailed, carefully coded data analysis of both the literal and theoretical replications that exist from case to case assists in identifying what categories or themes are likely to exist in other contexts.

The last aspect in the design focuses on the importance of reliability. Merriam describes this as “the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). This study is not concerned with whether or not the findings can be replicated, since each case study is different. However, there is concern with whether or not the drawn conclusions are consistent with the data that has been produced from each case. As stated earlier, a meticulous design and attention to detail allows for reader generalizability and aids in identifying themes. Another researcher or peer should be able to examine the evidence and conclude that the research findings make sense given the data that was collected. Merriam identifies this concept as an “audit trail” (Merriam,



1998, p. 207). Again, peer review was used to accomplish this goal.

One additional strategy employed to aid in the strength of reliability consisted of the creation of a case study data-base. Yin (2003) discusses the need to create a data-base that separates the raw data for analysis from the case study report. The data consists of the interview transcripts and my case study notes.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to ascertain whether social capital was being developed in students by virtue of their participation in high school extracurricular activities. In addition, it sought to identify what role the coach or activity plays in social capital development for students. The study was not concerned with issues of causation but rather was focused on whether there was positive correlation between actions taken by coach/advisors and student perceptions of development through participation in key areas of social capital. While some student and coach/advisor responses suggested aspects of causality, overall the data does not allow an inference of casual relationship at either population, nor was that the focus of the study. The impressions from students and then coach/advisors drove the study. A case study was selected because a deep analysis of the experience for participants in extracurricular activities was necessary. Multiple cases were selected to assist with external validity, as was the use of consistent questions asked of participants. Peer review of data was employed for both internal and external validity purposes as well as reliability.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results**

This study is based on theory generation rather than theory testing. Its conceptual framework focused on both student and coach/advisor experiences through their involvement in extracurricular activities. As pointed out in chapter three (Figure 3.2), the data was gathered and analyzed in two phases. The initial phase of the study consisted of gathering data from student respondents regarding their impressions of their coach or advisor. Those responses were then analyzed using key ideas derived from social capital theory. Students were identified as the initial focus point because they are the primary beneficiaries of social capital development. It was important to ascertain whether they reported elements of social capital development occurring or whether they entered the activity with an expectation that social capital development would occur.

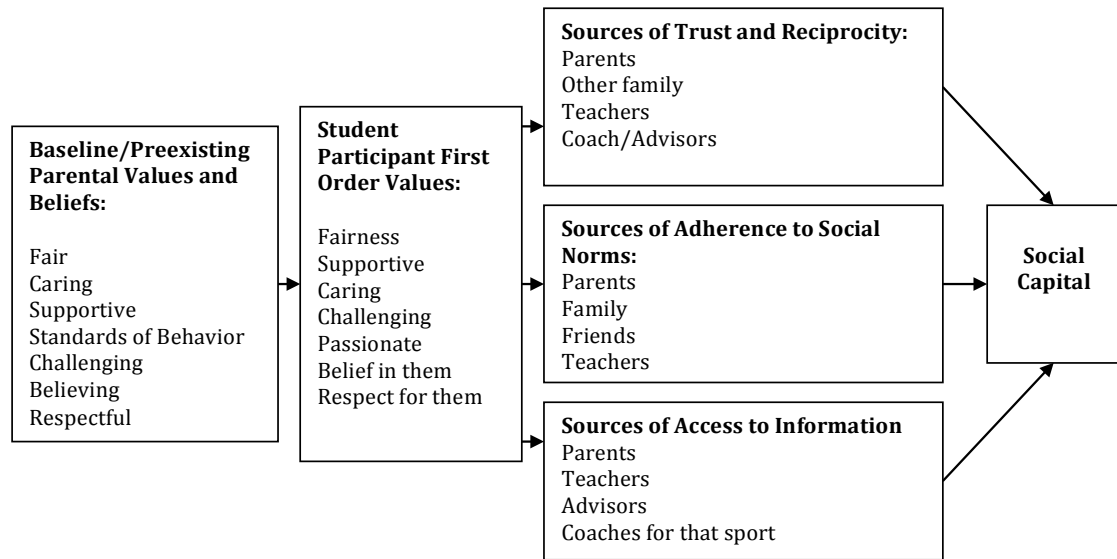
The second phase of this study consisted of gathering data from coach/advisors relative to their perceived responsibilities for student development. Coach/advisor respondents provided information as to whether or not they felt it was their responsibility to develop aspects of social capital in their student participants, as well as to identify particular strategies they utilized to do so. The data gathered in both phases was then compared in order to identify whether there was any alignment between student expectations and coach/advisor expectations.

## **Phase I. Student Experiences: Emergent Analytic Categories**

Figure 4.1 was generated at the early stages of the analysis using key terms generated from the interviews with students and implied links based on social capital theory (Figure 3.1). As analysis continued, a revised version of the figure was developed and will be shown later on in the chapter. Figure 4.1 identifies a few findings from the data that are outside the scope of social capital development through the coach/advisor to student relationship in extracurricular activity participation. It includes recognition of the existence of preexisting values associated with aspects of social capital development, namely preexisting baseline parental values and beliefs. In chapter three I pointed out that through the coding process I sought to be open to alternative categories to emerge naturally in a context in which social capital theory had not been previously applied. In this case what emerged was strong emphasis on the part of students of the impact their family values had on their interpretations of their experiences with their coach/advisor through their participation in extracurricular activities.

The figure concentrates on first order values. These values are those that seemed most important to the respondents. As mentioned in chapter three, they consisted of strong reflective and emotional responses from participants indicating a higher level of importance than other responses during the interviews. First order values are contrasted by second order values, which, while important to participants, did not reveal much emotional or demonstrate great reflection. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 4.1 Student Perceptions of Sources for Key Aspects of Social Capital: Emergent Themes



### Student Values

The interviews with students yielded emotional responses regarding what they felt were the positive qualities of the coach/advisors. The responses concentrated on: what they admired, what they deemed negative and counter productive qualities of coach/advisors. Their responses were value driven. These values were both first order and second order: first order values were cited by virtually every respondent, and elicited the clearest emotional resonance as well as the most detailed responses and examples. Values such as: fairness and equity, supportive, caring, respectful, challenging and passionate were cited by nearly every student. In addition, many reported that knowing a coach or advisor believed in them as a person, not just a musician or athlete, was very important to them. Other values such as: being organized, knowledgeable, humorous and personable, were often cited--but not consistently, and not with the same level of passion or importance. Therefore, these values are of the second order.

The descriptive, richer and more reflective nature of the first order values discussed by students, coupled with the frequency of those values being referenced, is what makes them first order. For example, one student when commenting on adult behavior stated, “someone that will push you to better yourself, but not in a cruel harsh way, but in a loving way I guess, understanding and caring.” Another reported, “He really focused on not just the game part, he focused on the outside; what you were doing in school, in the community to be a better person and all these different things.” Among the most passionate of responses was when a student reported that a first order value was breached. For example, one student spoke for many when she stated that:

I feel like he picked out his favorites and the others are in the dog shed and it was really hard for them to get out. He has his favorites and he has the ones he doesn't really like. So I feel like he is not the most fair coach I have had. And I don't really like that in a coach. He's obviously not going to change because he has his ways, but it is unfortunate.

The fact that this student believed she was one of the favorites did not allay her sense that a first order value had been violated. These examples of first order value comments can be contrasted with second order values. For example, “humor is important,” or “having a fun coach” are examples of comments reflecting second order values. They were reported frequently and are important, but seemed to be more of an afterthought as opposed to the thoughtful, reflective, contemplative and passionate way first order values were discussed. Whether first order or second order, values are the driver of the student experience in extracurricular programs.

## **Phase II. Coach/Advisor Expectation: Emergent Themes**

### **Coach/Advisor Values**

Like the students, coach/advisors responded with passionate and value laden perceptions of their responsibilities for student development. Many of these values overlapped with those the students identified and also consisted of first order and second order values. Those values that were first order, consistently mentioned by every participant and held in high importance, were: fairness, supportive, caring, challenging, knowledgeable, respectful, organized, communicative and consistent. Second order values focused on: safety, enjoyment, developing character and leadership skills, as well as teaching life lessons.

The way in which coach/advisors responded to the questions was different than the way students responded. Where students were descriptive and reflective when they discussed first order values, coach/advisors tended to be terse and firm. For example, “Coaches have to be organized, have to know their sport or position....and have the ability to communicate with kids.” The assumptions were that you must be fair, organized, a good communicator, knowledgeable, consistent. These were the assumptions that made them higher order values. Coach/advisors all stated these qualities and they were givens. The bridge between first order values and second order values is summarized by one coach/advisor this way:

I think the communication is the first piece and then connectedness. You have to be able to connect with students at a personal level because no one wants to invest time in an area, unless the person they know has some knowledge about it, number one and number two is invested themselves. So they have to be able to see how you connect to it and they have to be able to see how they connect either to you or the program itself.

This quote speaks to how coach/advisors feel about their responsibilities and how they separated values into first order and second order in a manner that was similar but different than the way students did. Coach/advisors viewed organization, communication, knowledge, fairness and consistency as the building blocks of the relationship. Therefore, they are first order values. Many also talked about character and the whole person, for example:

I think we always have a responsibility when working with kids in any way to make sure, to notice if there's something seems to be amiss with them and they need to know that we are very supportive of them as an entire person, that we are not just interested in their writing ability for the paper or speaking ability. We want to make sure they are doing ok in school, that things are good at home.

While coach/advisors wanted to provide an environment where students would learn life lessons and develop positive character traits, those things did not necessarily have to happen. As a result, those values were of the second order for coach/advisors. First order values were essential and must exist for these coach/advisors. If those first order values were not met, coach/advisors did not believe they had the chance to accomplish second order values such as: learning life lessons, developing leadership skills and character.

The perceptions and reflections of student participants and coach/advisors of extracurricular programs were passionate. Students clearly wanted a good experience and were looking for behaviors that centered on their values. Coach/advisors were also passionate in what they believed their responsibilities were to their students. They too, responded that those responsibilities are value focused. Both groups reported both values of first order and second order. Both groups believed that first order values are the foundation of the relationship between a student participant and their coach/advisor.

## **Results through the Lens of Social Capital**

### **Trust and Reciprocity**

Trust and reciprocity is a key component of social capital. It is developed when members of a group act on behalf of each other in a consistent manner. Acting for the benefit of group members creates trust among members and leads them to reciprocate and act for the benefit of each other. This study produced repeated references on the part of both students and coach/advisors regarding aspects of trust. A student, for example, when discussing teachers and coaches stated: “I learned that I could respect them and understand them and they understood me and I could trust them. It takes a little to build some trust so the ones that I feel I have trust with, that’s who I look to.” Another said (while describing what adults in the K-12 setting do that leads him to trust): “Integrity, I guess, over the actions or words. Just from the core of their being, they are true about themselves. I guess that’s the kind of a charismatic thing as well, but I can trust them to always be truthful to me.”

One coach described the following:

They expect you are going to be fair and they are going to hopefully be there for them, teach them. . . .As much as you can try to be on their side of the playing field. I think you may have an occasional kid who may think you are out to get them in some way, shape or form, but I think overall kids want you to be fair.

Trust was rarely mentioned by itself; rather, comments about trust were embedded in the first order values discussed above. In other words, trust occurred in the context of acting fairly, being supporting, demonstrating a caring approach, and respect/belief in the capacities of others. This was true for both the students and the coach/advisors.



It was particularly clear that the students needed to witness coach/advisors acting in ways that were consistent with these first order values in order for any trust or reciprocity to develop. All students had experienced coach/advisors who exhibited positive behaviors that matched a previously developed sense of what students believe constituted higher order values. Additionally, 12 of the 12 participants tied this to the development of trust, either explicitly or implicitly. Implicit trust was typically evidenced by summarizing a description of a coach or advisor as “a good person.” For example, one student described a coach he admired by saying, “A good person. For a coach, I liked him because he was a good leader, a good father, husband, brother. All that kind of stuff, generally a good person, someone I’d like to be.” Another student made a clearer statement about the importance of caring and supportive behaviors by referring to the characteristics of trustworthy coaches/advisors:

I’d say they have to see me as a young adult and respect me with my age and where I am at. To see things in me that maybe I don’t see in myself like the potential that I don’t see. To push me, especially with coaches they have done that. Even when I am down or in a rut, they usually can bring me out.

Responses like these were nearly universal among students and support a conclusion that coach/advisors who exhibit behaviors that involve higher order values and conform to a set of behaviors around those values, win the respect of students. The students become trusting of those adults when that behavior is consistent.

Students came to the relationship with a coach/advisor knowing what they were looking for in first order values, and none of the responses suggested that participating in a sport or other school-sponsored activity with a trusted/respected coach or advisor developed their value system further. Trust develops, but value systems do not change.

Rather, the development of trust allows a student to continue participating in the sport or activity, and taking the coaches' requests seriously. One student described this as, "I learned I could respect and understand them and they understood me and I could trust them. It takes a little to build some trust so the ones that I feel I have trust with that's who I look to." Another succinctly said, "If I trust a coach I will do as he asks."

It was also evident that when students did not witness positive behaviors associated with their higher order values, they did not enjoy their experience (even if they persisted) and they did not trust their coach/advisor. Loss of trust was also a process that was linked to observed behaviors that appeared to the students to be in opposition to their first order values. Many students described untrustworthy coaches as ones that, "played favorites." Others distrusted coach/advisors who "seemed disinterested in me." A majority reported they lost trust by "getting ragged on" or "demeaned" by the coach/advisor. These comments were expressed by every one of the student participants, suggesting that most had a significant experience of losing trust and respect. It demonstrates that student experiences with coach/advisors have been very mixed and, absent positive behaviors by coach/advisors demonstrating first order values such as fairness and caring, trust development could not occur.

In contrast, coach/advisors had a different impression of trust development. Most seemed to understand that trust was important and that they could generate trust by acting positively in areas of first order values, but were often unclear about their specific first order values that were most important, and often referred to other (less important) values. As one advisor put it:

I think most kids just want an advisor to be available and willing to work with

them. To give them some guidance, to give them the freedom so they can kind of figure some things out on their own. Yeah, I think that's what they mostly want is someone to be there...they need to know that we are very supportive of them as an entire person, that we are not just interested in their writing or speaking ability.

Note that this advisor emphasized two values that students rarely mentioned--availability and freedom, before stumbling to the idea of support. The emphasis that coaches and advisors put on values that they felt were entrusted by other adults to promote (like citizenship and overall character development) sometimes appeared to stand in the way of recognizing the needs expressed by students for: fairness, knowledge, and care.

Coach/advisors valued trust because in its absence they felt that they would be unable to reach their second order values regarding citizenship and overall character development.

They did not (as did students) make clear connections between their own first order behaviors and the development of trust.

Although every student talked about untrustworthy coaches/advisors that were not respected, considerable evidence was found in the development of trust and reciprocity through the coach/advisor and student relationship. For the students of this study, it can be concluded that to create trust, coach/advisor actions needed to focus on higher order values such as fairness, caring and support for the student, and such behaviors needed to regularly occur. Coach/advisors appeared to understand this necessity and described, as the quote above illustrates, steps they take to foster that creation of trust. These include/d: making themselves available to their students, supporting them when they try different things or just needing someone to talk to. However, there was no evidence from the interviews that a clear set of principles and actions were used to develop trust and respect in their roles as coaches/advisors, nor did students report seeing a consistent approach

among the adults that they worked with. It can be concluded that coach/advisors who employed strategies that demonstrate belief in the higher order values had an excellent opportunity to reinforce principles of trust that the students brought with them to the relationship and that trust could exist between those coaches and their participants for the purposes of participating in that activity. However, that conclusion is not a consequence of any well thought through approach to reinforce first order values among students in order to ensure that they have the experience of working with a trusted adult.

What follows are quoted examples of coach/advisor responses describing how they develop students in their programs:

I just think that as I go and build relationships with the kids it makes it easier to bond with them, talk with them and get them to understand exactly what it is I want them to do and exactly what it is in their life that will be beneficial for them.

When I lead off our coaches meeting with whole staff, the first thing we talk about is how we treat the kids. And the first thing I tell them is treat these kids like how you want your son or daughter treated... We will have meetings and sit and eat lunch with the kids, things like that are extremely important to what we do.

I don't do anything routinely. I don't have certain exercises I do with each and every team... So I do a lot of different educational pieces. We also take time at least once a week to talk about relational aggression or, you know, some of those things that affect high school girls specifically. I'll read them stories or different articles I come across.

The above quotes illustrate the difficulty coaches and advisors have in articulating a rationale for their choice of strategies. This inability demonstrates the level of inconsistency that exists from coach/advisor to coach/advisor in this area.

### **Adherence to Social Norms**

Another component of social capital is the development of and adherence to

social norms. This means that participants in groups have expectations of how they will interact with each other. In American society, acceptable social norms typically involve being honest, polite, supportive and responsible. As such, they are very closely aligned to the higher order values reported by both students and coach/advisors. The assumption underlying the generation of social capital is that group participation engenders positive responses to pro-social norms, and negative responses to behaviors that violate norms. Through experiencing (directly or indirectly) this process in a school-based activity or sport, normative behavior will be reinforced and participants will adhere to the norm/s.

In this area of adherence, the study produced limited evidence that students felt they had an enhanced ability to exhibit positive social norms through their relationship with their coach/advisor. Student yielded two types of responses in this area. One can be stated this way, "I did not want to let my parents down." In other words, the motivation for pro-social behavior and conformity to norms was outside the group in which the student was participating. The second typical response was that the group was irrelevant to their behavior. In some cases, students literally emphasized the unimportance of the group, "I was looking ahead, I was focused on school and soccer." In other cases, they indicated that their pro-social behavior was a consequence of socialization from a deeper past: "I don't think I was consciously motivated by anyone, I am just not a naughty kid." All the students reported these types of responses. Either they did not want to disappoint parents or other family members or they just felt their own moral compass was their guide. Only one student mentioned a coach/advisor noting that, "I did not want to let him (my coach) down." However, this was a follow-up to his first response, which focused on

being raised right by his parents.

Thinking highly of coaches and advisors as role models was, however, mentioned by some students, even as they disavowed the impact of positive or negative sanctions as a reinforcement of pro-social behavior. When students stated that they thought highly of coaches who acted as positive role models, or exhibited acceptable social norms and standards for themselves, or 'is a good person,' they also responded that they watched adults to determine how well coaches/advisors were adhering to social norms. In judging adult behavior, they often pointed to coaches or advisors who exemplified how they hoped to behave as adults. One student put it, "...some of the things he did. The actions they take, whether I agree with them or not. Basically things they are doing that I could see myself doing down the road. Positive things of course." Another also noted a persistent theme among students, which involved careful assessments of the normative behavior of coaches and advisors, "It all depends on what you would respect in an individual. For me its how the person carries themselves. If they were a nice person." While these responses referenced acceptable social norms, students saw them contributing to the building of trust rather than influencing their own behavior around social norms. In general, wary assessment of adults was more common than looking toward them as models for immediate behavior.

Coach/advisors, in contrast, believed they had some responsibility for assisting students in adhering to positive social norms. They focused their responses around concepts of citizenship and many tied this to the importance of service learning activities, which they saw as a key to modeling future desirable behavior, as well as providing a

specific model through their own involvement. One of the coach/advisors who articulated this most clearly indicated:

We are just an offshoot of what the school actually represents and so making sure your kids in your program are aware of that. The way they behave, the way they act, the way they treat other teams, the whole sportsmanship factor, but also how they carry themselves outside is a reflection of the school and the community. You are out there in other people's communities, in other people's schools, in other people's facilities and you want to make sure you are behaving in a way that is respectful to your school and community; I know we always try to let our athletes, kind of call it giving back to the programs that brought them up so my varsity athletes and our high school athletes go back and work with our younger youth programs...like last year we did a coaches vs. cancer event and we have worked with injured families that are in need...whether that is going in and bagging bags of rice for the homeless. Anything that is character building those are things we have done in our programs.

Others were, however, were more vague about what constitutes exposing student participants to valuable social norms. These responded with a hodge-podge of norms that they believed they should reinforce: "Be a good role model to them and I don't know, help them learn life skills like being able to work with other people, being able to work with authority, fitness, all sorts of different things that can help you out later in life after high school." While this belief was universally shared by coach/advisors, their responses regarding being a positive role model was problematic in the sense that no coach/advisor described what that meant and their statements about the social norms that they were hoping to reinforce were not consistent with those that students valued the most. One example: citizenship—this was not mentioned by any student, but was by coach/advisors. Another, the 'importance of working with authority' or 'becoming more fit,' both never mentioned by students, only coach/advisors.

A majority of the coaches/advisors used the term "positive role model" in their

responses, but without context or specificity. Their lack of clarity around defining a positive role model made it impossible to ascertain what qualities constituted a positive role model. Examples of this are demonstrated by the following responses:

I think parents should expect there's a certain level on our part to be a good role model for kids.

You're a role model for them, one way or another, so dictating what their responsibilities are going to be and what you expect from them as far as behaviors and expectations...

Because I'm in a role model position and as a role model, I have a responsibility to instill in my swimmers things that will make the successful not just in swimming but in life.

In other words, this study did not provide meaningful evidence to suggest participation in extracurricular activities and sports reinforces the development of adherence to acceptable social norms on the part of students. Nor did it demonstrate that those who provide adult leadership in those activities and sports have a clear conception of what it means to model pro-social behavior and reinforce acceptable social norms.

However, the study did provide evidence that coach/advisors who behaviorally adhere to acceptable social norms are more likely to develop the trust of their student participants. The study also produced evidence of a belief on the part of coach/advisors that they have some responsibility for development of adherence to acceptable social norms for their students, but are unable to articulate how they do it. The strategies that coaches/advisors employed were not consistent and there was pervasive ambiguity around what it meant to be a positive role model.

Also, as pointed out in the discussion on trust and reciprocity, coach/advisors maintained that developing greater adherence to acceptable social norms might not be



possible if they had not created a trusting relationship with their student participants. However, since students were vocal about their disappointment with many coaches/advisors (in spite of positive relationships with others) there appears to be a demonstrably weak connection between student participation in extracurricular activities that are led by an adult and the development of adherence to acceptable social norms.

### **Access to Information Channels**

Figure 4.1 shown at the beginning of this chapter, shows that building or reinforcing social capital is also dependent on access to information and resources. This means that through membership in a group, a participant will gain access to other resources or information that would not have otherwise been available to the individual if outside the group. Examples in the context of this study refer to: access to post secondary opportunities (academic, scholarships or employment), as well as continued participation in an extracurricular activity.

The students that participated in this study reported that they used a variety of networks to obtain information regarding their post secondary plans and drew on their parents, guidance counselors and teachers. One participant shared:

I talked a little to my guidance counselor...but she helped me out a little bit with college applications and stuff. I knew I could always talk with her. And also my history teacher I mentioned before. He knows a lot about good colleges and was always asking me about how I was doing and like who was recruiting me and what schools I was interested in.

Another student said:

Everyone joins the band so I did that, but I didn't expect to keep going but I did and I am still playing jazz in college right now. It's actually outpaced my sports. Going back to my band teacher...he's kind of the one who inspired me to keep playing.

A third student stated simply, “my dad, since he went to this school...just me going visiting with myself and my parents.”

Student responses regarding their athletic coaches or activities advisors as information agents were limited, and they were clearly subordinate to other sources mentioned above. An example that summarizes well how coaches were viewed in this regard is the following, “my coach contacted his friend who was friends with my college coach but I had already decided to go there.” Although coaches/advisors saw themselves as significant role models for students, they did not make reference in their answers to any responsibility for increasing resources or information channels for their students.

In other words, this study provided little evidence of any expectation on the part of students that coach/advisors in their “special relationship” should assist them in their post-secondary endeavors. Nor did it produce any evidence that coaches/advisors see their responsibility as participating in student post-graduation planning. Access to information was the element of social capital that evidenced the least amount of development by way of the coach/advisor-student relationship in extracurricular programs.

A selective coding/analysis of all the data, both student and coach/advisor, is summarized in Figure 4.2, which represents a summary of the findings and illustrates the discussion above.

Figure 4.2 The Production of Social Capital in Student Extracurricular Experiences: Reinterpreted Framework Merging Student and Coach/Advisor Data

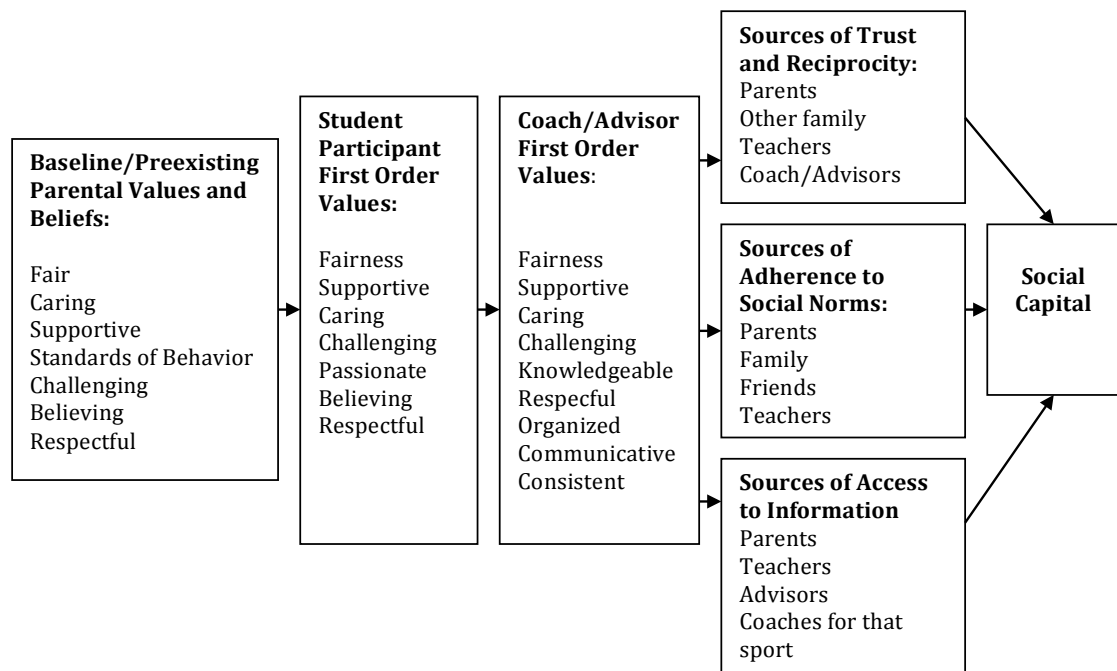


Figure 4.2 illustrates that students enter the coach/advisor relationship with preexisting first order values regarding the three key aspects of social capital development. The data supports that these values are formed primarily through their relationship with their parents or larger family. The figure also shows that coach/advisors share many of these same first order values. However, when you examine the sources of the key aspects of social capital development, coaches and advisor are consistently listed behind parents, family, friends, and teachers as sources of social capital. The data gathered from both students and coach/advisors suggests that trust and reciprocity offers the greatest area of impact of the coach/advisor to student relationship. It does so because coach/advisors reinforce preexisting student first order values around trust in two

ways. Coach/advisors reinforced student first order values around trust either by student recognition of coach/advisors who model behavior consistent with their values or by rejection of coach/advisors who violate these behavioral values. Either way, students leave the activity with a clear sense of their values surrounding trust and reciprocity

The data and Figure 4.2 also demonstrates no connection between participation in extracurricular activities and the role of the coach/advisor in developing social capital in the area of adherence to social norms. In the area of access to information beyond that already available to the student the connection between participation and the role of the coach/advisor is weak.

The conclusions illustrated in Figure 4.2 represent that students participate in extracurricular activities with a preconceived sense of their development in the area of social capital and that development occurred primarily through their experiences as a family member. In addition, coaches/advisors did not feel they had a responsibility to develop students' social capital, except perhaps in adherence to social norms, yet they failed to articulate a coherent or consistent strategy to achieve that result.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion and Implications**

#### **Prologue**

I have a long-term personal interest in understanding the role that high school athletic coaches/activity advisors play in student development. Initially, I approached the topic from my experiences as a high school athlete. As a player, I went through the highs of personal and team success as well as the lows that occurred when I did not play up to my potential or made a critical mistake at a costly time, which hurt our team. Years removed from that active competition, I thought about what made each season memorable or forgettable. I found that it did not have much to do with whether we won or not or whether I was a starter or a bench player. What I found defining the experiences were the interpersonal relationships I had with teammates and coaches. Deeper reflection found me focusing on the role the head coach had in shaping the environment of the activity and the expectations for behavior and how we treat and interact with one another. This realization made it clear to me that the foundation for the enjoyment of the activity rested with how I viewed our coach and how I interpreted his interactions with the team. It was this realization that fueled my desire to coach at the high school level as a complement to my classroom teaching.

I became an athletic coach because I believed that a coach or advisor could have a positive impact on student development of social skills and self-confidence beyond that of a classroom teacher. I believed I understood what worked and what did not when it came to student development through involvement in extracurricular activities. I felt that

as a coach, I could work with youth in a way that was somehow unique to the limitations of the classroom.

When I became a coach is when I discovered that there was no framework for, or common understanding about, how to organize the job. I was left, and comfortably so, to create and manage my program however I wanted. I was never formally evaluated. I served as both a head coach and an assistant coach without any formal training.

Although I was a trained teacher and I had participated in those activities as an athlete, these did not provide the kind of specialized training to work with adolescents in a non-classroom setting. I also found that because there was no framework within which to do the job, reliance on other coaches' "expert knowledge" became critical. We learned from each other and it was easy to see how a fraternity of coaches develops in the culture of a school.

Then two things happened simultaneously. First, my children began participating in both athletic and fine art activities at the youth level. Second, I became an administrator with responsibilities for extracurricular activities at a high school. As a parent, I witnessed and experienced both exceptional skills among coach/advisors in developing youth self-confidence and managing parental expectations. Unfortunately, I also witnessed behavior on the part of some coach/advisors that appeared detrimental to student development and happiness. In my capacity as an activities administrator, I reviewed the practices in the high school at which I worked and concluded that we did not have a set of criteria on which we selected our coaches or advisors, significant description of job expectations, or any formal evaluation process. Evaluation consisted of

occasional observations at games or concerts as well as at practice. No information was gathered from students who participated or their parents regarding their experiences. Though not taken lightly by any of the staff who worked with extracurricular programs or administrators who were charged with their oversight, it was an out-of-sight, out-of-mind process. If no one is complaining, then things must be going ok.

These personal experiences coupled with a sense of professional ethical responsibility were what led to this study. I believe that we must evaluate the value of the coach/advisor to student relationship and its effect on student development and growth. We must do this as part of our fiduciary responsibilities to allocate public funds in ways that are most likely to achieve the benefits for students that the public expects. I believe we must then utilize that data to help improve the likelihood of a positive student experience and enhanced growth. In addition, that data can be used to design informed professional development for those involved with managing these programs so they can more successfully meet the needs of their participants. My interpretation of the data reported in Chapter four is premised on this experiential and value basis.

### **Summary of Findings**

Taken as a whole, the data suggests that coaches and advisors have a very limited impact on the development of adolescents' social capital, at least as it was conceptualized in this study. The specific elements can be summarized separately.

### **Trust and Reciprocity**

This study does not provide meaningful evidence to support a conclusion that

trust and reciprocity is developed by the coach/advisor through their relationships with the students who participate. The data does provide some evidence of trust development but that evidence is limited to the trust necessary to adequately participate and function in that activity. However, even in the case of this functioning trust, it appears it only occurs when the coach/advisor models behaviors consistent with expectations of trusting relationships; expectations that the student brings from previous experiences. These previous experiences are most notably experiences that have occurred in the student's family environment.

### **Adherence to Social Norms**

This study does not support the common belief that the coach/advisor and student participant relationship supports the development of and adherence to acceptable pro-social norms. Students report that they enter their extracurricular activities at the high school level with a set of beliefs regarding appropriate and inappropriate ways to conduct themselves. The data gathered from students suggests that they form their beliefs regarding appropriate social norms earlier in life and predominately through their interactions with their family--although there is some element of peer influence for some students. Coach/advisors, in contrast, believe they have a responsibility to develop in students a greater sense of social responsibility and adherence to acceptable social norms--beyond those that they obtain in other settings. However, student responses indicate that those efforts on the part of coach/advisors are, at best, reinforcing previously held beliefs regarding appropriate behaviors.



### **Access to Information**

This study does not support a conclusion that coach/advisors provide access to information channels or opportunities that would not have existed if the student had not participated in the activity. The student interviews support findings that their post secondary planning and access to information opportunities are primarily generated within their family affiliation (which would include access that their parents have to information). In the K-12 setting, coaches and advisors are rarely considered a source of information, and most students reported that post secondary planning and opportunities were influenced more by teachers and counselors.

### **Informing Social Capital Theory**

The foregoing findings inform social capital theory in two ways. The authors that provide the foundation of this study, Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman view social capital as an economic resource. For Bourdieu, this resource enhances the individual's opportunity to advance in status and wealth. Coleman adds that benefit is not only for the individual's advancement but also for the advancement of other members of the group who may benefit from the affiliation. The data from this study does not support the proposition that students who participate in high school extracurricular activities develop any economic resource or social capital through their participation, although many proponents of youth engagement in sports argue that it will enhance the student's capacity to access post high school resources. While this may be true for a few individuals (those who are recruited for post secondary opportunities or obtain college scholarships) the findings undermine the assumptions that these benefits accrue, although

in smaller amounts, to those who are not stars. It runs contrary to the beliefs that participating in a visible and valued social network of high school sports and activities will produce social capital resulting in a tangible benefit to individual students as espoused by Bourdieu and Coleman.

This study also informs social capital theory in the area of socialization. Membership in groups, it is believed, develops trust and reciprocity, adherence to acceptable social norms and access to information channels and other opportunities. This study provides evidence to the contrary. The data collected and analyzed suggests that the quality, context and timing of group membership play an important role in social capital development--and that this occurs outside of school-sponsored activities. The student data from this study indicates that the actions that develop trust, establish social norms and inspire future aspirations/planning are firmly developed before high school and predominately in the family environment.

John Dewey believed that membership in external groups apart from the family was becoming increasingly important for individual ethical and cultural socialization in modern social settings. In other words, the larger community, as well as the ethical mores of community membership would dictate the adherence to social norms. This belief, while not specifically tied to social capital, speaks to the idea of adherence to social norms, which is a key component of social capital development. His observations were made at a time when the United States was moving from an agrarian society to an industrialized one. Dewey believed that this movement would lead to less reliance on the family unit for individual development. Over a hundred years later in the post industrial,

technological age, this study suggests that this conclusion may be overstated. This study indicates students believe that the family unit is the greatest developer of social capital at least for this study group. As a result, it appears the type of group affiliation, the duration of the affiliation, the context surrounding that affiliation and the timing of that affiliation is of great(er) importance.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study is not a broad study of the impact on student development through participation in extracurricular activities. Available research suggests that there are a number of positive correlates between participation and student development. Rather this study was limited to an examination of social capital development for students through participation. More specifically, its focus was to identify aspects of coach or advisor influence on that development. While limited to that focus, perhaps the most important implication from this study is that K-12 practitioners who work with extracurricular programming know very little about the value of student participation and the role a coach/advisor plays in enhancing or detracting from that value. One surprise (to this investigator) was the lack of reflective responses that coaches and advisors had to the questions that were asked about the way in which participation and their role influenced students. This is in part due to the fact that clear goals or objectives for student growth through participation in extracurricular activities have not been identified. School administrators and key stakeholders such as students and parents need to explore and identify what those objectives should be. In addition, further research should be undertaken to help establish whether those objectives can be met, measured and how.

Only through additional research and data can strategies be developed for coach/advisors to utilize, in order to develop their student participant's potential growth with predictable outcomes.

While additional research is required, this study provides evidence of adult behaviors that students find beneficial to them through their participation. Students reported that some coaches and advisors reinforced their trust in responsible adults and reinforced their beliefs about acceptable social norms. In addition, even less favorable experiences sharpened the student respondents' understanding of trust, fairness and support. It also provides evidence that students will seek out trusted adults in the K-12 setting for assistance in accessing post secondary interests and opportunities, even though those are rarely coaches or advisors. This suggests that with proper training and information, coaches and advisors could take on an enhanced role in this area. School activities administrators need to utilize data of this nature to thoughtfully identify key performance indicators for coach/advisors that are tied to standards relating to student development overall and specifically in the area of social capital.

Establishment of performance indicators would also point to and support the development of training opportunities related to those standards. Assessment tools need to be developed based on data to determine if coach/advisors are seeing growth in their participants in identified areas. These may be both technical performance areas and socialization performance areas. Finally, a consistent appraisal system needs to be developed for extracurricular coach/advisors. The appraisal system should be research based. These appraisal systems may look different from organization to organization but

should draw upon the research regarding human resources development, organization theory, effective instruction and identified growth targets for student participants.

Currently, for school activities administrators and coach/advisors, the gap in the research exists around what is known about the role a coach/advisor plays in student development and what aspects of student development through participation are of most importance.

Another implication from this study is that it is no longer enough to assert that coaches and advisors are key influences on student development without some tangible evidence of that assertion. This study provides clear evidence that student experiences vary from activity to activity. It produces evidence of factors that lead to positive experiences and negative experiences for students. It affirms that their experiences in extracurricular activities are important to students. It also affirms that there is no predictability of what a specific experience in a given extracurricular activity will be for students. This appears unfair to the student, coach/advisors, and parents who entrust their children to the care of the school when they sign their students up for extracurricular activities. It must be determined what the developmental goals of participation in extracurricular activities should be. In addition, there is a need to establish research-based processes and procedures which will assist in the achievement of those goals.

### **Conclusion**

This study represents a first attempt to develop an empirically based model to explain the impact athletic coaches and activities advisors may have on student growth. As an exploratory study, the findings point to the limited impact that coaches and other

activity advisors have, both as reported by themselves and students. This does not represent the “final word” and there is room for more research about the dynamic that exists between those who manage extracurricular activities and those who participate.

This study focused on social capital development. While some connections were made between coach/advisor attitudes and behaviors and student development in this area, particularly in the area of trust, their influence on students involved in this study is very limited. However, before reaching the conclusion that adult coaches/advisors have no effect, the limitations of this study should be noted. It must be pointed out that this was a small and relatively homogenous study group of largely white and middle class students who see their families as highly supportive. They uniformly expressed the opinion that their relationship with their parents privileged family members in helping to create social networks. This finding is, of course, consistent with Lareau’s 2003 summary of findings that middle class parents are more adept at creating social capital than less advantaged parents (Lareau, 2003). It is possible the results produced here might be different with a different or more diverse set of study participants; those whose experiences with family support for personal and social development are less positive for example. In particular, the role of organized extracurricular activities may have a compensatory function for some students that could not be uncovered here because of the nature of this sample. It will be important, in the future, to study cases involving different contexts and variables to determine the generalizability of the data produced by this study.

While the data obtained does not support a conclusion that social capital is

developed through participation in extracurricular activities it does lead to other possible conclusions. As noted above, the student data supports the conclusion that social capital is predominately developed through the family unit. Students repeatedly reported that their parents, or a parent, as well as siblings, aunts and uncles played the greatest role in demonstrating behaviors around trust development, access to information and adherence to acceptable social norms. Many students stated that they were looking for coach/advisors that mirrored the qualities they found in members of the family. It cannot be understated how powerful the family relationships are in developing social capital for students, this is particularly so for the parent.

Another conclusion supported by the data is that time spent with students does not equate to greater likelihood of social capital development. Students spend a large amount of time with coach/advisors, but the students report that more often than not the person they seek out for advice and assistance is a teacher, counselor or administrator. Students reported that they sought the same type of qualities as they looked for in coach/advisors but the sheer amount of time spent with an adult at school did not play a role in who they viewed as important and helpful. It is the quality and context of the time spent with the adult in school rather than the quantity of time spent that makes a difference to the student. Therefore, although coach/advisors may be in a better position to develop students because of self-selection into the activity and time spent in the activity, the impact of the amount of time spent together appears to be of limited value.

A negative conclusion from the results of this study concerns the fact that all of the students who participated reported behaviors by coaches and advisors that were

sometimes harmful rather than helpful to creating social capital. The variance in the experiences of students who participated in extracurricular activities is an indication that baseline or performance standards are lacking for the adults who work with these programs.

While this study did not find serious evidence of social capital development through participation in extracurricular activities, that does not necessarily mean that the K–12 system cannot have an influence in this area. To abandon the notion that schools, as social networks, cannot advance the development of social capital in students would be a mistake. It is clear from this study that students are looking for reinforcement of their developed sense of trust and pro-social behaviors. It is also clear, that they will seek out trusted individuals for assistance in discovering and accessing opportunities for future advancement. Greater attention should be paid by educators and those training educators regarding key aspects of social capital and how it can be developed in students. This is true for all educators. There are now proprietary software systems in place (such as Naviance and Explore) which allow students to articulate their interests and post secondary desires. Greater use of this type of technology and the dissemination of that information to school staff such as teachers, administrators, coaches and activity advisors can help inform those individuals so they may effectively engage students regarding those interests. This may lead to greater development of social capital in students. Without an understanding of what social capital constitutes, or a belief that it is a responsibility of school staff to develop it, social capital development will continue to be illusive for students.



Extracurricular programs involve millions of students each year and funding those programs costs taxpayers millions (NFHS, 2012). Given that level of participation and public financial commitment it is time to take a harder look at the development sought for students who participate in extracurricular programs and then tie expenditures to the attainment of that development. Social capital is but one area ripe for further research. Other aspects of the extracurricular program are equally worthy of further study.

### **Epilogue**

I selected this research topic because I believe that participation in extracurricular activities at the high school level can have significant benefits for students. These benefits can include a heightened sense of connectedness to the school, opportunities to enhance their socialization skills, new interest/s, friendships, connect with a caring adult, as well as learn responsibility to others, school and community. In the back of my mind, I was aware that this belief might not always be the case. I wanted to begin to peel back the layers regarding student participation and the role of the coach/advisor because I had been searching for some evidence that supported my belief other than “well, we just know that those programs are good for kids.”

My initial experience when searching for research on the role of a coach or advisor and student development in extracurricular activities gave me cause for pause. There was none out there. This was troubling. As a result, I needed to frame the research around an existing theoretical framework. I chose social capital because extracurricular activities are group activities and, I believed, there should be measurable data associated with participation in those types of groups.

What I found disappointed me: there is evidence that participation has an impact on the participants, both students and coach/advisors, but not in the way that a social capital framework predicted. While I believe that all of the coach/advisors I interviewed have the students' best interests at heart (and certainly the adults that I interviewed believed that of themselves), students did not always agree. Virtually all reported experiences with adult advisors and coaches that were, from their perspective, examples of bad adult behavior that did not foster good values, much less increase their social capital. Furthermore, they did not see coaches/advisors who were "good people" and decent role models as adding to their social capital. Rather, their judgments about these individuals were based exclusively on the degree to which their behavior accorded with values that they articulated as emerging from their families.

This result is disheartening based on rhetoric that supports the development of the extended (and costly) school-sponsored extracurricular activities. Yet this is, perhaps, not surprising as school activity administrators have provided coaches and advisors with little tangible guidance as to what we want them to do, why they should do it, how they should do it and how it will be measured. As an administrator, this fact frustrates me. We have also not asked the students, and for the most part the parents, what outcomes they desire through their participation in extracurricular activities. Without that information it is difficult to imagine how administrators can align expectations between students and coaches/advisors, much less for all stakeholders.

Carrying out this research has been a sobering experience as I consider the way in which experiences outside of school hours can help to build resilient and capable young

adults. I still believe that participating in extracurricular activities is beneficial for students, but the much discussed benefits are difficult to find when interviewing young adults about their experiences, and coaches/advisors are even less articulate about the benefits that accrue. I also know that more and more activities administrators are trying to develop performance indicators, standards, and equitable ways of assessing both coach/advisor performance but also student performance.

As I noted earlier, there is limited research on the role a coach or advisor plays on student development through participation in extracurricular activities. Therefore, there is void between what activities administrators are attempting to do in terms of performance indicators, standards and assessments and what the limited research tells us about the student participant and coach/advisor relationship. As a result, I believe that school administrators, in conjunction with researchers, and constituents (parents and students) should develop standards for what we believe extracurricular programs should provide for students and define how we think coaches and advisors can attain those standards. The establishment of standards and accompanying instructional strategies will allow us to assess our success in meeting the needs of students. This data can then inform our decision making in terms of the goals of participation in extracurricular activities. This information would assist coaches and advisors in carrying out their duties with a more defined purpose which I believe they desire.

This is an action research approach to extracurricular participation but one that is necessary to begin to compile measurable data that can inform our practice. I have an interest in developing those standards with colleagues in my own district as well as across

districts so we can begin the data gathering process. A partnership with a university researcher who is interested in this topic would be beneficial as well. It is well known that data informs quality instruction and coaching and advising is instruction. It is time we recognize this fact and move away from anecdotal references to the value of participation in extracurricular activities and define and measure that value. I am excited about the possibility of creating a framework under which coaches and advisors, administrators, parents and students have an aligned sense of what it means to participate in extracurricular activities. This includes, goals, roles and responsibilities of coaches/advisors, student, parents, administrators, identification of standards and clear assessment strategies both formative and summative.

I am pleased that some activities administrators are beginning to understand the foregoing discussion and I know that there are scholars out there who share my opinion. I am hopeful I can be a part of working with both groups to add value to the student experience through participation in extracurricular activities. However, there is much work that needs to be done and much, much more that needs to be learned about these programs and their effects on students.

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## **Appendix A Student Consent Form**

“Social Capital and the High School Activities Participant: A Multiple Case Replication Analysis of the Influence of the Coach/Advisor in the development of Social Capital for Students Who Participate in Co-curricular Activities.”

### **CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to be in a research study of the relationship between student’s who participate in co-curricular activities and their coaches and advisors in the area of social capital development. You were selected as a possible participant because you participated in a co-curricular activity while in high school. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by John Ward, a Ph.D doctoral candidate with the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership in the College of Human Development at the University of Minnesota.

### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to focus on social capital development and its implications for individual development through networks and relationships. The relationship to be examined is between the student participant and their coach/advisor. Social capital consists of the trust that develops between a coach/advisor and a student participant, access to new sources of information or people beyond that possessed by someone before joining a group and positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviors such as attendance, academics and so on. The focal point is the individual student and the goal is to identify and explain how students feel athletic coaches or activity advisors assist in their development in these three areas. That information could then be used to identify critical implications for both coaches/advisors and other school staff who interact with students.

### **Procedure:**

If you agree to be in this study you will be asked to submit to an interview of approximately 30 minutes in duration to answer semi structured questions regarding your experience in high school athletics.

### **Information Regarding Publishing of the Study**

Findings will be reported in a report in the form of a dissertation for the University of Minnesota. Findings may also be submitted for publication. Participant names will not be used in any report or publication.

### **Risks and Benefits of being in Study**

There are no risks for study participants. Interview questions will be asked regarding the athletes impressions of how the coach impacted key areas of the student’s overall development of social norms, contacts, and trust.

The benefit to the subject, if any, is knowing that the information will be used to make reasonable generalizations regarding how a head athletic coach develops social capital for students and lead to futher research in this area.

### **Compensation**

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

### **Confidentiality**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report published, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. Taped records of the interviews will be provided to a transcriptions service. You will be identified on the tape as a number before you begin to answer questions. The tapes will be erased one year after the completion of the study.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not effect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Minnesota.

### **Contacts and Questions**

The researcher conducting this study is: John Ward. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at Mounds View School District, 350 Highway 96 W., Shoreview, MN 55126 or by phone or email at (651) 621-6005 or [john.ward@moundsvIEWSchools.org](mailto:john.ward@moundsvIEWSchools.org). Questions may also be asked of my advisor, Dr. Karen Seashore at (612) 626-8971 or [klouis@umn.edu](mailto:klouis@umn.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than those listed above, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650

***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

### **Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher or Person Obtaining Consent:

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A. Coach/Advisor Consent Form**

“Social Capital and the High School Activities Participant: A Multiple Case Replication Analysis of the Influence of the Coach/Advisor in the development of Social Capital for Students Who Participate in Co-curricular Activities.”

### **CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to be in a research study of the relationship between students who participate in co-curricular activities and their coaches and advisors in the area of social capital development. You were selected as a possible participant because you coach or advise a high school co-curricular activity. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by John Ward, a Ph.D doctoral candidate with the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership in the College of Human Development at the University of Minnesota.

### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to focus on social capital development and its implications for individual development through networks and relationships. The relationship to be examined is between the student participant and their coach/advisor. Social capital consists of the trust that develops between a coach/advisor and a student participant, access to new sources of information or people beyond that possessed by someone before joining a group and positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviors such as attendance, academics and so on. The focal point is the individual student and the goal is to identify and explain how students feel athletic coaches or activity advisors assist in their development in these three areas and how coaches/advisors view that development. This information could then be used to identify critical implications for both coaches/advisors and other school staff who interact with students.

### **Procedure:**

If you agree to be in this study you will be asked to submit to an interview of approximately 20 minutes in duration to answer open ended questions regarding your experience in high school athletics.

### **Information Regarding Publishing of the Study**

Findings will be reported in a report in the form of a dissertation for the University of Minnesota. Findings may also be submitted for publication. Participant names will not be used in any report or publication.

### **Risks and Benefits of being in Study**

There are no risks for study participants. Interview questions will be asked regarding the athletes impressions of how the coach impacted key areas of the student’s overall development of social norms, contacts, and trust.

The benefit to the subject, if any, is knowing that the information will be used to make reasonable generalizations regarding how a head athletic coach or advisor develops social capital for students and lead to futher research in this area.

### **Compensation**

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

### **Confidentiality**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report published, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. Taped records of the interviews will be provided to a transcriptions service. You will be identified on the tape as a number before you begin to answer questions. The tapes will be erased one year after the completion of the study.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not effect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Minnesota.

### **Contacts and Questions**

The researcher conducting this study is: John Ward. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at Mounds View School District, 350 Highway 96 W., Shoreview, MN 55126 or by phone or email at (651) 621-6005 or [john.ward@moundsvIEWSchools.org](mailto:john.ward@moundsvIEWSchools.org). Questions may also be asked of my advisor, Dr. Karen Seashore at (612) 626-8971 or [klouis@umn.edu](mailto:klouis@umn.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than those listed above, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650

***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

### **Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher or Person Obtaining Consent:

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **Student Interview Tool**

Who would you say are the most influential adults that you have had in your life? Why-what is it about them that you value.

What qualities or traits do you look for in adults you choose to interact with? Why?

How do you know when you see these traits? What things do they do or say that make you think you want to be around them?

Who would you say are the adults you are closest to or trusted the most in the schools from kindergarten through graduation? What was it about them that you liked or valued?

Did you enjoy high school?

What kinds of things did you enjoy in high school and what was about them that you found interesting or fun?

What kinds of things did you not enjoy in high school and what was about them that you disliked?

What high school activities did you participate in?

Has participating been a good experience, have you enjoyed it?

What things did you enjoy about participating in activities? Please describe what it was about those things that you liked.

What things did you not enjoy about participating in activities? Please describe what it was about those things that you disliked.

Who has helped you the most in developing you as a player or person in those activities – how?

Of the people you hang out with (friends) about what percentage participated in the activities you did in school?

Did schools staff or people in the community ever talk with you about your accomplishments in activities?

How do you think they became aware of what you had accomplished?

Were you ever in any disciplinary trouble during high school?-for what?

If not, why do you suppose you didn't get into trouble? What was it that you believe allowed you to follow behavioral or academic expectations?

In your life has anyone talked with you or offered advice about the value of staying out of trouble and following rules?

Any adults at school talk with you about it?

Did any of those people, really make a difference in how you conducted yourself? Why or why not.

Whom do you speak with about grades, behavior, future plans?

If yes, did anyone assist you in that process?-who-why?

What individuals did you ask to write you letters of recommendation for you? Why

were they chosen?

What adults are you closest to at the High School? Why did you choose those adults?

What is it that you like about them?

Of the adults in your life, whose opinions do you respect the most?

Which adults in your life do you think know you the best? Why do you think they know you the best.

Of the adults at school, who do you trust the most- seek advice from?-why?

On what topics?- why those topics?

If you had to choose an adult at the school who can best help you or has helped you as you pursue other goals in life-who would that be?-why?

How long have you known the advisor you played for in high school?

Did your advisor work in the high school or another school in district?

Did other teachers or staff speak to you about your participation during the day? -Do have any idea why that is?

Did you know if your advisor spoke to other staff about you?-how?-what did he/she say?-why is that?

Did you know if your head coach spoke with your parents about you? -If yes, how often? If you know, about what did they talk about?

Were you comfortable with your coach talking with your parents? Why or why not?

Are there other staff your parents talked to regularly outside of school conferences?-who?-why?



Do you think your advisor treated you fairly? Give examples of why or why not.

Do you think your advisors were good advisors?-why or why not?

What do you think is a good advisor?

What qualities?

Why those qualities?

Did your coach ever talk with you about appropriate behavior?-when?

Do you think it had an impact on your behavior?

Were you aware of Minnesota State High School League and & your school's rules for behavior?-Why?-How?

Do you think they had an impact on your behavior?-Why do you think that is?

Anything you want to add or say?

### **Coach/Advisor Interview Tool**

What activities have you coached or advised?

Are you currently serving as an advisor or coach, if so, what activities?

Please describe what you think are the major responsibilities of a coach or advisor of your activity?

Why do you think that?

What are the major responsibilities of the coach/advisor to students?

What are the major responsibilities of the coach/advisor to the school or community?

What do you think students expect from their coaches or advisors? Why do you think that is the case?

Do you feel the coach or advisor has any responsibility for student's personal growth and development beyond having their participation in the (team/activity)?

If yes, define what elements of student growth are the responsibilities of the coach/advisor

Why do you feel that the coach/advisor has accountability for student growth in these areas?

How do you approach that responsibility-what conscious steps do you take to improve student growth in these areas?

Why do you take these measures?