Building Community and Social Capital through Children's Leisure in the Context of an International Camp

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The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which participation in leisure activities directed towards cooperation and effective communication affected the development of social capital and sense of community in a group of children at an international camp. Methods of data collection included participant observation and focus groups, which included drawings as a part of the focus group procedure. Through an inductive analysis of qualitative data gathered from 32 eleven-year old campers, leisure was observed to provide a common ground for the children's relationship building and the development of shared meanings. The findings suggest that leisure can provide a foundation for the development of shared meanings through the process of participation and social learning, which in turn is conducive to the emergence of social capital and community.

KEYWORDS: *Social capital, community, social learning, children, leisure, summer camp.*

Introduction

A sizeable body of literature argues that feelings of social disconnectedness have become prevalent in Western society. Putnam (2000) suggests that community bonds have withered with very real costs. These bonds and the potential for social capital development as described by Putnam (1996, 2000) include community members' social networks and norms of reciprocity and trust. According to Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, and Tipton (1996), the reduction of social capital may be contributing to a loss of civic consciousness and sense of obligation to the rest of society. Certain types of leisure experiences are thought to influence the attitudes and behaviours of participants (Coalter, 1998; Johnson & McLean, 1994; Kleiber 1999; Putnam, 2000). Specifically, leisure that is social in nature may encourage interactions among people and contribute to the generation of social capital and community.

While fields such as youth studies have begun to address social capital development among children (Raffo & Reeves, 2000; Ravanera & Turcotte, 2003; Swaman & Sweeting, 2004), little research examining social capital and community development in children in a leisure context has been reported. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which participation in leisure activities during a four-week camp, affected the development of social capital and sense of community among an international group of children. The specific questions asked were:

1. To what extent did social capital and a sense of community develop over the course of a four-week long camp? And what were the processes involved?
2. To what extent did structured, formal activities directed towards cross-cultural understanding and other community building goals transfer into the activities of daily living such as informal socializing and interactions among children?

Three primary areas of study provided theoretical sensitivity to this inductive, exploratory study; these areas included social capital, community and leisure as addressed in the following literature review.

Social Capital

According to Coleman (1988) social capital includes some aspect of social structure and facilitates certain actions of a group of people. He also describes social capital as a neutral concept that is defined by its function. In other words, social capital is not necessarily good or bad, rather it involves coordinated actions that reflect trust, norms and networks among group or community members. Social capital may be regarded as a process or an outcome, and indeed it may function as a positive or a negative influence. Given that social capital leads to accessing knowledge, informational, physical and economical resources that can help facilitate action (Bordieu, 1986), social capital can be used to promote individual self-interest and often corresponds to wealth, reputation and power (Lin, 1999). Indeed, researchers such as Glover (2004a) and Shulman and Anderson (1999) illustrate how social capital can be used to reinforce social inequities and further positions of power and domination. However, this study predominantly focuses on Putnam's (1996, 2000) conceptualization of social capital which emphasizes the intangible elements of social capital, such as the connections among people, and the expectations and obligations that exist within these relationships. In other words, this study examines the process of social capital through the development of shared meanings and norms.

According to Putnam, "networks (almost by definition) involve mutual obligations" (p. 20). Other researchers have also examined social capital in terms of relationships and networks among people. For example, Hemingway (1999) suggests that communities with strong social networks and links

among its members foster feelings of interconnectedness in contrast to sep-
arateness of human activity and human goals. Accordingly, Arai (2000) states
that the norms of reciprocity and the trustworthiness, based on beliefs in
honesty and cooperation that develop from these networks and connections,
are the glue that hold or tie people together.

Social capital may evolve in contexts where weak or strong ties exist.
Strong ties are associated with thick trust. According to Arai (2000), "thick
trust occurs in small face-to-face communities generated by intensive daily
contact between people" (p. 333). This bonding effect is thought to rein-
force identities that already exist within the community and contributes to
a sense of solidarity. However, excessive bonding within the community may
result in exclusive, homogenous communities. Weak ties can be associated
with thin trust. Thin trust involves the bonding of people from diverse back-
grounds, and the resulting social network is often described as inclusive. This
kind of trust may be a powerful foundation for social integration in large,
modern societies (Arai, 2000). Thus, social capital may incorporate both
strong and weak ties. In general, social capital is viewed as a positive aspect
of collectivities inasmuch as "it constitutes a force that helps to bind society
together by transforming individuals from self-seeking and egocentric cal-
culators, with little social conscience or sense of mutual obligation, into
members of a community with shared interests, shared assumptions about
social relations, and a sense of the common good" (Newton, 1997, p. 576).

Civic Education and Social Capital Development through Leisure

The recognition of human rights includes an individual's right to leisure
(Coalter, 1998; United Nations, 1948). Accordingly, some leisure researchers
have focused on examining factors that create inequalities in participation
and important individual leisure outcomes, rather than exploring subjective
experiences and the potential benefits leisure may have on the community
and overall social well-being. In other words, leisure research in North Amer-
ica has been predominantly focused on psychological factors related to in-
dividual participation (Jackson & Scott, 1999; Mannell & Reid, 1999). With
this emphasis on individual and psychological considerations, Coalter (1998,
p. 25) argues that "[t]he precise nature of the relationship between leisure
and social citizenship remains under-theorized in leisure studies."

Among the more significant contributions to understanding the rela-
tionship between leisure, community and social citizenship is the work of
philosopher, Albert Borgmann (1992), who introduces the concept of *focal
practices* to describe certain leisure activities. Focal practices provide a center
of orientation; they radiate into the surrounding social context and gather
people around (Borgmann, 1992). During their leisure experiences, partic-
ipants are most likely not making overt attempts to form connections or as
Borgmann (1992) argues, "people are not interested in the project of com-
munity building. It is the thing [the activities], its charms and traditions, that

have captivated their good will. Community gathers around reality" (p. 136). As Arai and Pedlar's (2003) analysis suggests, "the practice of leisure *is* the leisure experience, so that the end is inseparable from the means" (p. 190). Arai and Pedlar further argue that the leisure experience or 'leisure as meaning' remains part of the civic tradition in the public sphere rather than private sphere where 'leisure as consumption' dominates. Accordingly, Glover's (2004b) study on volunteers in a community center suggests that perceptions of citizenship can be fostered through active participation. Hence, the interdependence of engagement in leisure and connectedness are essential precursors to citizenship.

Inquiry into the role of leisure in the development of citizenship and feelings of responsibility may be especially important as the emphasis on paid employment as a primary vehicle for human and social development may be declining (Reid, 1995). Good citizenship, as argued by Reid (1995), can no longer be defined as the capacity to produce or as one's contribution to work productivity. Instead, leisure may be an effective form of civic education. Concomitantly, social capital may be an increasingly important component of citizenship as it promotes individuals working together and effectively pursuing common objectives (Fukuyama, 2001, 2002; Putman 1996, 2000), and leisure may grow in importance as a context for its further development. Of relevance then is the question of the potential for social capital development in young people as a precursor to engaged, active citizenship as adults. As Putnam (2000) noted in his agenda for social capitalists, if we are concerned for the future of citizenship in today's young people, we need to further encourage civic engagement through increased participation in leisure and civic education.

Methods

This study took place at an international summer camp during the summer of 2003 in New Jersey. The summer camp, called Pangea Village, is one of many programs organized by Children's International Summer Villages (CISV), whose aim is to promote peace and cross-cultural understanding through educational programs that foster cooperation and effective communication among children. English was the common language at camp. Activities such as cooperative and simulation games were organized and run by the counselors (the adults who brought the children to camp from their respective countries), junior counselors and staff members. The first author was an official staff member at the camp. Staff members are in charge of the administrative duties of camp and generally organize and participate in all of the camp's structured activities with the children.

A community is often defined by its history (Bellah et al., 1985) and involves a long-term commitment from its members (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993). Arguably, Pangea Village does not quite parallel these definitions of community. The community at camp may be more in-line with a *proto-*

community. According to Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) proto-communities encompass all aspects of community except for the shortened time span in which it develops.

Camp included 48 eleven-year-old participants from 12 different countries. The participating countries, which were selected by CISV's International Office, were Chile, China, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and the USA. As required by CISV policy, two girls and two boys from each country were selected to participate in the camp. Parental consent forms were mailed to the parents of all of the camp participants. The children themselves also had the option of accepting or rejecting the invitation to participate in the study while at camp. Out of the 48 camp participants, there were 32 study participants (17 males and 15 females). Two of the children's parents decided they did not want their children to participate, and another fourteen campers did not return their parent consent forms and child assent forms.

This exploratory study employed two major qualitative approaches to data collection. First, participant observations occurred on a daily basis during the entire four-week period of camp and focus groups sessions took place at the end of camp.

Participant Observations

Observations primarily focused on the children's interactions and their behaviors and attitudes related to cooperation, communication, sharing, teaching, trust, conflict, leadership, inclusion and exclusion. A conscious effort was made to maintain a balance between the children's behavior in structured and unstructured activities. Structured activities were the activities planned by the counselors, junior counselors and staff members, whereas unstructured activities typically occurred during free time.

As Fine (1987) states, for participant observation to be successful, the researcher must establish rapport with the participants in order to gain access to a variety of social situations. He suggests that one of the key aspects of gaining access is the establishment of trust. Furthermore, he suggests that "participants must believe the observer can be admitted to private conversations and actions without negative consequences" (p, 238). During interactions with the children, care was taken to not make corrections or pass judgement on the children's behaviours or topics of conversation. Mandell (1988) commented researchers need to suspend their judgments on children's behaviors and focus on the way these behaviors fit into the children's perceptions of their experiences, and the meanings created from these experiences. However, in accordance with the role of staff member and the ethical issues of being a researcher, there were several occasions when intervention was required. These situations involved fights that either occurred or were about to occur among the children. In general, the children were willing to answer questions and appeared to carry on normally with their activities and conversations when interacting and in the presence of the re-

searcher. Various studies suggest that preadolescents and children are generally willing to disclose their feelings, and are able to appreciate the researcher's fluctuating role between friend and authoritative figure (cf. Adler & Adler, 1994; Fine, 1987).

Focus Groups

The focus groups were the only activity added to the camp program for the purpose of the research. As participants in the focus group sessions, the children were assigned to one of six groups of eight children each (four boys and four girls in each group). The four children from each country were placed together because several of the children in some of these groups required help with language translation. Although the counselors from each country were present to help with translation, they were instructed to provide no leading comments or suggestions to the children. The first author facilitated the focus group discussions. The three weeks she spent with the children prior to the focus group sessions provided the opportunity to establish a sense of connectedness and rapport that was important for this qualitative inquiry (Patton, 1990).

A pilot test of the focus group procedure was administered by the first author (Yuen, 2004) and participated in by four eleven-year-olds from Canada during the time they were at a camp the year prior to the main study described here. The original question asked in the pilot focus group was, "How do you feel about being at camp?" The children were asked to draw a picture to reflect how they felt about the camp towards the end of the first week. This procedure was repeated during the last week of camp. Following the completion of the second drawing, the children were asked to present both of their drawings to the group. The children's drawings and discussions generally revolved around missing home, the food they were eating and not getting enough sleep. Consequently, the focus group question was changed to: "What did you learn at camp?"

Drawings were used to decrease the language barrier. As van Manen (1990) suggests, researchers can learn about a phenomenon through visual imagery because "it is in this work that the variety and possibility of human experience may be found in condensed and transcended form" (p. 19). Furthermore, drawings have been used in other research with children to investigate their personal perceptions and experiences (cf. Schratz & Walker, 1995; Lykes, 1994). In this study, participants were asked to draw four pictures based on four different questions or requests for information, but very much focused on what they felt they had learned from camp: 1) How would you describe our camp community? 2) How did you communicate with others? 3) Think of the activities we did at camp and what you learned from them, and 4) Think about what you did during free time, what you learned and why it was important to you. Few probing questions were required as the children who drew the pictures prior to the discussion spent at least twenty minutes thinking about the questions. Furthermore, as the focus

group occurred towards the end of camp, the children were comfortable with seeking clarification on their own, thinking aloud and discussing ideas within the group.

The duration of all but one of the focus groups was approximately 75 minutes. All discussion in the focus groups was audio-tape recorded. The tapes were then transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis. Due to time constraints, the last focus group session with the children from Great Britain and the USA did not include the drawing and the discussion only lasted 30 minutes. The participants were asked to place their names and self-selected pseudonym on the back of their drawings.

The focus groups also served as a method for member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Specifically, preliminary interpretations based on the observations were presented to the children. Member checking provided an opportunity for the children to formally confirm, revise or reject the interpretations and also to provide additional data for further analysis. The four-week length of the study provided time to learn about the children's culture and to re-examine the information collected for distortions (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Due to the emic perspective of the researcher and the intensity of the some of the relationships that were formed, a reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was kept to help understand how personal feelings, expectations and assumptions influenced the analysis and interpretations of the data. Additionally, triangulation was utilized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Specifically, multiple analyst triangulation occurred as the researcher shared her findings with other staff members, counselors, junior counselors, and the children. For example, during free-time the researcher would often approach members of the camp who were present during a specific activity or event that was observed and ask for their observations of the incident. In addition, data source triangulation involved comparing the data collected through participant observation and the focus groups. Essentially, the researcher compared the data obtained in the focus groups with her own observations. When the children's responses did not coincide with what was observed, the researcher then used the occasion to enter into negative case analysis with the children.

Data Analysis

As suggested by Kirby and McKenna (1989), data analysis began during the camp while the data were being collected. A transcript-based analysis (Krueger, 1994) was the primary method used in coding and interpreting the data. The tape-recordings of the focus groups were transcribed and analyzed along with the field notes and interpretations recorded in a reflexive journal that the researcher kept during the participant observation phase of the study. The children's drawings were also coded for the purpose of analysis and interpretation of the meaning the children attached to their camp experiences. Schratz and Walker (1995) caution that a drawing is distinctive and personal, thus the researcher may not always know the meaning behind the picture. However, the focus groups provided an opportunity for the chil-

dren to describe their drawings and for the researcher to clarify the meanings of the drawings with each child.

Analysis of the data began with an open coding process (Strauss, 1987) with the aid the computer software program N-Vivo 2.0 and the data were organized into common categories. These categories were then reduced to a set of four manageable themes through axial coding (Strauss, 1987). Following this phase of the analysis, the themes were further explored to identify a pattern among them with the aid of a conditional matrix (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Specifically, as the focus of the study was on process and generation of social capital and sense of community, each theme was examined comparatively and was identified as either a condition or a consequence.

Findings

Four major themes were identified on the basis of the data analysis: 1) Leisure as a Context for Relationship Building, 2) Opportunity for Participation, 3) Opportunity for Social Learning, and 4) Emergence of Community. Leisure was characterized as the condition or context for relationship building and the core of the children's experience at camp at it provided opportunities for participation and social learning. Participation and social learning were both observed to contribute to community building and the development of social capital as shared meaning and understanding were developed through practice and reflection. Finally, a sense of community of was identified as a conditional feature of the process. The development of a community with its emerging qualities is felt to be a conditional feature of the connections made as well as an opportunity to participate and learn with others; all of which are made possible through leisure.

Leisure as a Context for Relationship Building

Leisure experience in this study is used as an all encompassing term to include the children's perceptions, feelings and behaviours that stem from the actual activity. While the majority of the camp activities were intended to foster the goals of CISV (to promote peace and cross-cultural understanding through educational programs for children), leisure experiences were nevertheless a dominant feature of the stay at camp for the children and characterized the camp activities which were designed to be enjoyable and purposeful. As one child commented, "[Camp] was fun, but it like had a meaning" [Wilson, Field Notes, August 13, 2003]. The children also had a choice of whether or not to participate in the activities. Thus, in accordance with most definitions of leisure (see Mannell & Kleiber, 1997), the children were intrinsically motivated to participate in the activities. Indeed, the perception of freedom was dominant as there was always the underlying assumption that they did not have to participate if they chose not to do so.

Leisure experiences were observed to provide an event or occasion that helped enable the children to associate and develop connections with each other. As David mentioned, "I think we all get to know each other better

during activities" [Field Notes, July 29, 2003]. More specifically, as Anzi's drawing and comment suggests, the children were able establish a connection with each other by using leisure as the basis for communicating (see Figure 1). Essentially, leisure provided a context for the children to develop and maintain relationships with each other. For example, in Figure 2, Danla drew a picture of himself playing baseball and Frisbee with others.

Furthermore, as David suggested, activities enabled the opportunity for he and Kuro to "do stuff together" and thus facilitated the opportunity for friendships to form and be maintained.

> David: I mean I don't know why I'm such a good friend with Kuro because he doesn't talk to me very much, you know, except for in Japanese. He can't speak very much English. . . But that doesn't stop me from being his friend . . . at
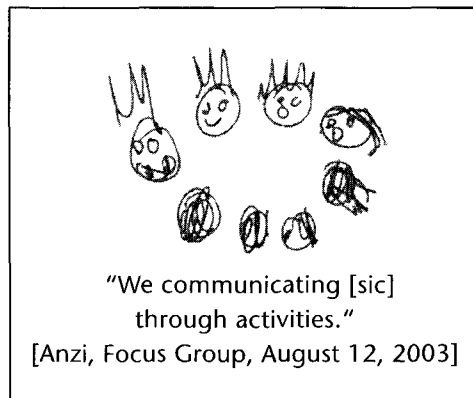

"We communicating [sic]
through activities."
[Anzi, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Figure 1. Anzi

"I usually played baseball or
Frisbee...with different people"
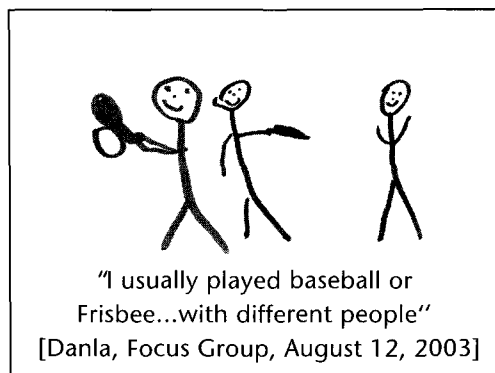[Danla, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Figure 2. Danla

the um . . . activities and stuff that we do, we usually like to stand next to each other so we can do stuff together. [Field Notes, August 4, 2003]

In sum, the children's leisure experiences were used as a context for relationship building. Specifically, two contexts were identified in which the children discussed their interactions. The first is in the context of *public leisure spaces*, which was important for the development of friendships. The second is *private leisure spaces*, where children were able to sustain and maintain their relationships with each other. These contexts are further examined as subthemes in the following paragraphs.

Public Leisure Spaces for Developing Relationships

Many of the children were observed to socialize during unstructured leisure activities initiated by themselves such as sports, crafts and games (see Figure 3). These activities were observed to provide a medium through which the children could interact with one another. Generally, most of these interactions occurred in public spaces such as the Lullaby Room, Arts and Crafts Room, Dining Hall and the forest as depicted in Nacho's drawing (Figure 4).

These kinds of spaces were perceived to be public spaces for everybody's use. Some of the children described these locations as places to 'hang out' and relax. For example, when Lili was asked why she liked to talk with others in the Lullaby Room, she replied, "I like to talk [in the Lullaby Room] because. . . I think they can relax in the Lullaby Room. [Focus Group, August 12, 2003]. Furthermore, as Wilson suggested, these spaces are good for getting to know others, "Like today me, Ted and John, we were just sitting down by the lake and talking about stuff . . . it's good cuz you can get to know other people." [Focus Group, August 12, 2003]. In sum, the children used these public leisure spaces for developing relationships with others.
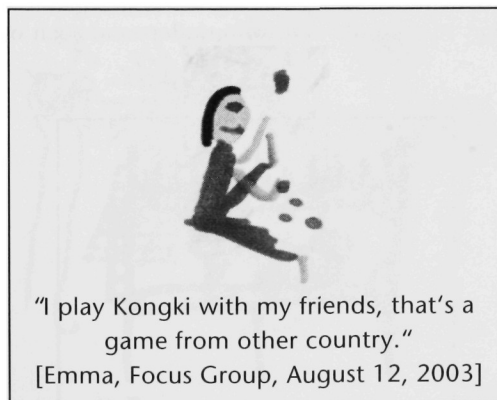

"I play Kongki with my friends, that's a game from other country."
[Emma, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Figure 3. Emma

"I draw, um, persons talking in the Free Time."
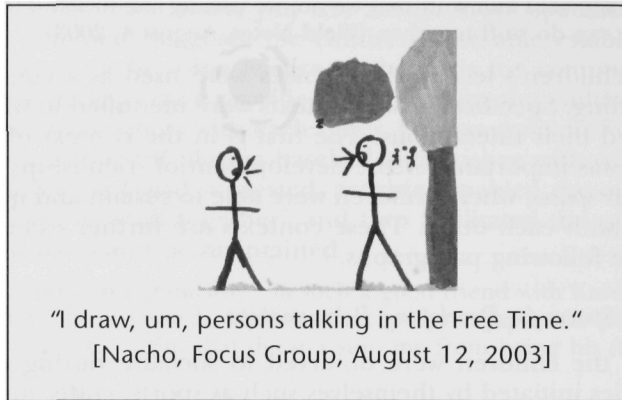[Nacho, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Figure 4. Nacho

Private Spaces for Maintaining Relationships

Several children emphasized the importance of having privacy at camp. The children were observed to use their private spaces to talk privately with friends. The children's bedrooms, as depicted in Catty's drawing (see Figure 5) were often used for private time between friends so they could talk about "private things, like boyfriends and girlfriends" [Chris, Focus Group, August 12, 2003].

Privacy was important but hard to find at camp. For example, as English was the common language at camp, the children from Great Britain and the United States commented on the difficulties in not having enough privacy because all the other children could understand what they were saying to each other.

> Ted: We don't have as much privacy as the other delegations, cuz they talk to each other and they're the only ones who understand each other...
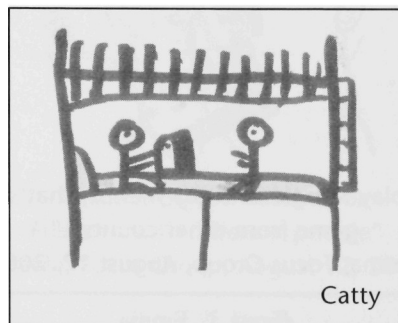

Catty

Figure 5. Catty

Wilson: They can understand what we're saying. So, like . . . if they're like having an argument, they can have it without anyone like knowing what they're on about . . . [Focus Group, August 12, 2003].

However, in response to this lack of private space, many of the children created their own private spaces. The children from Great Britain and the United States began to use Pig Latin as their 'secret language' while others, as displayed in Udo's drawing, created secret hiding spots in the forest (see Figure 6).

Leisure essentially provided a foundation for the development and maintenance of relationships. Specifically, public leisure spaces were more conducive for the development of friendships, and thus contributed to the bridging aspect of social capital and the generation of weak ties. Private leisure spaces were more conducive to maintaining relationships between the children, thereby facilitating the bonding aspect of social capital and the generation of strong ties. On occasion, the bonds between the children led to exclusion of others, as was demonstrated in the creation of secret hiding places and the use of Pig-Latin.

Opportunity for Participation

This second theme emphasizes how the leisure experience at camp provided the children opportunities for participation. Essentially, participation in camp life provided an opportunity for the children to contribute to the well-being of the camp community. As depicted in the drawing by Emma in Figure 7, several children suggested they personally had a part in creating and contributing to camp life by playing a variety of roles. Some children were leaders while others took on more of a supportive role. The children
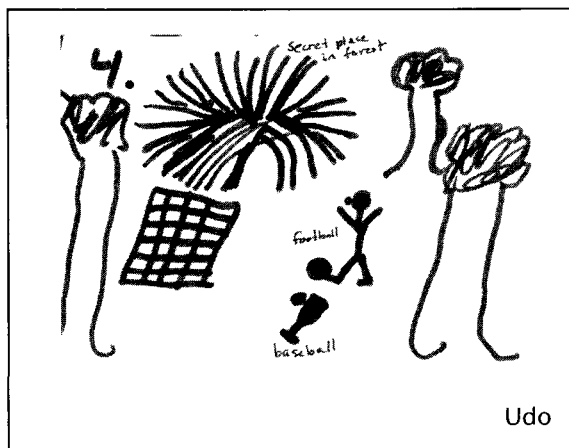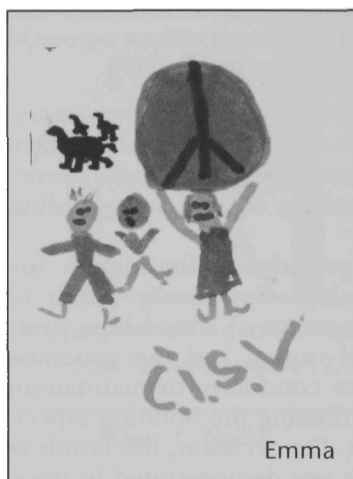
Figure 6. Udo

Figure 7. Emma

who typically took charge helped to ensure that everyone was able to partic-
ipate.

> When it came to decide our three wishes, we went into the boys' room. . . Ted
> asked everyone else in the group for their suggestions . . . and wrote everything
> down. John . . . suggested that everyone should have three votes and that we
> should go around in a circle to cast our votes... [Field Notes, July 28, 2003]

Some of the children also enjoyed helping the adults prepare for activities.

> The junior counselors were supposed to write the kids' suggestions on poster
> board so that everyone could see them during the Children's Meeting, but they
> had to go have a shower. I was going to do it in the Dining Hall . . . Betty and
> Kiki were in there and asked if they could help. I asked them to copy the
> suggestions written in English on to the poster board as I went to go set up the
> chairs for the meeting. They eventually left, I don't know why, but they asked
> Lili if she could take over. Jeppe was also there—he helped to translate the
> ones written in Norwegian and Swedish... [Field Notes, July 29, 2003]

The children's contributions gave them a sense of accomplishment and
pride.

> [I like] to be Delegation of the Day[1] because all the time you're coming and
> going at dinner to get the food, and I like to do it and also I like to do good
> things to people. [Goko, Field Notes, August 11, 2003]

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[1]Every day one country served as Delegation of the Day. Duties for Delegation of the Day in-
cluded waking the camp up, setting the tables for meals, refilling the water jugs and bringing
in the food from the kitchen, choosing songs for lullabies, etc.

I enjoyed being Delegation of the Day because you felt important and got to choose where everyone sat and what Lullabies we sang. [Wilson, Field Notes, August 11, 2003]

The excerpts above are examples of how the children used their personal resources towards a collective good and exercise their personal rights and participate. Furthermore, the children were able to experience the outcome of their contributions, thereby giving them a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Exclusion. Although the children were quite actively involved in the camp program, sometimes the children were observed not to participate. When approached about these observations the children mentioned that it was because they did not like the activity or because they felt that they did not have the ability to contribute to the task. In addition, a few of the children commented that they did in fact want to participate, but were prevented from doing so. For example, during an activity where the children were to build a protective covering for an egg from the impact of being dropped, one group of children sat at their table doing nothing. The next day when asked about the lack of participation, one of the children replied:

They [the Leader's] wouldn't let us do it . . . We wanted to do some of it, but we didn't do any of it so . . . the three of them [counselors] got together and did the padding [of the egg]. Well, I didn't like it because . . . our whole group was just kinda sitting at the table . . . even if we didn't want that, it just kinda didn't really matter, because we had an idea, we were going to [do] like- . . . we were going to do something [laugh], but I forget what it is. . . . I just thought we should have been able to do most of it on our own . . . [Mandy, Field Notes, July 28, 2003]

Mandy's reply suggests that even though her group wanted to participate, they were unable to do so because they felt that the counselors in their group did not give them the opportunity to contribute their ideas and opinions. This observation is important when understood from the perspective of social capital, as the counselors' intervention and their positions of power and control diminished the opportunity for social capital development among the children.

Overall, the children's leisure experiences provided opportunities for them to participate and social capital to develop through the process of participation. On the one hand, these opportunities, facilitated by social capital (networks of encouragement and support) help generate more social capital. Specifically, encouragement from others increased a sense of confidence among the children in their ability to take part in camp life and generated more social capital (expressive action), which in turn contributed to the collective well-being of camp. On the other hand, strong networks of solidarity, as exemplified by the counselors, can also be used to further the social capital of a specific group and consequently lead to the exclusion of others and in fact be more detrimental to the overall well-being of the entire group.

Opportunity for Social Learning

   Learning through practice as a group.   As stated by Friedmann (1987), so-
cial learning derives from the tradition that "practice and learning are con-
strued as correlative processes, so that one process necessarily implies the
other" (p. 182). During the focus group, some of the children discussed how
they were able to learn through their own discovery. As Bev stated, "while
we're here, you're like telling us things, but we're also finding out things for
ourselves" [Field Notes, August 13, 2003]. Sometimes the structured activities
would incorporate a formal discussion period that was facilitated by the coun-
selors. As Ted explains,

   "With a lot of the stuff they'll [the counselors] like- they'll give you a helping
   hand but then they'll like sort of help you find out yourself. They'll like say
   well, what do you think about this or what do you think about, and you will
   just say, and then that'll be like what you've learned. [Field Notes, August 13,
   2003]

   Social learning involves collective action and learning with a group of
two or more individuals who are engaged in a purposeful activity (Friedmann
1987). During the focus group, many of the children also described how
they learned together as a group (see Figure 8). While the activities were
planned by the adults with specific outcomes in mind, the children's collec-
tive participation in these task-oriented activities provided an opportunity for
the children to experience the processes involved in social learning. These
activities presented various opportunities for the children to work together,
thereby enabling them to understand and enhance the skills required for
cooperation (see Figure 9). Several of the children mentioned they learned
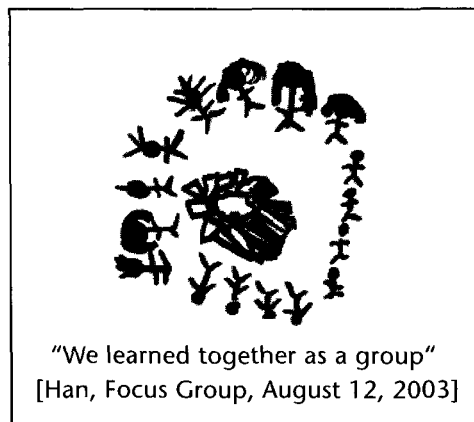to work with others during these activities.

"We learned together as a group"
[Han, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Figure 8. Han

"I draw the game of Capture the Flag because that teach me to working in a team [sic]..." [Marie, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]
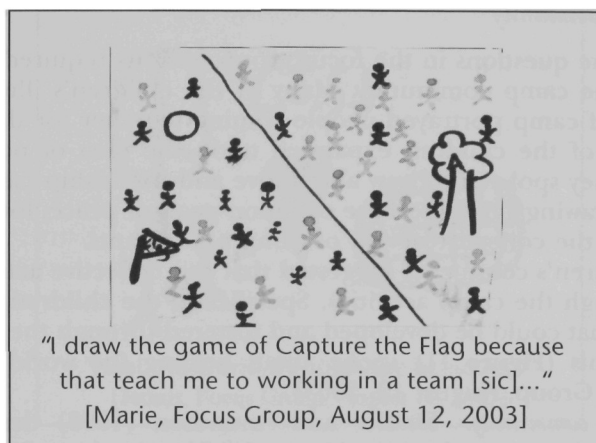
Figure 9. Marie

Susi: I learned cooperation from [the Declaration of Human Rights Puzzle]
Felice: Cooperation . . . how did you learn it?
Susi: We talk in a group and then agree what to write and draw.
[Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

During these activities, the children experienced various facets of coopera-
tion such as the need for flexibility and the use of democratic procedures,
as well as the often difficult and lengthy processes involved in cooperating,
"At first it was hard, you have to think about it—how to do it [build the
city]. The built[sic] itself was easy, the conversation and the planning was
harder" [Galon, Field Notes, August 7, 2003]. Eventually, a new concept of
success began to emerge where the focus was on process and teamwork
rather than an outcome such as scoring the most points in a soccer game.

Felice: And then here [you've written] it's important to win. How do you win?
Suswoz: If we ah, if we do ah two team [sic] . . . and . . . we [all] play not [just]
one [person] plays . . . cuz . . . if I . . . play and [someone does] not play we
lose. If all the team will play we win.
[Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Working together and collectively reflecting upon these experiences facili-
tated the generation of social capital through the development of connec-
tions. The term social learning implies learning with others and in learning
with others relationships are inevitably established. The shared experiences
involved in social learning also contribute to the development of shared
meanings, such the new concept of success that evolved over the course of
the camp. Indeed, as described in the final theme, it became quite evident
in these sorts of active as well as more passive cooperative endeavors that a
community with shared practices and meanings was emerging among the
children.

Emergence of Community

One of the questions in the focus group sessions required the children to describe the camp community. Many of the children's illustrations and descriptions of camp portrayed people coming together for the purpose of peace. A few of the children expanded upon the idea of people coming together, as they spoke and drew about love and friendship (see Figure 10). As Suswoz's drawing suggests, these common goals of peace, love and friendship required the collective action of camp participants.

The children's comments suggested that this collective action was made possible through the camp activities. Specifically, the children spoke of collective goals that could be developed and fostered through the activities. For example, Jounis (Figure 11) spoke about healing the world through the games [Focus Group, August 12, 2003].

Conscious community. Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) describe a conscious community as one that nurtures each of its members. Individuals who are a part of a conscious community incorporate their own needs as well as the group's needs into their behaviors and actions. As described by the children, the Pangea community generally appeared to exemplify a conscious community in which concern for others was quite apparent. Some of the children demonstrated a high level of awareness, which often led to consideration for other people's feelings:

> Nachi was crying during Lullabies again. Lili moved from the couch were she was sitting beside Nachi to sit beside me and told me: ' Nachi is crying because she is homesick, but the counsellors told us not to do anything because she will just keep crying—but I don't think that that's very nice because she's crying.' [Field Notes, August 4, 2003]

Other times, the children's consideration for others was evidenced through large group discussions, such as one where the children were commenting
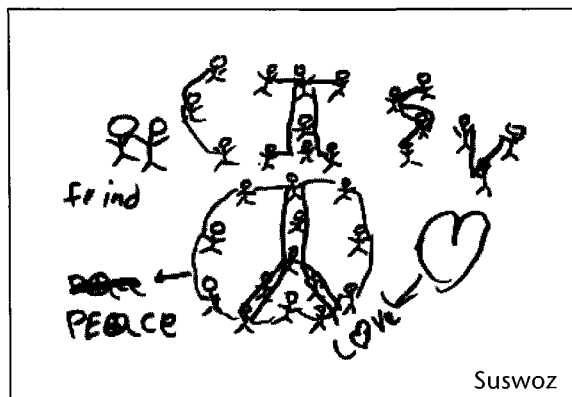

Figure 10. Suswoz

"Heal the world through the activities."
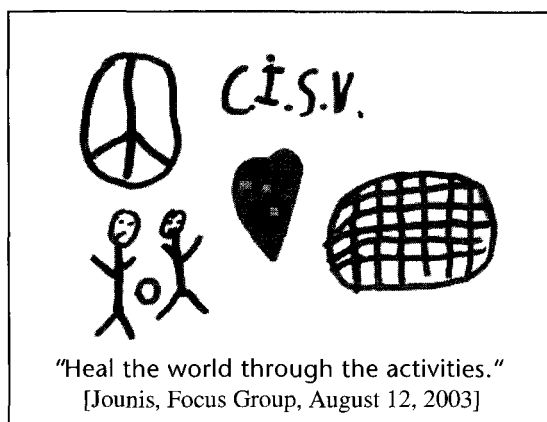[Jounis, Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Figure 11. Jounis

on the kinds of activities they wanted over the second half of the camp. In this example, Marie's rationale for arguing against having more running games was related to her concern for others:

> I think that to have more running games is a bad idea because there are many people that don't like to run. Um, because of the sun, they're tired and very hot . . . [Field Notes, July 29, 2003]

The children's concern for others and subsequent action for the well-being of their peers are representative of a conscious effort to nurture both individual and community needs while contributing towards the collective goals of the camp community.

Inclusion and exclusion. The camp community was not quickly formed. Rather, it was a process that evolved over time. Throughout the four weeks at camp incidents of inclusion and exclusion were observed. Some of the children's comments and actions were clearly inclusive. For example, Han stated that he learned he could make friends with anybody [Focus Group, August 14, 2003]. Moreover, some of the children appeared to understand the concept of inclusion, "You have to try and get along even if you don't feel like it" [Wilson, Field Notes, August 11, 2003]. Many of the children were observed making overt attempts to include others:

> Yesterday during Sweden and Norway's National Night, I was sitting on a chair and David was sitting on my knees and Hong came and stood beside us. After awhile Hong made motions to leave and David grabbed his arm and signalled him to stay with us. Hong pointed to the chair in the corner and proceeded to get the chair and sat beside us. [Field Notes, July 26, 2003]

Although the majority of the children felt included in the community, exclusion did occur. Some of the children felt excluded when others around them were speaking in a language that they did not understand:

> Bev: I like feel left out a bit because when I sat next to Susi and Karl and . . .
> it was like really weird because they were like listening to us and I was like I do
> not understand a word they're saying.
> Ted: Like, like Lili, she speaks French, German and English.
> Bev: And she can talk to Tança and that's like really annoying to me.
> [Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

Some of the children also expressed feelings of helplessness when they were
excluded from the conversation and could not understand what was being
said:

> Jennifer: Yeah we don't know what they're [the other children who can speak
> another language] saying . . . and they make us say bad things-
> John: Yeah and then they laugh, and they laugh at us.
> Bev: Yeah and it's really awful because they can tease us, but we can't do any-
> thing about it at all.
> [Focus Group, August 12, 2003]

These particular examples of exclusion are examples of how a group of
individuals have capitalized on their knowledge of language over others and
used it to further their own position over others. While these incidences may
not have been explicit attempts to do harm, the experience nonetheless
resulted in a decline of social capital through a loss of trust, and respect.

   Conflict.   A conscious community (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993) did not
just randomly emerge, and the characteristics described above were not al-
ways apparent. During the first two weeks of camp some incidences of phys-
ical aggression and disrespect were observed.

> Goko put water on Ted's head at the water fountain . . . Ted stopped drinking
> and walked menacingly towards Goko as if he were going to fight him. Goko
> backed up. I stepped in and asked what was going on. Ted told me that Goko
> put water all over him. . . Goko tried to apologize, but Ted was very angry,
> walked away and wouldn't accept the apology. Immediately after, I asked Goko
> why he did it. He started to cry a little and said Ted tells him that the other
> boys don't like him. . . Later I asked Ted why he thought Goko did that and
> he said Goko already had a drink and snuck in to get another one, and Ted
> told him off for doing so. I asked Ted if Goko did other annoying things to
> him. Ted replied, 'Yes, at night he shines the flashlight in my eyes, he really
> bothers me.' [Field Notes, July 30, 2003]

In addition to personality conflicts, over the course of the four weeks at camp
the children also dealt with on-going issues such as offensive language and
noise before bed. In the commentary below, Ted describes how John tried
to talk about the problem of noise before bed with Goko.

> Goko would be like, 'Why are you all so tired?' and then John would say to
> him, 'Well, perhaps it's because you wouldn't shut up last night when everybody
> was trying to sleep.' [Field Notes, August 4, 2003]

The potential for the development of conflict is, of course, exacerbated when
people experience exclusionary practices from those who appear to use it to
further their positions of power over others, such as those who excluded

others by using a language no one else understood. Perhaps not surprisingly, the camp was not entirely conflict-free, despite the more dominant experience of cooperation and connection, which ultimately helped illuminate the shared meanings the children experienced through leisure. In other words, the children's leisure experience provided a space for conflicts to occur and then be resolved through collective action, such as group discussion and reflection about the issue.

Discussion

Building Community and Social Capital

The findings of this study suggest that leisure experiences helped create a common ground for a group of children who did not share the same history, language or culture. Within their leisure spaces, the children were able to find a context for the development and maintenance of relationships, thereby contributing to the generation of social capital. Moreover, shared practices within the leisure experience provided an opportunity for the children to establish shared meanings, thus creating a foundation for shared norms and the emergence of community through their relationship building. The children establish shared meanings through the process of social learning, or learning with others through participation and reflection. Social learning, in the context of leisure, encompasses occasions for participation, conflict, and collective learning and relearning through leisure experiences. In short, leisure and the social learning experience contributed to the formation and maintenance of social capital, which in turn helped establish and support a sense of community through the development of shared meanings and norms.

Certain leisure experiences, particularly those that are social in nature, contributed to the development of social capital as they facilitated connections and promoted networks of obligations and expectations. Without social connections there is no framework for the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness to evolve. Certain leisure environments were observed to provide the occasion for expressions of citizenship; particularly those instances where the children were able and willing to take initiative and ultimately make the experience their own, such as the times when the children would begin to sing and dance together. Such practices constitute communal celebration which as Borgmann (1992) notes exemplifies citizenship. This type of leisure enables individuals to develop an idea of the common good by sharing a meaningful experience together, but at the same time maintain their own individuality. This is not unlike the experience of the Shipyard Project that Putnam and Feldstein (2003) discusses relative to the use of dance in bridging communities and cultures. Accordingly, one's understanding of the common good developed through leisure is more meaningful through shared experiences and social learning. Thus far, leisure has been discussed as a context for the development of shared norms and values; however with further exploration of this context needs to be supported by certain structures

that facilitate meaningful interactions, that is, structures that enable free-flowing and collaborative action.

Through the process of social learning, the children learned and experienced first-hand the concepts of trust and working together. The idea of cooperation cannot be taught by simply being told about them. Rather, the ability to work with others is a gradual process that builds through experience. Activities that required the children to cooperate may have invariably reinforced the values and norms that supported the idea of working together. Optimism about the ability to work together were reiterated as the children participated in the games and reflected together upon whether they were or were not successful. In other words, through the experience of social learning the fears of ridicule and discomfort were eventually be replaced by confidence and ultimately of the development of thin trust.

Social learning has the potential to change values and beliefs and possibly transform the way in which individuals perceive and relate to one another (Schusler, Decker, & Pfeffer, 2003; Wilson, 1997). The potential for social learning to transform the ways in which individuals relate to one another has significant implications for the generation of social capital. Sometimes, this transformation occurred through individual reflection, as Mandy suggested after the incident of the protective egg covering, "I just think we should have been able to do it on our own" and proceeded in subsequent activities to do so. Other times, social learning occurred through a collaborative process with others and led to the generation of social capital. For example, sometimes during or after resolutions of conflict, the children who were involved would discuss their experiences and become networks of support for each other.

Providing a physical context for social learning is only one of the prerequisites for members within a community to become involved. Other elements that support the process of engagement include one's sense of obligation and willingness to contribute to community and one's ability to participate, both of which can be fostered through cooperative and collaborative leisure experiences.

The children's sense of obligation to contribute to their community may have derived from their sense of belonging. This sense of belonging was established by the actions of others at camp. Encouragement, in particular, contributed to the children's willingness to participate as it increased feelings of ownership and stewardship. At the beginning of camp, the yet undeveloped feelings of belonging may have contributed to certain incidents of non-participation. By the end of camp, even if the children were bored, they may have felt the need to fulfill their social obligations as a citizen of the community. Feelings of disinterest were likely replaced by interest as individuals began to understand that they were members of the same collective, and that their contributions affected the good of the community as well as themselves.

In sum, the social learning experience in the context of leisure provides occasions for the development and maintenance of social capital through

relationship building. Moreover, this learning environment has the potential to influence individual values and behaviours and generate shared meanings and an understanding of the common good. Leisure as a context for social learning is ideal, as participants have generally chosen to take part and are intrinsically motivated to contribute to the experience.

Future Research

Occasions of exclusion were often closely related to conflict. Conflict may have contributed to the change and evolution of community and may have also influenced the creation of social norms within the camp community. Indeed, conflict between the children was observed particularly at the beginning of camp. This observation raises questions about the ways in which conflict may reinforce or weaken connections among the children, or perhaps even lead to the creation of other social networks.

The absence of conflict is often perceived as a positive occurrence in homogeneous, closed communities where it is considered a threat to social bonds (see Delanty, 2003). However, conflict may also contribute to the development of heterogeneous, more open communities. For instance, at the children's camp, it appeared that conflict provided an opportunity for diverse perspectives to be heard, thereby reflecting participation and mutual influence by the children involved in these situations. A community in which members gather and are socially interdependent is not quickly formed (Bellah et al., 1985). Community-building is not a smooth and inevitable process. Conflict appears to be a significant factor in this process. Since the findings of the present study suggest that conflict and disagreement may both positively and negatively affect the development of social capital and community, greater attention to the potentially positive outcomes seems warranted.

Furthermore, certain leadership styles encourage more participation from group members than others. The activity with the protective egg covering suggests that an autocratic leadership style may be less conducive to the development of collaborative efforts within a community. Conversely, consultative and participative styles of leadership contribute to shared discovery and learning, which in turn facilitates shared meanings and mutual understanding. The incidence of non-participation with the protective egg covering suggests that certain group members, adults in particular, can defeat the purposes of collaborative and cooperative experiences when they try to exert their 'expertise' and authority. Rather, consultative leadership styles and the concept of social learning can be incorporated in these leisure environments. In fact, Kahne and Bailey (1999) suggest that less formal interactions, particularly with youth, are better for creating trusting contexts. Further examination into how certain leadership styles influence the children's leisure experience and impact relationship development may contribute to understanding the impact of children's structured leisure experiences and social capital development.

Implications for Practice: The Flavour of Community

Although proto-communities dissolve after a certain a period of time, they provide individuals with an experience of what it might be like to be a part of a meaningful community. According to Shaffer and Anundsen (1993), members of proto-communities can better participate in other communities as they become more confident in themselves and their group-skills through their experiences of proto-community. Consequently, the children at camp who were members of this proto-community may have developed a better idea of what to strive for in other communities. Children, in particular, may benefit from exposure to a proto-community because it gives them the opportunity to reflect on its principles and ideological traditions and possibly decide whether they wish to adopt some of these as their own.

In sum, the children's camp community does not necessarily continue once camp is over. However, the experience of a proto-community leaves participants with an understanding of what it might be like to be a part of a conscious community, thereby providing them with an idea of what to strive for in other communities. Furthermore, the social capital developed does not necessarily continue after camp either, as Putnam (2000) argues, face-to-face interaction is important to the quality and maintenance of social capital. Granted, some of the children have met again of their own accord since camp ended; however, based on the findings of this study no conclusion can be drawn about the continuation of social capital beyond the camp experience.

Conclusion

While characteristics of a conscious community were observed to evolve in the children's camp community, it is important to recognize that structured activities were implemented by the adults with the goal of fostering cross-cultural understanding and friendships among the children. This foundation based on the goals of CISV may have also helped support and foster a sense of community among the children. At the same time, Pangea Village is a community that came together based on a leisure experience. This opportunity served as a context for children within the camp community to generate social capital and a sense of community through the development of relationships. These relationships were fostered through the process of social learning. Community norms (i.e., respect, sharing, consideration for others, and inclusion) were reinforced and maintained through the children's relationships. Thus, in this context, social capital was based on the children's relationships as both a process and a product. Essentially, the development of shared norms occurred through the generation of trust and values associated with cooperation and mutual understanding of a common goal (social capital as a process), which in turn lead to the formation and maintenance of relationships (social capital as outcome).

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