

EXPLORING THE OPINIONS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE MANAGERS
REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RECREATION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL AND
ITS BENEFITS

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DECLARATION

This Thesis is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration.

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ABSTRACT

Recreation has historically had a social welfare role highly oriented towards physical activities (indoor and outdoor sports). Today, a more strategic, utilitarian, preventive and purposeful role is needed to address issues such as crime, marginalization, health and even environmental degradation. In Canada, Municipal Parks, Recreation and Culture Department's intent is to carry out those functions while at the same time facing budget cuts that push them to be more effective and to clearly demonstrate their effectiveness. Despite research that has proven recreation contributions to community development, sustainability and resilience, it is still very important to demonstrate this contribution at the local level. This exploratory research relates recreation to social capital and the benefits of this relationship for the community.

Plans, reports and other similar documents that reflect The City of Nanaimo Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) guidelines, principles and strategies were analyzed using a thematic analysis technique to find relevant themes under the scope of the research. In addition, the same technique was applied to the opinions of the PRC managers obtained through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Resultant data from each process was separately grouped into two clusters formed by the themes proposed by the Policy Research Initiative Project (PRI; currently Policy Horizons Canada): "potential recreation contributions to social capital" and "potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital". A characterization of the PRC's collective understanding on the topic was produced by unifying corresponding clusters and themes from each data collection instrument. Finally, the characterization was compared to the PRI's framework seeking voids and opportunities in the PRC's collective understanding which may be influencing planning processes, execution of activities, and guiding the staff to achieving the department's goals. It was found that managers did not explicitly recognize the social capital concept but they found it closely related to their activities and goals. Managers believe that creating and maintaining partnerships is probably the most fundamental of their activities. They clearly and extensively recognized the utilitarian role the recreation field holds regarding areas like health prevention and therapy; and to a lesser extent, vandalism and crime reduction. Other community issues

were not identified to be reduced by recreation. There was not a clear distinction between what social capital is, what it does and how recreation contributes to it and ultimately the outcomes of that relationship.

Keywords: managers, recreation, social capital, benefits, development, sustainability, networks, relationships

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Aba, Ima, thanks for coming all the way with me, for always supporting me to develop and increase my capabilities and knowledge. I've taken with me your teachings and wisdom to accomplish my goals. "Oye, hijo mío, la instrucción de tu padre, Y no desprecies la dirección de tu madre..."

Contigo está la sabiduría y el poder; tuyo es el consejo y la inteligencia.

29 רמיהו

אחרית לכם לתת, לרעה ולא שלום מחשבות: יהוה-נאם--עליכם חשב אנכי אשר, המחשבת-את ידעתי אנכי כי

ותקנה

Yo Nezahualcóyotl lo pregunto:

¿Acaso de veras se vive con raíz en la tierra?

No para siempre en la tierra:

sólo un poco aquí.

Aunque sea de jade se quiebra,

aunque sea de oro se rompe,

aunque sea plumaje de quetzal se desgarrá.

No para siempre en la tierra:

sólo un poco aquí.

Nezahualcóyotl (1402-1472)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY

Historically, humans as social beings have gathered and organized with each other for reproduction, protection, and support. This collectiveness, commonly referred as community is defined by Mattessich and Monsey (2005) as people living within a geographical area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live. Wellman (2001) adds support, information, a sense of belonging and social identity to this concept. Community can also be defined as people not located within the same geographical area but with mutual set of interests (Green & Haines, 2012)

People exchange knowledge and goods as a result of their skills, to create value for each other in a way to preserve continuity. Since the medieval times, feudal land lords congregated people to produce and increase their wealth based on activities such as farming, herding cattle, or catching fish. Peasants also represented a means to defend the property in case of external attacks. A feudal community comprised a manor house where the lord and his family resided. Nearby that property there was a village where all the peasants lived as tenants. This compound was a self-sufficient community that generated a supply to firstly meet all the needs of the lord, and secondly at least the population's basic needs (Bennett, 1937). In this way some communities progress more than others by developing, maintaining or increasing their capital.

The concept of *capital* includes social, intellectual, physical, financial, and political components to enhance people's life conditions (Purcell, 2006). Green and Haines (2002) define human capital (intellectual) as the labor supply, skills, capabilities and experience; physical capital as buildings, streets, infrastructure; financial capital as community financial institutions, micro loan funds, and community development banks; and environmental capital as natural resources, weather, and recreational opportunities.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Specifically, social capital emerged from the social sciences (Keely, 2007; Field, 2002) to be subsequently adopted by the field of economics. Policy Research Institute (PRI) defines social capital in a very simple way as relationships. Social Development is one of the topics under which The World Bank defines social capital as "the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions" (World Bank, para. 1). Putnam (1995) defined and popularized the concept of social capital in the social sciences as "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit ". Phillips and Pittman (2008, p. 6) define social capital in a more elaborated way as "the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively to develop and sustain strong relationships; solve problems and make group decisions; and collaborate effectively to plan, set goals, and get things done".

SUSTAINABILITY

Social capital has been established as an important means for achieving the community's performance and development that lead to sustainability; specifically, recreation has been utilized by governments as one approach to community sustainability. Lucas, Lloyd Jones, Allen and Manzi (2012) stress the importance of the interdependencies and inter-relationships (social capital) for communities to effectively function. The authors also suggest that communities need to facilitate the creation of networks of support to minimize adverse consequences. In other words, social capital is a necessary component to achieve the community's sustainability and resilience.

Salardi (2011) merged community development with sustainability; she established that through sustainable development, economic gains and social needs are balanced with ecological processes to create viable communities. This kind of development respects and embraces cultural and ethnic diversity to ensure the quality of life for present and future generations. Sustainable development's most well known and accepted definition says: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 1987, p. 24. Also known as Brundtland

Report). These needs are defined by many authors without solid agreement; they vary from tangible physiological needs like housing, to intangible social ones like friendship (Alkira, 2002).

Governments use recreation and its benefits as one means to achieve optimal levels of sustainable community development. Canada's 2011 National Recreation Summit Proceedings Report suggests that recreation fosters sustainable change and is naturally included in the sustainability plans municipalities need to create out of people's input. It also states that one of its goals is to "build relationships so communities use recreation as a vehicle to a better future." Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield addressed the importance of recreation (leisure) for humans sustainability by saying: "Increased means and increased leisure are the two civilizers of man" (as cited in Torkildsen, 2005, p. 45).

In other words, the community's performance, development and continuity are defined by people working and recreating to satisfy and fulfill their needs. In summary, recreation does not only promote social interaction through which communities are created but also leads communities to physical and mental health by actively engaging their members in the recreation services provided, while at the same time developing stewardship of the natural resources.

PARKS AND RECREATION

In spite of their significant function, according to Baker and Palmer (2006), local park and recreation departments are being increasingly challenged to demonstrate what kind of tangible contributions they make for the community. Locally, various PRC's documents like the "City of Nanaimo 2011 Annual Municipal Report" and "Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan 2005" highlighted the pressure to increase relevance of the field and to identify meaningful benefits as a result of providing parks, recreation and culture spaces, facilities and programs; this, in addition to the fact that budgets for funding such services are shrinking. In response to these challenges, it is important that the recreation field firstly acknowledges the breadth extent and significance of its contributions and then determines how to articulate a message that supports this reality. In this sense, managers are particularly useful in increasing awareness and conveying a message; they are influential within organizations because they coordinate and oversee the staff which are the ones directly providing services to the public. Recreation needs

to be recognized in governmental budgets as a profitable investment that requires proper planning, execution and evaluation in order to accomplish specific collective (government and citizenship) objectives. If this happens, recreation will be acknowledged for its contributions to social capital but furthermore it will be justified at higher levels and in a broader sense for its contributions to create and enhance, among many other benefits, conditions for community sustainable development.

THE SETTING

According to the Economic Development Office of Nanaimo, the City of Nanaimo is a harbour service-based community located in the geographical centre and on the east coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia on the west coast of Canada. The City of Nanaimo is currently the fifth fastest growing medium size population centre in British Columbia and the second most populated municipality on the island after Greater Victoria with a population of ninety thousand residents. According to the municipal government, The City of Nanaimo is among the province's most livable cities, having a favorable balance of lifestyle with many nearby recreational and cultural amenities. The City of Nanaimo Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) is responsible for such amenities and its mission is "to enhance the quality of life and leisure..." (Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture. Mission Statement and Goals, p. 1). In other words, the city defines and distinguishes itself in terms of its lifestyle; it makes emphasis on the relationship of recreation, culture and quality of life as one of the aspects that provides value and makes the city attractive not only to residents but also to visitors. In order to achieve that, the city makes important investments in terms of money, people, and facilities, among other resources which are necessary to evaluate to guarantee they generate the planned and expected outcomes.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives were defined once the importance of the concept of social capital, sustainability, and recreation, and their relationships were established along with the setting to conduct the research. PRC's managers opinions were explored to obtain a collective characterization regarding the contributions of recreation to social capital and the resulting

benefits for the community from this relationship. The following specific research objectives were set to be explored in order to attain the characterization:

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential **CONTRIBUTIONS** of recreation to social capital.
 - What are the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential **CONTRIBUTIONS** of recreation to social capital?
- To characterize PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential **BENEFITS** for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.
 - What are the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential **BENEFITS** for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital?

SUMMARY

The following four chapters and appendixes will present the process the research followed to fulfill the aforementioned objectives and questions. Chapter 2 provides a literature review that was used to identify previous research on social capital and other related relevant topics; it was also utilized to identify the methods to collect data, what results were obtained and how to present them. Chapter 3 presents the methods, specifically the instruments used for collecting data, their rationale and how they were used. Every stage of the process is textually and graphically described to provide a comprehensible explanation of how the results were obtained; the limitations that affected the research are also acknowledged and explained. Chapter 4 displays the results along with representative quotes from the collected data as examples to demonstrate the research's accuracy and validity. Chapter 5 is the conclusion and discussion where the researcher presents comments, recommendations and observations; it is also a proposal to study future topics as a result of the experience acquired while conducting the present research. Finally, the appendixes provide various kinds of reference material, such as the data collection instruments, the plan to mobilize the knowledge obtained from this research and also a reflective piece that narrates the researcher's personal learning experience, among others.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social capital was established as the core concept to be reviewed in order to define the scope of the research, the theoretical framework, the methods, the existing research voids, and the future potential contributions for the field. A variety of bibliographic material was consulted to build this chapter; journals, books, web pages and reports, from researchers, educational institutions and other organizations regarding social capital were reviewed; specifically social capital's potential benefits, recreation, sustainability and management topics were reviewed to build this chapter. The *social capital components* section includes an explanation of what the social capital concept is, how it works, its importance, its benefits and how it has been studied. The *managers and practitioners in the social capital context* section highlights their importance as service providers in social capital creation. The chapter concludes by establishing that the recreation field needs to first understand the social capital concept in order to gain acknowledgment for its contributions.

SOCIAL CAPITAL COMPONENTS

The "Social Capital as Public Policy Tool" presented in 2005 by the Policy Research Initiative Project (PRI, today known as Policy Horizons Canada or PHC), is a federal government organization created in 1996 by the Clerk of the Privy Council; it is a project created through an iterative and exhaustive process which included a series of research and consultation activities that were undertaken by the PRI Social Capital Project team in close collaboration with departmental partners and academic researchers. Input from federal policy and research managers from more than fifteen departments and agencies, and from a group of leading Canadian and international experts in the area, was also integrated. In parallel, the PRI also worked with Statistics Canada and academic experts to examine different empirical strategies and tools for the measurement of social capital at the individual and collective levels.

PRI pursued two objectives: to strengthen the federal government's research capacity and to create an infrastructure that fosters collaboration on horizontal policy research. Its focus is the government's medium-term policy agenda, which includes research projects in areas such

as the use of social capital as a public policy tool and sustainable development. It embraces the broader policy research community, including academics and policy researchers, among other organizations. PRI establishes that policies and decisions about recreation facilities (i.e. investing in public infrastructure) is one of many ways through which governments influence and foster conditions for developing social capital. The promotion of public spaces like affordable public recreation facilities, community centres and other infrastructure as a means of supporting opportunities for social interaction is a frequent social capital topic. PRI (2005) also considers it necessary to apply a social capital perspective by policy and decision makers when developing, executing and assessing policies and programs. Initially, it is important that public service representatives have the ability to fully assess community members' needs. Secondly, their role as mediators to arrange and provide community members access to other networks, services, and opportunities can be critical. The quality of the relationships and face-to-face interactions between service representatives as providers and community members as recipients may make a considerable difference to the relative success or failure of public investments. Finally, the PRI established that: "The concept of social capital is important for the Government of Canada, because it brings together the theoretical and empirical rationale for considering social ties as a potentially important ingredient of well-being and prosperity in society" (Franke, 2005, p. 37)

According to PRI, social capital is social networks that may provide individuals, groups, or organizations with access to resources and social supports. It has sources like recreation, which causes outcomes that are defined by PRI (2005b, p. 11) as follows:

- **co-operation:** is often associated with collective action.
- **support:** which can take the form of material resources, financial assistance, service provision, emotional support or sharing of information, advice or expertise.
- **impact on behaviour:** in the form of social control, place effects, influence of mentors, etc.
- **capacity building:** (at the individual and collective levels) refers to the development of an ability to confront an event or difficulty or to meet a particular challenge.

The abovementioned outcomes produce economic, social, and/or health functions or effects, in this case identified as potential benefits. PRI (2005a, pp. 9-10) defines them as follows:

- **Material goods and services:** Social networks often constitute an essential source of informal services such as child care, informal health care, language training or, in distressed situations, food, clothing, and housing.
- **Information:** Job hunters can draw on their contacts to get a scoop on new employment opportunities. Collaboration between community groups can help provide coordinated information for newly arrived immigrants.
- **Reduced transaction costs:** Organizations or groups may spend less time finding the right employee or new business contacts if social ties can act as intermediaries.
- **Emotional support:** In stressful situations, support networks may help to find a solution to the problem, reduce the perceived importance of the problem, or provide a distraction from the problem. Indeed, simply knowing you have a potential support network may increase your sense of selfefficacy [*sic*]and control.
- **Reinforcement of positive behaviours:** Friends or family may influence whether individuals exercise, eat healthy diets, or quit smoking.
- **Service Brokerage:** Network contacts may help broker effective access to health, employment, or training services for those who would be unable or unwilling to access these services by themselves.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of a sequence in which, according to PRI, recreation is one of the sources for social capital conditions or outcomes that lead to benefits for the community. It also includes other sources that act as determinants or preconditions for social capital occurrence such as: space or place design that defines neighbourhoods' features like density and homogeneity, institutional structures like schools where demographics, specifically age, play an important role in creating social ties, and joint action policies; which PRI (2005b, p. 21) explained as follows: "in countries with a developed welfare state, the government plays an

important role in establishing the conditions that promote the emergence and functioning of certain types of 'informal' networks".

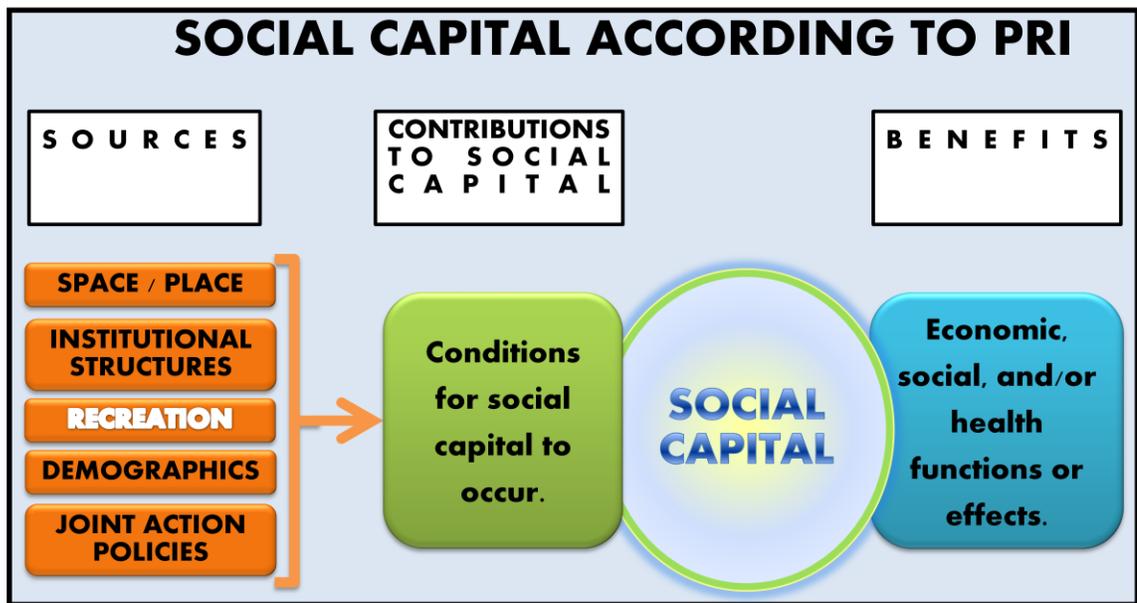


Figure 1. Sources, outcomes, social capital and benefits for the community sequence.

On an individual scale, social capital addresses domains related to mental and physical health and well-being, social inclusion, and social and economic mobility (van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004a). On a collective (community) scale, research is conducted primarily in the realm of social order (crime prevention, integration of immigrants, community resilience), promotion of social causes, local development (urban renewal, rural governance), and major problems of exclusion (deprived neighbourhoods or communities in decline)(Charbonneau, 2005).

Social Capital Measurement

In both the social and the economic sciences, social capital has been measured in three major levels: micro, macro and meso. The micro level refers to the collective action or association of actors to achieve objectives. The macro level refers to the structures that carry values and norms like trust and reciprocity that create conditions for social engagement and civic and political participation. Finally, the meso level refers to the social networks that may generate resources for co-operation. According to Paldam (2000) social capital embraces three components or variables at any of its three levels: trust, cooperation and network.

International organizations like the World Bank and the OECD have measured social capital worldwide through standard instruments (i.e. The Social Capital Toolkit (SOCAT) and other surveys). The Saguaro Seminar on the Harvard Kennedy School's website ("Measurement. Social capital measurement overview" n.d. para. 1) states that "everything that involves any human interaction can be asserted to create Social Capital"; in line with this statement, the Benefits Catalogue of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA, 1997) situates recreation as a source of a wide variety of physical, mental and social benefits like the acquisition, encouragement and growth of social skills. Baker and Palmer (2006) support that recreation services and their programs are a necessary service that could upgrade life quality. Iso-Ahola (1997) asserts that participation in recreation allows an opportunity for the achievement of an optimal level of daily social interaction which contributes to foster communities. In other words, there is evidence to support that recreation contributes to building social capital which encourages better communities.

According to the 'Saguaro Seminar' on the Harvard Kennedy School's website (para. 24), it is important to measure social capital for three reasons:

- The concept of social capital becomes more tangible
- Investment in social capital is increased if organizations can demonstrate their community-building efforts are showing results; and
- It helps funders and community organizations to strategically build more social capital. It helps them focus on specific efforts and allocate resources for them.

"Social capital's greatest potential for public policy is as a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself. It has a capacity to act as a resource employed for the achievement of broader policy objectives" (PRI, 2005). It may be successful when promoting community development efforts, participation, inclusion, resilience and sustainability. Social capital theory and research establish that a community with high levels of social capital are more capable of developing projects and succeeding (Putnam, 1995), overcoming hurdles like natural disasters, and thriving because there is greater accessibility, mobilization and exchange of knowledge and material resources (Jochum, 2003).

Evans and Syrett (2007) explored the notion of social capital and the manner in which it is produced, reproduced and used locally within the local context. They focused on the lack of understanding of the nature and extent of existing social capital resources and the exact way in which they are drawn upon in further social capital development. The authors attribute this lack of understanding to a conceptual confusion about social capital and also to a lack of empirical research.

MANAGERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN THE SOCIAL CAPITAL CONTEXT

"A clear understanding of what is meant by social capital is the *sine qua non* for rendering the concept useful to public policy practitioners" (PRI, 2005a, p. 6); in other words, it is crucial for managers and practitioners to first understand what social capital is in order to consider it useful for enhancing the community in relationship to recreation. The material in this section was reviewed to detect data collection instruments used with managers and practitioners in a social capital context; it was also reviewed to explore the findings and potential research voids.

Chaney and Fevre (2001) used semi-structured interviews to describe the opinions and understanding of managers, service providers and ordinary members of voluntary organizations regarding a major shift in a new mode of governance in Wales. Such a mode seeks to partner with and incorporate the voluntary sector to include marginalized and minority groups while fostering social capital. Quotes from the actual interviews are used to present the participants' views of the theoretical objectives of the new scheme and the actual accomplishments during the first 18 months of its operation.

Thomas (2002), in his article "Local Participation in Development Initiatives: The Potential Contribution of an Understanding of Social Capital" interviewed 250 local women to build a nuanced profile of the community's conditions in terms of social capital. The author presents how an understanding of the social capital dynamics in a group of women in a South African community can be valuable to design and implement appropriate development interventions. The author holds that it is a fundamental requirement for development practitioners to understand the social capital concept and its local conditions to create enabling environments that develop relationships and facilitate civic engagement.

Wagner and Fernandez-Gimenez (2009) assessed whether social capital building is affected by a defined set of characteristics of collaborative groups. On this occasion, the organizational environment is again observed due to the fact that certain individuals play key roles on developing social capital. In this study, the sample is made of selected key informants, who were purposely chosen based on their comprehensive knowledge and involvement in one or more groups. They responded to a semi structured interview looking to validate and enrich data previously obtained through a survey applied to a different group of individuals. The questionnaire consisted of six broad questions with optional probing questions. Accuracy and consistency were also added through this instrument. Among other aspects, participants were questioned about their views and the kind of impact they perceived the group had on the larger community. They found that perceived success and early levels of social capital were the strongest predictors of present levels of and changes in social capital over time. Previous collaboration experience was found to have negatively influenced subsequent levels of trust.

Burt (1999) attempts to define a theoretical framework where opinion leaders are regarded as brokers across social limits between groups. Opinion leaders' importance is highlighted because their social capital capabilities position them in resemblance of network entrepreneurs. They are key social actors that monitor and move information faster and to more people. They are more in control of their immediate surroundings, they create faster, better and cheaper solutions while at the same time create bridges that generate value among disconnected parts of a group, organization or system.

Success and optimal organizational operations in relationship to social capital are explored by Numerato (2008). His study specifically frames social capital within the sport governing bodies milieu in Czech Republic. Using semi structured interviews, among other techniques, the study collects mutual opinions of the representatives of three sport governing bodies at the local and national levels. The main scope of this study is to analyze the existing social capital circumstances between two levels of governing bodies and how it has a repercussion on the functioning and final outcomes achievement. It establishes that there are barriers that undermine the whole system's performance. One of those barriers is identified as

discrepancies on shared codes, language and shared narratives (the cognitive dimension of Social Capital). In other words, it suggests that organizations would work better if they avoid such barriers and share the same knowledge and understanding regarding common issues or topics.

Gubbins and Garavan (2005) researched the abilities of human resources development (HRD) practitioner's to build up social capital for their individual advantage. Career success and performance are related to networking and relationships building (social capital). The authors hold that social capital represents a source of support, resources, information and knowledge. They establish that HRD practitioners need relationships to create an environment in which other stakeholders understand their contributions; a necessary condition to finally enhance their credibility as effective and efficient professionals. It is concluded that the organizational objectives will be better achieved if practitioners reach optimal levels of social capital.

Lockhart's (2005) research is about social capital's creation process within two faith-based social programs in comparison to three secular ones. Along with active participation and observation from the researcher; face-to-face interviews were conducted with the directors, staff and beneficiaries of the programs. The organizations' mission statements, programs structure, staff training and execution of the activities were distinguished as the differentiators when creating social capital opportunities that may lead into more successful desirable results.

As shown in figure 2, PRI (2005a, p. 17) establishes a pyramid to depict the four options for governments for incorporating social capital into policy and program development. They vary in the degree of governmental involvement and influence (direct or indirect). At the bottom of the pyramid, *Sensitivity to existing patterns of social capital* refers to an approach that involves gathering and integrating information about existing social networks into policy and program design, implementation, and evaluation. Its goal would be to raise policy and decision makers' awareness about the potential impacts of new interventions or changes in policy directions on the community's social capital. It may also simply assist in a better understanding of the interactions between policies and service users' (or nonusers) social relationships.

Making use of social capital in public policy: from direct to indirect influence

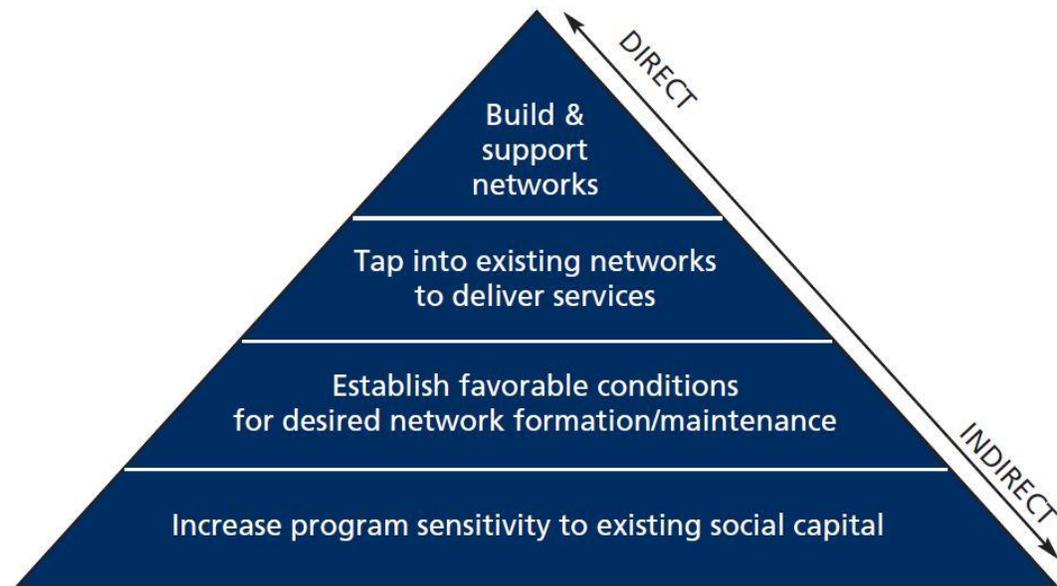


Figure 2. Government options for incorporating social capital.

At the municipal level, one of the approaches for governments to incorporate social capital is recreation. As PRI (2005b) states, people come into contact with other people through various life-course stages and through various activities like leisure.

RECREATION'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL CAPITAL

The "Proceedings Report" of Canada's 2011 National Recreation Summit, compiled two hundred leaders opinions, discussions and conclusions about various topics related to recreation. Regarding social capital, the report highlights the fact that recreation builds social capital but acknowledgment for this contribution is needed. The knowledge and understanding about the topic is described in a series of statements. It establishes that recreation plays a role as a facilitator, as a coordinator to join efforts with other organizations and as a liaison to reach out to community members. It recognizes that skilled people ("right champions") are the ones that will take action to gain acknowledgment for the field's ability to build social capital, to influence government agendas at the local and provincial levels and to advocate for flexible funding to support connectiveness. What is most importantly questioned is the understanding of social capital. In other words, it is critically important that recreation practitioners first understand social capital in order to situate recreation as an important contributor to build it and subsequently work to enhance that relationship. As referred to in Figure 2, the understanding of

the concept of social capital corresponds to an early stage where practitioners become aware of the current program's conditions regarding social capital.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The terminology used in the research is comprised of the following terms and acronyms:

SOCIAL CAPITAL: Mostly used and applicable to the social and economic sciences, it is defined in a very brief way as relationships. In a more extended way, it can be defined as "the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively to develop and sustain strong relationships; solve problems and make group decisions; and collaborate effectively to plan, set goals, and get things done" (Phillips & Pittman, 2008)

OUTCOMES: are the conditions for social capital occurrence created by recreation.

BENEFITS: are the positive contributions to the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

CHARACTERIZATION: is a presentation and description of a concept, a phenomenon or an event in terms of its distinctive attributes or components.

CLUSTER: is a group of different themes that, although they are different, share the same broad meaning.

THEME: located within a cluster, is a sub-group of common meaning terms that share a very particular meaning.

DOCUMENTS: can be plans, reports, web pages or any other similar written or textual files.

CONTENT ANALYSIS (HERMENEUTICS): is a data collection technique through which documents are compiled to become the subject of study of the research.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: is a technique that looks for common meaning portions within the collected data and organizes them in groups and sub-groups.

POTENTIAL IDENTIFIED (contributions or benefits) refers to data obtained from the documents.

POTENTIAL RECOGNIZED (contributions or benefits) refers to data obtained from the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

PARTICIPANTS OR INTERVIEWEES: are the subjects of study that provided their opinions in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

PRC: City of Nanaimo Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture.

PRI: Policy Research Institute, subsequently renamed as Policy Horizons Canada.

PHC: Policy Horizons Canada.

SUMMARY

Although there is abundant research on social capital; there is little that specifically considers and emphasizes the role of key people in delivering successful results for building social capital in organizations. Sufficient literature has not been identified, so far, that represents a theoretical framework applicable to accomplish recognition to the existence of a relationship between recreation and social capital; additionally, a clear understanding on how recreation operates as a tool for building social capital conditions is also missing; and consequently, the benefits for the community of that relationship are missing as well. Furthermore, little evidence indicates these concepts have been studied at a municipal level. This research explored managers' opinions or thoughts regarding recreation in relationship to social capital and the benefits for the community from this association. The research informs a course and set an antecedent that will increase the body of knowledge of the recreation field by raising awareness about recreation in relationship to social capital as a tool to gain acknowledgement for its tangible and intangible contributions to the community.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The methods used in this research were obtained from the literature review in accordance to the topic, the nature of the research, the research objectives to be explored, and the specific context on which the research took place. The scale and reach of the research, the availability of the potential participants, the proposed timeline and other required resources for completion were considered for designing the research along with the researchers capacity to professionally conduct it. In accordance to the identified research voids, during late May 2012, the research topic was presented and approved by The City of Nanaimo Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) director. Once the topic, the setting, and the conditions were defined, an approach to collect data for the research was determined. An exploratory approach was defined as the best way to study the topic; according to *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (Davies, 2006), exploratory research is a methodological approach that is primarily concerned with discovery and with generating or building theory; it is also considered as a perspective or a special personal orientation (Stebbins, 2001) of the researcher. Exploratory research is concerned with the development of theory from data in a process of continuous discovery. Since it is not in accordance to any set formula, it is flexible and pragmatic but yet it engages in a systematic form of research process.

PRC's documents and staff were defined as the subjects of study to collect the data that was analyzed to explore the research objectives.

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital.
 - What are the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital?
- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.
 - What are the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital?

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD PROCESS

Once the research was shaped into a formal project, during mid September 2012 it went through VIU research ethics board (REB) review whose mission is to guarantee that research involving human participants meets high ethical principles and also makes sure that the safety, health, welfare, and rights of participants are adequately protected. A proposal that presented the background, rationale, purpose and justification of the research was submitted along with an application form that requires detailed explanation on how the project will be conducted. One of the aspects of the submission is the actual proposed questionnaire for the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, it was included to be scrutinized and approved. After initial submission and approximately five subsequent iterations where the researcher was required to make modifications, explain, expand and clarify different aspects of the research, approval was granted by early October 2012.

DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

Content analysis (hermeneutics) and face-to-face semi-structured interviews were the instruments chosen to collect data from the documents and PRC's staff. The managerial staff was the specific group chosen within PRC to conduct the research to make it viable in terms of access to the potential participants, time restrictions and other available resources. Both instruments complemented each other; data collected from both sources was combined to explore the research objectives.

Content analysis (hermeneutics)

By early October 2012, immediately after the REB approval, the researcher initiated the content analysis stage. Mohammed (in Baban, 2009) includes historical analysis as one of the techniques to collect data for exploratory research; according to Gardner (2009), on *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, written documents are the most widely used traces to establish a context or background. In particular, content analysis or hermeneutics refers to the examination of written documents. As stated in Veal (2011), such examination is conducted on published or unpublished texts like organisations' reports, websites, company documents, and any other similar documentary source to collect data.

The first document of the following list was directly provided by PRC and the other six are public documents that were obtained from the official PRC's website. The basic criteria for choosing them among a wide variety was based on whether or not the documents contained evidence (text or images) that described the organizational principles and operations procedures.

- *Mission Statement and Goals (Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture)*
- *2011 Annual Municipal Report (City of Nanaimo)*
- *Master Plan 2005 (Parks, Recreation and Culture)*
- *Nanaimo Cultural Strategy 2008*
- *2005 Parks Horticulture Strategy (2009 revision)*
- *Nanaimo Sports Fields Strategy 2009-2024, and*
- *Trail Implementation Plan*

Face-to-face semi-structured interview

As Joppe (n.d.) declares, face-to-face semi-structured interview is one of the formal qualitative techniques to collect data, it allows the interviewer to clarify and acquire a better understanding of the specific context. This instrument is useful to supplement and expand knowledge about the subject's opinions, thoughts, feelings and behaviours, meanings, interpretations, etc. Wagner and Fernandez-Gimenez (2009), used it looking to validate and enrich data obtained from a previous instrument.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews also encourages the researcher to probe the interviewees seeking to generate an explanation on how they assign meaning in social life. Since the richness of the instrument relies on the probing questions, it is ideal to administer the questionnaire in person or by any other means that allows simultaneous interaction. In this way the interviewer is able to create the probing questions while listening to the interviewee. In this case, the researcher created a six question questionnaire with additional probing questions (See Appendix D: Semi Structured Interview). Five volunteers, not related to the organization and with experience in the recreation field, collaborated with the researcher to test the questionnaire. As a

result, adjustments were made to ask questions that would help obtain more relevant data and provide value while avoiding redundancy.

Data collected from the semi structured interviews offers plenty of insights and information that is recommended for generating themes that group the collective mindset. When creating the questionnaire, descriptive statements (how the concepts are interpreted) were pursued instead of evaluative ones (how the concepts are ranked). Whyte (1984, p. 104) states that participants should be asked about "what their jobs entail, what they do at what time, and how their jobs fit into the whole production process."

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted during mid October 2012. The secretary of the PRC assisted the researcher by sending an e-mail to invite the prospective participants. The e-mail contained two documents, the invitation which explained what the research was about, what the participants were required to do, and it also requested the participants to directly contact the researcher if interested in participating, and the consent form which explained with more detail the research process, how the data collected will be stored, used and presented, other ethical implications and the researcher and the research board officer's contact information for any inquiry, questions or information that the prospective participants may have before, during and after the face-to-face semi-structured interviews(See Appendix E: Invitation and Appendix F: Consent Form). Two additional reminders were also sent, the first one was sent a week later and the second one two weeks after the initial invitation. Potential participants that did not answer the invitation and reminders, were phoned to be personally invited three weeks after the initial invitation. Finally, six interviews were conducted during the first half of November 2012, in private rooms where confidentiality about the topic and content of the answers provided were assured. The researcher personally audio recorded the interviews, took notes during and after the sessions and transcribed the interviews.

Figure 3 highlights the data collection instruments including their corresponding subjects of study, documents for the first instrument and participants (PRC managers) for the second one. As a result, two sets of data, called *PRI clusters*, were obtained from each instrument and subjects of study; they represent the input for the next stage of the research process.

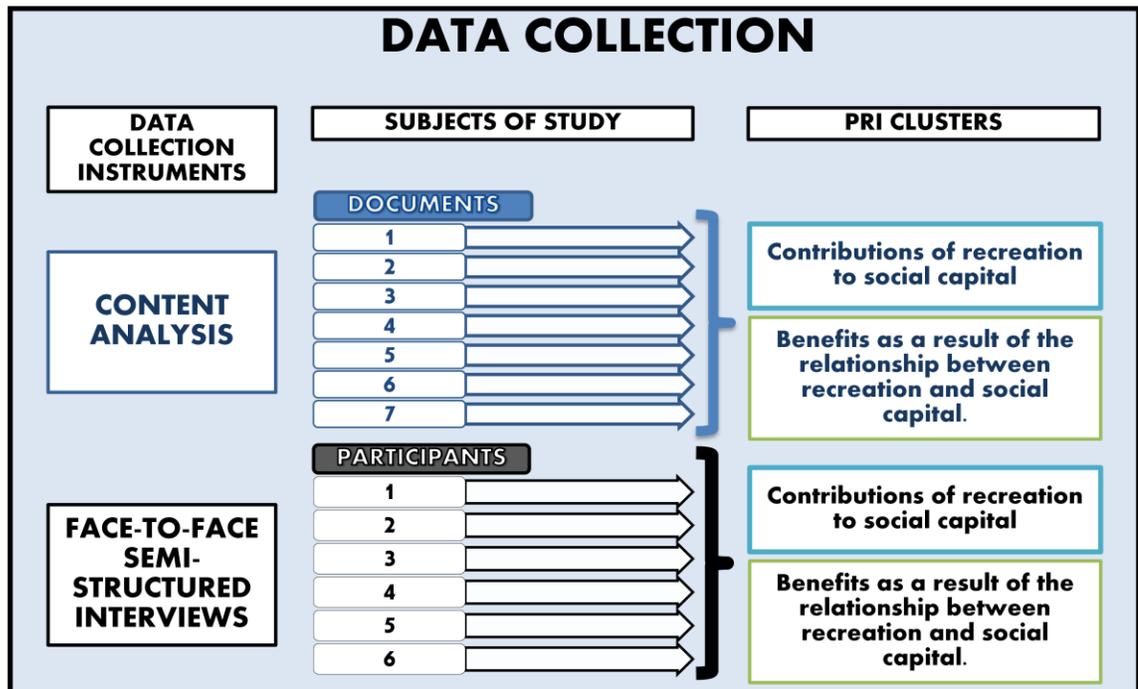


Figure 3. Data collection approach.

ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was the technique used to interpret the data collected from the data collection stage. Kohler Riessman (2006) explains that this technique focuses more on the meaning of what is said, instead of in the way it is said. According to Greg, MacQueen and Namey (2012), content can be organized according to various criteria: descriptions or explanations that are similar, concepts that have cause-effect relationship, or disparate explanations of events. In this case, having similar descriptions or explanations was the criteria for developing two initial *clusters* for each data collection instrument. As earlier mentioned in the literature review PRI distinguishes two *clusters*:

- the outcomes or conditions that recreation originates in terms of social capital, and
- the resultant functions or effects from this relationship.

Afterwards, the content of the *clusters* was divided in smaller groups called *themes*. They were built based on a common meaning criteria and using the PRI pre-established themes as a guideline.

Both the clusters and themes were developed to attain the characterizations that explored the research objectives:

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital.
- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

The following sections of this chapter explain the process through which the two clusters and their themes were developed for each data collection instrument. This stage of the research began as soon as the data collection started, which was from early October 2012 to mid January 2013.

Content Analysis

Every document was reviewed looking for words, phrases, concepts that showed evidence for each of the two clusters and their pertaining themes. The researcher read the documents at least ten times, underlined sections of text that were later used as extracts to construct the meaning of the clusters and themes. The analysis of this instrument's data did not start and finish to allow the analysis of the second instrument's data to occur, both overlapped and complemented each other as part of an iterative process that provides strength and validity. The product obtained from this process partially contributed to attain the characterizations that explored the research objectives (see *Results* chapter).

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher to repeat the same process conducted on the documents. The analysis of this data started from the moment the interview was being conducted, to its transcription and finally when the researcher repeatedly read the transcripts looking for words, phrases, concepts that showed evidence for each of the two clusters and their pertaining themes. Again, two clusters and themes were developed from the data to partially contribute to attain the characterizations that explored the research objectives.

Characterization

After constructing two clusters and their themes for each instrument, the researcher proceeded to analyze them in order to attain a general collective description that reflects the breadth, similarities and differences; in this case it is called *characterization*. As mentioned before, PRI themes were used as a general guideline and their names were just the labels used to name the recreation outcomes regarding social capital (co-operation, support, impact on behaviour and capacity building) and the benefits (functions or effects) from that relationship, such as: service brokerage, information, emotional support, material goods and services, reduced transaction costs and reinforcement of positive behaviours. For both, the content analysis and the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, additional themes within the clusters were created to group data that was not considered to match any of the PRI pre-established themes. Figure 4 shows the two data collection instruments that originated two clusters each containing a variety of themes.

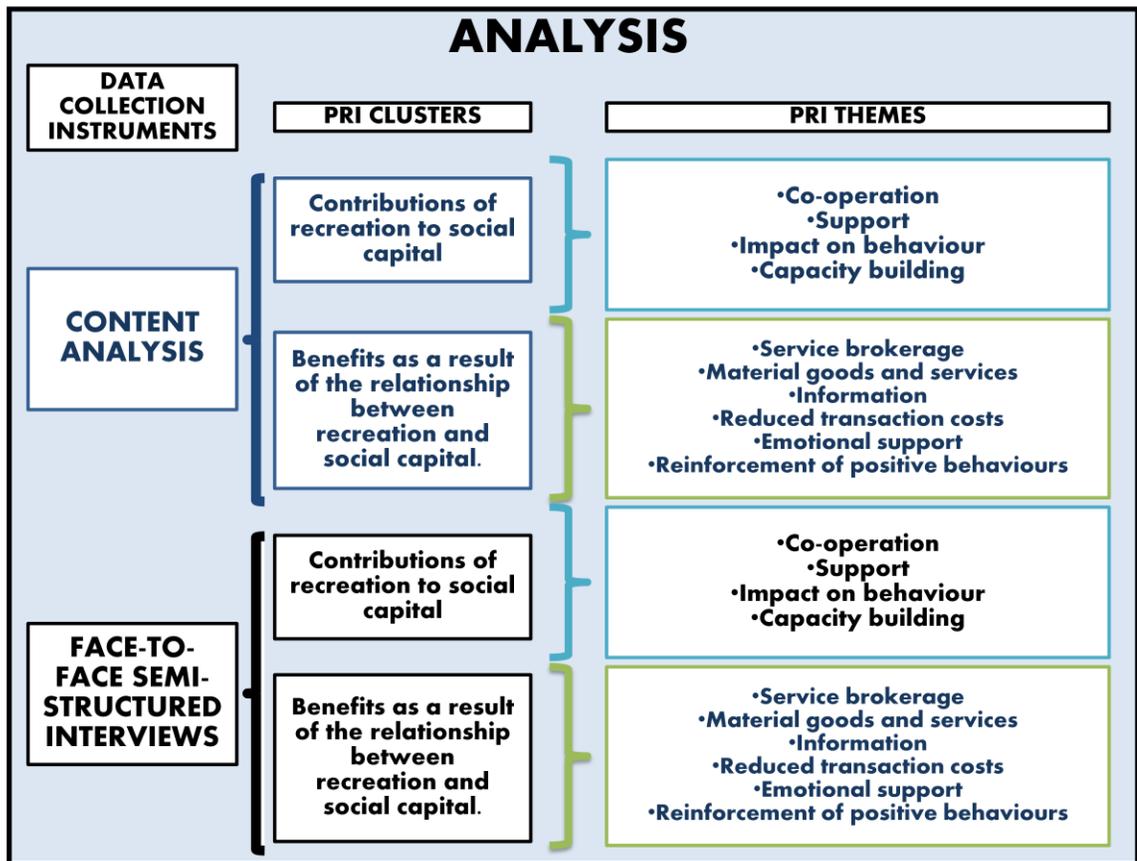


Figure 4. Data analysis.

The four clusters were merged into two general ones by pairing equivalent themes to achieve the characterizations that helped explore the two research objectives:

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital.
- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

As shown in Figure 5, clusters, specifically themes fed the characterizations that are considered as the PRC guiding principles that impact its planning processes, its activities execution, its outcomes and its overall performance.

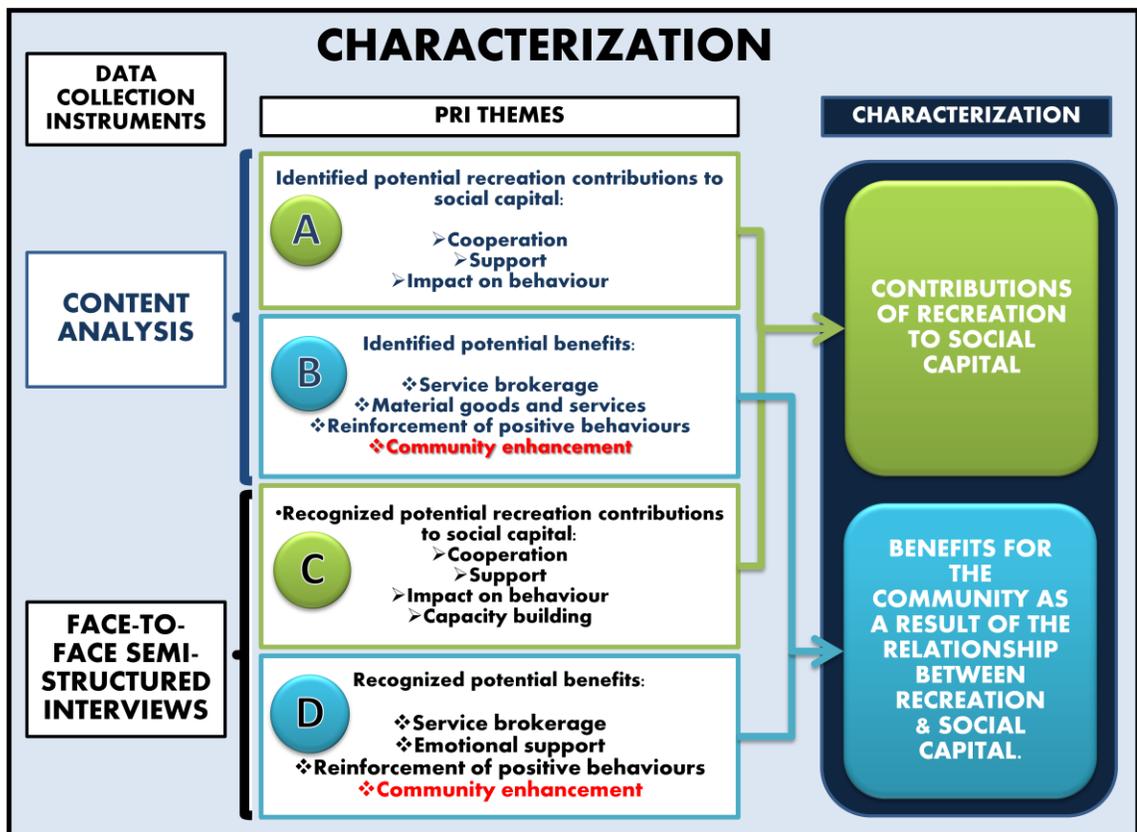


Figure 5. Clusters merged to attain characterization.

Finally, the characterizations were compared to the PRI theoretical framework to identify similarities, discrepancies and voids regarding social capital. Comparing to the PRI framework, it is considered valid and adequate because, as explained in the literature review, this project was formulated to be specifically used in the Canadian context. Figure 6 graphically shows how the characterization obtained overlaps in the PRI framework to find similarities, discrepancies and

voids which led to the conclusion and discussion chapter (Chapter 5) where comments, recommendations and observations are presented. They are intended to raise awareness within the managerial staff in the following three aspects:

1. The importance of the topic,
2. The significance of articulating an accurate message regarding their role's importance and positive impacts on the City of Nanaimo, and
3. The value of using this message as a tool to face the budgetary challenges they are currently facing.

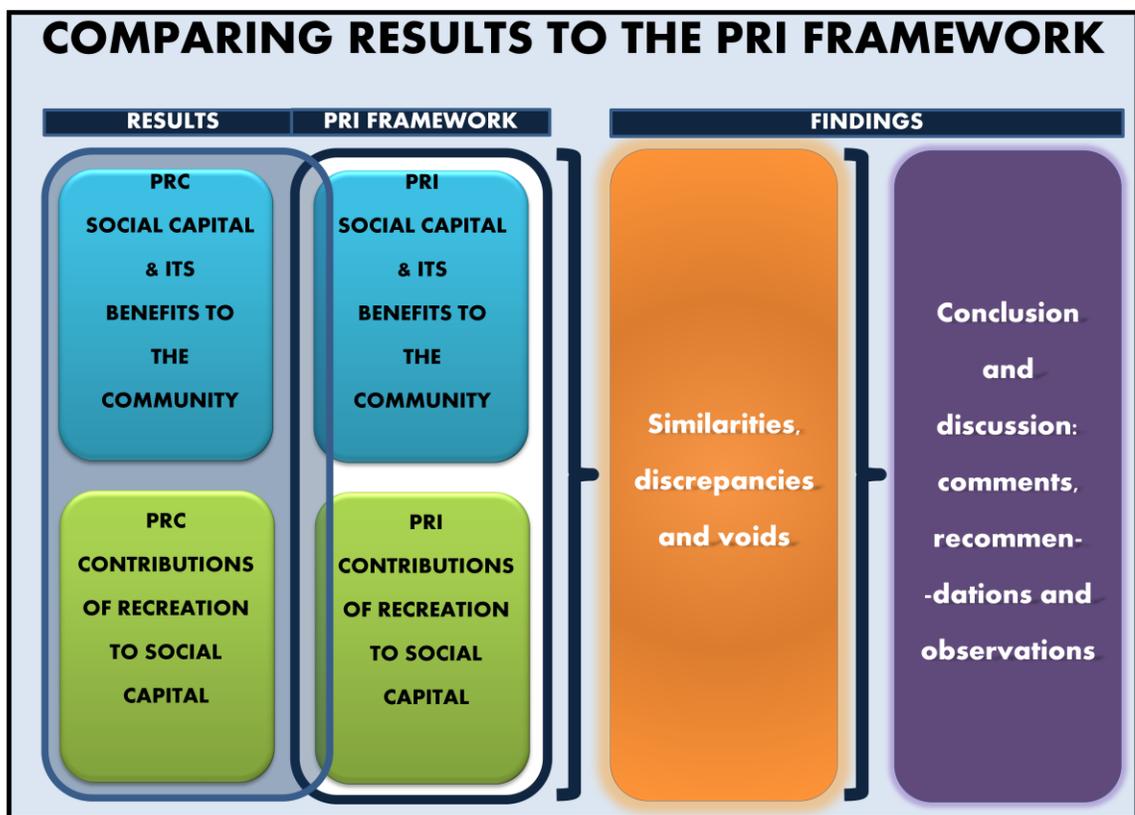


Figure 6. Comparing characterizations to PRI theoretical framework.

OTHER APPROACHES

Other approaches commonly use instruments like surveys to collect data. In this case, it was not used because the nature of this research is exploratory and qualitative. Surveys (close ended questionnaires) are useful when there is previous information on the topic so the researcher has a specific set of variables to be measured through a standard instrument and its scale. Using this instrument, the researcher does not have the flexibility to explore and inquire in

more detail about the topic and the meaning each participant assigns to it. Survey data allow the researcher to qualify the sample according to their answers. It is useful when looking to make generalizations out of the sample to the larger population it represents. Conversely, for this research, the researcher sought to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the specific phenomena found in this setting.

LIMITATIONS

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews do not allow for comparison among the members of the sample because contrary to surveys, it is not a standardized instrument. Although all the interviews follow a common general layout, the direction of each interview and its content vary according to every interviewee's responses. It is not possible to generalize to a greater population as a result of having a purposeful, non statistical sample. PRC managers' opinions may only partially offer evidence to depict the department's approach to recreation and social capital due to the fact that they are not personally carrying out the activities' execution. In other words, the managers' understanding does not fully represent the department's operations nor all their potential impacts in the community.

PRI does not offer extensive and explicit definitions of the clusters and themes; as a result, it cannot be guaranteed that the research themes strictly correspond to their original meaning. Since they are vaguely presented, they are only used as general guidelines and their names acted as labels that acquired a particular meaning that exclusively serves to this research.

Participants were only questioned about benefits; they were not questioned about hurdles or obstacles they face to benefit the community through the relationship recreation-social capital. Nevertheless, this issue may have emerged. Due to time constraints, there was not an opportunity for the researcher to verify and validate with interviewees how data collected from their answers was allocated and interpreted. The clustering and thematic arrangement was only done based on the understanding and interpretation of the researcher along with the data collected from the content analysis technique. The researcher did not use any software to build the clusters, themes and to identify their relationships. Since the research is of an exploratory

nature, it is intended to establish an early precursor on the topic; it did not intend to be conclusive. Although there were challenges in terms of the conditions and the variables that were not possible to control, the methods intended to provide the research with valid evidence to support the results used for exploring the research objectives.

SUMMARY

Data was collected using content analysis and face-to-face semi-structured interviews; it was then analyzed using thematic analysis technique, a process from which two separated clusters for each data collection instrument were created. The clusters' content was organized into themes with common meaning using as a guideline the predefined PRI themes. Each pair of equivalent clusters (one from each data collection instrument) were merged in two general ones to achieve the characterizations that will help explore the two research objectives:

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital.
- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

Once the characterization was achieved, it was compared to the PRI framework; as a result, similarities, discrepancies and voids were obtained. In the next chapter, the results are presented accompanied with quotes whose purpose is to illustrate the nature of the data collected.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The content analysis and face-to-face semi-structured interviews rendered inputs which were organized into two main clusters with their corresponding themes using a thematic analysis technique. The cluster A and cluster C, refer to the conditions that recreation creates, enhances and supports to foster social capital; cluster B and cluster D, refer to the positive contributions to the community that the recreation-social capital connection may originate. This cluster arrangement is based on what the Policy Research Institute (PRI, currently Policy Horizons Canada) pre-established regarding, in the first place, the outcomes of social capital and, in the second place, the functions or effects they produce along with their specific themes.

The first pair of clusters (A & C) and the second pair (B & D) shared a generic name, *potential recreation contributions to social capital, and potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital*, respectively. In order to distinguish the clusters resulting from each data collection tool, the word "identified" is used to name content analysis clusters (labeled A & B) and the word "recognized" is used to name face-to-face semi-structured interview clusters (labeled C & D).

It is important to mention that having at least one identified or recognized aspect of every theme was considered sufficient to include that theme in the characterization. The intensity at which every theme was fulfilled varies significantly but it was not the objective of this research to measure their intensity level. In other words, it was just a matter of whether some aspect that represented a theme was present or not to be incorporated. Subsequently, the results were merged (A + C & B + D) to offer the general characterization of The City of Nanaimo Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) managers' opinions. Additional findings that do not exactly correspond to the research objectives also emerged; they are presented at the end of this chapter.

As previously explained, the content analysis and face-to-face semi-structured interview instruments originated four clusters with their corresponding themes. Subsequently, two pairs of

equivalent complementing clusters were merged to obtain two characterizations that explored the research objectives:

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital.
- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

Finally, the general characterizations were compared to the PRI framework; as a result, the following chapter's content was developed (Chapter 5 *Conclusion and Discussion*).

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The PRC documents were analyzed using a content analysis technique to extract portions of text that explicitly or implicitly (according to the context) reflect evidence for both clusters and corresponding themes: *Cluster A: Identified potential recreation contributions to social capital* and *Cluster B: Identified potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital*.

A) Identified potential recreation contributions to social capital

Figure 7 visually represents the general structure of this cluster; the documents provided data for three themes: cooperation, support and impact on behaviour.

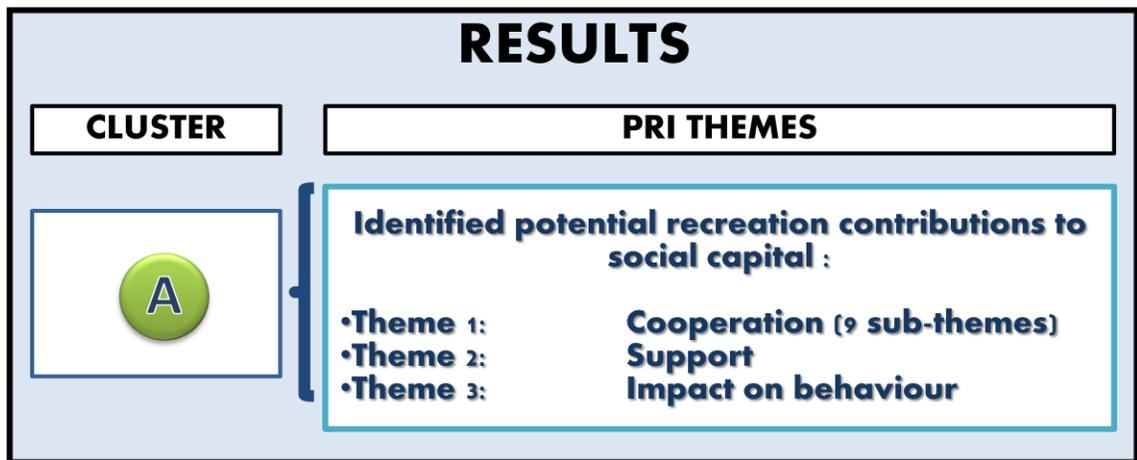


Figure 7. Cluster A and its themes.

In the following sections the three themes are defined or described in terms of their main features; the first theme contains nine sub-themes that represent predominant recurring data. Every theme is defined and supported by quotes from the data collected that exemplify

their breadth and provide clarity about what they represent (See Appendix G for a comprehensive inventory). Sub-themes and quotes are presented and listed according to their incidence on the documents, the most common are listed first while the least common come last.

Theme 1: Cooperation. According to PRI, this theme is associated to collective action. In this research, it refers to all kinds of interactions that imply contact among humans as an important consequence of participating in recreation services. Since it is a very broad theme, nine sub-themes were created to organize it better.

1. Gather/Congregate

"Plants...attract **people to the public realm.**"

"Nanaimo has approximately 20 organized field sport user groups with over 7,000 **participants and coaches**, in organized field sports...There is also a **large number of citizens** not affiliated with a registered club that **play casually**..."

2. Relationships

"The arts enrich communities in Nanaimo by helping people **relate to their neighbours**..."

3. Participation

"Provide services (arena, aquatic, and recreation and culture) that **encourage strong community participation**";

4. Teamwork

"...an individual can: 'learn'...personal life lessons that revolve around **teamwork**..."

5. Connect

"...provides opportunities for participants to...**connect**...with other **community members**..."

6. Engagement

"The Parks, Recreation and Culture department is actively trying to **engage the teen youth** of the community in programming such as field sport teams."

7. Friendships

"provides opportunities for **participants**...to **grow friendships**..."

8. Socialize

"...provides opportunities for participants to...**socialize with other community members**..."

9. Partnerships

"A **community partnership**...could allow for more sustained improvement by having many groups contribute to ongoing project completions rather than the present isolated contributions."

Theme 2: Support. According to PRI, this theme is associated with material resources and service provision. In this case it represents the fact that recreation offers physical spaces (facilities, open and closed spaces) and services to the community. The breadth of this theme is presented through the following words and corresponding phrases, which were taken from the documents:

1. Access to places, opportunities and services/Inclusion

- "The trend is to shift **access** benefits...to the **disadvantaged groups** with greater need for the access discount"
- "... develop, adopt and implement a strategy that allows **all citizens** of Nanaimo **access**..."
- "Field sports provides **opportunities** for Nanaimo residents to "Learn, Train and Play"

2. Foster an appropriate environment

- "...develop the sites so that they foster an **appropriate** tournament **environment**"

Theme 3: Impact on Behaviour. According to PRI this theme refers to social control, place effects and influence of mentors. One document expressed it as follows:

- "...participation in team sports **lower crime and antisocial behaviour**..."

B) Identified potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital

The documents analyzed provided data that fit four themes; the first three corresponded to what PRI established, it was necessary that the researcher created a fourth one named *community enhancement* to group all the similar content that was out of the scope of the pre-established themes. Figure 8 visually represents the general structure of this cluster; the *Community Enhancement* theme was created to group data that was not considered to match any of the PRI pre-established themes.

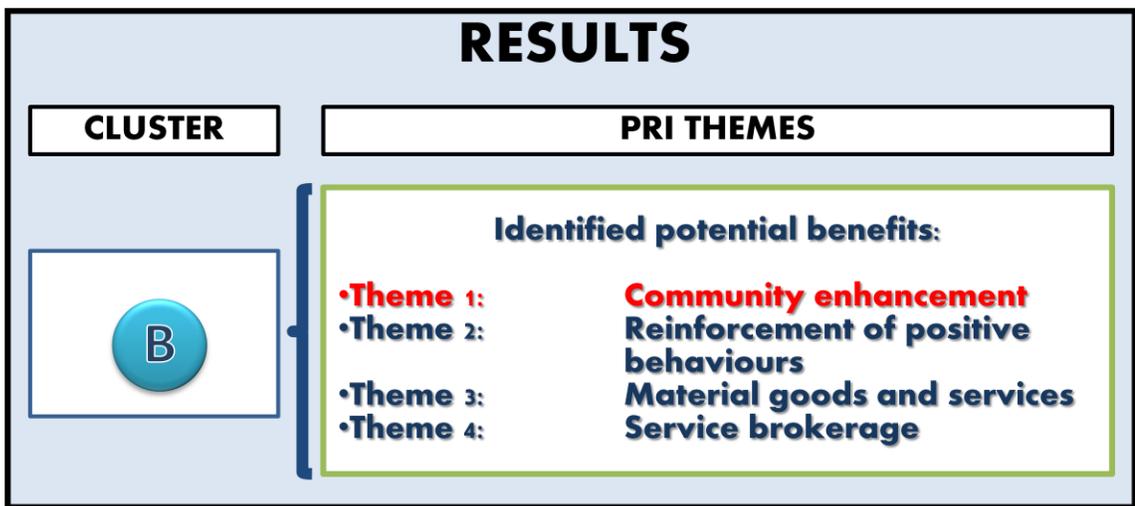


Figure 8. Cluster B and its themes.

In the following sections the four themes are defined or described in terms of their main features. Every theme is defined and supported by quotes from the data collected that exemplify their breadth and provide clarity about what they represent (See Appendix G for a comprehensive inventory). Sub-themes and quotes are presented and listed according to their incidence in the documents, the most common are listed first while the least common come last.

Theme 1: Community enhancement. This theme, which was not one of the PRI pre-established themes, refers to recreation mostly for its contributions to build a better community or to improve the community's conditions in terms of social issues, the environment, and even economic circumstances. In this case the contributions are regarded to impact the community at a collective level; in opposition to *Theme 2: Reinforcement of positive behaviours*, which refers to the individual level. The following sentences represent the breadth of this theme:

1. Community

- "Recreation and Parks **build strong families and healthy communities**"

2. Environment

- "Greenways trails can help to **preserve** corridors for wildlife to move between habitats, to **protect** water quality, offer flood plain control, **reduce** erosion on river banks and with trees and vegetation, **reduce** air pollution and temperature gains."

Theme 2: Reinforcement of positive behaviours. According to PRI, this theme is associated to staying active, eating healthy diets, or quitting smoking. In this case it stands for:

1. Stay active, Healthy living, quality of life, balance, fairness

- "Increased importance is being placed on the value of participation in leisure and physical activity as part of a **healthy lifestyle**."
- "...develop, adopt and implement a strategy that allows all citizens of Nanaimo ...opportunity to enjoy an **active life style**"
- "enhancing the **quality of life** and leisure through Active for Life which promotes life-long **physical activity**"
- " teaches important human qualities like **fairness** "

Theme 3:Material goods and services. According to PRI, this theme is associated, among others, to:

1. Child care

- "...local Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments are an integral part of social service delivery, responding to...**child care needs**..."

2. Informal health

- "Programs that help enhance the **mental, physical, and emotional health** of our clients continue to be offered for all age groups."

Theme 4: Service brokerage. According to PRI, this theme is associated to effective access to health, employment, or other training services that individuals would not be able to access by themselves. In this research, it was found to be expressed as:

Access to resources

- "This sector (arts and culture) stimulates growth...while creating **jobs**..."
- "**Teaches** important **human qualities** like determination, dedication,...and hard work."
- "Potential **access to scholarships** for post-secondary education"

FACE-TO-FACE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Following the same criteria and process used for the PRC documents content analysis, the interviewees' collective opinions were also organized into two clusters. Portions of the face-to-face semi-structured interviews that explicitly or implicitly (according to the context) reflect evidence for the clusters and corresponding themes were extracted. *Cluster C: Recognized potential recreation outcomes to social capital* and *Cluster D: Recognized potential benefits for the community as a result of the recreation and social capital*. In this case, the word "recognized" is used to differentiate these clusters from the previous ones

C) Recognized potential recreation contributions to social capital

This cluster includes the responses that reflect how recreation contributes to social capital. The interviewees were given a social capital definition and questioned about their thoughts, opinions and understanding. They were also explicitly questioned to find out if they identify a relationship between the two concepts. Data collected was organized in four common themes: co-operation, support and impact on behaviour and capacity building. Figure 9 visually represents the general structure of this theme.

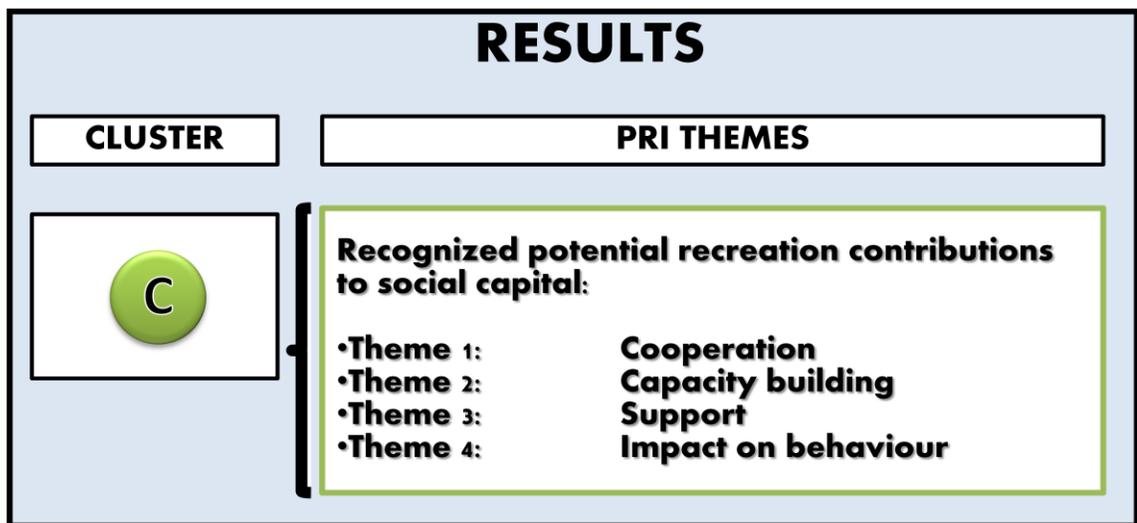


Figure 9. Cluster C and its themes.

In the following sections the four themes are defined or described in terms of their main features. Every theme is defined and supported by quotes from the data collected that exemplify their breadth and provide clarity about what they represent (See Appendix G for a comprehensive inventory). Sub-themes and quotes are presented and listed according to their

incidence in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the most common are listed first while the least common come last.

Theme 1: Cooperation. According to PRI this theme is associated to collective action. In this case, as it was in the case of the PRC documents content analysis, it refers to all kinds of interactions that imply contact among humans as an important consequence of participating in recreation services. The following sentences are quotes from the actual interviews; they represent the breadth of this theme:

- "They can **get together**, they **grow things together**, they **work together**...they like to do something with other people, so it's social..."
- "...people can go outside...they can **interact** with whatever age group they want"
- "I think we give the community opportunities to **meet each other** and **engage with one another**...it's quite easy that people would never meet and never cross paths and really **actively engage** with one another."

Theme 2: Capacity building. This theme refers to obtain or increase the ability to get through any difficult circumstance. This theme was not identified on the PRC documents content analysis. The following quotes stand for the interviewees' opinions on this theme:

- "people are just **helping** people out because they need to, they want to **help** people out..."
- "you are more likely to **help** somebody out...if you know them."
- "...it's about **facilitating** and **helping** them grow..."
- "...the community can **help** do for themselves or we can **assist** in doing that..."
- "we **support** either through by **assistance**..."

Theme 3: Support. This theme basically encompasses the opportunity that recreation provides in terms of any kind of definite physical area for the previous theme to take place. The following quotes stand for some of the interviewees' opinions:

- "...one thing that we do is we create **spaces** that people can **interact in**."
- "...the **infrastructure** that people can make use of. Whether they gather there...or just those **central hubs** and **connecting points**."
- "So I think our parks side of things is good...just for **gathering places**"
- "It gives people a **place** and an opportunity to practice...and develop their abilities for social capital."
- "So included in all our parks we have all kinds of amenities and **recreational opportunities**. From our **trail system**, we have **playgrounds**, we've got **sport fields**."
- "I think the value in parks operations is in the **open spaces**..."

Theme 4: Impact on behaviour. According to PRI this theme refers to social control, place effects and influence of mentors. One interviewee stated the following when describing the effects of parks in neighbourhoods:

- "...Then our **vandalism** is down..."

D) Recognized potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

This cluster includes responses that reflect the outcomes, repercussions or impacts on the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital. The interviewees were explicitly questioned about their perceptions on the benefits for the community from this relationship. Some probing questions aimed to find out what more practical, instrumental and operational benefits for the community the interviewees attributed to the relationship between recreation social capital. Figure 10 visually represents the general structure of this cluster; as in the case of the PRC documents content analysis, the *Community Enhancement* theme was created to group data that was not considered to match any of the PRI pre-established themes.

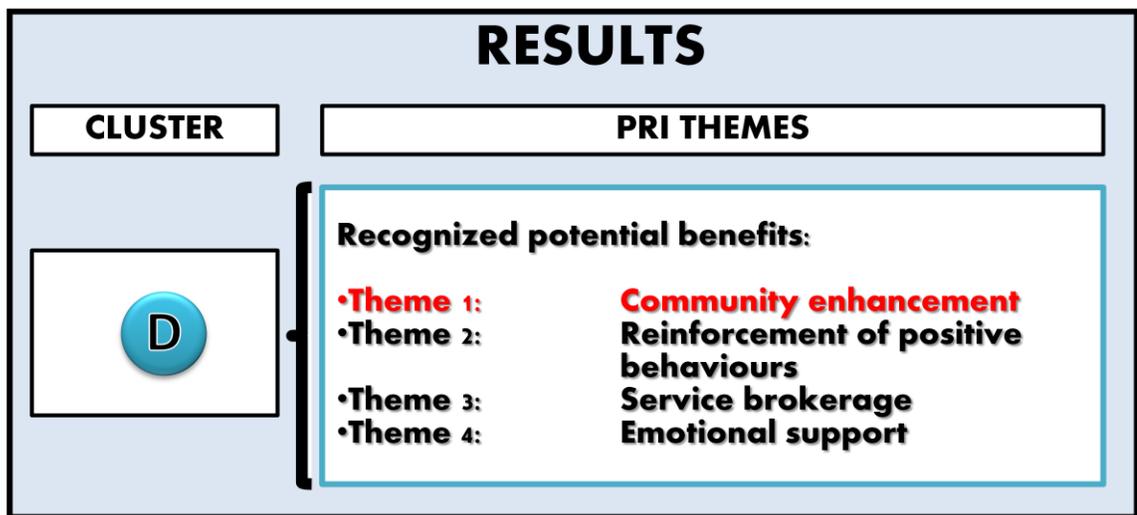


Figure 10. Cluster D and its themes.

In the following sections the four themes are defined or described in terms of their main features. Every theme is defined and supported by quotes from the data collected that exemplify their breadth and provide clarity about what they represent (See Appendix G for a comprehensive inventory). Sub-themes and quotes are presented and listed according to their incidence in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the most common are listed first while the least common come last.

Theme 1: Community enhancement. This theme refers to recreation mostly for its contributions to build a better community or to improve the community's conditions in terms of social issues, the environment, and even economic circumstances. In this case the contributions are regarded to impact the community at a collective level; in opposition to *Theme 2: Reinforcement of positive behaviours*, which refers to the individual level. As previously mentioned, this theme was created to group data that was not considered to match any of the PRI pre-established themes. The following sentences represent the breadth of this theme:

- "...**community development** which parks, recreation and culture that really is our mandate"
- "Improve the **quality of life** and **leisure** in the **community**"
- "So it creates a more **safe, sustainable, livable community**, where people can go outside and feel safe..."
- "...the **economic benefit** too... facilities are obviously primarily built for

Theme 2: Reinforcement of positive behaviours. According to PRI, this theme is associated with staying active, eating healthy diets, quitting smoking or developing ownership. In this case, interviewees expressed it as follows:

- "...lead toward **healthy living, active life...**"
- "So pretty much the **prevention of disease** and **promotion of health** through **activity** and **social contact**."
- "...they need to know that this belongs to them; if not they just take it for granted...they buy in, the **ownership**; and it is **used more** and **maintained better**."

Theme 3: Service brokerage. According to PRI, this theme is associated to effective access to health, employment, or other training services that individuals would not be able to access by themselves. In this research, it was found to be expressed as:

- "we **work with certain groups**...right from the creation of the bid through attending bid...conferences and **getting them to** hosting the actual events."
- "we've been working with VIHA (Vancouver Island Health Authority)...in developing programs in order to work with local diabetes chapter, ms chapter, cancer, alzheimer's, and partnering with them to **provide programs that assists in those treatments**"

Theme 4: Emotional support. According to PRI, this theme is associated, among others, to the provision or sustenance networks may provide to find a solution to the problem, reduce its perceived importance, or provide a distraction from it. The interviewees described what activities PRC executes in this sense:

- "...they're assigned a leisure **counselor** through the PRC and it **teaches** the whole family **how to engage in recreation** whether be, you know, touring our facilities so they **feel comfortable coming to rent a pair of skates or getting the pool and put on bath suit and knowing that it's not about Olympic athletes, we don't have to look a certain way**. That there's all body shapes and forms and types. **Whether you can swim or not, doesn't**

CHARACTERIZATION

The characterization of the managers' opinions regarding social capital as a whole is presented in two sections that combine the results presented in the previous section; cluster A + cluster C and cluster B + cluster D; two clusters are expressed in terms of their themes, which are defined and exemplified with quotes and visually represented in a *collective word depiction* of their incidence. The clusters kept the PRI framework format used all the way from the data collection and analysis stages to the results.

Overall managers' opinions regarding the contributions of recreation to social capital

The first research objective, *To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the contributions of recreation to social capital*, was built based on the results present in the previous section of this chapter; characterization was attained in terms of the following four themes:

Theme 1. Cooperation: PRC managers perceive that recreation is a means to create opportunities for people to gather, interact, socialize, participate, engage, build partnerships and friendships. Some examples of those opportunities may be the services, programs and activities on which they directly or indirectly get involved. This was predominantly present in the documents and to a lesser extent in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

Theme 2. Impact on behaviour: PRC managers perceive that recreation reduces negative social behaviours like vandalism, crime and antisocial behaviour, among others. Again, this was predominantly present in the documents and to a lesser extent in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

Theme 3. Support: PRC managers perceive that recreation provides places or spaces where an environment is created for all the people to meet and receive services, programs and activities. This theme was evenly present in both the documents and the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

Theme 4. Capacity Building: PRC managers perceive that help to get through any circumstance is available as a result of the cooperation (Theme 1) and support (Theme 2) that recreation creates. This theme was only present in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

Figure 11 visually represents the predominance of the *Cooperation* theme over the incidences of the rest of the themes that compose this characterization. Although it is not a proportional representation of the themes' weights, it aims to provide an idea of their extent.



Figure 11. Themes that characterize the managers' opinions regarding the contributions of recreation to social capital.

As outlined in the literature review, PRI establishes that this characterization represent the conditions that recreation may create in terms of social capital. The next section presents the benefits that may occur after the conditions are set.

Overall managers' opinions regarding the benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital

The second research objective, *To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital*, was explored with this cluster; based on the results previously presented in this chapter, the researcher defined it in terms of the following five themes.

Theme 1. Community Enhancement; PRC managers perceive recreation promotes community development, creates healthy communities, preserves, protects the environment and reduces negative impacts to it. In other words, it creates safe, sustainable and livable communities while improving their quality of life. This theme was created to group data that was not considered to match any of the PRI pre-established themes was a very abundant theme that strongly emerged from both instruments.

Theme 2. Reinforcement of positive behaviours: PRC managers perceive that recreation promotes health lifestyle through physical activity and social contact; it also promotes behaviours like fairness and ownership. Although this theme emerged from both data collection instruments, the documents put special emphasis on the role of recreation to promote health through physical activity.

Theme 3. Service brokerage: PRC managers perceive that a benefit of recreation is the access to various resources like scholarships, jobs, health treatments assistance, mentorship and practice of human qualities like determination, dedication and hard work that leads to getting projects done. This theme was present in both instruments but predominately in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews where the managers mostly emphasized the health treatments assistance aspect as a benefit.

Theme 4. Material goods and services: PRC managers perceive child care and informal health are side services of the recreation services. This theme was only identified in the documents.

Theme 5. Emotional Support: PRC perceives that recreation assists the community at some kind of psychological level through counseling to engage in recreation that will lead to successive benefits. This theme was only implicitly expressed in the interviews.

Figure 12 visually represents the predominance of the *Community Enhancement* theme over the incidence of the rest of the themes that compose this characterization. Although it is not a proportional representation of the themes' weights, it aims to provide an idea of their extent.



Figure 12. Themes that characterize the managers' opinions regarding the benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

COMPARING STUDY RESULTS TO PRI FRAMEWORK

As previously presented in the literature review, PRI establishes that social capital has sources which create conditions for social capital occurrence that finally creates benefits for the community. This is the framework the researcher used to compare the overall results of this study against. Figure 13 is a visual representation of the way the researcher interpreted the framework.

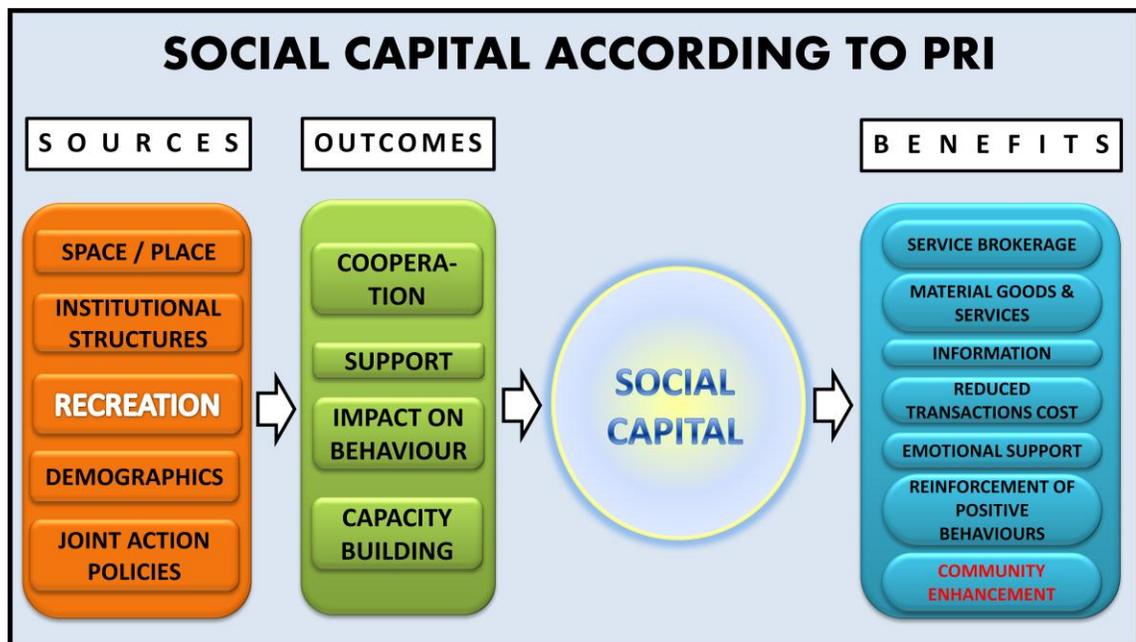


Figure 13. Researcher's interpretation of PRI framework.

The comparison took place once the results and the framework were available, figure 14 shows how this process was conducted, the characterizations attained were compared against the PRI framework to obtain, on the one hand, the *similarities*, and on the other, the *discrepancies and voids* that led to the *comments, recommendations and observations*.

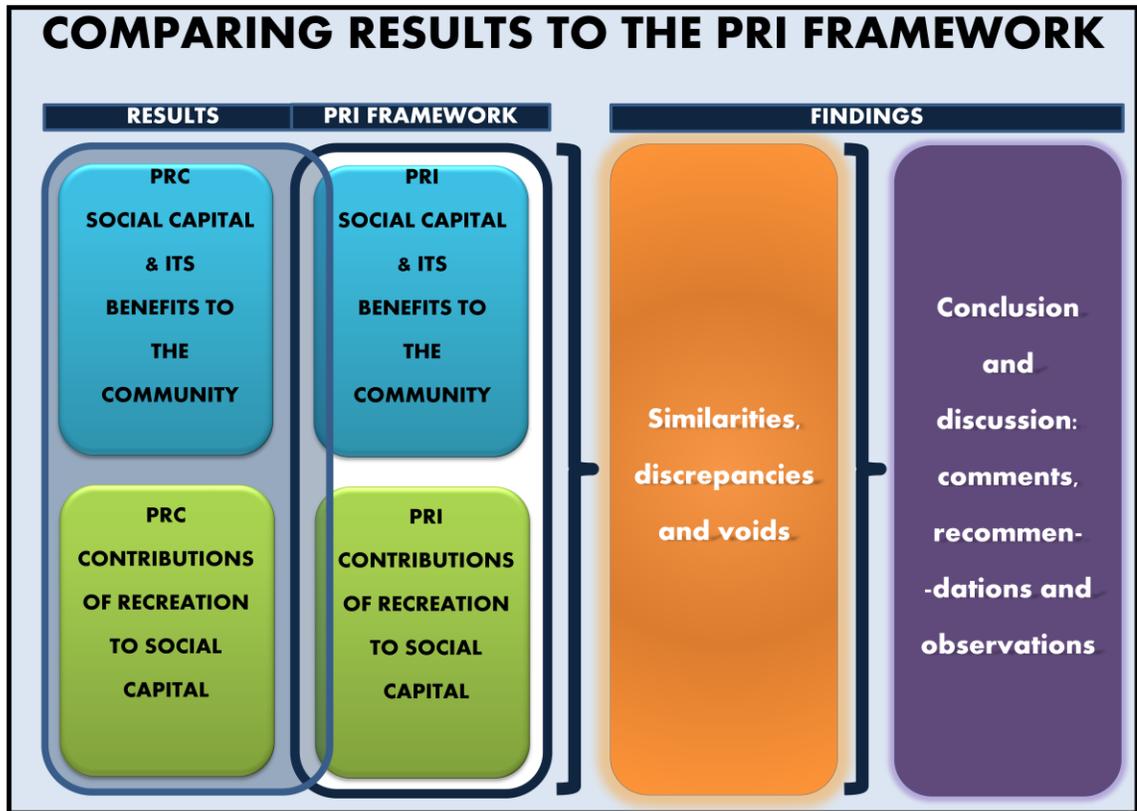


Figure 14. Similarities, discrepancies and voids as a result of comparing the results to the PRI framework.

The following section presents the results of the comparison divided in two portions: *similarities* and *discrepancies and voids*; which at the same time are sub-divided in two pieces that correspond to the research objectives:

- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential contributions of recreation to social capital.
- To characterize the PRC managers' opinions regarding the potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

Similarities

Contributions of recreation to social capital. PRC managers perceive that recreation contributes to the set of conditions for social capital; such conditions are the outcomes that were organized in the four pre-established PRI themes:

- Co-operation
- Support
- Impact on behaviour
- Capacity building

Benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital. PRC managers perceive that the relationship between recreation and social capital leads to benefits for the community that fulfilled only four of the pre-established PRI themes:

- Reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Service brokerage
- Material goods and services
- Emotional support

Community enhancement emerged from the data collected and analyzed, it was consistently present as a benefit but it was not part of the pre-established PRI themes.

Discrepancies and Voids

Contributions of recreation to social capital.

It is important to highlight that PRC managers perceive that recreation originates benefits in a very straightforward way; it does not perceive that recreation creates conditions for social capital.

Benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

Data was not found to fulfill two of the PRI pre-established themes: 'information' and 'reduced transaction costs'. Additionally, as mentioned in the data collection section, 'community enhancement' was a predominant theme that had to be created by the researcher to organize

data that did not match any of the PRI pre-established ones. PRC managers do not perceive the benefits for the community are a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

GENERAL RESULTS

The social capital concept was neither found explicitly expressed in the documents nor in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Despite that, after providing the social capital definition, none of the interviewees contradicted the concept, they added and built their opinions from it, and some even explicitly affirmed it made sense to them; for instance the interviewees mentioned things like: "I think the term is fine"; "...that's a good definition."

Interviewees recognized the existence of a relationship between recreation and social capital which was generally identified or related to community development and/or community building. There was not a clear distinction between how recreation contributes to create conditions for social capital and then how this relationship may produce benefits for the community. Although the two aspects are present, they are not obviously differentiated.

Recreation is considered to be preventative (before illness) and therapeutic (during or after illness) tool for achieving health. Recreation is perceived to play an instrumental and complementary role to address health along with the established health care system. Other instrumental benefits of recreation like crime reduction were scarcely found on the documents or brought up when interviewing participants.

Partnership was a frequent theme that emerged from both data collection sources. Documents outlined partnerships as a fundamental means to complete projects in the economic sense and carry on with future opportunities. Interviewees also consistently mentioned the partnership theme as a means to carry on with projects in terms of ideas and execution. Closely related to partnerships, volunteerism is another theme acknowledged as essential to get things done but not as a consequence of participating in recreation.

Finally, content analysis offered a better understanding of the context; it also showed a more instrumental role of recreation that goes beyond physical health. Semi-structured interviews delivered, as expected, a rich amount of insights about the topic. The process allowed the researcher to dig in and obtain information in detail. In general terms, both sources of data

characterize the organizational (PRC's) approach to recreation, what role they pursue in the community and how they perceive themselves performing that role.

OTHER FINDINGS

There is congruence between the information found on the documents and the information collected from the semi-structured interviews. Both complement and reinforce each other. Interviewees seem to be confident about the quality of the recreation services, the facilities and amenities, the natural setting and the users' satisfaction with them.

Despite that budget cuts were identified and recognized as an important restriction and a challenge to be able to sustain the services offered and its quality; the researcher did not find any evidence that supported that the PRC managers will be able to face these challenges by demonstrating recreation's tangible and intangible benefits for the community.

The *City of Nanaimo. 2011 Annual Municipal Report* declares: "The department is an established community influencer with hundreds of community contacts. The management team has drafted a nine-year work plan focused on building those contacts into effective relationships" This shows clear evidence of the realization about the specific management team's role as social brokers, entrepreneurs or champions. As the literature states (Burt, 1999), they are expected to create bridges that generate value among disconnected parts of a group, organization or system, they are key actors (network entrepreneurs) across social limits between groups.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Data collected shows an explicit direct relation between recreation and the benefits for the community but there is not an appreciation of a system in which social capital represents the conditions generated by recreation that bears benefits for the community. Facilitating and creating contexts for people to connect and build relationships to be happy is not the ultimate goal of recreation. The ultimate goal is to build an operational scheme which implementation and measurement relies on the achievement of benefits. Health is a very important aspect but the field is not exclusively limited to it; there are other social and environmental benefits that recreation can originate.

According to the research results, there were two main scenarios identified that reflect how recreation creates benefits for the community. Despite the fact that recreation is acknowledged for creating benefits for the community; it is not positioned, as established by PRI (see Figure 15), as a component of a sequence where recreation creates conditions for social capital and after that occurs, the benefits take place.

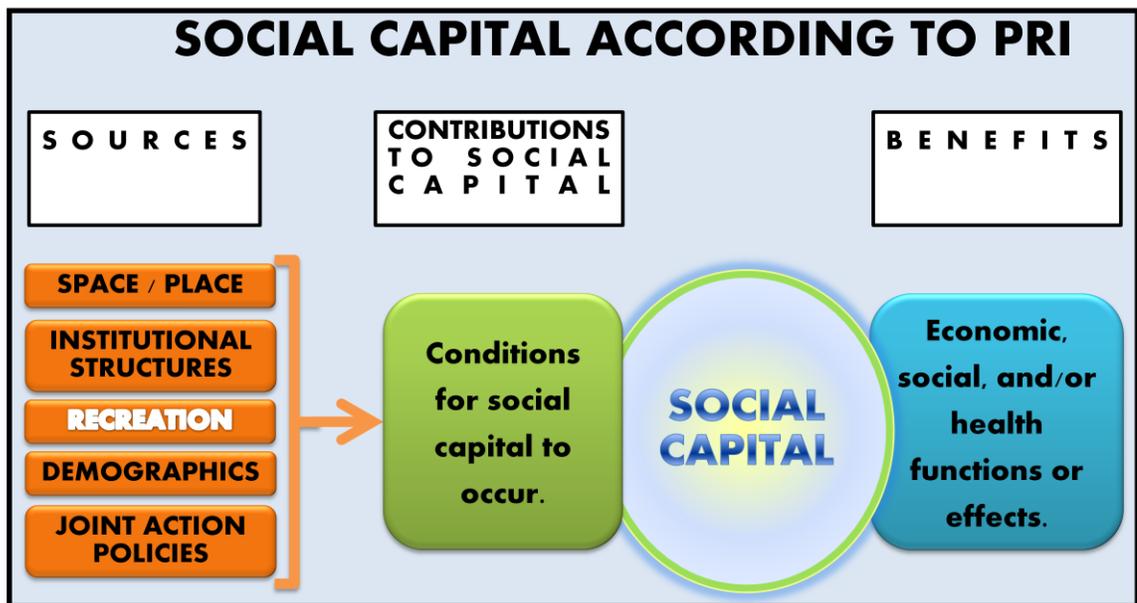


Figure 15. Sources, outcomes, social capital and benefits for the community sequence.

The first scenario, shown in Figure 16, presents how the documents and participants opinions reflect a very basic understanding of the relationship between recreation and the benefits. Recreation is perceived to directly create benefits; the conditions recreation creates for social capital are not interpreted as a prerequisite to obtain benefits, they are generally understood as the final benefits.

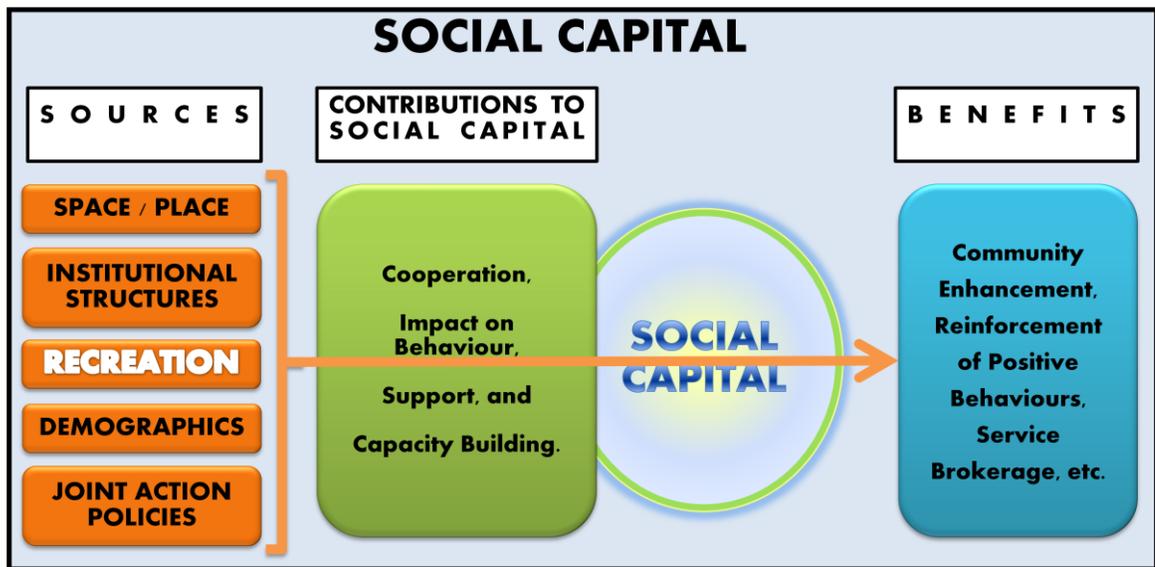


Figure 16. Recreation directly creates benefits.

The second scenario, shown in Figure 17, presents another way of how the documents and participants understand recreation. Indistinctively, only a conglomerate of outcomes, benefits and social capital is acknowledged as a result of recreation. The three concepts are not separately distinguished, they are acknowledged as identical (represented by the equal signs) and their outreach, extent or boundaries (represented by the dotted frames) are also undefined.

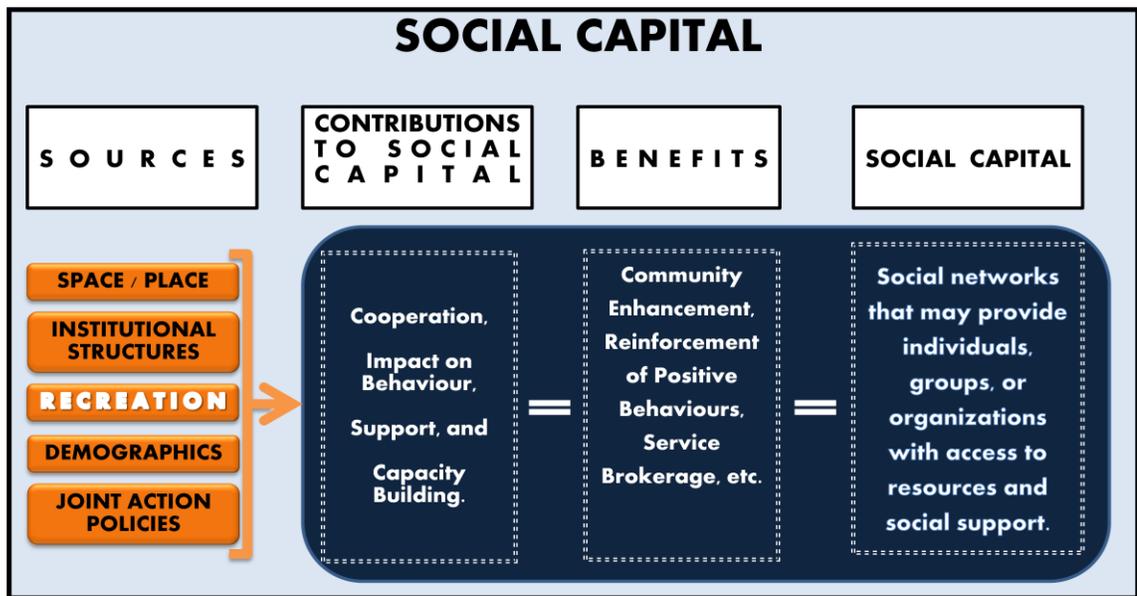


Figure 17. Recreation indistinctively creates outcomes, benefits and social capital.

In order to face budget challenges and position recreation in a more instrumental and strategic role; it is important, as stated by PRI, to differentiate among what social capital is, its sources and what effects it has. Once this differentiation is reached, it is important to know the expected benefits (i.e. emotional support for ageing well or life transitions, exchange materials, goods and services or reduce transaction costs to face economic downturn) for the community and what the role of The City of Nanaimo Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) can play using its resources. Customized mechanisms such as recreation programs to assist in addressing social inclusion for immigrants and minorities, youth at risk issues (addictions, academic attrition, vandalism), literacy rate and population aging among others, should result out of this understanding to be successfully implemented. Finally, the measurement -i.e. through surveys or other indicators- of the effectiveness of those programs would be structured and viable.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A network analysis to visualize the existing relationships between PRC and other organizations would be useful to understand how the resources are mobilized and who the main actors are in this network. The identification of the community's needs and the most instrumental actors in its network to address them would be another helpful aspect to research. Since participants were only questioned about benefits, it would be useful to explore the hurdles or obstacles they face to benefit the community through the relationship between recreation and social capital. The negative impacts of social capital represent another valuable topic to explore.

CONCLUSION

In the first place, it is essential that PRC practitioners develop an understanding on how recreation is one source of social capital and the span of positive outcomes the community gains from this relationship. This will allow them to purposely plan activities that will address particular community needs; as a result, it will be easier to measure and demonstrate the outcomes and the recreation field will be better positioned.

Secondly, once awareness was raised and the topic is considered as valuable and functional; it is necessary to establish a starting point for action by assessing, in the local context, the present social capital conditions, what is recreation's role and what are the desired outcomes according to the community needs. It is expected to find out that, at different levels, benefits are already taking place. It is then a matter of making strategic efforts to purposefully maximize them, make them evident and verifiable. As referred to in the literature review, The Saguaro Seminar (para. 24) highlights the importance of measuring social capital for three reasons:

- The concept of social capital becomes more tangible
- Investment in social capital is increased if organizations can demonstrate their community-building efforts are showing results; and
- It helps funders and community organizations to strategically build more social capital. It helps them focus on specific efforts and allocate resources for them.

Finally, PRC managers have the opportunity to redefine the organization's mission, vision and goals to better operate and serve the community. Therefore, the PRC will gain recognition and perpetuate its role as an essential contributor to the community's sustainability and resilience. It also will be able to face the present budget cuts by accessing more funds, retain the current ones or, as PRC documents and practitioners express, by adding up resources as a result of partnerships with other sources of social capital.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION PRODUCT

The researcher wants to raise awareness about the importance of the research topic, firstly among the recreation managers who participated in the research and afterwards making it extensive to the rest of the field practitioners; as presented in the literature review, they are critical in the success of social capital development. Secondly, the researcher wants to raise awareness among the members of the academic community, professors and students included.

THESIS

The thesis is a printed and electronic document that represents the final research report. This product will be reviewed and approved to meet the faculty pre-established criteria with the purpose of being presented in the thesis defence event. Proposed date of execution: Late-March, 2013.

THESIS DEFENCE

The thesis defence is part of the graduation process. It represents an opportunity to publicly present the research project with the Recreation and Tourism Faculty, extended Faculty of the Management school, Recreation and Tourism students, VIU general community and other students. Proposed date of execution: Late March, 2013.

SEMINAR

In order to contribute to the organization that hosted this project, the main knowledge mobilization product will be a seminar / discussion session with the staff that was originally invited to participate in the research. The researcher will present the main topic to the audience, followed by the justification, the methodology and ultimately the major findings. After this the researcher will act as a moderator to lead an open discussion. A final report of this event will be developed to be distributed among the participants. Proposed date of execution: Late-March, 2013.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Other products like academic presentations are likely to happen in the future. These sessions are oriented not only to share the objectives and results from this research but also the researcher's personal learning acquired throughout the whole process. Proposed date of execution: 2013.

APPENDIX B
REFLECTIVE CHAPTER

MAJOR FINDINGS

MAJOR PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In the first place, it is essential that PRC practitioners develop an understanding on how recreation is one source of social capital and the span of positive outcomes the community gains from this relationship. This will allow them to purposely plan activities that will address particular community needs; as a result, it will be easier to measure and demonstrate the outcomes and the recreation field will be better positioned.

Secondly, once awareness was raised and the topic is considered as valuable and functional; it is necessary to establish a starting point for action by assessing, in the local context, the present social capital conditions, what is recreation's role and what are the desired outcomes according to the community needs. It is expected to find out that, at different levels, benefits are already taking place. It is then a matter of making strategic efforts to purposefully maximize them.

Thirdly, PRC managers have the opportunity to redefine the organization's mission, vision and goals to better operate and serve the community. Therefore, the PRC will gain recognition and perpetuate its role as an essential contributor to the community's sustainability and resilience. It also will be able to face the present budget cuts by accessing more funds, retain the current ones or, as PRC documents and practitioners express, by adding up resources as a result of partnerships with other sources of social capital.

WHAT I LEARNT IN EACH STAGE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS?

Topic definition

I found that the research topic should be relevant and interesting for the researcher, for the hosting organization based on the value it adds, for the research supervisors so they can enthusiastically contribute along the whole process. Once this is met then the project can be considered as realistic and feasible.

Proposal

The most remarkable aspect during developing the proposal was that it grew into a well-built plan after discussing with the hosting organization how to actually operate the research according to their requirements and also when getting feedback from the Ethics Board. In order to get the project approved by them, it was necessary to fulfil requirements that aimed to consider some practical implications that were helpful for avoiding potential hurdles. Aspects like data collection material management, storage, planned means of knowledge dissemination (reports, presentations, etc) were correctly constructed.

Methods

The instrument was elaborated without deep previous knowledge of the principles of the organization. In this manner the questions were not biased, loaded or oriented to induce the interviewees to answer the expected. The pre-defined core questions were general and the probing ones were defined by the answers the participants provided while being interviewed.

The instrument evolved as the researcher better comprehended the topic, better know the potential participants' profile, and test it with participants that were related to the field but not part of the subject population. Pilot testing the instrument previously to be applied was the best way to enhance it. In this manner, the researcher made sure the questions asked for the information they were intended to. The questions became oriented to be understandable by the interviewees but also to help the interviewer to be more precise about what probing questions to elaborate.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews are more about listening than asking. It is an exercise of carefully listening to the ideas, concepts, words in order to create and improvise probing questions according to what has been said. Along with listening, brief notes of key constructs are useful to further quote participants using their own words in order to expand or clarify what resounded relevant to the topic. It may usually be assumed that last interviews are better than the initial ones because of the expertise acquired with time. In reality, it depends a lot on the interviewee's disposition, availability, and character as well as on the interviewers ability to communicate, develop rapport and in general create and comfortable environment.

Data collection

It is important to be timely when inviting potential participants. I did not know the organization and potential participants operate within seasons. There is a busy summer season when it may be difficult to get appointments with them. Apparently, right after this season there is a less busy period when the managers take advantage and go out on vacations; so it is still not a good time for appointments.

In order to get as many participants as possible it is important to create an invitation that adequately reflects the benefit or importance of the topic. It is also important to schedule in a timely manner the reminders and their format; whether be e-mails, printed letters, phone calls, etc.

On one occasion, the Ethics Board's requirements and efforts to protect anonymity and avoid any harm to participants caused one potential interviewee to retract from participating. There was initial interest in participating and there were e-mails and phone calls back and forth to arrange an appointment for the interview. The subject expressed concern about the emphasis put on confidentiality. As expressed in the subject's own words: "I don't know what I am getting into". By this time the participant had already received the invitation and consent form where the research project was thoroughly explained. In a phone conversation I also explained that the research did not represent any known potential harm for any participant; that the emphasis on confidentiality (location and other specifications) was a requirement from the Research Ethics Board aiming to make participants feel confident and to protect them. I offered to visit the participant to address any concern. I explained that it was the participant's right not to contribute if not feeling confident even after answering the questions. In a last attempt to obtain participation, I sent the questionnaire via e-mail to collect the answers in that way. At the end, the participant chose not to participate. The effort to present the research as a serious, professional and properly conducted project actually made the participant feel the other way around. Perhaps the language or the invitation and consent form's degree of elaboration constrained other participants from participating too.

The questionnaire contained two initial questions that were not strictly intended for supplying data for the ultimate purpose of the research but they efficiently played a role as starters to set an adequate atmosphere and lead to smoothly transit to the core of the questionnaire. In addition, conducting myself the semi-structured interviews contribute as a complementary strategy to gain understanding of the meaning that participants assigned to their words. There are gestures and physical movements that reflect emotions and intentions that are not captured neither on text nor in audio. Nevertheless, audio recording does capture the vocal tones that accompanied those visual observations. At the end, words, visuals and audio are the means to interpret participants messages. Combining content analysis and face-to-face semi-structured interviews was a very useful approach to gain deep understanding of the context and to also be able to ask better questions.

The process all the way from the definition of the topic, the proposal, the elaboration of the instrument, the data analysis and the writing of the thesis, is very intense because of its iterative nature. Several revisions and corrections, back and forth, with supervisors are necessary for reaching accuracy.

Data analysis

The data obtained out of the questionnaire pilot testing was the initial step to assess what kind and quality of information was being obtained. It is an opportunity for practicing and developing an analysis technique. During this process the data is not analyzed until every piece is collected; the analysis starts from the moment the first piece is collected and all the data collected is brought along and revisited many times from the beginning until the end. Some information that initially did not have any meaning or relevance became understandable, relevant and helpful once succeeding data was collected and analyzed. Some other data already present got stronger or acquired a different meaning by complementing it with the additional pieces.

While interviewing and listening to the participants' answers, a voluntarily or involuntarily data analysis process starts; after that, listening and transcribing data myself was a second opportunity to continuing building up on this process. Although, while reviewing literature and

consulting methods sources, I did not become aware of the importance of doing so; as for now I consider it one of the more useful decisions made in terms of data collection. I should mention I am aware this was only feasible due to the small scale of the sample for this exploratory project.

WHAT DID I CHANGE BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND THE FINAL PRODUCT AND WHY?

It was initially proposed to only collect data using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. At the early stage of the data collection using this technique, it was evident the need for a additional data collection technique in order to add completeness. The interviews were planned to be fifty minutes long aiming to have enough time to fulfill the research ethics board review requirements and margin for the probing questions; in practice the whole process lasted around at most thirty minutes. A potential follow up interview was considered as an intent to have an opportunity for clarification; that second interview was not required because the researcher considered the initial information sufficient to accomplish the research goal.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES AND HOW WERE THEY MANAGED?

The initial challenge was finding an organization that was interested and open to host the research. Many organizations were contacted as potential hosts but they did not answered or denied access to conduct the research with their employees. Fortunately as soon as PRC was contacted, they demonstrated eagerness to collaborate. They were absolutely open in terms of the topic to be explored.

The second important challenge was getting participants to the actual interviews because of their schedules. This was minimized by being absolutely available in terms of dates, time, and location. The participants convenience was always a priority.

WHAT I AM MOST PROUD OF IN THE PROCESS?

Since the topic was unknown for me, I consider valuable the fact that throughout the process I developed an ability to grow in terms of knowledge in order to be up to the challenge. I also had the opportunity to turn to many sources for input to improved the research execution (methods, analysis, etc).

As a foreign student, I was capable of overcoming language barriers to communicate through written and oral means. I was also capable deal with cultural, professional or any another sort of differences.

The honest and open relationship developed with both my supervisors and PRC were central for successfully developing and conducting the project. This aspect was also helpful not to feel discouraged and to keep engaged until completion.

WHAT IMPACT I WOULD LIKE MY RESEARCH TO HAVE AND HOW I INTEND FOR THAT TO HAPPEN?

I intend to benefit the local community by helping PRC to keep and build up their significant role in the city so they can gain access to all the necessary resources to maintain operations and therefore reach their full potential. The community will benefit from having an even more focused parks, recreation and culture department that identify its needs and priorities while being capable of managing its resources to address them from the recreation standpoint. According to PRI, one of the reasons for using a social capital approach is: "To increase program sensitivity to existing patterns of social capital" which purpose is "To raise awareness among decision makers about the potential impacts or new interventions or changes or changes in policy directions on the social capital already present...". This will be partially achieved by using the research as an opportunity to initially expose managers to the social capital concept. After that awareness phase, sharing the research rational and findings with them will provide an occasion for dialogue and hopefully leave a knowledge legacy in the organization.

Finally, from a personal perspective, the significant amount of knowledge acquired regarding social capital and recreation within the parks, recreation and culture real world context is a major asset gained for my professional development. In the future, I expect to accumulate more expertise and prove the utility of the recreation-social capital relationship by having the opportunity to apply it under real circumstances.

APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX D

FACE-TO-FACE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW



FACE TO FACE SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: _____ Time: _____ Code: _____

In order to protect your anonymity and the anonymity of other participants and non-participants, it is important that you refrain from using names of individuals or discussing details of incidents that may lead to yourself or other individuals being identified. However, if you do so, every effort will be made to avoid identifying you, and other participants and non-participants to whom you may refer, by name or by any other specific fact or statement that may reveal your identity.

1. What is your role within the City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (NPRC)?
2. How does your specific area contribute to the NPRC mission?
3. What do you think are the specific benefits the NPRC Department offers to the Nanaimo community?
4. Social Capital is: "the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively to develop and sustain strong relationships; solve problems and make group decisions; and collaborate effectively to plan, set goals, and get things done (Phillips & Pittman, 2008, p.6)"
 - a. **Are you aware of this concept?** Can you explain your understanding (thoughts) of it?
 - b. **How do you think recreation is related to the social capital definition previously mentioned?**
 - c. Can you comment on what specific benefits to the community you perceive as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital?
5. Do you have specific examples of how your activities within the NPRC Department contribute to the relationship between recreation and social capital?
6. Do you have any additional thoughts or comments about what we have talked about?

APPENDIX E

INVITATION



My name is Augusto Dominguez, I am currently a student of the Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management Program at VIU.

As a requirement for graduation I am in the planning stage of a research project that will take the form of a thesis. This is the reason I am inviting you to voluntarily collaborate with me as a participant. The project's title is: "EXPLORING THE OPINIONS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE MANAGERS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RECREATION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ITS BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY"

As part of the managerial staff whose general responsibilities involves instructing staff, providing direction, deploying organizational information, setting goals and activities, supervising and evaluating programs, you will be asked to attend an initial 50 minute appointment to be interviewed regarding your thoughts, opinions and experiences about the topic. In order to protect your anonymity as a participant, a private meeting room on VIU campus is highly recommended as an ideal location to conduct the interview. After that initial 50 minute session, it is possible you might be contacted for a second session in order to validate or clarify some relevant information or just to share with you the outcomes of the research project.

Along with this invitation you are receiving a consent form so you are properly informed about the details of this project and what you are expected to do while participating. Please review it and contact me to set an interview. Before you participate in the interview, I will provide a copy of this form that I will review with you and ask for your signature at that time as an evidence of your informed participation. It is very important that you know that your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time and for any reason without explanation and without penalty. You may choose not to answer any question for any reason.

If you are able and willing to participate, please contact me via e-mail so we can set up an appointment according to your convenience:

Augusto Dominguez
Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management Student
Vancouver Island University
poblanete@yahoo.fr

If you have any question or concern about this research project, you can contact me or:

Joanne Schroeder, MA, Supervisor
Department of Recreation and Tourism
Vancouver Island University
joanne.schroeder@viu.ca
Tel. (250) 753-3245, local 2832

or

VIU Research Ethics Officer
Tel. 250-753-3245, local 2665
reb@viu.ca

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project!

APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM



**"EXPLORING THE OPINIONS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
MANAGERS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RECREATION AND
SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ITS BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY"**

OCTOBER, 2012

Augusto Dominguez Quintana,
Sustainable Leisure Management Student
poblanete@yahoo.fr
Vancouver Island University

Joanne Schroeder, MA, Supervisor
Department of Recreation and
Tourism
Vancouver Island University
(250) 753-3245, local 2832

I am a Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management student conducting research that I have designed to learn about your opinions regarding recreation, social capital and their benefits to the community.

During this study, you will be asked to voluntarily attend to a 50 minute (approximately) face to face interview and you may also be requested to attend a second shorter session. The second session will only occur if there is any doubt or slight possibility of ambiguity or inaccuracy about the meaning of your words, phrases and expressions during the interview. Clarification on your answers aims to accurately reflect your opinions. You will not be asked additional questions during this session. The first and the second sessions fall under the data collection phase which comprehends a three month period. You will be asked to accept an invitation to an appropriate location to conduct a face to face interview. In order to protect your anonymous participation, it is highly recommended that the interview takes place in a private meeting room on VIU campus. Your participation requires you to answer a number of brief questions concerning your thoughts, opinions and experiences within the City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (NPRC) context. With your permission, I will be making notes,

the interview will be audio-recorded and used only for the purposes of verifying the accuracy of how your views are represented in my research.

All records (written, audio and electronic documents) of participation will be kept strictly confidential, such that only I and my supervisor will have access to the information. Electronic data will be stored in a password protected personal computer and printed data such as notes and questionnaire will be stored in a locked filing cabinet within my supervisor's office at Vancouver Island University. Data will be destroyed by shredding at the end of the project, approximately by the end of June 2013. Electronic files will also be deleted at that time. The results from this study will be reported in a written research report and an oral report during the research project's presentation. Information about the project will not be made public in any way that identifies you as an individual. Anonymous quotes from your interview may be included in those reports in order to support and strengthen the validity of the research, however, comments will be presented in a fashion that will protect your anonymity and the anonymity of others who you may reference in your responses. Every effort will be made to avoid identifying you, and other participants and non-participants to whom you may refer, by name or by any other specific fact or statement that may reveal your identity. However, there is still a risk that you and other participants and non-participants could still be inadvertently identified.

There are no known harms for you associated with this project. It can potentially help you understand your present role's contributions to the community as well as the NPRC's ones.

It is very important that you know that your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time and for any reason without explanation and without penalty. You may choose not to answer any question for any reason. If you withdraw from the study, any information you have provided prior to withdrawal will be excluded from study results and immediately destroyed.

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Officer, by telephone at 250-753-3245 (ext, 2665) or by email at reb@viu.ca.

If you have any questions about this research project, or would like more information before, during or after the research project is conducted, please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address below:

Augusto Dominguez Quintana,
Sustainable Leisure Management Student
Vancouver Island University
poblanete@yahoo.fr

I have read the above form, understand the information read, understand that I can ask questions or withdraw at any time. I consent to allow today's interview audio-recorded and to participate in today's research study.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX G

EXTRACTS AND QUOTES INVENTORY

CONTENT ANALYSIS (EXTRACTS)

A) Identified potential recreation contributions to social capital.

THEME 1: Cooperation

- Gather/Congregate
 - "Art also allows people to express and **share** their cultures and ideas **with members of the community**"
 - "Plants...attract **people to the public realm**".
 - "Nanaimo has approximately 20 organized field sport user groups with over 7,000 **participants and coaches**, in organized field sports...There is also a **large number of citizens** not affiliated with a registered club that **play casually**..."
 - "There are also **countless supporters/spectators** for each participant on the field...it suggests a **large percentage of the population enjoys field sports**..."
- Relationships
 - "The arts enrich communities in Nanaimo by helping people **relate to their neighbours**..."
 - "...fostering **relationships** with volunteer groups to help achieve this goal."
 - "Continue building **relationships** with the RDN and School District 68."
- Participation
 - "Provide services (arena, aquatic, and recreation and culture) that **encourage strong community participation**";
 - "Maintain a system of parks, trails and open spaces that **encourage strong community participation**".
- Partnerships
 - "**Partnerships** are becoming essential to community facilities, ranging from the sharing of capital costs to the operation of entire facilities, to programs operation, to sponsorship, to contracting of food services."; "The most important **partnership**...with School District #68. This will allow...to also **work together** for the further availability of various user group function opportunities."; "As mentioned, a **partnership** with the school district will hopefully materialize in the near future and would allow for discussions on temporary field availability, but also field acquisition."
 - "A **community partnership**...could allow for more sustained improvement by having many groups contribute to ongoing project completions rather than the present isolated contributions."
- Teamwork
 - "and teaches important human qualities like...**team spirit**..."

- "...an individual can: 'learn'...personal life lessons that revolve around **teamwork...**"
- Connect
 - "...provides opportunities for participants to...**connect...**with other **community members...**".
- Engagement
 - "The Parks, Recreation and Culture department is actively trying to **engage** the **teen youth** of the community in programming such as field sport teams."
- Friendships
 - "provides opportunities for **participants...**to **grow friendships...**".
- Socialize
 - "...provides opportunities for participants to...**socialize with other community members...**"

THEME 2: Support

1. Access to places, opportunities and services/Inclusion
 - "The trend is to shift **access** benefits...to the **disadvantaged groups** with greater need for the access discount"
 - "... develop, adopt and implement a strategy that allows **all citizens** of Nanaimo **access...**"
 - "Multi-purpose facilities...enable communities to provide **access** to a **broad range of client groups.**"
 - "There is a growing trend to advocate the use of leisure programs and service to...**break down ethnic divisions and create better understanding between different cultures**"
 - "...adopt and implement a strategy that allows all citizens of Nanaimo **access...**"
 - "Field sports provides opportunities for Nanaimo residents to "Learn, Train and Play"
 - "...develop the sites so that they meet the everyday needs of users at all community levels"
 - "**Accessibility** will ensure that playing fields are more readily available and affordable for bookings, as well as geographically distributed around town"
 - "Playability will strive for better field conditions, maintenance infrastructure, and amenities"
 - "...developing and maintaining a variety of open spaces...will enhance the...**leisure opportunities** within the City..."
 - "Offering alternative **routes between** parks, residences and parks, work spaces, shopping and other services..."
2. Foster an appropriate environment
 - " ...develop the sites so that they foster an appropriate tournament environment"

THEME 3: Impact on behaviour.

- "Recreation **reduces health care, social service and police/ justice costs.**"
- "...participation in team sports **lower crime and antisocial behaviour...**"
- "This sector (arts and culture) stimulates growth...**stabilizing neighbourhoods...**"
- "...local Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments are an integral part of **social service delivery**, responding to **homelessness, drug use...**and a myriad of community-based **social issues...**"
- "There is a growing trend to advocate the use of leisure programs and services to **reduce crime, to reduce risk factors for youth at risk...**"

B) Identified potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship between recreation and social capital.

THEME 1: Service brokerage.

3. Access to resources

- "This sector (arts and culture) stimulates growth...while creating **jobs...**"
- "**Teaches** important **human qualities** like determination, dedication,...and hard work."
- "Potential **access to scholarships** for post-secondary education"

THEME 2: Material goods and services.

4. Child care

- "...local Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments are an integral part of social service delivery, responding to...**child care** needs..."

5. Informal health

- "Programs that help enhance the **mental, physical, and emotional health** of our clients continue to be offered for all age groups."

THEME 3: Reinforcement of positive behaviours.

1. Stay active, Healthy living, quality of life, balance, fairness, volunteerism

- "Increased importance is being placed on the value of participation in leisure and physical activity as part of a **healthy lifestyle.**"
- "...develop, adopt and implement a strategy that allows all citizens of Nanaimo ...opportunity to enjoy an **active life style**"
- "enhancing the **quality of life** and leisure through Active for Life which promotes life-long **physical activity**"
- "...provides opportunities for participants to engage in **healthy physical activity...**"
- "...if we engage the youth early in their adolescent development with **physical activity**, they are more likely to remain active as an adult..."
- "Recreation and active living are essential to **personal health**"
- "Recreation and parks are essential to the **quality of life**"
- "...developing and maintaining a variety of open spaces...will enhance the **quality of life...**"
- "The investment will...improve the **quality of life** for residents"
- "...teaches important human qualities like **fairness...**"

- "**Equitability** will promote **fairness** to all user groups regardless, of their respective field sport, gender, or age."

THEME 4: Community enhancement

2. Community

- "Recreation and Parks build strong families and **healthy communities**"
- "To be active in fostering Nanaimo as a **healthy community**"
- "In fact, parks, recreation and culture plays a critical role in the building of **healthy communities** in British Columbia. These services enhance the **health and well being of BC residents**"
- "Cultural Development is widely recognized...to be of vital importance to the **quality of community life**"

3. Environment

- "These services...**protect** the **environment**."
- "...using a greenways approach in serving recreation, transportation and/or **conservation** functions."
- "Greenways trails can help to **preserve** corridors for wildlife to move between habitats, to **protect** water quality, offer flood plain control, **reduce** erosion on river banks and with trees and vegetation, **reduce** air pollution and temperature gains."
- "Plan trails along waterways to **avoid detrimental impacts** on riparian habitat;...protect fisheries..."
- "To plan, provide and **maintain** horticultural areas in an **environmentally responsible** manner for the future generations to enjoy."
- "...to enhance the identification and **protection** of Nanaimo's **environmentally significant features**."

FACE-TO-FACE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (QUOTES)

C) Recognized potential recreation contributions to social capital.

Theme 1: Cooperation.

- "I think there's a social aspect of **meeting people**"
- "obviously our objective is to get **people out**..."
- "They can **get together**, they **grow things together**, they **work together**...they like to **do something with other people**, so it's social..."
- "...people can go outside...they can **interact with** whatever age group they want"
- "I think we give the community opportunities to **meet each other** and **engage with one another**...it's quite easy that people would never meet and never cross paths and really **actively engage with one another**."
- "One of the main functions that we as a department do is around **community building**..."
- "It **builds community**...a sustainable community in the sense of seniors **working with** teens rather than...everyone sitting behind the doors because of the fear of going outside.
- "...we want our community to do is to be able to develop **sustained strong relationships**..."

- "Some of this community groups would **pull together**, gets a whole neighbourhood **together**, they get behind an specific idea."
- "so really what it does is it gets **people together**..."
- "...**connecting people** with people, **connecting** groups and organizations with others, trying to **build partnerships**..."
- "...getting those like minded **people together** or people that are involved in similar types of activities **together** in a room and connecting people..."
- "...create that **social contact**..."
- "...we have the ability to make **partnerships** and to **meet** a number of groups and organizations...so we have the ability to **touch** a number of people"
- "**connect** the different people or the different groups...so they can **come together**"
- "**Social contacts** for sure, it's around just making those **connections** with people"
- "...not only is all about, you know, the craft fair but **social interaction** that comes from that."
- "I think it **builds community** too"
- "**working together** to community, that's what we do...we do **work together** to solve problems, how do we move an idea forward, how are we going to fund it, how do we **partner** on it..."
- "we do a lot of **partnerships**...and that has some real benefits too...when we **work together collectively** who knows what can happen."
- "...by doing these **partnerships**, we have the opportunity to kind of leverage some of those ideas..."
- "**working with** countless community user groups..."
- "...a real **partnership** with community groups...So there is a lot of **relationships**...equal **partnership**"
- "I think we play a **partnership** role..."
- "I think we need to be seen as **partners**."
- "...**more heads** are better than one..."
- "people coming **together**...making that happen when **working together**"
- "**working with people** that...still have a role to play in that conversation...still need to have a seat at that table"

Theme 2: Support.

- "...one thing that we do is we **create spaces** that people can interact in."
- "...we've got now close to a hundred and fifty kilometres of **trails**..."
- "one of the fastest growing components in our community is **community gardens**."
- "I think we have a **very good parks system**. That's about **facilities** for people to use..."
- "...that is so much of what we provide whether through the actual programs and **services** or through the **infrastructure** that other groups and organizations use"
- "...the **infrastructure** that people can make use of. Whether they gather there...or just those **central hubs** and **connecting points**."
- "...having the **infrastructure**...they can make use of...**The Port Theatre...our museums, symphonies, the amenities of the aquatic centre, the arenas, and those things that occur within those**."
- "So included in all our parks we have all kinds of amenities and **recreational opportunities**. From our **trail system**, we have **playgrounds**, we've got **sport fields**."
- "I think the value in parks operations is in the **open spaces**..."
- "So I think our **parks** side of things is good...just for **gathering places**"
- "It gives people a **place** and an opportunity to practice...and develop their abilities for social capital."

Theme 3: Impact on behaviour.

- "...Then our **vandalism** is down..."

Theme 4: Capacity building.

- "people are just **helping** people out because they need to, they want to **help** people out..."
- "you are more likely to **help** somebody out...if you know them."
- "...the community can **help** do for themselves or we can **assist** in doing that..."
- "we **support** either through by **assistance**..."
- "we also do a lot of **facilitation**..."
- "So providing some **leadership** around...**what is** some successful programming and **how they can** market their cultural product differently"
- "**bonding** the family and **nurturing** the family"
- "...it's about **facilitating** and **helping** them grow..."
- "...we **help** families grow..."
- "...we give people the opportunity to **test themselves**"
- "We get to see what it's like to do our best and **we push them to do that..**"
- "...their lease ran out so they wanted to find somewhere else...**we took them** and **we worked with** them and we did the whole museum."
- "...we get the...surveying, get everybody...to a meeting...we have some major discussion...some good discussion and then, if there's a desire we create a local committee...**we give them examples**..."

D) Recognized potential benefits for the community as a result of the relationship

between recreation and social capital.

Theme 1: Service brokerage.

- "we work with certain groups...right from the creation of the bid through attending bid...conferences and **getting them** to hosting the actual events."
- "we've been working with VIHA (Vancouver Island Health Authority)...in developing programs in order to work with local diabetes chapter, ms chapter, cancer, alzheimer's, and **partnering with** them to provide programs that **assists in those treatments**"
- "...**it benefits the health care program**..."
- "I know they've (coordinators) got that **health** among us."
- "our **connection with health**...and **add to the medical system** as much as we can...that when people think of parks, recreation and culture; they think of health too as much as they think of the doctor"
- "...whether that's a dance class...learning to sing...I think we educate children, our preschool programs and our arts programs and our music and all those programs **help raise our community's children**"

Theme 2: Emotional support.

- "...they're assigned a leisure **counselor** through the PRC and it **teaches** the whole family **how to engage in recreation** whether be, you know, touring our facilities so they **feel comfortable coming to rent a pair of skates or getting the pool and put on bath suit and knowing that it's not about Olympic athletes, we don't have to look a certain way.** That there's all body shapes and forms and types. **Whether you can swim or not, doesn't mean you can't**

come to the pool. Whether is taking a pottery class together, so it's...**the focus isn't in physical ability...**"

Theme 3: Reinforcement of positive behaviours.

- "...lead toward **healthy living, active life...**"
- "you just have to be **active**"
- "So pretty much the prevention of disease and **promotion of health through activity and social contact.**"
- "Creating that infrastructure allows people to **get out and stay active.**"
- "they want to be able to **get out** and enjoy the surroundings..."
- "...they need to know that this belongs to them; if not they just take it for granted...they buy in, the **ownership**; and it is **used more and maintained better.**"
- "I think that when you build parks and you build rec and civic facilities that people believe in; I do believe that people do take **ownership** on that because that is their city"
- "...so they take **ownership**...that's worked really well"

Theme 4: Community enhancement.

- "A lot of **community development** work..."
- "...**community development** which parks, recreation and culture that really is our mandate"
- "Improve the quality **of life and leisure in the community**"
- "...we also see what is **beneficial** to the community for **quality of life**"
- "secure land and maintaining it for the **environmental enhancement** of the community"
- "...the end result: a **healthier community**, higher **quality of life**, leisure in the community"
- "...it's general **quality of life** of course because that is so much of what we provide..."
- So it creates a more **safe, sustainable, livable community**, where people can go outside and feel safe..."
- "...the **economic benefit** too...facilities are obviously primarily built for citizens ...but they definitely bring sports tourism and cultural tourism..."
- "the **economic driver** is whether it's hockey tournaments or baseball tournaments bringing in large scale special events...having the infrastructure...not only them having a **direct economic impact** but if companies and businesses are looking to locate or come to Nanaimo..."
- "we just don't make it **better** for ourselves, we make it **better for everybody**...for our **kids**, for our **neighbours**, for **everybody** in our **community**"
- "I think...we push the **community forward** at times."