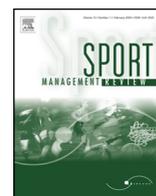




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Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr

Leveraging community sport organizations to promote community capacity: Strategic outcomes, challenges, and theoretical considerations



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 19 December 2016

Received in revised form 6 July 2017

Accepted 11 July 2017

Available online 21 July 2017

Keywords:

Community capacity

Case study

Community sport

Community development

Sport-for-development

ABSTRACT

Community sport organizations (CSOs) provide valuable contexts for promoting community development. These initiatives are most effective when they involve local stakeholders in the process of development. A key first step to achieving this objective is building community capacity, defined as local stakeholders' skills, knowledge, and resources that may be leveraged for change. Interestingly, despite this conceptual importance, few researchers have focused on capacity building in the sport context. This has limited the theoretical advancement of community capacity theory as it relates to CSOs and community development. Using a qualitative case study approach, the authors analyze the outcomes and challenges of implementing community capacity building strategies in an American CSO, and draw on the empirical data to contribute to this theoretical conversation. Interviews, participant observation, and document analysis were used to generate data, and deductive techniques were used for thematic analysis. The results highlight the outcomes of the capacity building strategies and challenges associated with implementation. In addition, the conclusion focuses on theoretical contributions to community capacity theory, namely the role of sport in facilitating inter-community relations across social groups and the link with process models of organizational capacity. © 2017 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Community sport organizations (CSOs) are potentially useful agents for promoting community development in underserved areas (Schulenkorf, 2012). Due to the wide range of objectives which fall under the umbrella of community development, definitions of the term are often tailored to specific goals, circumstances, and people (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2012). Despite these differences, a fundamental element of all variations is the empowerment of local communities

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(Vail, 2007). Rather than focusing solely on targeted outcomes, communities must be engaged in the process of development (Midgley, 1986). This entails building the resources, skills, and knowledge of local stakeholders to promote sustainable community development (Warburton, 2013).

However, this process is often overlooked in both research and practice. In the sport context, some scholars have critiqued CSO's for focusing narrowly on the individual manifestations of social problems (e.g., Coalter, 2010). Under this approach, sport events and activities are leveraged as the primary agents of change, and the efficacy of programs hinges on the presumed micro-level benefits of sport participation, characterized by the physical, social, and psychological traits of individuals (Coakley, 2011). While they provide important resources that might otherwise be missing in underserved areas, critics suggest this individualized focus promotes "narrow empowerment" that falls short of addressing the systemic social issues which create and perpetuate disadvantages in the first place (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012, p. 479).

Recently, researchers have worked to develop more holistic approaches to sport-based community development. These approaches emphasize bottom-up conceptualizations that engage community stakeholders in the planning, development, and implementation of CSOs (Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008). A key first step in this process is building community capacity, which Chaskin (2001) defined as "the intersection of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community" (p. 295). Strong community capacity ensures that a community possesses the human, physical, and financial resources necessary to lead self-directed initiatives (Lawson, 2005). As discussed by Vail (2007), "the idea of community development as a process is closely aligned with capacity building, which implies building on the strengths of a community and developing the skills, knowledge, and leadership such that the community is capable of recognizing and solving local problems" (p. 574).

Despite this conceptual relevance, capacity building is rarely the focus of empirical research focused on CSOs. Although previous scholars have provided anecdotal evidence of capacity building, or linked CSOs with specific dimensions of community capacity (e.g., social capital, leadership), Edwards (2015) indicates "there is still a need for empirical evidence of the suggested outcomes of [capacity building] strategies" (p. 15). This work is needed to not only examine the efficacy of capacity building strategies in CSOs, but also refine and develop the application of community capacity theory. Using a qualitative case study approach, we contribute to those objectives by empirically analyzing the outcomes and challenges associated with capacity building strategies in an American CSO, and provide empirically-based contributions to community capacity theory.

2. Conceptual background

2.1. Community capacity

The theoretical groundwork for community capacity begins with Toennies (1957) classical ideas of *gemeinschaft* (community) and *gesellschaft* (society), a conceptualization that has subsequently received important contributions from other notable sociologists. According to Toennies (1957), *gemeinschaft* refers to the bonds of kinship and tradition typically held among members of closely-knit communities, while *gesellschaft* describes less personal, and often exchange-based, institutionalized relationships (Toennies, 1957). Together, these terms informed early conceptualizations of community, comprised of social interactions among individuals bound within prevailing institutional structures (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). Although initially presented as mutually exclusive definitions for social groups, the concept of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* has been revisited by Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and other notable scholars who have disaggregated the terms to provide more clarity and specificity (Brint, 2001). While institutional structures undoubtedly shape the social dynamics of individuals, the social dynamics of individuals are equally capable of influencing institutional structures. This highlights the importance of analyzing how *gemeinschaft*-like social relations affect the arrangement and composition of *gesellschaft*-like structures (Brint, 2001). Community capacity draws on these prevailing conceptualizations by deconstructing static institutional structures into the dynamic arrangement of human, material, and social capacities which collectively build and sustain them (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). These include the individual and collective knowledge of community members, resources and infrastructure, associational and social patterns, and environmental circumstances that are leveraged for change (Jackson et al., 2003).

Communities possessing capacity are more likely to mobilize resources, leverage social connections, and build supportive institutional structures on their own volition (Wendel et al., 2009). Conversely, communities lacking capacity often struggle to achieve these objectives due to a lack of human capital, inadequate infrastructure, limited political influence, and/or fragmented social ties (Wendel et al., 2009). This leads to gaps in key areas of investment which often become the target of external development initiatives (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Although organizations filling these gaps provide important services that might otherwise be missing in communities, many do not rely on the local capacity of residents to do so, thus unwittingly create chronic dependencies. As Bhattacharyya (2004) asserts, "they are service providers . . . set up for the clients not with them" (p. 13).

Community capacity addresses these limitations by focusing on the process of development as much as the product. From this perspective, sustainable development depends on the composition of institutional structures, not just their presence or absence within a community (Labonte & Laverack, 2001). While capacity initiatives have similar long-term goals as community development, they serve the dual purpose of cultivating key capacities through the strategic integration of

community stakeholders and resources (Wendel et al., 2009). It is for this reason that community capacity is often referred to as a parallel track, with one track representing the goal of capacity building and the other track being that of tangible community development (MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007, p. 300).

2.2. Sport and community capacity

Scholars have applied the concept of community capacity in a multitude of fields leading to a variety of contrasting perspectives (Simmons, Reynolds, & Swinburn, 2011). While there is consensus on a set of core domains, other components are largely dependent on the context and purpose of the capacity building processes under study (Liberato, Brimblecombe, Ritchie, Ferguson, & Coveney, 2011). In the sport context, principles of community capacity can help CSOs more strategically leverage the process of community development. Just as sport activities are utilized to promote individual and community outcomes, the strategic management of CSOs can be leveraged to build community capacity as a parallel track (Edwards, 2015). By developing and utilizing community-led management practices to deliver sport programs, CSOs can improve local skills and knowledge (e.g., leadership), establish connections with other community institutions, and provide structures for community dialogue (Edwards, 2015). O'Brien and Pontig (2013) provide an example of this process by elucidating how local businesses and stakeholders in Papua New Guinea leveraged their burgeoning surf tourism industry to foster cross-cultural ties and community development. Although building a sustainable surf tourism market remained the strategic focus for this initiative, capacity building became the longer-term byproduct of collaborative efforts towards achieving that goal (O'Brien & Pontig, 2013).

Within the sport management literature, much of the work connecting sport with elements of community capacity has emanated from the Sport-for-Development (SFD) sector. SFD represents a growing body of research and practice centered on sport's wider role in promoting social development, alleviating inequalities, and advocating for social justice (Schulenkorf, in press; Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016). Rather than relying on conventional assumptions regarding the power of sport, SFD offers a stronger theoretical basis for directing sport toward social, political, and health-related goals (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). A growing number of case studies and project evaluations have also helped link these theories with practice, contributing to a distinct applied component within SFD research. Similar to other substantive areas of SFD inquiry, sport's connection to community capacity was initially based largely in public and policy-related rhetoric, yet concepts related to capacity building have received more critical attention in recent years. In particular, Edwards (2015) provided an insightful overview of how sport may be leveraged to enhance community capacity for health promotion. Using Wendel et al. (2009) framework as a guide, Edwards (2015) elucidated the connection between sport and seven dimensions of community capacity: (a) skills, knowledge, and resources; (b) social relationships; (c) structures and mechanisms for community dialogue; (d) quality leadership; (e) civic participation; (f) value systems; and (g) a learning culture. Table 1 provides an overview and brief description of each of these dimensions.

One of the more distinctive elements of Edwards (2015) framework is the emphasis on enhancing *existing* systems, infrastructure, and methods of engagement. Drawing on contemporary public health perspectives, which have increasingly emphasized ecological rather than individual models of health promotion, Edwards (2015) outlined strategies for enhancing the efficacy of sport's contribution to community health. This stands in contrast to many SFD researchers, who have more often focused on international aid projects with external implementers (Levermore, 2009). Indeed, Schulenkorf et al. (2016) review of SFD research revealed that only one in two SFD projects "used local (in-country) staff, which means that a remarkable 50% relied solely on 'international experts' to implement programs" (p. 34). Comparatively, Edwards' (2015) framework focused specifically on improving existing sport systems and practices to more strategically contribute to the dimensions of capacity outlined by Wendel et al. (2009). Importantly, Edwards (2015) emphasized that sport's contribution to these dimensions are not inherent and that sport must be intentionally structured and managed with community capacity existing along a deliberate parallel track.

This makes the American community sport system an especially intriguing context to study sport-based community capacity building. In the US, elite performance and competition has typically taken precedence over SFD values when it comes to sport (Frisby & Millar, 2002). Although social and community impacts are often associated with CSOs, they are

Table 1
Dimensions of community capacity.

Dimension	Definition
Level of skills and resources	Development of and access to resources and skills within the community
Nature of social relations	Sense of community; social capital
Structures, mechanisms, and spaces for community dialogue	Social and inter-organizational networks; Mechanisms for communication and citizen input
Leadership	Effective and sustainable community leadership and leadership development
Civic participation	Distribution of community power and ability for citizens to participate in community processes
Value system	Shared community values that support democracy, inclusion, and social justice
Learning culture	Understanding and awareness of community history and ability to critically reflect on shared experiences.

Source: Edwards (2015).

frequently substantiated through assumption rather than assessment (Coalter, 2010). As a result, many sport managers may be reluctant to alter their approaches or overlook opportunities to integrate community capacity strategies into their operations. For example, building a learning culture requires sport managers to confront their assumptions and engage in critical reflections regarding sport's role in society (Edwards, 2015). Although there is evidence of sport fostering this dialogue in certain instances (e.g., Vail, 2007), traditional modes of sport remain deeply ingrained in American society and institutions, and may inhibit opportunities to build a learning culture around SFD values. Moreover, although sport's connection to social relations has emerged as a prominent area of SFD research, ongoing scholarship in this area suggests CSO's have a propensity to facilitate bonding rather than bridging social capital (Nichols, Tacon, & Muir, 2013; Nicholson & Hoye, 2008; Whittaker & Holland-Smith, 2016). In other words, while CSO's can strengthen social relations within distinct social groups (i.e., bonding), they do not necessarily connect these social groups along broader social spectrums (i.e., bridging; Widdop, Cutts, & Jarvie, 2016). This distinction is especially salient in the American context, where market-driven public policy has widened the gap between social classes and led to disproportionate access to key resources (Lin, 2000).

In addition, the ability of American CSOs to build community capacity may be influenced by their organizational capacity (see also Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014). Destabilized finances (Misener & Doherty, 2009), declining volunteer rates (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006), and a lack of critical infrastructure (Coakley, 2010) have weakened the organizational capacity of many CSOs, thus limiting their ability to implement community capacity as a parallel track (Whitley, Forneris, Barker, 2015). Moreover, in an effort to build organizational capacity, many CSOs may drift from their original mission and adopt new management strategies that neglect community capacity altogether. For example, sponsors have become an essential resource for CSOs to generate funding streams beyond their traditional revenue structures (Misener & Doherty, 2014). But, while these partnerships can be beneficial for building organizational capacity, they also reduce autonomy and increase dependencies on external organizations, which can lead to fundamental changes in how programs are delivered. Although the literature on organizational capacity in CSOs is robust, scholarship on this process of building organizational capacity is still emerging (Millar & Doherty, 2016). In addition to developing a greater understanding of this process, it is equally important to consider how community capacity may be implemented as a parallel track.

Clearly, more empirical work is needed to understand how community capacity building strategies may be implemented into the operation of CSOs. While the framework makes sense theoretically, the implementation of capacity building strategies in practice may be influenced by a variety of context-specific factors (O'Hare, 2011). Moreover, the lack of direct empirical attention has curtailed potential theoretical advancements since Edwards' (2015) initial contribution. The purpose of this study is to empirically examine how one CSO implemented community capacity strategies in an underserved community. Using Edwards (2015) model of community capacity as a guide, we focus on the strategic outcomes of specific strategies, challenges encountered during the process, and implications for community capacity theory. We developed three primary research questions: (a) what were the strategic outcomes related to each dimension of community capacity; (b) what were the challenges associated with implementing capacity building strategies; and (c) what are the implications for sport-based community capacity theory?

3. Method

To ensure a rich analysis of how CSOs contribute to community capacity, we considered a single qualitative case study as an epistemological fit for this study (Yin, 2009). Westside Youth Center (WYC) was purposively selected based on their program design and study setting.

3.1. Program design

WYC was founded by community members in 1950 with the goal of using sport as a catalyst to promote positive youth development. Although positive youth development is the focus of programming, WYC strategically leverages their social and structural resources to intentionally build community capacity as a parallel track. WYC owns their facilities, which include two lighted fields (football and baseball), one club house, and one concession stand. Traditionally, the organization offered baseball, football, cheerleading, and softball activities for youth ages 5–15; however, funding reductions and declining interest have limited programming to just football and cheerleading. There are currently six football teams, grouped by age and weight, and one cheerleading team collectively serving youth ages 5–15. Altogether, WYC serves approximately 120–150 children and adolescents per year through these programs. The organization is operated by approximately 30–35 family and community volunteers who serve in a variety of sport related (e.g., coaches, officials, game announcers) and non-sport related (e.g., team parent, fundraising/sponsorship coordinator, facility maintenance) roles. The board of directors is made up of six volunteers from the local community who have been nominated for exceptional service.

3.2. Study setting

In the context of this study, our characterization of underserved relates primarily to socio-economic and racial characteristics of the community. WYC is located in a low income neighborhood in a medium-sized city in the Southeastern US. Based on the mandates of their affiliated national governing body, WYC specifically serves three ZIP codes in this area. According to *City-Data.com*, an online data aggregation service, these ZIP codes collectively have a 14% unemployment rate,

22% poverty rate, and a median household income of US\$44,377. By comparison, the rest of the county has a 4% unemployment rate, 9% poverty rate, and a median household income of US\$68,080. In addition, 83% of the population in the ZIP codes served by WYC have attained a high school degree or higher, compared to 90% of the population in the rest of the county. The racial characteristics of the ZIP codes served by WYC are 54% Black/African American, 25% White, 18% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% other or mixed race, while the rest of the county is 16% Black/African American, 68% White, 9% Hispanic/Latino, and 7% mixed race. The families and youth served by WYC share similar socio-economic and racial characteristics as the ZIP codes they serve.

3.3. Data generation

Data were generated between December 2015 and February 2016 from a variety of sources to ensure the credibility and dependability of findings (Tracy, 2010). First, we collected documents related to the financial, administrative, and programmatic features of WYC. Following Scott (1990), document selection was guided by authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. The corpus of documents included registration and membership forms, participant contracts, memorandums, meeting agendas, sponsorship and advertisement forms, flyers, Internet documents from the organization's website, and external documents, such as news stories and press releases. In addition to the meaning of each document, the intertextuality among documents was also an important consideration for this study, as establishing the links between communicative documents and operational documents was critical to understanding the implementation of capacity building strategies.

Second, we conducted eight semi-structured interviews with the commissioner, members of the board of directors, and head coaches (see Table 2). Interviews were conducted in a public setting that allowed for an uninterrupted and focused conversation (Markula & Silk, 2011), and averaged approximately 45 minutes. We utilized Edwards' (2015) framework of community capacity to develop open, theory-driven, and probing questions organized around each dimension of capacity. Open questions were intended to encourage interviewees to express their knowledge and insight; theory-driven questions were intended to reconcile interviewees' knowledge with extant community capacity theory (Flick, 2014); and probing questions were utilized to re-examine specific themes and clarify statements (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2007).

Third, we utilized observational methods to further understand the operations and activities of WYC. One coaches' meeting and one parents' meeting were purposively selected to understand the flow of communication from board members (e.g., management), coaches (e.g., staff), and parents (e.g., stakeholders). These observations were conducted in natural settings in the field of interest, and utilized methods that were flexible to the processes themselves (Flick, 2014). The itinerary for the coaches' meeting was collected and added to the corpus of documents, and the meeting was audiotaped. Gareth Jones assumed a role of observer-as-participant, as his presence was announced at the beginning of the meeting, although he had minimal involvement in the social interactions occurring within the setting. The parents' meeting was less formal and did not have an itinerary; however, we incorporated the same methods and Jones assumed the same observational role.

3.4. Data analysis

Gareth Jones transcribed the data from interviews, focus groups, and meeting dialogues verbatim. To ensure the dependability of interview and focus group data, we sent transcripts to each interviewee in order check for accuracy and representativeness. We imported these transcripts, along with relevant documents and meetings logs, into QSR Nvivo 10 to facilitate the coding process and used a deductive thematic analysis to code the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The structure of the coding frame was based on Edwards (2015) conceptualization of community capacity. After transcribing the data and reading the transcripts several times, Jones coded the data systematically under these *a priori* themes. A realist approach was taken to this process, as the coding was guided by the research questions outlined at the beginning of the study. Jones worked through the data line-by-line, and the primary units of analysis were words, sentences, and/or paragraphs that were related through content or context. Verbatim quotations and other data extracts were used to substantiate themes.

Table 2
Interviewee Characteristics.

ID	Pseudonym	Role	Gender
1.	Peter	Commissioner	Male
2	Brian	Board Member	Male
3	Megan	Board Member	Female
4	Greg	Board Member	Male
5	Joe	Board Member	Male
6	Coach Tyler	Head Coach	Male
7	Coach Eric	Head Coach	Male
8	Coach Tom	Head Coach	Male

To ensure the credibility of themes, Gareth Jones emphasized multivocality in the selection of supporting data extracts (Tracy, 2010). In addition, he strived to provide thick descriptions of the data to provide sufficient detail of culturally situated meanings (Geertz, 1973). The trustworthiness of findings was enhanced by both methodological and data triangulation (Denzin, 2008). Methodological triangulation was achieved by utilizing multiple data generation methods, which encouraged consistent (re)interpretations of findings and increased the scope of understanding (Tracy, 2010). Data triangulation was achieved by generating data from different people, in different places, at different times to increase the depth and consistency of analysis (Denzin, 2008).

4. Results and discussion

The analysis focused on examining the strategic outcomes and challenges associated with WYCs attempts to build community capacity, and drawing out theoretical implications. Table 3 provides a summary of the results, which are organized around the dimensions of community capacity outlined by Edwards (2015).

4.1. Level of skills and resources

Developing local skills and resources is critical to building the organizational and structural capacities required for sustainable community development (Wendel et al., 2009). One of the primary ways CSOs contribute to this dimension is by managing programs and events that enhance local infrastructure and knowledge (Edwards, 2015). WYC has leveraged their physical and social position within the community to achieve these objectives. A partnership with the local church

Table 3
Summary of Results.

Dimension	Strategic Outcome(s)	Challenges
Level of skills and resources.	Local Infrastructure: “[WYC] hosts Sunday worship, discipleship classes, and Bible study” Human Capital: “[the coaches] go through the [governing body] training which includes risk management”	Parent/Community Outreach: “I would love to see a situation where we’re able to mentor the parents” Non-Sport Training: “we also need to take clinics on how to be able to intervene and see [child behaviors]”
Nature of social relations	Family-Like Ties: “we all see ourselves as a family, we sell [WYC] as a family” Cross-Group Contact: “it’s like we [are] still brothers at the end of the day, White or Black it [doesn’t matter]”	Establishing Bridging Ties: “reaching out to them on a continued basis and getting the response from the community, it’s tough to do that”
Structures, mechanisms, and spaces for community dialogue	Individual Communication Structures: “the little boy called me one day to come and talk to him, and things in the house kind of got back together” Inter-Organizational Partnerships: “[The partnership] invites community people in, and gives us the chance to help in a way that we have not ever helped before”	Partnership Management: “When you bring other entities in, it’s not as easy as one would think it is because everyone doesn’t have the same mission . . .” “We had a partnership with [a representative] at [parks and recreation], next year he’s not there . . . so now we need to re-establish that relationship”
Leadership	Local Leadership Development: “Once we go through the committee program . . . once we establish that to see what your involvement level is, and how committed you can be to something, then that becomes a nomination process”	Turnover: “it’s like closing a door, you know you open the door then all of a sudden it [closes] . . .” Leader Affiliation: “it would be good if we had some more supporters outside of the parents”
Civic participation	Strong Collective Identity: “I played with WYC . . . so I [came back] to give back to WYC” “. . . so my whole reason for doing this is trying to do something to bring the community back together”	Limited Engagement from Broader Community: “[you] can put it out there on blast, hey community event, come here, tell us about WYC, how this can help your community, that kind of thing, and it’ll fizzle out”
Value system	Recognition of Community Capacity: “a lot of [youth’s] behavioral issues come from societal issues, so until we are able to address those societal issues, there’s still going to be [behavioral] issues” Development-Based Sport Values: “The goal of WYC is to use football, cheerleading, baseball, and softball as a catalyst to promote positive youth development”	Limited Interest in Non-Sport Components: “we did [the study hall] for about two weeks and I stopped because when I was there nobody was there” Declining Interest in Non-Competitive Sport: “about five years ago we had a really large flag football [program] with five year olds, now they want their kids to put on pads at five”
Learning culture	Ongoing Individual Learning: “I take every critical response, every positive praise point to heart.” “we have meetings and stuff like that before we practice, so like once a week or something like that . . . the team moms will [also] have parent meetings sometimes”	Facilitating Organizational Learning Culture ^a : “Every game I try to go with different captains . . . whoever did good at practice that week, I’ll let them go ahead and be captain” “every coach is not a counselor, and that’s big . . . you have to be able to recognize that”

^a Note: Quotations intended to represent emphasis on individual, rather than organizational, learning culture.

was leveraged to improve WYC facilities, which according to a 2015 press release included, “lights for its gazebo, a fixed water leak, and a spruced up, in-use clubhouse.” These infrastructural improvements allowed WYC to host more community-based sport programs and events throughout the year. As the commissioner, Peter, stated, “recently we [added] a soccer organization that [uses] the facilities during the weekends, which is very good because you have young kids all the way up to adults that are actually utilizing the facility.” Similarly, a board member, Brian, mentioned, “[A high school] plays their games here now . . . we have another rec league . . . that utilizes the field as well, and a homeschool baseball team.”

Importantly, facility improvements were leveraged to host a wider array of non-sport events as well. As the 2015 press release explains, WYC now “hosts Sunday worship, discipleship classes, and Bible study . . . [and] there’s also a summer camp and a food pantry the second and last Saturday of each month.” These programs and events provide valuable resources for community members and are a key element of building community capacity. Utilizing sport to increase engagement with these initiatives was an important point of emphasis among board members and coaches. For example, Brian stated, “we’re in the process now of looking at [other] programs to engage the youth in the community . . . so that they feel a part of the organization.” In particular, integrating enrichment programs with sport activities was a notable point of emphasis during the coaches’ meeting, as one coach stated, “the mentoring aspect is so much more important than the football aspect. I mean I can’t emphasize that enough . . . so that’s why [mentoring is] such an imperative part of what we [want to] begin to do.”

In addition to developing and leveraging their physical resources, WYC has attempted to develop human capital through their programs and events. However, the primary focus of these efforts has been on the attitudes and behaviors of participants, with less formalized structures for coaches, parents and community members. For example, WYC’s coach education programs primarily emphasize the development of skills, knowledge, and expertise tied to safety or sport-specific tactics. Although they have attempted to integrate more child and adolescent development training into these sessions, formalizing such processes has been difficult. As Greg stated, “[the coaches] go through the [governing body] training which includes risk management . . . but [we need] training that actually [helps] our volunteers so they can actually understand kids better.” During the coaches’ meeting, one coach also remarked, “that’s one thing as coaches that we have to keep reminding [ourselves], we can take the coaches clinics, but we also need to take clinics on how to be able to intervene and see [child behaviors].” Additional skill training for parents and volunteers was also a much less formalized process, and although volunteers in administrative roles likely acquired skills that could be applied in different contexts, there were no structures in place to make this transference intentional. Formalizing these procedures was a point of emphasis among WYC board members and coaches, as Coach Tom stated:

I would love to see a situation where we’re able to mentor the parents, not telling them how to raise their child, but involve them and just show them, ya know, this is how you prepare your credit to buy a house, this is how you prepare yourself to get a better job.

4.2. Nature of social relations

The connection between sport and social relations is an essential element of community capacity building (Edwards, 2015). Drawing from the foundational work of Pierre Bourdieu, Robert Putnam, and James Coleman, a growing body of literature has linked sport events, sport organizations, and sport activities to social capital (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008). Conceptually, social capital developed in sport contexts may be deployed in broader community settings to help bridge social divides and mobilize collective action (Edwards, 2015). During interviews with board members and coaches, the theme of family was frequently used to express how WYC builds social capital. Megan explained, “in addition to us being a part of the community, we all see ourselves as a family, we sell [WYC] as a family.” This sentiment was also expressed by coaches, who explained various strategies for promoting a “family” social atmosphere. For example, Coach Eric utilized cook-outs after each game to strengthen social relations within the team and community, and mentioned:

I saw these kids come from day one having no football knowledge [and] never playing football before, never knowing each other, to man, we had cook-outs, everybody knows each other, their playing with each other, the mom’s know each other . . . camaraderie, so it’s like we created a family.

Importantly, Coach Eric indicated that these events helped bridge social divides among youth, stating “you see kids that normally wouldn’t [even] know each other, who stay on opposite sides of the town, can actually play with each other, interact with each other.” When reflecting on his own experiences with WYC, Coach Tyler specifically mentioned how the program facilitated cross-race interactions, stating “it [is] like we [are] still brothers at the end of the day, White or Black it [doesn’t matter].”

WYC also utilized a variety of on- and off-site events to build social relations with the broader community. As Megan mentioned, “we always have our huge kick-off and family day, and you don’t even have to be a part of [WYC] or have a kid in our program . . . we just have a good old block party.” In addition, when discussing his post-game cook-outs, Coach Eric stated, “I open it up to everybody, not just my team . . . so its things like that [that] I’m trying to do off-site [of] WYC, but still represent WYC as well.” Similarly, Joe, a board member, discussed how WYC has tried to engage local businesses in fundraising events, stating:

We've had pizza parties at certain businesses . . . we've [gone to] Applebee's or Buffalo Wild Wings or whatever, [and] yea we want to try to get money, but it also helps the business because they're supporting the youth, and you would think the community would come out and do more with the youth.

These initiatives were seen as a way to grow the social network of WYC, with Greg stating, “we [are] reaching out to build a stronger network.” However, while these events have been successful at strengthening “bonding” ties among families, establishing “bridging” relations with other social groups has been difficult. As Peter mentioned, “yea that's kind of tough . . . reaching out to them on a continued basis and getting the response from the community, it's tough to do that.” These results are particularly salient when considering the demographics of WYC's stakeholders, who are predominantly low-income residents from the surrounding community. Although the programs and events were successful at building “family-like” social capital within this group, evidence of more expansive social connections were sparse. This ultimately constrained WYC's efforts to capitalize on their social capital, since many of their ties were locally redundant and did not provide access to new resources or other forms of political, economic, or cultural capital (Lin, 2000).

4.3. Structures, mechanisms, and spaces for community dialogue

Sport organizations that provide settings for community dialogue help build dense social networks that are conducive to mobilizing collective action (Lawson, 2005). In addition, inter-organizational partnerships help facilitate community capacity building by opening channels of communication, resource exchange, and collective decision-making (Edwards, 2015). These networks are most effective when they extend beyond traditional sport organizations and engage partners in other industries (Chalip, 2006).

WYC has attempted to facilitate these expansive structures at the individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, the decentralized management of youth sport programs at WYC helps build strong communication networks among coaches, parents, and volunteers. Coaches stressed the importance of communication with parents, and parents reported that communication with coaches was excellent. Importantly, communication networks were also utilized to discuss important, and sometimes difficult, non-sport issues as well. For example, Coach Eric described how he responded to one child acting out of character:

I'm like “Hey mom what's been going on?” Come to find out, step-dad left him, having some problems at home, there were some problems in the family. So I reached out, the little boy called me one day to come and talk to him, and things in the house kind of got back together. So I'm not just here for the just football.

Establishing mechanisms of social support is an integral part of building community capacity, and provides an effective platform for more expansive community dialogue. These mechanisms especially important for single mothers, as Coach Eric explained, “mom's [are usually] the ones that are pushing for the boys to get, especially the single mothers, for the boys to be around these men, because they don't have that.”

However, capitalizing on this platform has been difficult. Although respondents alluded to strong bonding mechanisms within the WYC network, these typically did not extend beyond parents and families involved in the program. To facilitate more diverse communication and dialogue, WYC has attempted to form inter-organizational partnerships with other community institutions; yet, this has been a challenge, with Brian indicating, “that is where we can use some help, people that understand how to go about doing that.” Specifically, board members alluded to value discrepancies that impeded opportunities to extend their inter-organizational network, with Brian stating:

When you bring other entities in, it's not as easy as one would think it is because everyone doesn't have the same mission and the same goals, so to take all those entities, bring them together, and try to attain the same goal is a challenge.

Similarly, Megan provided an example of how turnover in other organizations made it difficult to establish consistent value-based partnerships:

We had a partnership with [a representative] at [parks and recreation], next year he's not there, he's gone and so now we need to re-establish that relationship with somebody else, and does that person really want to do it? Same thing with [sponsors].

As a result, WYC has been hesitant to solicit partnerships with other organizations, and instead focused on managing their existing relationships. For example, Megan talked about the benefits of partnering with the local church:

[The partnership] invites community people in, and gives us the chance to help in a way that we have not ever helped before . . . so that is amazing to us because we have not ever had, even though the church is right there with us, the church doesn't have a giveaway for needy families, they have an AA meeting and then they have a divorce counseling meeting and so we filter into some of those things if we need.

Moving forward, the board of directors is keen to expand and formalize these types of partnerships to facilitate more expansive community dialogue. For example, a future partnership with a local youth mentoring organization was discussed during the coaches' meeting, with one coach stating, “we need to have somebody who does this professionally involved. We don't always have to take the credit for doing something, but if there is somebody who is doing something positive we need to try to get on that wagon.” Sustainably growing and managing these strategies will be essential to promoting more expansive community dialogue between WYC and the broader community.

4.4. Leadership

According to [Edwards \(2015\)](#), community capacity building requires “local community champions to communicate goals, motivate community members, acquire resources, and lead the implementation of community-wide initiatives” (p. 12). Sport leaders from the local community often possess high levels of trust and credibility that can be used to galvanize community stakeholders ([Burnett, 2006](#)), and coaches and volunteers can develop transferrable leadership skills through their participation in community sport programs ([Parent, Olver, & Séguin, 2009](#)). In addition, contemporary models of leadership in social change organizations have emphasized the potential of decentralized leadership strategies that provide more flexibility and adaptability to the fluctuating needs of stakeholders (e.g., [Ospina & Foldy, 2010](#)). This recognition is also evident in the sport management literature ([Welty Peachey, Zhou, Damon, & Burton, 2015](#)), and is particularly relevant to SFD organizations ([Schulenkorf, 2012](#)).

WYC operates with this structure and promotes local leadership development among volunteers and coaches. However, implementing more formalized structures to guide this process has been difficult. Currently, potential leaders are either referred by members of the organization or identified from a pool of volunteers who lead one of several committees (e.g., sponsorship, special events, fundraising). As Megan describes:

Once we go through the committee program, I think we have like seven committees, once we establish that to see what your involvement level is, and how committed you can be to something, then that becomes a nomination process, let's train somebody [for a leadership role].

In addition to assessing their specific skills, the board also looks for volunteers that are intrinsically motivated. As Peter noted, “one of the biggest things we look at is intent, and what are they looking to do, the people that give us a good eye are the ones that actually do without being told to do.” Ideally, leaders are identified from the volunteers who perform well and demonstrate a commitment to WYC, then elected by the community every June to join the Board of Directors. However, board members indicated that most volunteers become overwhelmed by the complex challenges they face and dropout before assuming a leadership role. Greg described the cycle as a swinging door, stating, “it's like closing a door, you know you open the door then all of a sudden it [closes] if things don't turn out the way that person thought it would.”

Another issue with implementing this protocol is that most of the volunteers who proceed through the leadership hierarchy are parents of participants in the program. Although these individuals develop important leadership skills and contribute immensely to WYC, they rarely continue after their child ages out of the program. As a result, the board specifically targets parents of younger participants to try and establish more continuity. As Megan mentioned, “we try to start with the parents of the five, six, and seven year olds, because longevity wise they have more invested in our program as opposed to training the [parents of] fourteen and fifteen [year olds].” While this tactic helps WYC limit turnover, it places additional strain on certain parents. This was evident in parent evaluations, as a mother from the youngest team stated, “it would be good if we had some more supporters outside of the parents that could help with home games so that the same parents were not always called on to volunteer.” Overall, WYC utilizes the sort of decentralized approach that is conducive to developing collective leadership at the local community, and has attempted to formalize a process to champion local leaders. However, the complexity of the social issues they face has hindered these efforts, and high volunteer turnover has made it difficult to implement leadership development strategies.

4.5. Civic participation

Participation in voluntary grassroots organizations is frequently associated with broader civic involvement. Sport programs and events can provide contexts for diverse community stakeholders to interact and develop a shared identity ([Sharpe, 2006](#)), which compels them to engage in broader community development efforts ([Glover & Bates, 2006](#)). In particular, programs that engage local citizens in governance processes and ensure they are relevant to community needs are most likely to engender broader civic action ([Midgley, 1986](#)).

Results indicate a localized recruiting approach has helped WYC engender this collective identity among board members, coaches, volunteers, and participants. When asked how most volunteers are recruited, Megan stated, “they're all coming from [the community], they're coming from either the patch that we pull from, one of our parents, or somebody that knows somebody.” This strategy has contributed to a local identity that was especially evident in interviews with coaches. For example, Coach Tyler explained, “I played with WYC . . . so I [came back] to give back to WYC.” Coach Eric articulated similar connections, and explained how the prospect of helping youth in the area motivated him to start coaching:

That's my whole reason for doing this is because I grew up in inner city youth in [this area], I started out in WYC and made it up through high school and went to college playing ball. And then I come back to my neighborhood and see the same thing going on . . . so my whole reason for doing this is trying to do something to bring the community back together.

WYC has attempted to increase broader civic participation by engaging members of the broader community in key decision-making processes. As Peter stated, “board meetings are, and always have been, open to the public. They're

available for the public to come, and that's how it was founded, it was a community-based organization." These meetings are primarily communicated through word-of-mouth, although texts, emails, and postcards have also been used. However, public involvement in these forums has been limited, as Joe mentioned, "[you] can put it out there on blast, hey community event, come here, tell us about WYC, how this can help your community, that kind of thing, and it'll fizzle out." As a result, WYC has struggled to transfer their collective identity to other civic areas. Megan explained how this has limited their voice in public issues, such as the redevelopment of their local shopping center and namesake:

The plaza that was right [next to] us . . . that used to be called Westside Plaza, and it got bought [but it was] like that forever. So then stores up there started to close, new owners bought the property, I think somebody bought the whole plot and they changed the name, which was devastating to us because we felt like we were connected to that plaza by having it named after our field.

To increase their visibility and community involvement, WYC recently adjusted the dates and times of board meetings to be more accommodating. While this approach has been relatively successful at increasing the participation of parents, engaging with members of the broader public has remained difficult. Being more deliberate about increasing community interaction and identifying important community members was a notable area of potential improvement among board members, with Peter stating, "that's probably something we can increase a lot more to engage [the community]."

4.6. Value system

Sport organizations can help build community capacity by creating a value system that aligns with local cultures and beliefs (Shilbury, Sotiriadou, & Green, 2008). This ensures that development initiatives reflect the goals and interests of local stakeholders by fostering inclusion and social justice (Edwards, 2015). The value system of WYC is directly reflective of local stakeholders, and emphasizes youth development and community capacity building. The website states that the goal of the program is to "use football, cheerleading, baseball, and softball as a catalyst to promote positive youth development" and "the development of healthy lifestyles and community values." While promoting youth development is the primary goal of WYC, their core value system is embedded in the process of community capacity building. Board members and several coaches described the structural disadvantages facing the community they serve, and explained that addressing those issues was essential to achieving their objective. As Coach Tom stated, "a lot of [youth's] behavioral issues come from societal issues, so until we are able to address those societal issues, there's still going to be [behavioral] issues." Board members reinforced this commitment when discussing some of the obstacles they face, with Brian describing his reaction to recent acts of vandalism at WYC facility:

I'm not upset or frustrated about it because I know the bigger goal for here is to continue to help the youth. So I don't get discouraged, I don't get downtrodden, and I don't get mad . . . my initial reaction now is how can we help to solve this problem, and when [the same people that are vandalizing] come to start helping build it, then that's when I think you reach a pinnacle in your organization.

Despite the acts of vandalism, Brian indicated WYC will remain open for public use, reflecting a deep commitment to building community capacity. As Brian stated, "being open is what community is all about, so I think shutting it down and locking it kind of goes away from the original vision of what WYC [stands for]."

Importantly, this dualistic focus was evident in the design of WYC programs, which included sport and non-sport components. For example, Brian stated that WYC was "looking this summer to put together a program to build computers with the youth that in turn they will be able to take home with them." Additionally, Brian mentioned that the organization was "trying to put together some classes possibly in welding, and possibly in learning how to operate large machinery." These strategies develop skills and competencies that participants can use outside of the sport context, and are complemented with opportunities to apply them in program-related settings. For example, Megan stated:

We have student demonstrators who have aged out of our program, but are giving back to the program. And then they can get community service hours through their school . . . And so, we feel like we give them a positive role model to look at, and then in turn they can turn around and give that back to us.

However, board members and coaches highlighted declining interest in non-sport (and even non-competitive sport) components of their programs. For example, Coach Tom described a short-lived attempt to establish a study hall, stating, "on the days I had practice, Coach Greg would host, and on the days he had practice I would host, and we did this for about two weeks and I stopped because when I was there nobody was there." Similarly, Megan described the declining interest in a non-competitive family-based flag football program for youth, indicating, "[no parents] want [their child] to play flag football anymore, about five years ago we had a really large flag football [program] with five year olds, now they want their kids to put on pads at five." This trend is particularly alarming considering the success of SFD projects hinges on the strength of their non-sport components (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). In addition, the ability of WYC to align their sport value system with broader community value systems, which is essential to the sport-based community development process (Shilbury et al., 2008), may be negatively impacted if only competitive sport opportunities are utilized.

4.7. Learning culture

The final dimension of community capacity relates to how organizations critically assess intended outcomes and the underlying assumptions that guide program logic (Edwards, 2015). Organizational learning involves continuously assessing internal and external operating environments to improve strategic management, and a learning culture is developed when this assessment becomes embedded into the norms, values, and operations of an organization (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). It is particularly important for SFD programs to build and sustain a strong learning culture since the delivery of sport in these contexts is unique and requires ongoing consideration of sport's wider role in society (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). A strong learning culture not only promotes internal organizational growth, but also diffuses externally to stimulate critical thinking in broader community settings (Edwards, 2015).

At the organizational level, WYC has attempted to establish a learning culture by utilizing end-of-year surveys to solicit feedback from parents. Response rates have been extremely low, with Greg stating that “a lot of parents don't even do the survey,” but the board of directors still systematically review all responses to identify potential areas of need. As Megan stated, “we organize them, put them in categories, and then try to figure out how we can enact the changes that we need in order to make this [happen].” Additionally, Peter mentioned, “I take every critical response, every positive praise point to heart, so I don't take anything lightly and we try to address it in some type of way.” There are also informal feedback loops between coaches and parents that consist of ongoing dialogue throughout the season. As Coach Tyler stated, “we have meetings and stuff like that before we practice, so like once a week or something like that . . . the team moms will [also] have parent meetings sometimes.” While information from both formal and informal evaluations are used to inform program operations, there is not a standardized set of evaluable benchmarks. Brian highlighted similar shortcomings, and expressed the need for external help to address the issue, stating, “having some resources, some [human] resources to help implement those things would be awesome.”

Another key element of building a learning culture is engaging in critical reflections regarding underlying assumptions in program logic and the role of sport (Edwards, 2015). Although this process was evident among board members, results indicate it did not completely filter down to coaches and volunteers. For example, Peter, a board member, described sport as simply the hook to engage youth, and specifically emphasized, “building [youth] up in the areas where they can be productive citizens outside in society.” Similarly, Brian, another board member, explained how WYC board members encouraged each other to become involved with other organizations to learn different community capacity building approaches, stating, “[the WYC] has always encouraged becoming a part of local organizations to learn how [they] do things to bring that back.” However, this deeper reflection and assessment was not consistent at the coach and volunteer level. For example, Coach Tyler explained one of his strategies to build confidence in players:

Every game I try to go with different captains . . . whoever did good at practice that week, I'll let them go ahead and be captain of the game and walk out onto the field, so we just trying to build the kids confidence up.

Similarly, Coach Eric explained how he specifically looked for assistant coaches who were comfortable working with kids, stating, “every coach is not a counselor, and that's big . . . you have to be able to recognize that.” However, there was less evidence of recognizing the broader role of WYC in building community capacity. This finding is particularly important considering Fiol & Lyles, 1985 specifically distinguish between individual and organizational learning. Although individual learning is important, organizational learning is critical to developing and maintaining a learning culture that then transmits to others through histories and norms (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Following this logic, strengthening organizational learning may not only foster a greater learning culture within WYC, but also provide opportunities to transmit that culture into the broader community. This appears especially salient considering the aforementioned struggles with engaging member of the broader community.

5. Discussion and implications

The results related to strategic outcomes and challenges highlight several practical contributions for CSOs building community capacity. In addition, we uncovered intriguing theoretical contributions related to the application of community capacity in the sport context. Before outlining these contributions, we first acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, the case study approach involved only one youth sport program in an underserved community. The results are rooted within this specific context, and readers should consider this narrow scope when determining the transferability of findings (Maxwell, 2012). Second, although data was collected over a period of several months, an interpretation of how capacity building outcomes manifested over longer periods of time was somewhat limited. While the retrospective insight offered during interviews provided a glimpse into this process, such as the communication structure with coaches, more longitudinal work is needed to provide an in-depth depiction of this progression. Third, most of the primary data were generated from sources associated with WYC, which may have contributed to a biased representation of organization-community interactions. Finally, the deductive approach to data generation, coding, and analysis may have limited opportunities for more extensive engagement with the context. Future studies should consider alternative qualitative methods, particularly ethnographic and participatory action research, that provide valuable opportunities for prolonged and in-depth engagement with such a complex contexts (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016).

Despite these potential limitations, the results of this study offer several intriguing practical and theoretical contributions to community capacity in the CSO context, and the discussion is organized around these two domains. Data indicate WYC had a positive impact on various dimensions of community capacity. WYC leveraged community partnerships to improve physical resources and infrastructure that had reverberating effects throughout the community. In addition to hosting more sport programs and events, these enhancements were utilized to host other community services as well, such as a monthly food bank, faith-based programs, and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. In addition, WYC hosted a variety of ancillary activities, such as yard sales, which provided additional opportunities to enrich local skills, knowledge, and resources. Importantly, these services also provided a safe setting to enhance social relations among community members. Creating a shared sense of community is one of the potential strengths of CSOs (Lawson, 2005), and these initiatives helped contribute to that objective while also integrating WYC with other social services in the area.

Another important strategic outcome was WYC's contribution to the nature of social relations through sport-specific programming. The youth sport programs were leveraged to build communication structures between families and coaches that also served as important social support systems. Moreover, sport activities and events facilitated the formation of *gemeinschaft*-like social cliques that reinforced team values and promoted a collective identity tied to the values of WYC. Importantly, data suggested the sport teams helped bridge prevailing divides in the broader community by facilitating relationships among players who would otherwise not interact. This promotion of social inclusion in the development of social capital is a particularly valuable element of capacity-building initiatives (Forde, Lee, Mills, & Frisby, 2015). Indeed, while communication structures formed through CSOs initially pertain to sport-specific issues; they can also serve important social and cultural functions as well. This transition was evident in the data, as WYC coaches highlighted how parents and players utilized team communication networks to discuss important personal matters.

However, the potential impact of WYC's capacity building strategies was limited by challenges at a variety of levels. One of the primary issues was their limited organizational capacity. Although limited financial capacities were mentioned as an operational constraint, data suggests human resources were the most restricting. Most volunteers were parents of younger participants, and frequently dropped out before assuming leadership roles. Consequently, most core volunteers in administrative positions were forced to perform secondary duties as well, which usurped time and resources that could otherwise be used for strategic management. As a result, several promising projects and events experienced short-term delivery episodes or failed to get off the ground altogether because leaders were forced to focus on day-to-day operations. Although WYC possessed strategic capacities within the board of directors, these skills and knowledge were not fully deployed. This made it difficult to formalize various organizational processes and contributed to issues related to volunteer retention (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

Another key challenge for the organization stemmed from the complex challenges facing the community they served. For example, since many players were from single-parent homes or had parents working multiple jobs, coaches dealt with significant transportation issues. In addition, acts of vandalism not only increased the costs of maintaining the facility, but also inflicted *perceptual* damages that were detrimental to their reputation. Board members and coaches expressed their desire to project a positive image of WYC that would attract and engage players, parents, and community members. A key part of maintaining this image is maintaining the aesthetic appearance of the facility, and continuous acts of vandalism make it increasingly difficult to accomplish that task. Finally, board members indicated that public attendance to WYC's open meetings has declined significantly in recent years. Despite attempts to engage the community through signage, emails, and text messaging, the response has remained minimal. While declining participation in civic and/or voluntary associations has been noted at the national level (Putnam, 2000), decreases are especially evident in low-income communities. This makes it especially difficult to implement the type of decentralized management strategies that are essential to building community capacity.

The results of this study also highlight intriguing theoretical contributions to advance community capacity theory in the CSO context. First, data indicated that while WYC activities and events helped build dense family-like social cliques, these relations tended to be rather insular. Similarly, although WYC successfully recruited volunteers from existing networks, they struggled to solicit participation from the broader community. As a result, the primary growth of WYC occurred through the extension of existing social circles rather than the creation of new ones. Considering their location within a socio-economically underserved community, this process of social redundancy drastically limited access to key resources. Although a large proportion of the sport and social capital literature has drawn from the seminal work of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, it would appear Lin's (2001) conceptualization of social capital provides a more appropriate lens for this type of analysis. Lin (2001) draws on social network theories to emphasize the resources embedded in social structures, rather than just the structures themselves. This perspective accounts for the tendency of individuals and groups to form homophilous social networks at different level of a social hierarchy (Lin, 2009). In the current study, social cliques established at WYC provided access to substantial social capital for individuals, yet the majority of this network involved clustering at a relatively low socio-economic position. As a result, the resources embedded in the network were relatively poor compared to networks that involve more diverse socio-economic groups and positions (Lin, 2000).

This distinction is important, as Edwards (2015) indicates that "sport's potential to contribute to capacity building may require intentional practices to build social capital across unequal groups and structures" (p. 11). However, the current American sport policy landscape is not necessarily conducive to facilitating these type of collaborative exchanges between CSOs. In fact, recent research suggests CSOs may be operating in environments that induce competitive rather than collaborative action (Jones et al., 2017). This highlights the need for a more critical assessment of how prevailing sport

policies facilitate or constrain the ability of CSOs to promote community capacity. Forming inter-community ties is extremely difficult, as structural constraints and various class-based social patterns reduce opportunities for interactions with more advantaged social groups (Lin, 2001). In order for CSOs to successfully bridge these gaps, they must be supported by sport policies that foster meaningful inter-community relations. For CSOs in underserved areas, such as WYC, the form and substance of these relations is also salient, as philanthropic or paternalistic one-way interactions are unlikely to foster the type of exchanges necessary for true community development (Bhattacharyya, 2004). In addition, this may require a reconsideration of traditional competitive policies, such as the ZIP code restrictions imposed by the national governing body in this case study, which may further impede opportunities for collaboration between diverse CSOs.

Another important theoretical contribution is the interplay between organizational capacity and community capacity. Most SFD research has focused on the efficacy of external change agents in promoting community development and elements of community capacity. That is, state-sponsored agencies or other non- and for-profit organizations that enter underserved communities and develop a platform to mobilize collective action (Schulenkorf, 2010). In addition to facilitating and extending the reach of social interactions, external change agents also provide local stakeholders with access to tangible and intangible resources (Schulenkorf, 2010). Conceptually, once the community is able to plan, manage, and leverage projects on their own volition, external change agents reduce their influence and gradually transfer control to local leaders (Schulenkorf, 2010). This case study provides insight into a slightly different context, since WYC has remained community-led for over six decades and may be more accurately characterized as an *internal* change agent in need of external revitalization. Rather than starting from scratch with an externally-led project, the foundation for an effective change agent was already in place, it just needed to be strengthened.

A greater understanding of how CSOs build organizational capacity is essential to maximizing their potential in promoting community capacity. Unstable funding, limited human resources, and a lack of strategic capacities significantly impacted WYCs ability to contribute to various dimensions of community capacity, and presented a strategic dilemma related to the process of building organizational capacity. CSOs with greater organizational capacity are able to hire paid staff, develop more advanced strategic plans, and formalize operating procedures (Doherty et al., 2014). Yet each of these steps comes with the risk, perhaps even the temptation, of drifting from community capacity objectives. For example, when CSOs are able to hire paid staff, particularly for strategic positions, they may be more inclined to hire external qualified individuals rather than investing resources into training a local volunteer. Although this decision may be a more efficient use of resources, and further enhance organizational capacity, it does not align with community capacity objectives. As Edwards (2015) indicates, volunteers in CSOs can develop important skills that contribute to their human capital, but when these opportunities are taken away it undermines their skill development. The flip side of this internal battle was also evident in the study, as WYC avoided partnering with organizations that didn't share their values and mission. Although they maintained their dedication to promoting community capacity, they also relinquished numerous opportunities to enhance organizational capacity. Striking this balance is essential for internal change agents, such as WYC, to promote sustainable community development. Millar and Doherty (2016) have stimulated an important discussion around this topic by presenting a process model of organizational capacity building, which starts with initial stimuli and ends with integration into program and service delivery. Including dimensions of community capacity in this discussion would yield key insights into how CSOs may be effectively leveraged to promote community development.

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