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Socializing on the playing field: sport participation and social capital

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Abstract

At the present time, prevailing neoliberal economic patterns of development stress and entail significant reductions in government interventions. Privatizations, structural adjustment measures and *laissez-faire* attitudes are simultaneously emphasized by state productive forces and global governance institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Nevertheless, from a proper sociological analysis perspective, meaningful negative externalities are emerging thereof, particularly in terms of social disengagement and individualistic underinvestment in collective objectives (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000). Several developed countries are expected to observe inner declining trends of social capital (Putnam 2000). As far as this dissertation is concerned, the latter reveals itself conducive to significant patterns of human socialization and civic engagement processes. In particular, from early 20th century Pierre de Coubertin's principles to contemporary sociological research on physical activity social benefices, sports have been recognized as sources of social interaction and dynamism. In this perspective, present academic work focuses on sport participation and practices as vehicles to social capital development, both in developed and developing countries. Quantitative and qualitative research herein support this underlying thesis. Specifically, in addition to consistent literature review concerning social capital understanding, two major sociological focus-areas are explored. Firstly, sport participation-induced mechanisms of civic engagement are investigated in terms of social capital development. Eventually, these participatory mechanisms encompass identity and cultural enforcement, social inclusion and social integration processes. In order to contextualize these social interaction processes, the present dissertation introduces to case-studies and researches from the Pacific Region and the United Kingdom. Personal experiences corroborated that in those social environments,

sports are immerged in highly significant and dynamic social interaction understandings. Furthermore, the second focus-area of this dissertation examines how sport participation-induced social capital development might be expected to benefit social collectivises, disadvantaged communities and the state as a whole. In particular, the beneficial and worthwhile character of social capital is investigated in terms of democratic participation, economic development and health enhancement. In this perspective, social capital development through sport appears to endorse polyvalent, multi-layered and wide-reaching outputs. Accordingly, this dissertation suggests sport participation-promoting government interventions, 'Third way' and grassroots long-term sport-delivery programs as desirable public policy outcomes. In this sense, Sport-for-Development (S4D) model provides managerial frameworks to supply sport-induce communal empowerment, sustainable development and social capital enhancement.

Keywords: Social capital, sport participation, trust, social integration, civic engagement.

Preface

In line with recently increasing academic and policy-making authorities' interests in sports social character, this dissertation focuses on sport participation and practice as vehicles of social capital development. Indeed, sports contribute to wider social interaction, additional educative paths in parallel with schools and homes not more than increased collective well-being. Moreover, it appears fair to argue that sport participation provides shared senses of belonging, togetherness and interconnectedness (Giulianotti 2005). In 2007, adopting the White Paper on Sport, the European Commission claimed that: "Sport is an area of human activity that greatly interests citizens of the European Union and has enormous potential for bringing them together, reaching out to all, regardless of age or social origin" (European Commission 2007, p.2). Sports characters concerned with social capital development, multilayered social care, civic engagement and economic progress are also recognized by the Scottish Parliament, the government of the United Kingdom and the Australian Sport Commission, to name but just a few. While individualistic and profit-driven attitudes transpire from current neoliberal economic patterns into deeper social strata, sports and their participatory and inclusive qualities have gained salience in wide-spectrum, multidimensional social policy frameworks. The latter aim at ensuring residual public policy-driven social care, as post-Second World War *welfare state* appears disappearing and privatizations emerge both on national and global scale. As far as this dissertation is concerned, not only sports might be considered as conducive to social capital development, but they also contribute to broader social, political, economic and health advantages. Thus, within the mentioned wide-scope, multidimensional and socially multi-sector-reaching public policies, sports are here expected to play a fundamental role. Accordingly, the first chapter of this dissertation investigates philosophical and sociological roots to modern social capital understanding.

Moreover, substantive academic literature from the 1980s to the first decade of new millennium is reviewed in order to clarify the predominant features of social capital concept. The second chapter focuses on three mechanisms of civic engagement induced by sport social capital development. For the purpose of contextualizing those social mechanisms, ethnographic, qualitative and quantitative case-studies from the Pacific area and the United Kingdom are provided. Indeed, identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration are contextualized in terms of, respectively, Maori rugby culture, rugby in Samoan villages and sport integration in Australia. Also, examples of sport-delivery projects aiming at social inclusion both in Scotland and England are underlined. Furthermore, the second chapter addresses the so-called dark side of social capital, which is investigated here in terms of sport participation and practice. Eventually, public policy-solutions to this collective challenge are discussed in terms of poverty reduction, social safety intensification and institutional commitment to sport values and egalitarian ideals. The last chapter highlights which public advantages transpire from sport-induced social capital development. These advantages are investigated in terms of increased democratic engagement, enhanced public health and incremented economic productivity. Moreover, this chapter illustrates the Sport-for-Development (S4D) framework, in order to present a long-term managerial model committed to collective sustainable development and community empowerment. Accordingly, these social benefits are expected to both further enhance the socialization of citizens and to protect the public interests of governments and public policy-making authorities. Thus, this dissertation eventually aims at underlining how sport participation and engagement might well be considered fruitful, shared and sustainable areas of public policy investment, particularly in current neoliberal era. Indeed, sport social capital appears to enhance processes of civic interactions, democratic functioning, economic development

and health prevention; these collective polyvalent and multidimensional potentialities, suiting neoliberal public spending reductions, are expected to be managed and implemented by socially-concerned and -sensitive public policy-making.

First Chapter

Framing social capital and its sensitiveness towards sport participation and socialization

Notwithstanding theoretical vagueness has emerged since social capital argument's overexploitation in the last three decades, a consistent normative framework of sociological academic reference is needed to address its discussion. Particularly, theoretical clarity on social capital arguments must be supplied if the latter are meant to promote peculiar government interventions and sport associations policy-making. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter seeks to find the notional origins of social capital concept. Theoretical roots to the latter are discussed in sociological terms concerning the political engagement of civil society and the individualistic-communitarian divide on industrializing processes of socialization. Consequently, modern sociological literature is reviewed to underlined salient features of contemporary social capital understanding. The latter reflect path-breaking sociological reflections from the 1980s to recent years. Furthermore, substantial review space is reserved to bonding-bridging social capital dichotomy, whose analysis appears crucial within the framework of sport-based government policies targeting social inclusion. Finally, this chapter highlights social capital sensitive nexus with sport participation and practices. The latter are eventually recognized as sources of development for both community and individual social capital.

1.1 Civil society, social solidarity and communitarianism: a common-sense understanding of social capital

Undoubtedly, background roots to social capital understanding were implicitly concealed within 19th century theoretical frameworks regarding individual freedoms of association, public-private interaction processes as well as civil society activism. Consequently, according to significant number of modern sociologists (Kim 2000; Donovan et al. 2004), implicit theoretical hints concerning social capital have emerged in the process of sociological comprehension of democratic functioning and phenomena. The questioning of how civil society virtuosity and liberties of association were supposed to foster political engagement and democratic efficacy finds common ground in the utilitarian contributions by John Stuart Mill (1859) and Alexis de Tocqueville (1840). In particular, the latter provided meaningful considerations regarding the social and political values of civil society organizations and their connections with democratic efficiencies in the United States of America. In 1840, he wrote: "Civil associations, therefore, facilitate political association: but, on the other hand, political association singularly strengthens and improves associations for civil purposes" (p.123). Moreover, A. de Tocqueville (1840) explicitly refereed to the educative character of a consistent share of civil society organizations and activities, underlining the civic virtues emerging thereof. Notably, the "reciprocal influence of men upon each other" (1840, p.117) was meant to be recognized. In line with the aims of this dissertation, "neo-Tocquevillians" (Kim 2000, p.219) still consider the instructive and proactive civic-democratic characteristics as development-reaching potentialities of social capital. Moreover, as it is going to be extensively discussed in next sections, social capital arguments tend to rely on two units of analysis, namely the individual and the collectivity. Far from being simplistic, this notional dualism appears to have developed around two long-lasting,

parallel sociological tendencies, respectively functionalism and communitarianism. In particular, when dealing with the late 19th century industrialization consequences on social bonds and processes of socialization, the two sociological perspectives appear to diverge. The functionalist thinking was imminently supported by Emile Durkheim, who in *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) underlined how 'social solidarity' would have benefited from industrializing evolution. Distinguishing between *mechanica*l and *organic solidarity*, E. Durkheim (1893) sought to highlight that in a mechanically-shaped society, individualism is at stake, homogeneous attitudes emerge and conservative closure results as the predominant social strategy. Accordingly, mechanical solidarity was not meant to foster pre-modern liberal socialization practices and valuable social ties. On the contrary, the most valuable and efficient social cohesion would emerge within an organic collectivity, featured by extensive labour specialization, high-level industrialization and economic interdependence (Giddens and Sutton 2013, p.79). In other words, "stronger bonds of mutual interdependence are created under organic forms of solidarity, which have the potential for a better balance between individual differences and collective purpose" (Giddens and Sutton 2013, p.79). Insisting on the value of social association and adopting a communitarian perspective, Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) provided alternative and conservative insights regarding how different types of social interactions and associations shape collectivities in which individuals interact. By introducing the *gemeinschaft–gesellschaft* dichotomy, F. Tönnies (1887) aimed at underlining how modernity and industrialization might be expected to gradually disnature the traditional ties of community units (Giddens and Sutton 2013). *Gemeinschaft* (i.e. community bonds) were presented as close-knit, familiar, intense and long-lasting relationships, generally underpinned within a closed community. In contrast, *gesellschaft* (i.e. society bonds), being casual, precarious, instrumental and impersonal in attitudes and behaviors, were

supposed to substitute traditional community ties. Indeed, "though all societies contain social bonds of both types, with industrialization and urbanization the balance was shifting decisively away from *Gemeinschaft*" (Giddens and Sutton 2013, p.206). Thus, relations and ties ushering from individualistic or communalistic collectives are not self-exclusive and, despite the dichotomist assertions, they appear to coexist extensively. Nevertheless, as all theories, the above-mentioned perspectives rely on distinct abstract principles referring to practical and material attitudes. Indeed, Kim (2000) claimed:

> "Analytically, these contrasts were reduced to two antinomic modes of associational membership. The natural and spontaneous integration of a gemeinschaftliche society was seen to draw its strength from "particularism" (i.e., that associational membership is in principle limited to those sharing a certain set of particularistic features) and "ascriptivism" (i.e., that defining characteristics of associational members are inherited), which in combination provided the most visible locus for the us-them distinction. By contrast, the modern "universalist and voluntarist principle" of association eroded this distinction, thereby ushering in the modern society of atomized individuals and universal sovereignty of the state".
> (Kim 2000, p.202).

Accordingly, communal 'particularism' and 'ascriptivism' in inward-looking, exclusive and homogenous societies appear to have been substituted through the predominance of liberal and individualistic attitudes. The latter coincide with processes of industrialization which ushered and are still provoking shifts towards universalistic principles of voluntarism and heterogeneity. Nevertheless, these shifts seem to vary with respect to an extremely wide series of variables, among which geographical area, cultural conservatism, religious influence and economic development are perhaps the most tangible. As a matter of fact, divergent perspectives over paradigms of social interactions and processes of socialization represented theoretically constructive backgrounds

facilitating further conception of social capital argument and theories. Importantly, consequent political considerations, particularly concerning government policy-making performance and outcomes, are expected to recognize that a desirable point might be found between communitarian targets and liberal individualistic rights.

1.2 Framing Social Capital Theory

The last two decades have observed an increasing number of policy-making authorities, academic voices and market businesses becoming ever more interested in social capital arguments. The first ever definition of social capital was due to L. J. Hanifan's study of school's scope and importance in rural areas (1916). He defined social capital as the "tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit" (Hanifan 1916, p.130). Nevertheless, it appears fair to hold that recent social capital salience and research began around the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Samuel Coleman (1988), Ronald S. Burt (1992) and Robert Putnam (1993; 2000) published their path-breaking works. Since not a unique definition or social capital theory have been explicitly accepted in the academic scenario, in this section it appears right to discuss divergent social capital understandings. The latter are analyzed with respect to either fundamental analogies or differences among them. Although supplying a rather limited theoretical framework, L. J. Hanifan (1916) significantly contributed to the setting-out of two major points of debate among social capital theorists, namely whether framing social capital as a private or public good and what are social capital generative processes. Approaching the former debate, it is possible to recover the above-discussed contrast between communitarian and liberal approaches.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) interpreted social capital as one of the three categories of resources (capitals) individuals may be distinguished by, namely economic, cultural and social capital. Accordingly, the latter might be recognized as nothing more than a resource individuals are supposed to accumulate and eventually exploit through selfish, profit-maximizing, individualistic attitudes. In 1986, Bourdieu wrote: "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resource which is linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu 1986, p.86). Thus, in Bourdieu's perspective (1986), social capital generative processes appear to consist in investment-strategies agents undertake in terms of economic resources (time and money). Strategies are set up in order to produce and maintain durable and profitable benefits from volumes of relations. Efficient and long-lasting ties might be formal (for example, marriage) or informal (friendship) in nature and require either symbolic or material exchanges. In this sense, the transformation of social assets into economic and cultural capitals via the maximization of personal assets and benefits enables labour profitability (Hauberer 2011). Interpreting social capital as a structural value from a neo-capitalist perspective, Nan Lin (2001) provided similar social capital contributions. Here, social capital is framed as an "investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace" (Hauberer 2011, p.119). Again, resources such as time and money must be employed, if benefits from social capital are meant to be captured. In Lin's perspective, information, influence over other individuals, social credentials and identity reinforcements are the mechanisms through which social capital operates (Seippel 2006). Eventually, these processes privately benefit individual or collective agents. Similar mechanisms are discussed in the second chapter in order to underline the ways through which sport participation and practices perform as social capital providers and facilitators. Alternatively, James Coleman (1988) appeared to

integrate social capital with two distinct human action perspectives, namely rational-choice theory and the existence of social norms and obligations. In this perspective, social capital adaptive and multifaceted purposes seem crucial. Indeed, J. Coleman argued that: "social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors-whether persons or corporate actors-within the structure" (Coleman 1988, p.s98). Accordingly, social capital would consist in what agents make out of their own social network, maximizing benefits and opportunities of all types emerging from their surrounding relationships. In line with the thesis of this dissertation, Coleman's social capital understanding comprises its productive potentialities as conducive to the enhancement other forms of capital. However, "unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons"(Coleman 1988, p.s98). Thus, although explicitly resulting in selfish opportunism and maximizing-utility attitudes, social capital functionalism is owned by no one, but potentially it might benefit all the individuals in the network; particularly when approaching human capital development among children and young students (Coleman 1988) and the creation of social sanctions and norms aiming at overcoming the free-rider paradox (Seippel 2006), social capital might be interpreted as a public good. It is in this sense that social capital might be interpreted as a Tocquevillian "civic virtue" (Putnam 2000, p.19). In R. Putnam's perspective, a civic community is characterized by high levels of social capital, which in turn is defined by the degree of trust among citizens and by the qualities of inherent norms of reciprocity and civic engagement networks (Hauberer 2011). Thus, either individually or collectively, benefiting from social capital entails participating into community activities and civil organizations. Eventually, civic and political participatory attitudes as well as

trust among individuals stand as fundamental factors preceding social capital enhancement and generative processes (Hauberer 2011). In this sense, the present dissertation conceives sport interactions and practices as vehicles to wider social participation and collective rules-making. Norms of reciprocity fostering communal trustworthiness result in mutual and communitarian transfer of rights to sanction individualistic, self-fish and damaging behaviors towards the collectiveness: eventually norms of reciprocity, consisting in common-sense sanctions and rules, might operate as the communitarian advantage to solve free-rider paradox (Hauberer 2011). In addition, networks of civic engagement, also in terms of civil associations, are expected to underpin the democratic apparatus functioning, fostering cooperation and participatory attitudes towards politics. To conclude this normative section, it must be underlined that both J.S. Coleman (1988) and R. Putnam (1993; 2000) considered evident the phenomenon of social capital underinvestment in modern societies (Coleman 1988; Hauberer 2011): underinvestment flourishes since individual benefits are easier to be reached than social capital collective objectives and individualistic rights provide single actors with rational comparative advantage to refuse social norms of reciprocity. Accordingly, individuals are discouraged and not rationally motivated to perform socially and pursue social capital. Indeed, "social capital arises or disappears without anyone's willing it into or out of being and is thus even less recognized and taken account of in social action than its already intangible character would warrant" (Coleman 1988, p.s118). As a consequence, peculiar policy-attitudes and development considerations are needed. Public policy-making authorities are expected to catalyze and promote social development. This dissertation suggests that, particularly in the present neoliberal era, sport participation, practices and sport-delivery programs operate beneficially in terms of civic engagement mechanisms and long-term social advantages.

1.3 Bonding v. Bridging ties: investigating social networks viability

Investigating which specific types of relationship and which peculiar categories of associations are meant to better foster social capital rests as a crucial part of the above-commenced theoretical discussion. The so-called *closure argument* was supported by both P. Bourdieu (1986) and J. S. Coleman (1988) (Hauberer 2011): according their perspectives, social capital would be more efficiently enhanced within closed groups and associations. Negative externalities (for example, excessive conservatism and social exclusion) that might spillover from networks narrowness were neglected (Hauberer 2011). In R. Putnam's works (1993; 2000), it appears clear that networks of civic engagement (i.e. civil associations) not only are distinguished with respect to a formal-informal divide, but also in terms of their internal assemblage. Thus, there appear to exist vertically- and horizontally-structured networks. The latter link together individuals belonging to homogenous social strata, reputation and economic level, thus facilitating information flow phenomena and the creation of norms of reciprocity. Eventually, horizontal networks, ushered by previous cooperation between homogeneous agents, is meant to underpin cooperative attitudes. Indeed, "the cooperation success works as a culturally defined pattern for future cooperation. The higher the density of such networks in the community, the more likely citizens are to cooperate and reach a common advantage" (Hauberer 2011, p.55). As a matter of fact, homogeneity and symmetry within networks of civic engagement, like sport clubs and associations, would better develop trustworthiness, thus social capital, among individuals (Hauberer 2011). On the contrary, vertically-structured associations are not expected to provide the same benefits: heterogeneity and asymmetry in social status and economic conditions, which very often comprise patron-client relationships, appear to obstacle information flows and trust development (Hauberer 2011). Moreover, R. Putnam (1993; 2000) succeeded in

elevating these theoretical considerations regarding networks' structures to two different kinds of social capital: indeed, he provides the distinction between "bonding" and "bridging social capital" (Putnam 2000, p.23). The former connects together homogeneous individuals who share feelings of exclusive identity and similarities from political, economic and social view points; thus, bonding social capital emerges from inward-looking groups, within which identity and mutuality are extremely marked, yet external links are discouraged (Putnam 2000). On the contrary, bridging social capital basically consists in groups' and individuals' openness towards diversity and heterogeneity. This openness, or bridge, underpins flows of information, that would otherwise remain in a closed context, enhancing innovations and external advantages. As for the networks of civic engagement, groups and associations do not belong to one of the two extremes of social capital spectrum but they are more wisely defined as endorsing rather bonding or bridging social capital practices. Within society boundaries, a combination of the two social capital categories is needed, since each of them provides for complementary distinctive features of *civicness*: "bonding social capital can help to mobilize reciprocity and solidarity and bridging social capital can be used to connect to external advantages and to guarantee the flow of information" (Hauberer 2011, p.58). In a similar perspective, the theory concerning the strength of weak social ties was conceptualized (Granovetter 1973). According to M. Granovetter (1973), only weak relations among individual agents or groups can preserve and enhance flows of information as well as beneficial opportunities for various social strata. Particularly, loose connections would provide "opportunities for successful groups to assist those less fortunate" (Granovetter 1973, cit. in Woodhouse 2006, p.86) within society. In this sense, "structural holes" (Burt 1992, p.18) are meant to provoke weak ties between at least two individuals or groups. Resulting in non-redundant social relations, structural holes

would foster beneficial degrees of diversity and innovation, not only in terms of information flows, inside relationships networks. In addition, networks size appears to be positively related to the number of structural holes: the wider the network of relations, the higher the number of structural holes might be endorsed by the network itself. Accordingly, open and sparse networks are expected to more efficiently enhance social capital development (Burt 1992). Figure 1.1 represents an overall and ideal conceptualization of social capital and it is presented at the end of these consistent normative sections in order to figuratively stimulate the comprehension of such complex and multi-layered argument. As far as this dissertation is concerned, social capital appears to encompass significant social processes, potentially desirable to public concerns emerging in current neoliberal era. Indeed, although individualistic rights are exacerbated by currently prevailing market-oriented forces, civic engagement can rely on social capital development mechanisms. In terms of sport participation, the latter comprise collective identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration. Moreover, social capital potentialities in underpinning civic education, democratic engagement and economic performances should be underlined. In this perspective, social capital-enhancing government policy-making and sport associations interventions are intended to foster consistent communitarian benefices. The latter are not meant to contrast or abolish private and individualistic neoliberal rights, but rather they might be recognized as complementary social opportunities for egalitarian coexistence and well-being.

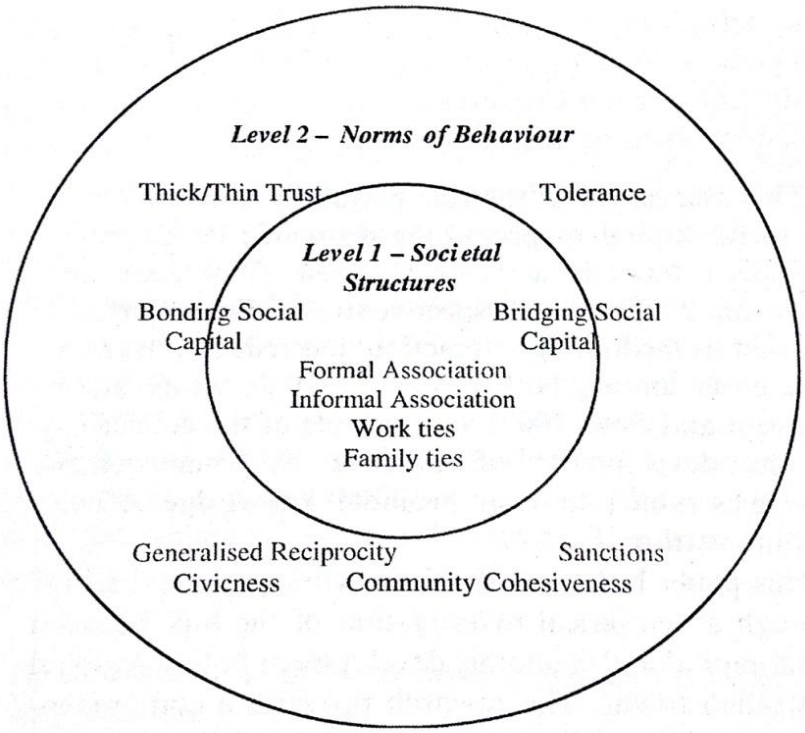


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of social capital in society.

(Fig. 1: Woodhouse 2006, p.85)

1.4 Sport organizations and associations as vehicles of social capital development

Differently from de Tocqueville's general consideration that whatever type of civil association would foster civic attitudes and democratic practices (Putnam 1993), social capital development is expected to be more efficiently enhanced by peculiar kinds of associations. It appears to emerge common-sense recognition that sport clubs and organizations prominently enhance and stimulate in various ways positive social capital. Being among the most evident and shared human practices enabling social cooperation and togetherness, and providing socially useful solution to individualistic empowerment

and collective goals, sport potentialities in fostering social capital came to the fore at the beginning of the second millennium. In 1999, Uslaner wrote:

> "Sports build social capital because they build self-confidence and teach respect for rules… Sports widen our social contact. They spread tolerance and egalitarian values on the sly. People don't play games to make themselves more moral. Morality lessons are a by-product, not the main event, in athletics" (Uslaner 1999, p.146-147).

In *Making Democracy Work* (1993), Robert Putnam had recognized that civic connotations of certain Italian regions appeared to be related to the additional presence of amateur soccer team. Accordingly, researches, sociological analyses and studies have been carried out in order to investigate the connections between sport participation and social capital development. Quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic researches have significantly affirmed concerned underlying assumptions (Uslaner 1999; Jarvie 2003; Donovan et al. 2004; Seippel 2006; Skinner et al. 2008; Marlier et al. 2015). As a consequence, when approaching the concept of social capital, sport associations have now captured the attentions of academic sociologists, policy-makers, supervising institutions and economic companies. Thus, recent years have observed an expanding sociological body of research seeking to understand how peculiar features of sport associations, which comprise the largest sector of voluntary civil society in several developed and developing countries (Seippel 2006), might underpin positive social capital development. Studying high standards of sport participation in New Zealand (Donovan et al. 2004), it has been argued that sport groups membership appears to enhance political engagement among citizens, particularly when approaching voting and discussing politics dimensions. On the grounds of Na Lin's social capital considerations, Ø. Seippel (2006) found that in Swedish voluntary sport organizations, which, operating though information, influence and identity, eventually enhance social trust, positive voting attitudes and political interest.

Similar social mechanisms are analyzed in second chapter to demonstrate the civic-oriented social processes of sport participation. Alternatively, it has been underlined that sport organizations appear to enhance more social than political positive effects and that those benefices might be traduced in social recognition, reciprocity and trust (Warren 2001). Moreover, "the features of the organizations producing these effects are, to Warren, forms of membership (especially whether there is an exit option easily available), its social (non-political) and vested (internally directed) character" (Seippel 2006, p.173). As a matter of fact, sport groups, associations and clubs function as horizontally-structured networks of civic engagement, within which communication flows, solidarity and group identities appear fundamental. Thus, bonding social capital, prominently flourishing from sport associations and clubs, might play a crucial role in social capital development processes. Furthermore, sport participation and practices do not only foster a sense of belonging, both at local and national level, but they do also stimulate integration processes, moments and opportunities to interact with diverse cultures, life-styles and sensibilities. In national sport events, localism and regionalism merge together in a complex syntax of physical competitiveness and openness towards the otherness of players and athletes, towards the social status of *stranger* (Giulianotti 2005). Diversities in cultural, geographical and material terms simultaneously disappear in sport rules and codes and are accepted through the politics of difference. Evidently, inter-communities and inter-nations dialogues are stimulated by sport events and opportunities. It is not a case that sport events and practices have been recognized and utilized as opportunities for national reunification and international reconciliation (Jarvie 2005). Jessie Owens's four gold medals at 1936 Nazi Olympic Games held in Berlin, the new 'Rainbow' nation desired by Nelson Mandela after South Africa victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the reconciliation between South Korea and Japan co-hosting the 2002

FIFA World Cup: these are all examples of how sports do enable humans to interact and reconcile (Jarvie 2003), thus stimulating bridging social capital among groups. Accordingly, as far as this dissertation is concerned, social capital emanating through sport participation and activities should be recognized as pertaining to both bonding and bridging social capital. This consideration is going to have a crucial impact on further policy-making implications. As such, next chapters are providing both qualitative and quantitative arguments highlighting how both forms of sport social capital shall be enhanced by policy-makers, institutional agencies, international sport boards.

Chapter 2

Identity, inclusion and integration: exploring the sport-induced civic mechanisms of social capital development

Since declining trends in social capital have been claimed in recent years of neoliberal era (Putnam 2000), this chapter aims at discussing and analyzing the civic mechanisms through which sport participation and practices result conducive to social capital development. Specifically, identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration practices are here evaluated as mechanisms of civic engagement. Indeed, the latter appear as the most visible and direct social effects of bonding and bridging social capital ushered by participation in competitive sport clubs, amateur sport associations and supply-side sport-delivery projects. In order to contextualize present arguments, this chapter introduces cases and researches from the Pacific area and from the UK, as macro regions where sports play a crucial role in the daily-life practices of socialization between individuals, communities and cultures. Accordingly, the most imminent and tangible effects of sport participation and practices, namely identity enforcement and transmission of culture, are investigated. In this case, analysis focuses on rugby practices among Maori communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. By referring to how sports endorse social inclusion benefits, Samoan rugby villages interactions and structures are explored through the lens of rugby practices. Also, either supply-side or grassroots, several sport-delivery projects are recognized as facilitating social inclusion in the UK, particularly among the youngest. Social integration, as a major objective of inclusive social policy, is discussed in terms of both urban and rural sport participation in Australia. Furthermore, the existence and features of the so-called dark side of social capital are extensively investigated. In more technical terms, consequent policy solutions to the sport participation negative phenomena are pointed out. Eventually, poverty-

reduction, social integration agenda and public institutions commitment to sport values and ideals are expected to highly reduce social capital dark side and exacerbate sport-induced civic mechanisms of engagement and collective benefices.

2.1 Collective identity enforcement and transmission of culture: approaching Maori rugby perspective

As it has been quite explicitly hinted, the most prominent effect of sport participation in organizations and clubs is the enforcement of collective identity. Feelings of belonging, mutual solidarity and exclusive reciprocity are the effects *par excellence* of horizontal networks of civic engagement such as sport clubs (Putnam 1993; Hauberer 2011). Accordingly, "sport in many ways is ideally suited to mutuality because of the way in which groups attach themselves to a sporting ideal or a common objective" (Jarvie 2003, p.150). In addition, it has been argued that identity recognition is one of the three mechanisms through which sport participation is expected to endorse social capital development (Seippel 2006). Several degrees of influence can be observed. Indeed, social capital transpiring from sport clubs and organizations might reinforce local, regional and national identities. By means of either voluntary or professional competitions, all levels symbolically support and promote the processes of identity recognition and multi-level cultural transmission. Locally and regionally, old rivalries and new challenges permit competition to survive and the enthusiasm promoted through an 'us-them' divide enables recognition and maintenance of identities (Giuliannotti 2005). Sport as a local "sociological superglue" (Putnam 2000, p.23) emerged evidently in Hague's and Mercer's ethnographic analysis (1998) concerning communal supporters' attachment to Raith Rovers Football Club in Kirkcaldy, Scotland. In this context, residents appeared to commit themselves to the football club since the latter concentrated and preserved social

memory and communal identity. National prides and cultures are imminently manifested during international sport events, like the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup and other international competitions. These events are promoted through massive supporters' participation and global media attentions. Indeed, "for several decades, sport tournaments and special events have been acknowledged as contributors to feelings of national identity, social cohesion and communal pride" (Schulenkorf 2012, p.6). Not only during international events, sports have historically served diverse political attempts to reinforce and exacerbate national sense of belonging: from sport practices as conducive to regime consensus and social mobilization in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the former U.S.S.R to the 'Ping-Pong Diplomacy' between China and the U.S.A, sports have played a top-level political role in the development of interactions among states. Moreover, sports have been and still are recognized as efficient means to reiterate regional prides and both political and cultural autonomy in places such as Scotland, Catalonia and Brittany (Jarvie 2003). In this perspective, sport participation and practices are meant to stimulate not only either local, regional or national prides enforcement but also cultural heritage transmission across generations. A clear case of sport social capital enhancing cultural transmission and collective sensitivity is exemplified by Maori rugby practices and culture in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Undoubtedly, Maori rugby legacy stands as the most publicized example of interconnection between sport participation and Pacific popular culture, identity and communalism. It seems fair to hold that "since the second quarter of the 20th century, Maori integrated the game into their community dynamics thereby demonstrating socio-cultural resilience as well as a persistent creative and strategic support to rugby" (Calabrò 2014, p.392). As Bill Burdett argued referring to rugby clubs across New Zealand, "sport in general, but rugby in particular, is the catalyst that unites all our communities" (2000, p.11). Communalism is crucially bound to the transmission

of Maori cultural heritage and identity through rugby. As a consequence, to the theoretical reflections over individualism and communalism in social capital theory, Maori culture appears to conserve a rather collectivist perspective in this sense. Indeed, a significant share of *whakawhanaungatanga*, the set of Maori attitudes towards a community in terms of cooperation, sharing and support, might be found in rugby practices and participation. Either interacting within large cities or in small-size villages, a Maori rugby team behaves as a *whanau*, a Maori family, in which ceremonial customs and collective Maori principles shall be closely observed: among the others, reciprocity, support (*awhi*), hospitality and unity (*kotahitanga*) are comprised in rugby camaraderie (Calabrò 2014). Rugby matches appear extremely important in the process of creation of the Maori "pan-tribal identity" (Calabrò 2014, p.395), since communities interact and clash while their collective *mana* (power, influence and force). Mirroring and reinforcing *nga tuonga toku iho*, the values and cultural heritage of ancestors, Maori rugby teams are "vested with indigenous socio-cultural meanings" (Calabrò 2014, p.390). As a matter of fact, "in the rugby contest, Maori have been able to get together to discuss ideas and projects, to transmit their knowledge to younger generations, reinforce their sense of identity, and exercise their culture in a communal setting" (Calabrò 2014, p.393).

2.2 The social inclusiveness by means of sport participation: studying rugby practices in Samoan villages

Recently, the potentialities of sport participation in fostering social inclusion have gradually gained ever more attentions among policy-making institutions, governmental agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Indeed, sport-delivery projects, particularly at the recreational level, as well sport participation-based policies have entered social inclusion programs of a wide range of institutions. Among the latter the

European Commission, the Australian Sport Commission, the Scottish Parliament and the UK government departments might well be considered (Jarvie 2003; Coalter 2007; Skinner et al. 2008; Spaaij 2012). "Social inclusion policy, particularly in the UK, has driven the recent emphasis on sport as a potential panacea for a range of social ills, in particular youth disengagement and crime" (Skinner et al. 2008, p.264). From this perspective, sport-induced community development public interventions, intended as social capital fostering civic interaction, political engagement and socio-economic progress, are socially desirable and efficiently manageable on a top-down model. In addition, sport-delivery supply-side and grassroots initiatives appear to usher significant economic and health benefices in disadvantaged communities (Collins 2004; Woodhouse 2006; Skinner et al. 2008; Marlier et al. 2015). In this perspective, sport appear to suitable serve as a mean to reach wider social inclusion (Skinner et al. 2008). In order to contextualize social inclusion dimension by means of sport, this section aims at discussing and presenting how recreational rugby practices within Samoan villages stimulate the activity of all the inhabitants and permits grassroots social inclusion. Beyond Samoan national rugby team relevance in the world rugby scenario, Samoan rugby organization heavily relies on villages structures, hierarchies and rivalries (Clement 2014). Indeed, "the sport and village systems are mixed in rugby and the various institutions to a different degree are integrated in both Samoan social organization and rugby as an institution" (Clement 2014, p.373). Villages' hierarchy is bound to the figures of villages' chiefs, whose personalities are respected and greeted at the end of each rugby match. Chiefs keep the authority to influence, orientate and sometimes own local or regional rugby clubs. As a matter of fact, fashioned in and influenced by *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way of doing actions and living moments), within villages rugby practices take "place within the frame if intensely communal life"

(Clement 2014, p.376). As men and children play touch rugby together at the end of the workday to take a rest and find laughs, young rugby players learn to support each other and cooperate in daily activities. Indeed, rugby "plays an important role in young men's socialization as they represent their families and villages" (Clement 2014, p.376). Moreover, competitions between local and provincial teams appear to be endorsed by the historical rivalries between villages themselves. The latter not only frame competition, but take part in it showing up to the rugby field to support their own representatives and enacting the practice of 'tapua'iga' (praying before important and hypothetically dangerous moments). Evidently, praying is a fundamental element before and after rugby matches in Samoan villages' contexts: before the matches, young rugby players are likely to pray altogether, manifesting a sense of unity and communality, and "if the players attend different churches, it does not influence this collective moment" (Clement 2014, p.379). Even during funeral ceremonies rugby appears to be endorsed in villages' activities, as villagers play before and after the ceremonies to communize together (Clement 2014). Concluding, it appears fair to argue that Samoan rugby is inherently intertwined with social inclusion practices within Samoan villages, since everybody might learn from "the camp unique form and meaning" (Clement 2014, p.376).

2.3 Sport participation as a tool for social integration in both urban and rural Australia

Another major positive social contribution that sport practices and participation might enhance is that of social integration. As the world political and socio-economic stages witness the controversial effects of neoliberal globalization process, social integration has become a crucial policy-target, particularly for wealthier nations facing significant phenomena of immigration. Since "sport can combine disparate people, communities and nations" (Schulenkorf 2012, p.7), various policy-making institutions, governmental

agencies and grassroots local associations identify sport participation and sport-delivery projects as highly significant tools to deal with social disintegration and inequality. In England, government-investment initiatives like PAT 101 and Game Plan 202 reflect the significant attention social capital development promote within public authorities' conduct and policy-making. Moreover, supply-delivery, sponsored and public-privately funded projects such as Sport Action Zones (SAZ), Street Leagues and Positive Futures attempted at tackling youth racism and disengagement, particularly in disadvantaged communities (Skinner et al. 2008). These cases exemplify how efficient 'Third Way' perspective on policy-making might be expected to usher beneficial collective outcomes in the framework of current neoliberal era. In 2007, the European Commission adopted the White Paper on Sport claiming that sport "makes an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and more integrated societies" (European Commission 2007, p.7). According to Ager and Strang (2004; cit. in Spaaij 2012), in attempting to stimulate and promote the two-fold adaption processes of social integration, four key elements shall be enhanced: employment, housing education and health. Yet, R. Spaaij claimed that:

> "Beyond these four domains recreational sport, as a popular form of leisure, can also be viewed as a means and marker of integration. Sport serves as a significant site for civic participation, potentially enabling resettled refugees to foster social relationships with, and cultural knowledge of, the host community"
> (Spaaij 2012, p.1520)

By referring to Georg Simmel's sociological perspective (1955), Richard Giulianotti (2005) argues that the sociability of sports might be recognized as a 'conflict and order' dualistic process, which appears to simultaneously conserve traditions and

stimulate innovative relationships. As integration might be easily translated into bridging social capital development, this controversial social procedure enables the interaction of individuals and groups, via the construction of local, regional or international bridging ties. In global sport events nationalist spirits emerge while divergent cultures clash and melt together through the encounter of people. As a matter of fact, bonding and bridging social capital ties emanating from and by-produced through sport clubs, organizations and events appear to exacerbate both the identity and the interconnectedness of team groups. Moreover, togetherness and unification processes comprise also supporters, who simultaneously demonstrate the persistence of communal, regional and national attachments (Giulianotti 2005). It is not a case that the wide-reaching integrative and assimilative character of sports has inevitably served political projects of integration: from Western imperialism to processes of reconciliation either among states (the organization of the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Japan and South Korea) or within them (1995 Rugby World Cup held and won by South Africa, in the aftermath of apartheid's abolition) (Jarvie 2003). In the last two decades, sport participation-induced social integration has gained significant attention among both state and federal Australian policy-making institutions and governmental agencies (Woodhouse 2006; Skinner et al. 2008; Schulenkorf 2012; Spaaij 2012). Accordingly, the Australian Sports Commission explicitly refers to the positive advantages sport participation is expected to usher, namely youth crime reduction, education, social integration and increased participatory attitudes among citizens (ASC, 2004a). Sociological attentions about bonding and bridging social capital enhancement have been studied both in urban and rural Australian social environments. Crucial social capital salience transpires from researches on minority groups interacting in non-professional Australian

leagues of football. Indeed, "football in Australia has long been distinguished by its popularity among sections of migrant minorities, and many amateur football clubs have been founded and organized along non-Anglo lines" (Spaaij 2012, p.1529). All along the 20th century, Australia has witnessed significant phenomena of immigration, which eventually brought to the emergence of wide social multi-ethnicity and consequent minority communities. Providing ethnographic and qualitative research insights into minorities conduct within Australian amateur football leagues, R. Spaaij (2012) focused on Melbourne Giants club to understand whether urban social integration might emerge within non-professional sport contexts. Behind a fictitious name, Melbourne Giants are but one among many multi-ethnic clubs originally established and supported by minority communities. In the amateur football leagues in which Melbourne Giants compete, Turkish, Italian, Iraqi and Greek community-managed clubs might be observed among others (Spaaij 2012). Financially supported by locals and insiders, in the early 2000 the club was established to secure sporting activities to Somalis refugees living in disadvantaged neighborhoods of the city. Gradually, the club gained ever more attention from city authorities and federal institutions, which started assisting it economically. Nowadays, Melbourne Giants appear to be a real point of reference for the surrounding communities, comprising different African and Muslim ethnic groups. Local children and young athletes have the possibility to play among them and against other club teams. Meanwhile, non-players (coaches, club volunteers and supporters) keep interacting in and out the field area. Importantly, Somalis clanship divisions, accentuated by long-lasting crises and wars within motherland territory, seem to disappear in the collective context of football club. Indeed, "cross-clan bonding in the football context has overcome some of the clan-based cleavages

which were endemic in Somalia, thereby contributing to the internal cohesion of occasions, bridging ties between the Somali club and other ethno-specific football clubs might be recognized, particularly during match days" (Spaaij 2012, p.1525). This consideration reveals how potentialities of sport-induced social integration are often underinvested and underestimated. Similar results were founded by Matthew Tonts's survey-oriented and qualitative research on competitive sports role in fostering social capital in Australian rural areas (2005). Analyzing the Northern Wheatbelt region, Tont's research outlined not only the extraordinary role of volunteers in running and facilities-maintaining of sport clubs in those rural areas, but also residents' commitment to sport-delivered beneficial effects (Tonts 2005). Indeed, to 82% of research survey respondents, social connectivity represented the most valid reason to perform sport practices (Tonts 2005). Despite the persistence of significant socio-economic barriers, sport activities and clubs appear to include participation of a significant share of Aboriginal ethnic group, counting for 9.5% of the regional population (Tonts 2005). Thus, although gradually undermined by regional economic restructuring and depopulation, "the evidence would suggest that sport plays a role in the formation of networks that contribute to both bridging and bonding capital" (Tonts 2005, p.143). Although sport-induced social capital appears in both Australian rural and urban social frameworks, it must be argued that social advantages emerging thereof should be neither underestimated nor overemphasized. Indeed, negative externalities of social capital might eventually emerge (Putnam 2000; Jarvie 2003; Seippel 2006; Skinner et al. 2008). Nevertheless, the beneficial capacities and potentialities of sport participation and interaction in the processes of integration appear evident, fruitful and viable. Particularly, sport participation-induced social integration might more coherently be exacerbated

through wide-reaching, multi-layered and socially sensitive policy-making framework of intervention (Jarvie 2003). The latter is meant to comprehend sport participation-induced mechanism of civic engagement as well as social policies aiming at outdoing the negative side of sport social capital.

2.4 **A dark side? Investigating negative externalities of sport social capital**

As far as social capital development through sport participation and proactive policy-making might be discussed, it is evidently clear that not in all circumstances sports are able to produce beneficial advantages in terms of social inclusion and integration. Indeed, it has been argued that social capital might hide potential negative social externalities, not only in terms of its underinvestment (Putnam 2000). Immoderate and unmanaged reliance on group communality and reciprocity as well as radicalism in enforcements of exclusive collective identities might eventually result in group members' closure towards external actors, resources and benefits. This closure is often caused by or combined with geographical isolation, deprived economic conditions or family backgrounds. In popular and followed social phenomena such as high-level competitive sports, these negative externalities might unfortunately be exacerbated. Football hooliganism, ethnic discrimination, social exclusion are but few outcomes of what has been called dark side of social capital (Putnam 2000; Seippel 2006; Skinner et al. 2008; Spaaij 2012). In the above-mentioned contexts of the two Australian case-studies, negative externalities, particularly in terms of weak bridging ties were recognized. Indeed, Melbourne Giants club provided significant opportunities for the creation of bonding ties among playing and not-playing club actors (Spaaij 2012). Nevertheless, phenomena of discrimination and violent verbal abuse still occurred. Indeed, although creating important bridging attempts, inter-club matches "can magnify inter-group

differences and tensions" (Spaaij 2012, p.1530). It might be argued that it is during matches bridging potentialities that negative externalities occur, thus presuming that also bridging ties may reserve detrimental side effects (Spaaij 2012). Moreover, women participation in Melbourne Giants club appeared limited and unable to result in the acquisition of socially-desirable high status (Spaaij 2012). Gender equality remains a significant field of enquiry in the sociology of sport, indeed. It must be underlined that "not only is female participation in sport much lower than males in all age groups, but women tend to participate in a narrower range of usually individualistic activities, which can often be combined with childcare – swimming, walking, keep-fit" (Coalter 2007, p.539). Similarly, it has been found that sport participation in rural Australia appears to be still featured by ethnicity, class and gender (Tonts 2005). In particular, although present, bridging ties between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal appear relatively weak and not durable (Tonts 2005). Two additional issues linked to the dark side of sport participation-induced social capital may arise, namely non-participants' exclusion and physical barriers. Especially in rural areas, the former binds non-participants in sport activity, or better in bonding sport clubs and organizations, to networks resources depravation, reducing information, group identity and support (Tonts 2005). Evidently, exclusion from sport practices might in turn be caused by several socially endemic factors, such as ethnicity, class, relatives' income, housing place to name but just a few. Physical and gender barriers might provoke additional implicit processes of exclusion in this sense. The detrimental effects of excessive bonding social capital presence within sport framework is documented in Grant Jarvie's analysis on Scottish sport. From a communitarian perspective, G. Jarvie held that:

> "A degree of interaction with the world beyond one's own immediate neighborhood is vital if communities are not to be socially excluded. While this

> might be easier for the talented Olympic athlete at another level if sport is deemed as being important in sustaining a long-term sense of social capital and civic engagement, the traditional inward-looking view of the Scottish neighborhood community needs to be questioned. The neighborhood represents only a small part of an increasingly diverse web of relationships involving kin, friends, colleagues and contacts and these need in all cases to be developed outwith the immediate neighborhood if the benefits of sport are to be sustained". (Jarvie 2003, p.152)

These considerations demonstrate that, although liberal individualism is likely expected to gradually erode collective social obligations, mutuality and trustworthiness, Scottish borders, close-knit bonding communities are not meant to keep resisting prevailing market-oriented forces. On the contrary, socially coherent sport management and sport-based policy frameworks are expected to tie communitarian objectives and desirable long-term outcomes to prevailing individualistic attitudes transpiring from both national economic trends and global mode of production. It is in this perspective that Scottish communities might enforce their openness towards the remoteness of the "stranger" (Giulianotti 2005, p.298), to cultural diversity, to external resources and actors (Jarvie 2003). In this sense, socially-committed and development-delivery 'Third Way' policy-framework might provide more democratic and equitable solutions both in terms of profit-driven interests and collective objectives.

2.5 Beyond the dark side: committing sport values, practices and participation to policies and projects underpinning poverty reduction and social illnesses cure

Without any doubt, it seems unfair and unrealistic to argue that above-mentioned social externalities are not relevant in sport participation-based social capital development. At the same time, it would be logically incorrect to hold that the same social illnesses

(discrimination, exclusion, disintegration) that sport practice and participation are committed to cure are eventually produced by sports themselves. Maximizing social benefits emerging from sport social capital requires, or better would require, preventing negative externalities to flourish. Although this might appear a highly complex task, significant steps towards wider social inclusion into sport participation are reachable through inclusive and integrative public-policies and government interventions, as exemplified by early 2000 New Labour policies in the UK (Jarvie 2003; Collins 2004; Skinner et al. 2008). Despite the formal disappearance of national welfare state, the first policy area targets social poverty reduction (Collins 2004). Indeed, poverty, basically intended as absence of income, "restricts leisure spending, and the disparities between the richest and poorest groups become even more exaggerated" (Collins 2004, p.728). Undeniably, poverty exacerbates the dynamic processes of social exclusion, which might be reduced to structural, mediating and personal exclusion (Collins 2004). Figure 2 (Collins 2004, p.730) shows how these three types of exclusion are expected to withdraw and eventually annul social advantages and civic engagement provided by sport participation in clubs, organizations and projects.

Structural	Mediating	Personal
Poor physical/social environment	Manager's policies/attitudes	Lack of time structure
Poor facilities/community capacity	Labelling by society	Lack of income
Poor support networks/communal and social capital		Lack of skills/personal and social capital
Poor transport		Fears over safety
		Powerlessness
		Poor body image

(Figure 2: Collins 2004, p.730)

In this perspective, job security, enhanced possibilities of employment and wage-protecting public polices might result fundamental. Indeed, consciousness of social

security is a crucial factor influencing shared trust, thus social capital enhancement. In addition, in terms of physical safety, coherent policy-making activities are expected to preserve the collective interests (Collins 2006; Skinner et al. 2008). Indeed, "trust is a key element in social capital inclusion programs and in the development of social capital and it is one that must first be established in a safe and familiar place before challenging cultural and physical barriers" (Skinner et al. 2008, p. 268). This is the reason why in the last decades, numerous sport-delivery projects, like have been organized in communal parks, streets and square in the UK (Skinner et. al 2008). An additional area of public intervention encompasses governments, national institutions and global governance sport values and ideals commitment. Moreover, high skilled-sport management is needed within policy-making authorities and sport associations, both nationally and globally, to orientate the reaching of long-term social outcomes and collective development. In different words, multi-level policy interventions are expected to bind sport participation both to its values and to its social benefices, comprising above-mentioned socially-crucial mechanisms of civic engagement and both democratic and economic incentives. Although sport alone might seem incapable of entirely supporting community development (Jarvie 2003), this dissertation suggests that sport participation-induced social capital has socially-responsible potentialities and multifaceted characteristics to be included in social development-reaching broad-spectrum policy framework. Undoubtedly, it must be restated that only in particular circumstances bonding social capital connections result socially harmful. Indeed, in addition to social reciprocity, communality and tight-knit connections, "bonding social capital is also frequently associated with positively perceived outcomes such as increased educational attainment and reduced costs of job search" (Spaaij 2012, p.1523). Bridging ties in sport contexts among players and non-players, among supporters and non-supporters and

among states is exacerbated by the integrative nature of sport participation, practices and events (Jarvie 2003; Giulianotti 2005). Significant management capacities are needed to combine both bonding and bridging senses of sport participation in attaining social capital development. As it is going to be discussed, this might occur through the use of specific sport-management frameworks. Furthermore, sport participation-induced social capital development might well encompass individual agency perceptions with respect to proper functioning of civic engagement mechanisms. Accordingly, it seems right to underline "the importance of personal agency in cultural negotiation and integration experiences, as well as the significance of developing positive and mutually respectful social bridges and links with the host community" (Spaaij 2012, p. 1531). It might be argued that current globalizing trends might endorse several beneficial effects, committing sport values such as respect for rules, support, cohesion and collective sensitivity, not only to intra-state social systems but also to international togetherness and inter-state reconciliation (Jarvie 2003; Uperesa and Mountjoy 2014). As a consequence, "sports have also become an important site of connection within transnational communities, whose participants seen as embodying national and cultural identities unbounded by geography" (Uperesa and Mountjoy 2014, p.269). Concluding, sport-based social capital development, both nationally and globally, shall be monitored, managed and controlled on a long-term basis and in various regional contexts to eventually capture more exhaustive sociological analyses. Future research on the sociology of sport social capital might be oriented in this sense. However, beneficial social capital effects linked to civic engagement, in terms of collective identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration, ushered by sport participation and sport practices exist. Their defense and enhancement through anti-poverty and social inclusion-oriented policy measures by governments and relative institutions, as well as

through collaborations with NGOs, private business and grassroots initiatives might endorse highly significant social results. In a long term, these results, combined with large spectrum-based government interventions pursuing social equity, civic engagement and health, might be expected to cure negative externalities and social lacunas of current neoliberal economy. These long-term objectives result highly fruitful, efficient and adequate to deal with ever increasing phenomena of social migration and consequent social disengagement, such as those witnessed by European Union member states in recent months.

CHAPTER 3

The sustainable advantage of social capital development sport-oriented policies in current neoliberal era

Last chapter seeks to make use of sport participation-induced social capital development in order to address social issues and illnesses in proper neoliberal dynamic understanding. As the so-called post-WWII *embedded liberalism*, or welfare state, appears to gradually disappear in Western democracies, neoliberal economic trends and rules do impose restrictions to policy-making authorities. Indeed, both nationally and globally, governments spaces of manoeuvre shrink in favor of neoliberal market forces oriented towards individualistic and private aims. In this perspective, being scarce resources, reduced public spending and investments by public policy-making bodies are meant to be addressed not only by equitable and consistent proves of social benefits, but also in terms of high levels of returns. Accordingly, in a suitable 'Third Way' fashion, this chapter underlines sport-based policies and sport-delivery projects, either publicly or state-privately funded, as enhancing social capital development. Particularly, sport-induced social capital development appears to endorse rather sustainable advantages in terms of social illnesses cure with respect to other policy areas: not only, sport participation is intended to foster social capital in terms of above-mentioned mechanisms of civic engagement, but it appears to underpin additional democratic, health and economic benefices. Indeed, "social capital is important for political stability, effectiveness and economic development" (Hauberer 2011, p.58). Eventually, these multifaceted and copious developmental potentialities are expected to attract private interests, but most importantly to consign public policy-making with sport-oriented polyvalent tools to deal with prevailing social issues. By referring to Tocquevillian arguments of civic engagement and political virtuosity, sociological focus is placed on

how sport participation supports the functioning of modern democracies and how it might be conducive to further democratic transformations. Being accepted in common-sense terms, sport participation and practices beneficial effects concerning both mental and physical health is discussed, particularly with respect to disadvantaged communities. In more economic and profit-oriented terms, this chapter presents significant insights into the processes through which social capital development encompasses and gradually stimulates economic benefits and high level returns. Furthermore, since high skilled- managerial inputs within public policy-making institutions and sport associations have been previously recognized as key factors shrinking social capital dark side, a communitarian sport-management model is presented. In particular, Sport-for-development (S4D) model is addressed in the attainment of sustainable development and communal empowerment. In conclusion, final considerations are provided regarding future policy-frameworks for sport-induced social capital development as well as states and governments roles in further sport development.

3.1 Making democracy work again: sport activities and attitudes as responses to democratic illnesses and inefficiencies

As already mentioned before in this dissertation, A. de Tocqueville (1840) significantly underlined how civil society virtuosity might result beneficial for stable democratic practices and civic engagement. During last three decades, while popular criticism concerning democratic efficacies and functioning has raised, political specialists and sociologists have turned to social capital and civil society processes to find solutions to democracies inefficacies and disequilibria. Accordingly, “neo-Tocquevillians” (Kim 2000,

p.219) claim that the more virtuous, active and diversified the space between citizens and democratic representative institutions (i.e. civil society), the more efficient democratic processes are expected to be. Within the vague and blurring boundaries of civil society interactions, it has been argued that sport participation-induced social capital encompasses beneficial democratic effects (Putnam 1993; Donovan et al. 2004; Seippel 2006). In R. Putnam's works (1993; 2000), theoretical connections between democratic efficiencies and social capital development are particularly underlined. In terms of trust, reciprocity and rules of civic engagement, social capital is conceived as exacerbating "the democratic performances of the state" (Hauberer 2011, p.54). In *Making Democracy Work* (1993), twenty Italian regional governments were studied in order to investigate how different levels of social capital development could usher differences in government effectiveness across a north-south divide. Eventually, it resulted that northern regions, where civil society developmental paths had been more stimulated by and endorsed in regional political systems, appeared to civilly and politically function in a more efficient way (Putnam 1993; Laitin 1995). In this perspective, R. Putnam recognized that social capital might be fairly though as a meaningful "civic virtue" (Putnam 2000, p.19). Particularly, "Putnam (1993, 115) stressed that the 'civic' regions of Italy were distinguished by the presence of amateur soccer teams, and other social groups that were organized 'horizontally, not hierarchically'" (Donovan et al. 2004, p.408-409). Accordingly, horizontal networks of civic engagement, like sport clubs and associations, are expected to foster trust and mutual reciprocity, enhancing, as a consequence, political interests, cooperation and democratic correct functioning. However, questions might be raised on "whether some groups are better than others as incubators of democratic virtues or whether all groups are equally good in that regard" (Donovan et al., 2004, p.407). In 2004 a quantitative study was realized in Aotearoa/New Zealand, focusing on

how national standards of political engagement could vary with respect to different group memberships and their inherent political influence over individuals (Donovan et al. 2004). Results demonstrated that membership in sport groups and associations provide substantive benefices in both collective and individual political commitment, particularly in terms of voting engagement and discussing politics. Indeed, when analyzing the latter two dimensions, it could be argued that political influence of sport participation on citizens "is twice the size of the effect of identifying as working class, and it is larger than the effect of being an electoral winner. {...} The effect of one-unit shift in frequency of meeting with sport groups (b=0.043), furthermore, is similar to the effect on an identical change in frequency of attending union meetings (0.050)" (Donovan et al. 2004, p.416). Although in a different social context, similar results were found by Seippel's research (2006) on voluntary sport and social capital in Norway. In this context, membership in voluntary sport organizations and clubs supplies crucially important advantages in generalized trust among individuals and communities. Yet, when compared to other forms of voluntary organizations, sport endorses weaker effects. Again, it must be underlined that "sport as in 'isolated organization' contains less social capital than sport as 'connected'" (Seippel 2006, p.178); in alternative words, bridging ties in sport participation and activities shall be exacerbated and maximized, if social advantages, in terms of trust, identity, inclusion and integration are meant to be commonly benefited. Moreover, positive political effects ushered by sport participation might be observed. Indeed, research survey respondents affiliated to voluntary sport clubs and associations were characterized by higher levels of general political interest and voting commitment (Seippel 2006). As a matter of fact, sport participation and practice, particularly in voluntary and grassroots modes, appear to simultaneously conserve and stimulate higher standards of political engagement and commitment than

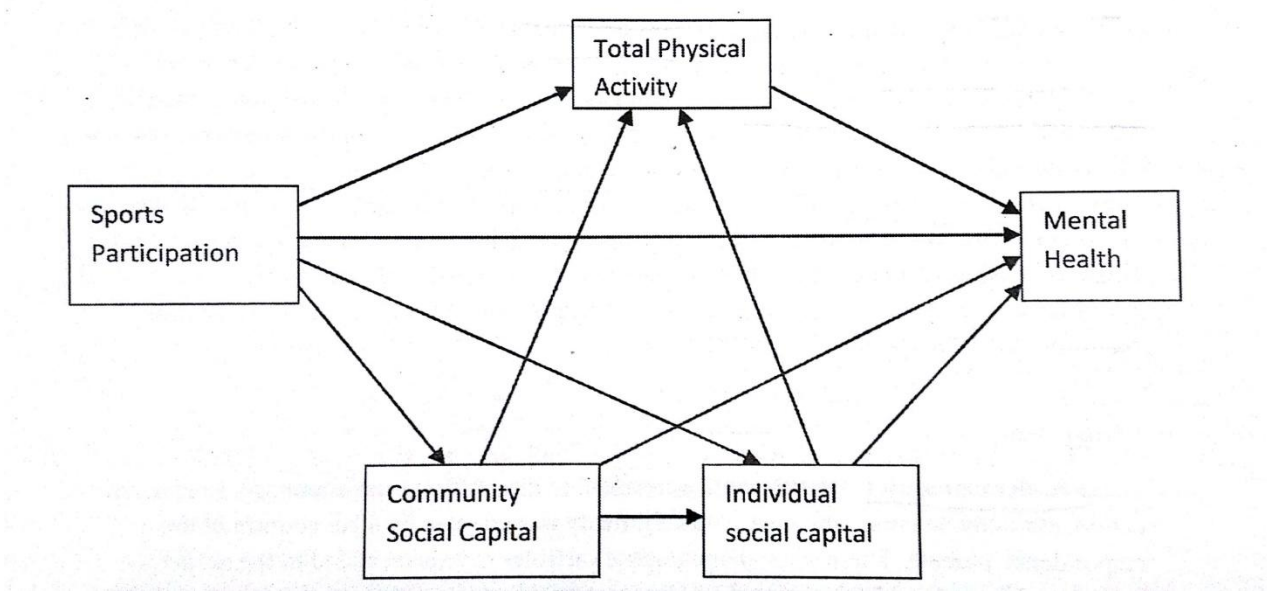
ordinarily among individuals and within communities. It seems right to consider sport clubs and organizations as highly important social sites where interest in politics, but most importantly participation and cooperation are expected to emerge (Donovan et al. 2004; Skinnet et al. 2008; Schulenkorf 2012). Accordingly, not only citizens and communities, but also polities and politics might benefit from sport participation "'educative' role in teaching them how to act and work together and how to act socially as well as politically" (Donovan et al. 2004, p.406). In this perspective sport clubs and associations are meant to perform not only as schools of democracy, but also as social arenas where politics, policies and polities are discussed, evaluated and eventually reshaped. Nowadays, political participation is more than a vague and a general commitment of most Western and *Westernized* stable democracies. While the era of representative democracy appears to be simultaneously contested and declining, participatory theory has been recognized as necessary steps in the evolution of democracies by numerous populist, activist and academic voices (della Porta 2013). Moreover, it seems fair to argue that "participation also promises disadvantaged and/or divided communities the capacity to help themselves through newly established connections or networks" (Schulenkorf 2012, p.3). As phenomena of manifestations against democratic inefficiencies and against global governance trends, polity inputs concerning contestation show that transformations and modernizations of traditional democratic processes are needed. These transformations must necessarily allow higher levels of citizens' involvement, commitment and participation in modern politics. As a consequence, sport clubs and associations useful and shared sites of both civic education and intermediation between citizens and institutions. In this perspective political participatory dimension and sport participation appear anchored to social capital development. Since sports promote mutual cooperation, solidarity and focus on

collective objectives, political participation might well be geared with sport-induced civic mechanisms of engagement and socialization processes. Further political participatory experiments might contemplate sport clubs and associations as dynamic frameworks in this sense.

3.2 Mens sana in corpore sano: physical and mental health by means of sport participation in disadvantaged communities

Because of their globally widespread character, their popularity and their educative role, sport institutions are all committed to pursue paths of health enhancement and protection, particularly, but not only, among the youngest. In this perspective, sports have attracted ever increasing attentions in policy-making institutions' and agencies' agenda concerned with community and individual well-being, as well as both physical and mental health. Attentions have emerged since it appears clear how "sport participation and physical activity protect against and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, delay cognitive decline, increase self-esteem and feelings of energy, and contribute to the overall quality of life" (Marlier et al. 2015, p.2). Although this might seem a simplicistic argument, increasing neoliberal privatizations substituting welfare state and both regional and national health systems constraint concerned public interventions. Thus, it seems fair to argue that sports function as tools and sites to prevent health illnesses and to enhance healthy collective well-being equilibrium. When managed in terms of vehicles of sustainable collective health in developed countries, sport participation and practice might well provide savings and economic profits to government authorities. Indeed, "every US$1 million spent on sport and physical activity generates a saving of US$3.2 million in national medical costs" (ASC 2004b, p.22).

Moreover, sport institutions are expected to spread knowledge concerning healthy standards and practices, both in developed and developing countries. Indeed, "development organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) make regular use of the mobilizing values of sport to raise awareness about issues such as HIV/AIDS, respect for human rights and the improvement of health and education" (Kobayashi et al. 2011, p.38-39). Being health issues complex and multifaceted, sport activity-induced health management needs multi-level collaboration between different types of institutions to address them locally and regionally. For example, the health department of the Sri Lankan government promoted polyvalent sport-delivery projects including schools and swimming pools. These projects, targeting the youngest and their parents, simultaneously stimulated swimming skills as lifesaver, providing workshops concerning Tetanus and Hepatitis prevention and teaching sport values during classes (Schulenkorf 2012). In this framework, it is clear that Sport-for-Development (S4D) programs and projects, whatever the funding sources might be, are expected to enhance social capital development thus providing significant benefices (Lyras et al. 2011). Particularly, disadvantaged areas are meant to be objects of S4D projects and public interventions since those are "communities which suffer acute social problems such as increasing population densities, low socio-economic status, high rates of chronic disease, high levels of migration and multiculturalism and young people at risk of exclusion/disaffection from society" (Skinner et al. 2008, p.264). Figure 3 (Marlier et. al 2015, p.5) shows the hypothesized model of interactions between sport participation, social capital and mental health variables and how causation is expected to proceed.



(Figure 3: Marlier et al. 2015, p.5)

Scientific results are in line with expected beneficial contributions of sport practices to both collective and individual health; indeed, sport participation and not general physical activity appears linked to better mental well-being, while individual social capital is the fittest variable of the model explaining mental health (Marlier et al. 2015). Accordingly, "even more substantial than being married or owning a house, the trust and reciprocity one has of people in general is most essential for better mental health" (Marlier et al. 2015, p.13). It might be argued that sport participation is more conducive to mental health than general physical activity since social capital is expected to be more intensively and properly enhanced through sport-based team working, support and togetherness. Indeed, individuals in a "isolated environment" (Marlier et. al 2015, p.12) appear to endorse inferior levels of both individual and collective social capital. As a matter of fact, both sociological and medical scientific proves are explicit: social capital enhanced through sport participation, practices and sport-delivery projects provide beneficial health conditions to individuals and communities (Schulenkorf 2012; Marlier et

al. 2015). Moreover, "results encourage a better interaction among the sport, social and health sector to combine their forces and reach better outcomes in the multidimensional and interrelated concepts of sport participation, physical activity, social capital and mental health" (Marlier et al 2015, p.14). In this regard, future health-preventing and -promoting public policies are suggested to conceive the wide sport frameworks as vehicles to social capital development and both mental and physical health enhancement. In this sense, governmental agencies and policy-making institutions are provided with polyvalent tools and sites aimed at balancing negative social externalities of neoliberal privatizations and public spending reductions in health systems.

3.3 The evolution of social capital into economic benefices

Living in the neoliberal economic era entails not only that public interventions are constrained by privatizations, but also that the residual policy-choices and policy-making prospects must provide consistent economic returns to concerned public institutions. In other words, when public spending is to be employed in order to address social issues, returns both in social and economic terms must be preventively evaluated. From this perspective, sport participation-based policies for social capital development endorse crucial aspects of economic interest (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Woodhouse 2006; Schulenkorf 2012). Although focusing on profitability and individual opportunism, P. Bourdieu (1986) recognized that social capital might be turned into economic advantages. Both J. Coleman (1988) and R. Putnam (2000) argued that high levels of community and individual social capital could exacerbate collective productivity, thus economic performance. This appears to be possible since social capital comprises shared trust, cohesiveness, civic engagement and increased norms of reciprocity. Eventually, they are

dramatically influential in social attitudes concerning economics and commerce. While modern economics are bound to transaction costs between distinct private parts, "social capital serves to facilitate the establishment of this trust, increase the effectiveness of social sanctions against who abuse it, and thereby reduce the cost and increase the ease of doing business" (Woodhouse 2006, p.85). In this sense, shared trust and sensitive togetherness enhanced by sport participation-induced social capital permit healthier, more stable and more efficient economic processes. These arguments are not in contrast with current prevailing neoliberal economic though, but on the contrary they are bound to its predominance and to its framework. However, sport-induced social capital might endorse consistent benefices to the social surrounding existing around neoliberal activities and procedures. As a matter of fact, social capital, in terms of mechanisms of civic engagement and norms of reciprocity, does not contract economic activities, but, on the contrary, it provides solid bases to forward-looking and ambitious economic prospectus and programs. In this sense, Andrew Woodhouse argued that:

> "in a society with high levels of social capital, individuals or groups are more willing to pursue higher returns through engaging in high-risk economic activities or innovative practices. Social capital acts as informal insurance, against risk, minimizing potential negative economic and social consequences associated with the adoption of new and innovative ideas" (Woodhouse 2006, p.85-86).

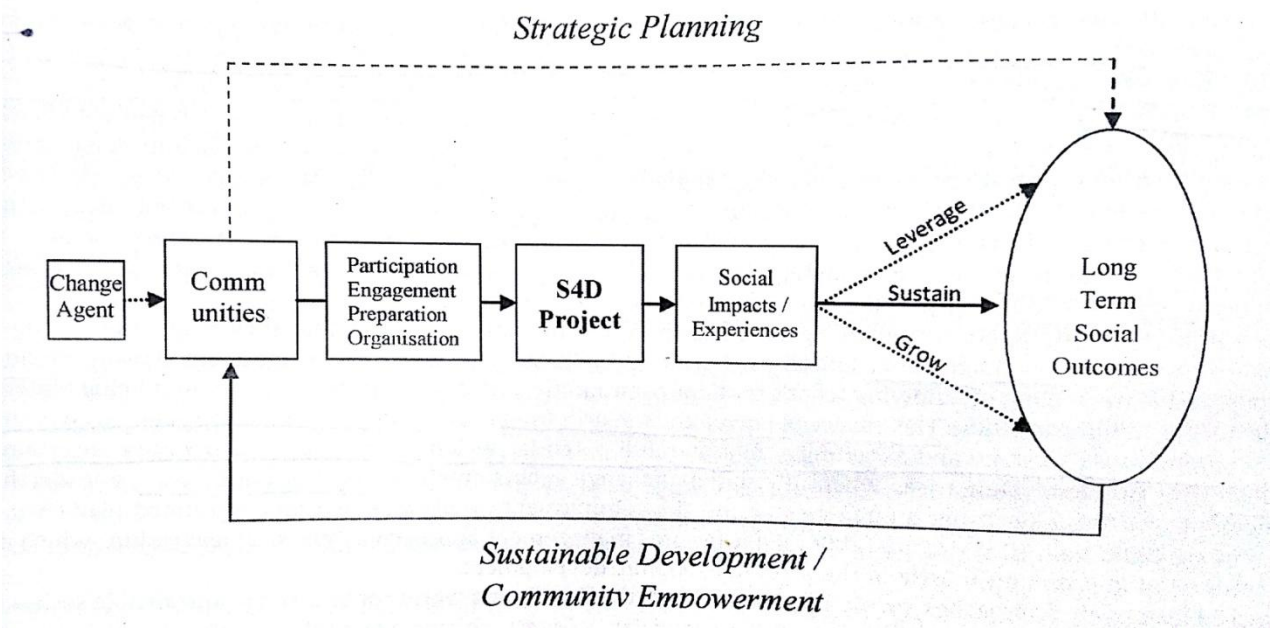
According to Narayan and Princhett (1999; cit. in Woodhouse 2006), social capital are expected to stimulate and promote higher returns in economic performances in three main ways: firstly, through enhanced trust and social cohesiveness, social capital is meant to ameliorate public administration performances and functioning; secondly, it appears as a suitable and defusing mechanism solving the collective-action dilemma of the tragedy of the commons (G. Hardin 1968); finally, and most importantly in neoliberal

perspective, social capital development might promote innovation to be spread across social boundaries. Here again, bridging social endorses crucial functions and tasks. Bridging ties relating to social capital, including working relations, conditions and solutions bringing together disparate and heterogeneous actors. Thus, they are expected to be enhanced by both national and regional executives as well as by governmental agencies pursuing economic development and virtuosity. In rural areas of Australia, indicative results demonstrated that causality proceeds from high levels of social capital to increased economic development, yet future research is expected to focus on whether this is true in all contexts and whether the opposite causality may be true as well (Woodhouse 2006).

3.4 Managing Sport-for-Development projects: a rather communitarian perspective

When approaching the sport-induced dark side of social capital, this dissertation has argued that significant answers to the negative effects of social capital might transpire from efficient and high-skilled sport management. Accordingly, in line with 'Third Way' aims of this dissertation Figure 4 shows what N. Schulenkorf (2012, p.6) presented as the Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework. The latter consists in a schematized model for managing, implementing and evaluating sport-delivery projects and initiatives. These, in turn, are expected foster sport participation-induced social capital development, in terms of civic engagement mechanisms and communitarian benefits both in a short and long run. Evidently, S4D framework focuses on communities and their gradual empowerment rather than individual citizens, as both direct and long-term social outcomes are expected to benefit entire collectivities. This is not in contrast with neoliberal individualism, but rather the model seeks to manage the combination of socially desirable outcomes and

profit-oriented interests. Eventually, this management framework might result vital to specific geographical areas and towns where national and global neoliberal economic trends have uprooted productive processes and community self-seustainability (Jarvie 2003; Woodhouse 2006).



(Figure 4: Schulenkorf 2012, p.6)

Three crucial elements must be underlined. Firstly, monitoring and evaluation must be accomplished before, during and in the aftermath of sport-delivery projects, either supply-side or grassroots initiatives, pursuing social capital development. Preliminary monitoring activities and evaluations are needed in order to study local conditions where projects and programs are meant to be set up. In particular, this managerial step must comprise the evaluation of particular necessities and desirable long term socio-economic outcomes the specific community might be pursuing. Indeed, sport-delivery projects "need to be designed to meet and reflect local demands, as they only take on meaning within local communities" (Schulenkorf 2012, p.8). Monitoring and research activities in

the aftermath of S4D projects and events might result helpful in understanding the direct impacts of the projects, as well as in highlighting how to address improvements to projects. Moreover, viability of long-term outcomes might be studied (Schulenkorf 2012). Secondly, *change agents*, intended as mediators and facilitators, external to the specific communities concerned, appear fundamental for maximizing usable resources and reachable outcomes of sport-based programs. In areas where bonding social capital copiously flourishes within inward and close-knit communities, change agents provide bridging social capital in terms of strategic community development and collective action program. Indeed, overcoming social capital dark side, change agents manage to guide and teach participating communal residents how to acquire sport skills and knowledge while enhancing community benefices from external resources and outward multilayered cooperation. Local authorities and national institutions, NGOs, private businesses, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and grassroots outreach initiatives might all perform as change agents in S4D projects and events. In terms of top-down approach, excessive control might smoother local attitudes and traditions; coercive attitudes might destabilize communitarian aspirations and long-term desirable outcomes, thus forcing residents on an external approach, often a 'Western' one, denaturalizing socio-natural context (Schulenkorf 2012). In this perspective, N. Schulenkorf argued that:

> "only a fruitful cooperation between communities and change agents can lead to the empowerment of people and groups that enhances individual and collective capacities, efficacy as well as social and economic justice and wellbeing. To achieve these aims, the change agent should not be serving as a dictating force but as a supportive enabler and facilitator for projects and network of partnerships between residents, management, and community organizations" (Schulenkorf 2012, p.5).

Finally, S4D framework is focused not only on both long term and direct social outcomes but also to community empowerment. The latter flourishes when residents properly acquire transferable knowledge and capacities conducive to keep leveraging S4D programs. These mobile skills are expected to result helpful in the wider social environment (Skinner et. Al 2008). Community empowerment increases when concerned communities gain responsibilities and self-management capacities and simultaneously change agents reduce their control over S4D projects. Obviously, S4D projects and programs are not successful in disconnected implementations, but, on the contrary, they must be repeated and continued in strategically chronic manner if long term outcomes are meant to be leveraged. Indeed, "the long-term social outcomes are embedded in a cyclical process towards sustainable development and community empowerment" (Schulenkorf 2012, p.8). When this happens, communal empowerment and sustainable development emerge, thus providing social capital enhancement through either, supply-side or bottom-up, sport-delivery projects. It might be argued that S4D framework "is a method for building community participation and citizenship and is a pathway to education and employment opportunities, which in turn, increase the social capital stocks of a community" (Skinner et al. 2008, p.267). Indeed, among long-term outcomes, there are comprised sport participation-induced mechanisms of civic engagement and its direct and indirect social benefices in current neoliberal era.

3.5 State and government roles in social capital development through sport

Despite the trans-nationally and nationally intense neoliberal economic forces, consistent academic voices have claimed that states as well as their national and regional governments must be expected to endorse crucial roles in social capital development

through sport participation and practices (Jarvie 2003). Indeed, while phenomena of global or supranational governance ever increase their centrality both in sport and political world scenarios, national governments and regional institutions are still crucial authorities when approaching issues related to local communities and individual citizens. Moreover, the above-mentioned social mechanisms activated by sport-induced social capital, in terms of identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration, might all be managed, supported and exacerbated by national governmental institutions pursuing social cohesiveness and related advantages (Schulenkorf 2012). Sport-delivery and S4D projects necessitate proactive and preventive sustain from public institutions, particularly both national and regional executives and concerned governmental agencies, in order to democratically reach citizens. Indeed, egalitarian policies are expected to permit them to benefit from the above mentioned long-term civic social processes and the democratic, healthy and economic advantages of social capital. Furthermore, indifferently on whether neoliberal phenomena of globalization and global governance will encompass long-term modifications and shifts in political power balances, states and their legal sovereignties are still recognized as fundamentally enhancing sport evolution and development. Grant Jarvie (2003) holds that it appears highly likely that the nationalist characters of states are going to keep their connections with sport practices and attitudes. Not only sport teams and traditional sport associations are expected to exacerbate the cultural and territorial identities they were forged in, but also "national-states governments and nationalist organizations such as the African National Congress or the Palestinian Liberation Organization will continue to operate with the principle of sovereignty and will promote distinctive sporting policies that reflect links between sovereignty and territory" (Jarvie 2003, p.543). Also, supranational bodies, performing supervising, legislative or executive functions, still need states to implement nationally and locally international regulations,

laws and directives (Jarvie 2003). For these reasons, in analyzing the future evolution of sport frameworks, it would be realistic to argue about sport internationalism more than general processes of globalization. States are going keep relying on sports as socio-political popular arenas, both nationally and internationally. The latter provide possibilities for them to interact, to support political ideals and projects and promote reconciliation processes (Jarvie 2003). To conclude, as far as this dissertation is concerned, states and governments are expected to support both top-down projects and grassroots initiatives promoting social capital development through sport participation and practices. Moreover, public investments, although gradually reduced by constraints emerging from neoliberal privatizations and 'laissez-faire' attitudes, are suggested to be oriented towards and stimulate proactive wide-spectrum programs and policies aiming at enhancing social capital development. In this spectrum, either publicly or publicly-privately funded, long-term sport-delivery policies and S4D programs must be included in the social inclusion agenda of executives and governmental agencies. In more specific terms, 'Third Way' supply-side policies oriented towards social capital development via sport participation are expected to endorse long-term efficient, sustainable and socially-responsible outcomes. In this perspective, socially accountable partnerships between public authorities and both private entities and voluntary organizations are vital to socially maximize and equally redistribute benefits emerging thereof. Sport participation-induced social advantages include democratic, healthy and economic benefices as well as vital civic mechanisms such as identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration. Dealing with disengaged individualism and with business profit-maximizing trends in social system, sport social capital has the potentialities to balance negative externalities emerging from neoliberal economics. Moreover, sport participation-induced civil mechanism and social outcomes are expected to be crucial in current and future

multicultural societies, where complex social, multiethnic and generational issues are likely to emerge on a long-term scale.

Conclusions

This dissertation underlined the significant value of sport participation enhancing social capital development. The first chapter sought to explore the implicit theoretical roots to modern social capital concept. Eventually, this dissertation researched the latter in terms of 19th century utilitarianism, functionalism and communitarianism. Also, the prevailing modern features of social capital have been claimed reviewing the academic literature from the 1980s to more recent years. Moreover, this dissertation has investigated three civic mechanisms of social capital development by means of sport participation and practice. Indeed, the second chapter illustrated identity enforcement, social inclusion and integration in terms of Maori rugby culture, rugby practices within Samoan villages and sport integration in Australia. In addition, social challenges to those mechanisms of engagement and participation were analyzed relatively to the so-called dark side of social capital. Eventually, sociological analysis reflected the need to enhance poverty-reduction policies, social safety and institutional commitment to sport egalitarian values and ideals. In addition to the mechanisms of social participation, the last chapter of this dissertation highlighted the democratic, economic and health advantages transpiring from sport participation and practice. The Sport-for-Development (S4D) management approach has been outlined in order to provide a sustainable development framework targeted at community empowerment. The S4D framework is expected here to be pursued by both public sport sector and government policy-making. Conclusive considerations underlined how sport participation and practice, underpinning multidimensional and wide-reaching social advantages, might be considered suitable areas of public policy intervention. As far as this dissertation is concerned, sport participation and sport-enhancing public policies alone appear unable to sustain and enhance national development and wealth. Nevertheless, sport participation and practice remain

widespread social sites where fundamental processes of social and political engagement emerge, economic productivity and performance are underpinned and general health is enhanced. Thus, sport participation contributes to the overall equilibrium of societies, economy and state as a whole. The democratic functioning and efficacy within and outside states appear to be influenced too. Thus, this dissertation has argued that coherent, far-looking and socially responsible policy-making authorities are expected to manage and include these broad advantages in wide-spectrum and cross-social-sectors policy-maneuvers of development. Combining currently prevailing neoliberal patterns with sport participation-induced polyvalent social advantages, government policy-making is expected to simultaneously address social illnesses and public necessities, sustainable social development and state functioning, while committing to structural economic constraints. In this perspective, 'Third Way' policies are considered fundamental to arrange prevalent economic interests, social development, long-term collective objectives, government stability and democratic egalitarian efficiency. In particular, as far as this dissertation is concerned, sport participation-induced mechanisms of social integration and inclusion are going to reveal themselves crucial in the overall framework of current and future phenomena of immigration towards Europe and other developed countries.

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Riassunto della tesi

Lo sviluppo del capitale sociale attraverso la partecipazione sportiva

Allo stato attuale, i modelli economici neoliberali di sviluppo sottolineano e comportano significative riduzioni degli interventi governativi. Privatizzazioni, misure di adeguamento strutturale e politiche di *laissez-faire* sono promossi da correnti produttive nazionali e da istituzioni economiche sovrannazionali, come l'Organizzazione Mondiale del Commercio (OMC) e il Fondo Monetario Internazionale (FMI). Tuttavia nell'affermarsi di questi modelli, prospettive comunitarie sottolineano l'emergere di significativi danni collaterali, relativamente al disimpegno sociale dei singoli ed ai loro scarsi investimenti verso obiettivi collettivi (Coleman 1988, Putnam 2000). In effetti, un crescente numero di paesi sviluppati osservano e prevedono al loro interno processi di declino in termini di capitale sociale (Putnam 2000). Nell'ambito di questa dissertazione, quest'ultimo è considerato come contribuente alla socializzazione umana ed a processi di impegno civico. In particolare, la presente tesi si concentra sulla partecipazione e la pratica sportiva come volani di sviluppo del capitale sociale, nei paesi sviluppati come nei paesi in via di sviluppo. Certamente, dagli ideali olimpici di Pierre de Coubertin all'inizio del XX secolo alla ricerca sociologica contemporanea sui benefici dell'attività fisica, gli sport sono stati riconosciuti come fonti di interazione e dinamismo sociale. Non a caso, negli ultimi quindici anni, l'argomento della partecipazione sportiva e le sue potenzialità benefiche a carattere sociale, democratico ed economico sono stati sottolineati da numerose autorità esecutive nazionali e sovrannazionali, fra le quali il parlamento scozzese, il governo britannico e la Commissione Sportiva Australiana. Nel 2007 la Commissione Europea, pubblicando il Libro Bianco sullo Sport, ha dichiarato: "Lo sport è una sfera dell'attività umana che interessa in modo particolare i cittadini dell'Unione europea e ha un potenziale enorme di riunire e raggiungere tutti,

indipendentemente dall'età o dall'origine sociale. {…} Oltre a migliorare la salute dei cittadini europei, lo sport ha una dimensione educativa e svolge un ruolo sociale, culturale e ricreativo" (Commissione Europea 2007, p.2-3). Innanzitutto, è necessario fare chiarezza sul concetto di capitale sociale; dunque, il primo capitolo di questa dissertazione si concentra sulla ricerca delle radici teoriche di tale concetto e sui suoi connotati moderni. La tematica del capitale sociale viene implicitamente trattata nei lavori utilitaristici di John Stuart Mill (1859) ed Alexis de Tocqueville (1840). In particolare, quest'ultimo ha analizzato la connessione funzionale fra associazioni civili, coinvolgimento civico e corrette procedure democratiche negli Stati Uniti d'America (1840). Inoltre, il dualismo moderno fra visione collettiva e visione individualistica del capitale sociale appare fortemente legato all'atomizzazione della società attraverso i processi di industrializzazione e liberalizzazione alla fine del diciannovesimo secolo. In termini sociologici, il contrasto fra *solidarietà organica* (Durkheim 1893), fondata sulla specializzazione del lavoro e sull'interdipendenza economica, e *die gemeinschaft* (Tönnies 1887), opposta ai processi di modernizzazione, corrisponde al suddetto dualismo analitico. La concezione atomistica della società contemporanea permea anche il moderno significato di capitale sociale. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) e James Coleman (1988) definiscono il capitale sociale come una risorsa individualistica che beneficia il singolo pur emergendo dalle relazioni con l'ambiente sociale circostante. In questa prospettiva, il singolo è incentivato ad applicare strategie d'investimento verso il capitale sociale. Quest'ultimo, inoltre garantirebbe potenzialità di profitti economici. Da qui il collegamento fra avanzamento del capitale sociale e lo sviluppo economico. In termini di *gemeinschaft*, Robert Putnam (1993;2000) esplicita il capitale sociale come una "virtù civica" (Putnam 2000, p.19), definita come la somma di fiducia collettiva, norme di reciprocità e meccanismi di coinvolgimento civico. Tuttavia, proprio perche gli interessi

individuali sono più desiderati e più facilmente conseguibili, il capitale sociale è oggetto di investimenti insufficienti da parte della collettività (James Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993). Per questo motivo, politiche di prevenzione ed educazione civica, cosi come considerazioni di sviluppo sociale ed economico, sono necessarie al consolidamento del capitale sociale. È in questa prospettiva che la partecipazione e la pratica sportiva risultano propedeutiche, dato che coinvolgono e stimolano sia legami di vicinanza (*bonding*) che relazioni di collegamento, o di ponte (*bridging*) (Putnam 2000). Il secondo capitolo analizza in maniera mirata i meccanismi di contatto civico riguardanti lo sviluppo del capitale sociale stimolati dalla pratica e dalla partecipazione sportiva. Questi processi sociali vengono definiti in termini di riconoscimento d'identità e cultura, di inclusione ed integrazione sociale. Per contestualizzare tali argomenti, il secondo capitolo si basa su casi-studio etnografici, qualitativi e quantitativi condotti nella regione Oceanica e nel Regno Unito. Esperienze personali hanno evidenziato che in queste aree, lo sport è, coscientemente od implicitamente, immerso in condivisi e dinamici significati sociali (Uperesa e Mountjoy 2014). Per quanto riguarda il tramando culturale e l'attaccamento all'identità nel contesto neozelandese, il rapporto fra comunità Maori e rugby appare unico. Si può certamente affermare che il rugby ha funzionato da catalizzatore per le relazioni fra le varie comunità Maori, capaci attraverso la palla ovale di dialogare, unirsi e trasmettere la propria cultura (Calabrò 2014). Non a caso gli ideali rugbistici collimano con *nga tuonga toku iho*, i valori, gli usi e la cultura ancestrale Maori. Diversamente, il concetto di inclusione sociale tramite pratica e partecipazione sportiva viene analizzato in riferimento al ruolo del rugby nelle pratiche sociali dei villaggi Samoani. La struttura gerarchica, la quotidianità e le relazioni fra quest'ultimi sembrano ruotare intorno alla pratica del rugby, influenzata da *fa'asamoa* (il modo Samoano di vivere e d'interagire socialmente) (Clement 2014). Infine, il meccanismo di integrazione sociale viene rivisto

attraverso due ricerche sul capitale sociale e lo sport portate a termine in Australia. La prima delle ricerche si focalizza sull'integrazione di una ampia comunità Somala (includente anche individui musulmani ma di altra nazionalità) attraverso la pratica calcistica nella periferia di Melbourne (Spaaij 2012). In particolare, il club calcistico del quartiere sembra acquietare le divisioni fra clan Somali, sensibili alla crisi ed alla guerra civile nella madrepatria. La seconda ricerca, invece, analizza come, nonostante la delocalizzazione economica ed il fenomeno dell'urbanizzazione, attraverso gli sport siano possibili processi di integrazione sociale nella zona rurale della Northern Wheatbelt, Australia (Tonts 2005). Un'altra tematica affrontata dal secondo capitolo sottolinea le riscontrate problematiche definite lato oscuro del capitale sociale. Inserite nel contesto sportivo, queste problematiche si riferiscono al radicalismo di forme esclusive d'identità e di appartenenza che spesso sfociano in atteggiamenti aggressivi e violenti. Uniti a condizioni familiari sfavorevoli, mancanza di educazione civica e povertà, questi fenomeni possono scatenare l'hooliganismo sportivo, la discriminazione verbale e la violenza fisica nel contesto sportivo. Tuttavia, intervenendo su tematiche sociali interconnesse e complesse, la dissertazione presenta delle argomentazioni riguardo desiderabili politiche di sviluppo sociale ed etico, potenzialmente capaci di disinnescare tale lato oscuro. In questa prospettiva, sicurezza sociale, sia intesa nel senso fisico che nel senso relativo al mercato del lavoro, e lotta alla povertà devono rimanere obiettivi necessari dello stato e del governo per consentire la corretta assunzione dei vantaggi emergenti dalla condivisa pratica sportiva (Collins 2004). Inoltre, è necessaria l'impegno e la piena condivisione degli ideali sportivi nelle istituzioni nazionali, regionali e locali al fine di sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica e la società civile verso gli obiettivi di sviluppo del capitale sociale. Infine, l'ultimo capitolo si propone d' investigare quali benefici, in particolare nell'era neoliberale corrente, la collettività

pubblica e lo stato possono potenzialmente ricevere da una condivisa e rafforzata partecipazione sportiva. In ambito politico, la partecipazione sportiva in associazioni e club sembra incrementare il tasso d'impegno politico sia collettivo che del singolo, in particolare in riferimento alle votazioni democratiche ed alla discussione di temi politici (Donovan et al. 2014; Seippel 2006). A questo va legato il nesso pratico fra il concetto di partecipazione e supporto nello sport e la dimensione partecipativa della forma democratica, che diventa sempre più una evoluzione necessaria della più classica e rigida struttura rappresentativa (della Porta, 2013). Senza alcun dubbio la pratica sportiva favorisce il sostentamento fisico e psicologico della collettività, e permette il corretto benessere. È in particolare lo sport, e non l'attività fisica generale, capace di curare e prevenire salutarmente, sia in termini fisici che psicologici (Marlier et al. 2014). In questa prospettiva, l'investimento pubblico nello sport è qui considerato come una ipotetica e parziale, seppur efficace, risposta alle crescenti privatizzazioni ed i drammatici tagli nel settore sanitario. Inoltre, investimenti pubblici e progetti d'investimento pubblico-privati, atti ad incentivare la condivisa e condivisibile partecipazione sportiva, garantirebbero ritorni economici. In effetti, l'avanzamento del capitale sociale attraverso lo sport ha la capacità di aumentare la produttività e il ritorno economico collettivo. L'incrementata fiducia pubblica e la proliferazione di norme civiche di reciprocità permetterebbero la diminuzione dei costi di transizione, una più egalitaria diffusione dell'innovazione e una spirale positiva di sviluppo economico (Woodhouse 2006; Narayan and Princhett 1999). Al fine di presentare un modello manageriale finalizzato allo sviluppo sociale sostenibile e di aumento della responsabilità collettiva, lo schema Sport-per-Sviluppo viene messo in luce. Componenti fondamentali di questo modello sono il costante monitoraggio e valutazione statistica, il graduale aumento di responsabilità comuni ed il conseguente ruolo dello 'agente trasformatore', il quale, esterno alla ristretta comunità, può dirigere

ed educare lo sviluppo sociale. La figura dell'agente trasformatore può essere interpretata da diverse entità pubbliche e private, come il governo, le istituzioni comunali e regionali, le associazioni locali, le Organizzazioni Non-Governative (ONG) o multinazionali. Questi positivi riscontri sociali, necessari per la manutenzione della cosa pubblica, sono qui considerati come potenziali benefici pubblici complementari alle lacune sociali ed agli scarsi investimenti collettivi, emergenti dalle attitudini individualiste e orientate al profitto dell' attuale era economica neoliberale. In questa prospettiva, la presente dissertazione suggerisce che la partecipazione sportiva sia riconosciuta parte fondamentale di progetti e politiche sociali includenti interconnesse problematiche sociali, che mirano allo sviluppo sostenibile della coesione e dell'integrazione civile. L'inclusione dell'incremento e della ristrutturata partecipazione sportiva in queste politiche sociali sarebbe dettata dalla sua benefica polivalenza sociale, dalla sua popolare e democratica connessione con i cittadini e dagli interconnessi effetti benefici scaturiti da essa, che, se protetti e raffinati, potrebbero garantire un senso residuo di *welfare state* e di protezione sociale. Dati i profitti democratici, salutari ed economici il governo e lo stato stesso trarrebbero vantaggio da un investimento mirato all'incremento ed alla gestione della partecipazione sportiva. In ultimo, queste politiche e progetti sociali a lungo termine vengono considerati attuabili in termini di politiche di *Terza Via*, attraverso cui è possibile riscontrare il collidere dei prevalenti interessi economici e delle necessità sociali attuali. In conclusione, i meccanismi di integrazione, inclusione ed identità, abilitati attraverso la partecipazione sportiva possono costituire, nell'ambito di questa dissertazione, parte di una risposta a lungo termine ai correnti e futuri fenomeni di migrazione, quali quelli affrontati dall'Italia e dall'Unione Europea negli ultimi mesi.