**Abstract**

In *Bowling Alone* Robert Putnam considers the possibility that the growth of private health clubs and the rising rates of membership to such clubs might represent a counter-trend to his thesis on the decline in social capital. In this paper I explore this idea using ethnographic data and social network analysis. I show both that and how networks form in health clubs and I discuss the ways in which these networks constitute social capital for their members. In addition, however, I explore the ‘dark side’ of this form of social capital. I argue that high integration amongst some members of a fitness class can generate a power differential between those members and other, less integrated members who experience this negatively. Furthermore, with an eye on Burt’s (2005) important thesis on brokerage and closure, I argue that brokerage between relatively closed clusters of agents can lead to inter-group rivalry and conflict, which, in turn, is experienced negatively by those involved.

**Keywords:** Social networks; social capital; gyms; health clubs; brokerage and closure; established and outsiders

In this paper I push the social capital debate forward by way of a qualitative examination of network formation, network figurations and their effects. Focusing upon a private health club in the Greater Manchester area of the UK, I analyse: (1) the processes by which informal networks form in this context and the mechanisms involved; (2) the manner in which such networks serve as a resource for their members; and (3) the ‘dark side’ of this particular form of social capital. The analysis is distinctive because it integrates participant observation and social network analysis, at the methodological level, and because it focuses upon mechanisms of social capital. These innovations facilitate a deepening of our understanding of social capital.
A health club may seem like an unusual context in which to examine social capital. The ‘social capital debate’, triggered by Putnam’s (2000) *Bowling Alone*, has tended to be focused upon political, charitable or business-related activities. There is no necessity for this, however, given any of the classic definitions of the concept (i.e. Coleman 1990; Bourdieu 1980; 1986; Putnam 2000). Indeed Bourdieu’s (1980, 1986) main discussions of social capital are primarily focused upon leisure and sporting contexts, and Putnam (2000), in addition to taking bowling as the central metaphor for his book, explicitly discusses health club membership as a form of social capital. A case study of health club-based networks is, therefore, an important corrective to the bias of much contemporary work. In addition, evidence from Norway suggests that sports club membership, which is similar, correlates with higher levels of general social and political trust (Seippel 2006). This suggests a link between leisure-based networks and the concerns of wider debates on social capital.

More importantly, health clubs are unusual in an important respect. Putnam’s key argument with respect to social capital in the USA concerns its decline. Americans, he argues, are less likely now than previously to belong to one of the range of informal associations comprising ‘civil society’. There is clearly scope for international variation with respect to this trend and early research on the UK suggested that the pattern does not hold here (Hall 1999). However, more recent research contradicts this, pointing to a decline in the UK too (Halpern 2005), and an Economic and Social Research Council fact sheet¹ on social capital, which summarizes the available evidence, suggests that it is ‘stable or declining’ in the UK. Certainly it is not increasing, as it is held to be in Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden. As Putnam notes in relationship to the USA and I can confirm for the UK, however, health club membership is increasing. The number of health clubs in the UK and the rate of subscription to such clubs have risen steadily and consistently over the last 10 years (Mintel 2003). Indeed there was an 18 per cent increase in the number of private health clubs in the UK in the four year period between 1998 and 2002 alone, with numbers of members of such clubs, nationally, rising from 2.16 to 3.78 million; that is, 4.6 per cent of the adult population to 7.8 per cent (Mintel 2003). Health club/gym membership is interesting and important, therefore, because its growth bucks the downward trend that we find for other clubs and associations. Moreover, private health clubs are believed to have only half of the market share in health clubs as a whole, with schemes in public facilities holding the other half. Indeed, a recent ‘Citizens Audit’, which involved a representative sample of the British electorate, found that 14 per cent of the population belong to a gym, a figure just two percentage points lower than trade union membership (16 per cent), double that of church/religious membership (7 per cent) and over four times greater than membership of environmental, animal rights or women’s groups (3 per cent each) (Citizen Audit 2002). Given the
importance attributed to these other forms of membership in social capital debates there is a strong rationale for looking at what is happening in health clubs and gyms.

Putnam is not inclined to attribute great significance to this. He argues that the figures are deceptive as social capital is only likely to form, in health clubs, in the classes (e.g. aerobics) which bring people together and the number of club members who participate in such classes will be lower than the overall number of members. I agree that classes increase the likelihood of network formation and focus upon classes in this paper but that does not alter the fact that health club membership is growing and that classes within such clubs are a potential source of social capital. Social capital in health clubs is important, therefore, because it is a new and growing form.

Social capital

Before I discuss my study it is necessary to introduce the concept of social capital. The literature is too vast and diverse to admit even a review of reviews here (see Field 2003; Fine 2001; Halpern 2005; Lin 2001; Lin, Burt and Cook 2001). Some key issues must be discussed, however, in order that I can be clear what I mean by ‘social capital’. All writers agree that social capital refers to the manner in which networks and their emergent properties (e.g. trust and norms) can constitute a resource for their members but this basic insight has been developed in diverse ways. I begin by distinguishing between elite and mundane conceptions.

The elite conception is posited by Bourdieu (1980, 1986). For him, social capital involves ‘friends in high places’ or ‘old boy networks’. As such it is not reducible to economic and cultural capital but its acquisition is predicted by them because ‘friends in high places’ are acquired in social contexts, such as elite schools and select golf clubs, which have economic and cultural entry barriers, and because ‘networking’, in Bourdieu’s view, is a characteristic disposition of social elites. This elite conception, which Bourdieu develops in relation to observations on the UK as well as France, contrasts with the more mundane conceptions of Coleman (1990), Putnam (2000) and Burt (2005). Any social network can potentially confer advantage upon its members for these writers. A poor community with networks of mutual support, for example, is better off than one without.

In this paper I adopt the mundane conception. Bourdieu’s conception is very important but firmly rooted in his broader project of analysing the reproduction of specific forms of economic and cultural domination. Unless we are engaging with this project it is overly narrow and restrictive. For this reason, and because private health clubs tend to be ‘middle brow’ rather than elitist, the mundane conception is more appropriate.
It is also worth noting that, for Coleman (1990), social capital is often akin to a public good; it is shared by all who belong to a network, irrespective of their contribution to it. This has two implications for Coleman. Firstly, given the free rider problem (e.g. Olson 1971), it is not rational for individuals to pursue the generation of social capital as a primary aim of their activity. Secondly, consequently, the generation of social capital tends to be an unintended by-product of activities oriented to other goals. This is a problematic argument, in my view, as social capital is not always a public good; networks are not always beneficial to all of their members, certainly not equally so, and there are therefore private incentives which might attach to networking activity. Nevertheless, his argument is plausible for some networks and further distinguishes his position from Bourdieu’s, which theorizes networking as the strategic pursuit of social capital. The notion of social capital as an accidental public good has a strong *prima facie* resonance in relation to the case study discussed in this paper and I am therefore inclined, for present purposes, to side with Coleman over Bourdieu in this respect too.

How is mundane social capital to be defined? In practice many empirical studies, including Putnam’s (2000), equate the existence of social capital either with the existence of networks and their supposed by-products (e.g. trust and norms) or with some proxy for these. Coleman (1990) offers a more precise definition, however. He refuses to associate social capital with networks, norms etc. *per se* and argues rather that it consists in whatever facilitative functions they can be shown to serve. Social capital is a function rather than a thing. This seems appropriate as ‘capital’ suggests ‘resource’ which, in turn, suggests facilitation. As Coleman argues, social capital is a property of social relations, rather than individuals, and, as such, cannot be exchanged. It only has a *use value*, no exchange value. Nevertheless, to talk of social capital is to recognize the *use value* of social connections for the individuals involved in them and, as such, it is important to focus upon this value in our definition of it. ‘Facilitative functions’ does this.

The attention to facilitative functions is also important methodologically. Research on social capital must begin by identifying networks and their by-products. We cannot research the facilitative functions of emergent social forms without first locating such forms. However, there is a problematic empiricist tendency in the literature of seeking out correlations between measures of social capital, defined simply as membership or trust, and measures of other forms of well-being, without considering the mechanisms that allow social capital to enhance well-being (on further methodological problems see van Deth 2003; Devine and Roberts 2003). Defining social capital in terms of facilitative functions begins to address this since it forces us to attend to the ways in which networks and their by-products acquire use value. It turns the analytic spotlight upon mechanisms (on mechanisms see Hedström and Swedberg 1998).
The inattention to mechanisms in much social capital research forms part of a wider problem of what a number of authors have criticized as ‘variable analysis’ (Abbott 2001; Blumer 1986; Pawson 1989; Hedström and Swedberg 1998). In his critique of variable analysis, Abbott (2001) observes that most social theory is concerned with the actions of and relations between agents, whilst most empirical research (in his US context) is concerned with the action of and relationships between variables. Relationships between variables, he continues, do not translate into relationships between agents; do not necessarily inform us with respect to those relations; and may even obscure them. There is a problematic gulf between theory and empirical research which must be bridged. Similarly, Hedström and Swedberg (1998) argue that attention to mechanisms (and actors) is necessary if researchers are to identify genuine causal relations and avoid attributing undue significance to spurious statistical associations. This is not to deny the value of variable analysis but it does clearly circumscribe that value and alert us to the need for more innovative research methodologies. This critique applies to the social capital debate. We know a lot about the statistical link between proxy variables for social capital and well-being variables but it is necessary to delve deeper; to look at the social connections, networks and mechanisms that constitute social capital. We need research which more precisely maps on to our theoretical apparatus.

One obvious way to do this is through social network analysis, and a number of sociologists have begun to explore this possibility empirically (Warde and Tampubolon 2002; Degenne and Forsé 1999; Burt 2005). In the second part of the paper, where I discuss the dark side of social capital, I follow this lead. I begin the paper in a more open, ethnographic vein, however, and maintain an ethnographic point of reference even as I shift into a more network analytic mode. Social network analysts have made massive advances on the quantitative side in recent years (see Carrington, Scott and Wasserman 2005). Qualitative analysis is also important, however, if we are to have a proper grasp of: the relations and interactions that constitute a network; the processes by which it was formed, has been transformed and may ultimately wither; the mechanisms involved in these processes; and the facilitative functions it serves for its members (see also Devine and Roberts 2003; Knox, Savage and Harvey 2006). Furthermore, as a number of prominent network analysts have argued, quantitative analysis of network structures can tend to delete agency and the dynamics of social interaction in such a way that the specificity of network effects and mechanisms remains obscure (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Smilde 2005; Gould 2003a). The effects that networks have, they argue, depend in some part upon the way in which their members use them and, more generally, upon interactions between those members. Qualitative research, they continue, is generally much better at accessing these details. For these reasons I have sought to ground my analysis, which uses formal network analytic ideas, in ethnography.
In summary then, I am interested in the formation of networks in the everyday context of a private health club. I take it that the networks involved are not elite networks, as such, and that their emergence, whilst it may involve specifiable mechanisms, begins as an unintended consequence of the activities of their members. I am interested in the facilitative functions of these networks for their members and I understand these functions to be, potentially at least, public goods in the sense that they are enjoyed by all involved in the network. As I noted at the outset of the paper, however, I am also going to explore the negative externalities of such networks and thus what Putnam dubs the ‘dark side’ of social capital.

A gym ethnography

The study reported here emerged out of my own membership of and regular visits to a private health club in the Greater Manchester (UK) area. Over a period of six years I had attended the club 4 times per week, with my wife. Initially I had resisted the temptation to turn this site of leisure into a research object but after six years I had accumulated a range of interesting observations about both the site and the practices of working out, and I thus elected to spend a period of eighteen months making more systematic observations. I became a participant observer.

Much of my focus was upon embodied practices of working out and the ‘vocabularies of motive’ that take shape around them (Crossley 2006, 2004). I was also aware of the processes of network formation that I had been and was involved in, however, and of the impact of these processes upon both practices of and motives for working out. I thus made notes of the way in which my network had formed and was sustained, of the various activities it seemed to embed and support, and of the various spontaneous accounts of it and of its role, which, I noted, were commonly voiced by its members.

Much of my observational work was conducted in the evening (between 7p.m. and 10p.m.), and at least a couple of my visits in any week involved participation in a class (usually circuit training). This is significant. Classes, as Putnam (2000) speculates, seem to involve a greater degree of social interaction than other club activities. And evening attendees might be presumed to be ‘making a night of it’ in a way that those who attend immediately before or after work, for example, are not. Had I observed the club, systematically and extensively, at other times I may have discovered different practices. My analysis must be read against this background, with the qualifications it necessitates.

My observations were conducted: in the changing rooms before and after sessions; in the gym; in the studio where classes were held; and in the relaxation area where gym-goers, dressed in swim gear, drink water, relax and use the saunas, steam room and jacuzzi. I did not interview people other than by way
of casual conversation. Mostly I sat and listened or joined in on on-going conversations, whatever they happened to be about.

The analysis that follows falls into three sections. In the first I focus upon the process of network generation and reproduction that I observed. In the second I identify the positive facilitative functions which constituted the network as a resource for its members. In the third I explore the ‘dark side’ of social capital by way of a consideration of both established-outsider figurations and inter-group rivalry.

**Processes and mechanisms of network formation and maintenance**

Most relationships that form in health clubs are casual. Regulars, if the times of their visits overlap, enjoy a ‘nodding acquaintance’. They exchange gestures of friendly recognition and chat around the water coolers, in the saunas and in the changing rooms. They may remark if they have not seen another ‘down here for a while’. But personal disclosure tends to be limited and obligations and interdependencies do not extend beyond those pertaining to the maintenance of a friendly and polite order within the gym. Classes, such as circuit training and aerobics, often intensify these relations, as Putnam (2000) suggests. The timing of participants’ arrivals and departures are more likely to coincide; they ‘bump into’ one another in the car park and changing room; they cluster as they wait for the previous class to vacate the room, perhaps grumbling that the other class always encroach upon what they might conceptualize as their (collective) time; and they work out in close proximity, with synchronized movements. They share in a ritual or a game with its own rules and its own rather unusual moves; a game where agents sometimes collide, physically, and where self-presentations are easily compromised by sweat, tiredness, accidents and dishevelment (Crossley 2004). Accidental intimacy is inevitable and friendly interaction is required to manage it. Nevertheless, social relations often remain at the level of casual acquaintance.

However, stronger relations do form in some instances. In this paper I focus upon one particular example of this. In this case group formation began when a cluster of approximately 10 people found themselves regularly meeting, once or twice a week, in the saunas during the final half-hour before the club closed. Over several months they became friends. Some of the members of this group attended at the times they did because they took part in a circuit training class; others happened to use the gym at that same time. All met regularly, however, initially by accident, in the sauna.

A number of analytical points should be observed here. A precondition of the formation of face-to-face relations is time-space coincidence. Agents have to meet if they are to get to know one another. This doesn’t just happen randomly, however. Classes such as circuit training draw groups of people
together in the same place, at the same time. Moreover, the closing time of the
gym served as a temporal marker which co-ordinated agents in time and space.
Anybody who doesn’t get to the club until late must break off their session at
more or less the same time if they are to ‘get a sauna in’, and will thus tend to
find himself/herself partaking in a regular collective ritual with others in the
same situation. Shared practices take shape and, for reflexive agents, so too
does a mutual recognition of the fact: a sense of ‘here we go again’. Classes and
timetables are, in this respect, mechanisms of network formation akin to what
Feld (1981; 1982) calls ‘social foci’. They bring people with shared interests
together and thus facilitate relationship formation.

In addition, the sauna encouraged conversation. It was small and intimate.
Agents were often squashed together in a stepped seating arrangement which
led some to sit on the feet of others. And some, inevitably, sat directly in the eye
line of others; others, that is, dressed only in swim wear. The situation was often
sufficiently ridiculous to motivate comment to that effect, initiating a process
dialogue and interaction. Furthermore, when the same people meet regularly,
norms of politeness require nods of recognition and this, in the absence
of anything else to do, often serves to open a conversation. Finally, it is impor-
tant to note the significance of cross-contextual meeting. I noted on a number
of occasions that agents who seemed not to talk to one another in the circuit
class did talk if they met in another context. I was stopped in the street on a
number of occasions by people from my circuit class, for example, who I did
not ordinarily talk to during the class. This is doubtless because previous
shared acquaintance only affords an opening for dialogue in contexts other
than the one in which it is formed. One cannot open a conversation with the
line ‘don’t I know you from circuit training?’ whilst in a circuit class. Further-
more, there is a moral pressure to ‘place’ agents, indicating that one knows
where one knows them from, when encountering them out of context. Such
norms of politeness tend to involve agents in a more sustained interaction than
they would ordinarily be involved in and lead to further interaction still, as
once opened a conversation must go somewhere, again for sake of politeness.
Furthermore, mutual acquaintance, however slight, may be the surest bet for
‘social survival’ in a context otherwise populated by strangers. The awkward-
ness attached to walking into a crowded sauna can be offset if one can identify
a ‘friendly face’ to talk to. For all of these reasons the sauna became a context
of relation building. Its context, rituals and physical construction mobilized a
number of mechanisms that, in combination, encourage social interaction and
the building of relationships.

Over time, a third and then fourth context of interaction was added to this
process of group formation: the pub and the curry house. Various dyads and
triads took off to the pub after a sauna relatively frequently but my main
concern is with group level events, which began one Christmas. The group
discussions that had, by that time, become customary in the sauna, turned to
the suggestion that we should all ‘have a pint, for Christmas’, next time we met. The success of the event prompted the suggestion that ‘we should do that more regularly’, which we did, adding in a visit to a local curry house. Over time a relatively self-conscious ritual emerged. ‘A meal’ was called for to celebrate the birthdays of group members, or such public events as Christmas, or sometimes just because ‘we’ve not been out for a while’.

Over time the membership of the group changed. Some left, others joined. New members generally became involved either because they knew or came to know an existing member of the group, who was their sponsor, or because they inadvertently turned up to the sauna and found themselves involved in a group event. In terms of the profile of the group, however, membership became almost exclusively composed of circuit training participants. The replacement of an old sauna with two new ones had an effect in this respect, as individuals who had not attended the class and/or did not belong to the group tended to gravitate towards whichever sauna the class group were not using, if only because the group’s sauna tended to become crowded and noisy. The existence of two saunas gave outsiders an alternative to mixing with the group and the dominance which the group enjoyed in ‘their space,’ combined with the way in which they inadvertently made their presence felt (see also below), provided an incentive for them to take it. The group became more exclusive in virtue of the disincentives to engagement with it which manifestations of its increased group-ness constituted for outsiders.

The formation of the group was, in the first instance, unintended and, to an extent, passed largely unnoticed by those involved. One might say that the group existed in-itself and also for-others outside of it, who sometimes made reference to ‘that lot’, but it did not yet exist for-itself. Over time, however, the group began to exist for-itself. A collective identity began to take shape and attendance at meals became a self-conscious, if informal initiation rite. New ‘members’ achieved recognition as ‘one of the gang’ by partaking in the group’s ‘feasts’ and one group member was named ‘social secretary’ – albeit jokingly. Moreover, the group’s collective identity entered into the process of its reproduction. Once the group existed for its members then those members were able to demand loyalty from one another: e.g. ‘c’mon, you can’t let the team down’. The existence of the group became an element in a ‘vocabulary of motive’ (Mills 1967) which agents were able to use in an effort to steer the conduct of both self and other (see also Crossley 2006).

One is reminded here of Durkheim’s (1915) analysis of the solidarity building function of festivals and rituals. Where Durkheim appears to conceive of solidarity building as what Merton (1968) calls a ‘latent function’, however, the agents in this example were reflexively aware of the way in which regular evenings out ‘pull us together’, and sometimes called for a night out on just these grounds: e.g. ‘we need a night out to gee us up a bit’. A vocabulary of motive took shape around the rituals of the group, as it did around the group
itself. In this respect, whilst the group was never planned or managed in a formal manner, its continued existence was dependent upon the recognition by some of its members of the need to revivify it every now and then, and upon both their practical ability and commitment to doing so. At another level, the rituals, collective identity and vocabularies of motive of the group were mechanisms of its formation and reproduction. They defined it and both established and renewed the bonds between its members.

The group that emerged in this context, although always in-process, remained socially heterogenous for the duration of my study. There tended to be more men than women in the group at any point in time but the group was never exclusively male and women were often vocal and influential. Likewise, members of the group had a wide range of national, ethnic and religious backgrounds. In terms of class most members of the group appeared to be relatively affluent, being either white-collar professionals or self-employed. However, there was a mix of manual and non-manual workers (the self-employed tending towards manual work) and of formal education levels. In terms of age, all members were under retirement age and over 18 but otherwise varied across that spectrum. There were only two points of homogeneity by my reckoning. Firstly, the group was exclusively heterosexual to the best of my knowledge. Secondly, most members had low levels of immediate family commitment either because (1) they had not (yet) started a family, (2) were divorced/separated or (3) had teenage children who did not need evening supervision. In addition, it is interesting that many members had not grown up in Greater Manchester. They were newcomers to the area. Arguably this made them more dependent upon the club for friendship networks.

The relationships that were built up in this context might best be described as casual friendships. For the most part friends met twice a week for a period of around two hours on each occasion. They chatted in changing rooms and before classes, worked out together in a circuit training class, had a sauna, steam bath and/or jacuzzi together and generally hung around chatting (except on curry and/or pub nights, when they went on for a drink and meal). Some members went on a cycling weekend together and some on a diving holiday. Some held house parties, to which their gym mates were invited. One couple (who met independently of the gym) got married and invited gym members to their wedding. Others had nights out in smaller groups. For the most part, however, friendships remained anchored to the club. Individuals who ceased attending the club generally dropped out of the wider circle of social activities surrounding it. The emotional intensity of relationships varied, not least as some pairs within the overall group were spouses or lovers. Generally, however, members expressed a care and concern for one another, exemplified, for example, by a tendency to ring individuals who failed to turn up to two or three consecutive classes to check they were OK and to ask probing questions if someone appeared distracted or out of sorts (seemingly feeling the duty,
right and inclination to do so). In a number of cases, moreover, there was an apparent ‘path dependence’ tending towards stronger friendships: activity spent with gym friends was time spent away from others friends, which strengthened gym ties and weakened others, leading to greater time being spent with gym friends and so on. This process, which overlaps with what Becker (1960) theorizes as a mechanism of ‘commitment’ was, in this case, a mechanism for generating further commitment to and dependence upon the group and was thus a mechanism of network formation and bonding.

Facilitative functions: social capital in action

A clearer picture of these friendships emerges if we turn to their ‘facilitative functions’. It is my contention that the group served a number of facilitative functions for its members. In what follows I will briefly describe the key examples.

Reframing the workout and maximizing physical advantages

Most people become members of a health club in an effort to lose weight, get fit or improve their health (Crossley 2006). The attendance of many drops off sharply after a few months, however, such that physical gains are relatively short lived. The group under discussion are an exception. They attended regularly and consistently, on a weekly basis, over a period of years. And the reason many gave for their continued attendance, in the periodic spontaneous discussions of ‘why we bother’ that were common, pointed to the importance of the group itself (Crossley 2006). The existence of friendships, promise of ‘a laugh’ and also the pranks and interactions that were woven around the activity of working out contributed to a process whereby it was (collectively) framed as ‘play’ and ‘fun’. What might have been and for many is viewed as ‘a hard slog’, involving pain, hard physical exertion and exhaustion, could be perceived as ‘a laugh’. There was more to attendance and working out than physical exercise: there were friends to relax with and gossip to catch up on. Individuals became involved in one another’s lives, following the stories of the others’ escapades in the wider world and relating their own. Exercise became a collective action and an ethic of fun, involving jokes, chatter and playful interactions was woven into it. Hard work was not thereby diluted, however. The group offered encouragement, competition and shared expectations of ‘going for it’, which motivated its members to work hard and thereby helped them to achieve both their workout objectives and the pleasurable ‘afterburn’ of a good session. ‘Slacking’ was punished by labelling it as such (albeit jokingly) and individuals were cheered on when, for example, racing on their ‘shuttle runs’ or performing a high number of repetitions of a particular exercise. In these respects the group
facilitated the pursuit of physical gains (health, fitness and slimness) by shifting the balance of costs and rewards involved. Group members felt that, in virtue of the group, they were more likely to turn up to train and more likely to work hard when they did.

Identity and recognition

Following on from this, the group created a social space for its members wherein they could develop an identity which was relatively independent of their work or family identity. Most members of the group only knew one another through their participation in circuit training classes, affording them an opportunity to bracket out the identities and criteria by which they were known and evaluated in the rest of their life; an opportunity to exert strong control over the flow of information regarding their wider life. On one level group members were often virtually naked in front of one another and, in classes, revealed much about their character and physical attributes. Of course some social information was revealed too, not least by way of what Bourdieu (1979) calls ‘bodily hexis’. It was sometimes apparent, for example, that members classified one another, socially, by reference to speech patterns (e.g. accent) and cultural know-how, as revealed in conversation topics or contributions. It was also apparent that, at least for some purposes, members connected with those they perceived to be on a similar ‘level’ to themselves: labelling others, for example, as a bit ‘posh’, ‘snobby’, ‘rough’, ‘dim’ or ‘crude’. In another respect, however, the details of wider roles were screened out and agents enjoyed a degree of autonomy in ‘self-presentation’, to borrow Goffman’s (1959) term, because they were the only source of information about their ‘outside’ life. And they received reinforcement and recognition for the identity they presented. An individual might be greeted, for example, with a collective ‘oh, here she is’ (in a ‘here comes trouble’ tone), with the implication that she would have something to say about whatever was going on or being discussed and that others were looking forward to hearing it. Individuals acquired playful inter-group identities as, for example, jokers, wheeler-dealers, rogues, sex maniacs, cultural sophisticates, adventurers, which they played up to, in accordance with the wider expectations of the group, and for which they were regarded fondly by others – who communicated their regard through friendly gestures and who generally colluded in practices of self-presentation. If, as many have argued, recognition and the existence of relatively autonomous spaces where an individual can control the flow of information regarding his/her self and develop a distinct identity is central to self-esteem, agency and psychological well-being (e.g. Honneth 1995; Goffman 1959, 1961; Simmel 1955), then the group again played an important facilitative role in this respect. It created a space wherein its members could enjoy an identity which was both valued by others and distinct from whatever other identities they enjoyed.
elsewhere in their life. It is relevant in this sense that a number of group members, on different occasions, expressed the view that their time spent at the gym was a time where the individual could ‘be him/her self’, dropping what by implication were portrayed as the pretences and controls required by interaction in other contexts. Of course it may be that on other occasions they felt and expressed the view that these other contexts were the outlet of their truth self but these claims at least indicate that the group was experienced as serving needs for identity and recognition.

**Counsel(ing)**

In a different vein, the group became a supportive space in which agents could discuss problems. Having said that work and family identities were generally suspended, for example, information regarding them was sometimes disclosed when the agent felt a need to talk. A number of members experiencing marital or relationship breakdowns (at different times) discussed the difficulties this was creating, for example, particularly in instances where circumstances were acrimonious, and sought advice from others about what they should do. Similarly, a number of individuals who were either threatened with imminent redundancy or were finding their circumstances at work unbearable discussed this openly in the sauna. Other group members were sometimes critical. Whilst they offered support, it was common for them to offer advice and, on occasion, a ‘reality check’. But they were also able to offer different perspectives upon an issue and thus to facilitate a fresh approach to problems. In this respect group members offered ‘counselling’ to one another in both the political and psychological senses of the term.

**Information**

Talk was also an important means of circulating information. In some cases this was information about exercise. In other cases it was information about the health club or other clubs in the area. In other cases still it was about interests that smaller sub-groupings within the group found that they shared. In one or two cases it was about employment and other economic opportunities. If such information is a valuable resource then access to it was another facilitative function of the group. Outside of the group its members belonged to very different walks of life, where they tapped into diverse sources of information. The group was a ‘junction box’ facilitating the flow of information between these sources. It is important to add here, however, that information flow was mediated by what Schutz (1973) calls ‘typifications’. I do not recall ever informing my gym mates of the publication of ‘Bourdieu’s latest book’, for example, despite enthusing about that book to work colleagues. Likewise, I do not recall exchanging tips on exercise with work colleagues,
when doing so with gym mates was commonplace. Whether or not information is passed from ego to alter depends upon whether alter is typified in such a way as to be deemed potentially interested in or receptive to it. The same filtering process was evident within the gym group. Particular sub-groups had interests in, for example, sub-aqua diving, motorbikes, alternative music and competitive running. Information about these topics was often exchanged within earshot of the group as a whole but it was addressed to members of the sub-group who were believed to have an interest in it and whose conversations tended, habitually, to gravitate in that direction. The filtering process periodically became conspicuous, when it was discovered that an interested party had not been recognized as such and had been filtered out of a dissemination process. Such occasions prompted a revision of typifications and it is fair to say that most typifications were permanently ‘in process’ as agents learned more about one another. An important implication of this filtering process, of course, is that access to information was not guaranteed by the existence of or belonging to the group itself. It was mediated by the processes of identification and typification that shaped and constituted bonds between members.

**Collective action**

In some cases information precipitated collective action. On a number of occasions, for different reasons, members of the group expressed grievances about the club and/or considered moving to one of the other clubs in the area. On each of these occasions the group acted collectively. Representatives approached the management, for example, taking grievances and attempting to use the size of the collective to negotiate a better membership deal: e.g. ‘can you do us a better deal if 25 of us agree to sign up?’ Or again, representatives visited new clubs, reporting back what they had found and prompting discussions about whether ‘we’ should move, again on the understanding that ‘we’, collectively, can get a better deal than an individual consumer and, indeed, that ‘we’ should decide and act together. Little was achieved by way of these negotiations. However, a small number of minor beneficial ‘deals’ were struck and it is at least significant that a sense of collective agency was generated.

Another aspect to collective action was involvement in and, in some cases, organization of charitable events. A number of runners, for example, both used their club-based network to generate sponsorship for their participation in marathon races and used both their connection to the club and the collective weight of their friendship group to negotiate free use of resources, such as function rooms, for fundraising events. Both the formal and the informal networks of relations involved in the club were resources that could be mobilized in the organization of charitable events.
Exchange of services

In addition to symbolic exchanges members also offered other services to one another. As they came from different occupational backgrounds, for example, many were able to offer professional advice to one another. And in some cases this extended to doing small jobs for one another based upon a professional competence. Many smaller jobs were done as a favour and without charge, largely because the ethos of the group encouraged this and reputations were maintained by way of it (on reputation see Burt 2005). One group member, an architect, for example, offered advice to a number of others on such issues as house prices, planning permission (for house extensions) and he even visited a house that one member was planning to buy, performing an informal but critical survey. Likewise, another member, who was an estate agent, often offered advice on the buying and selling of properties. Even where bigger jobs were done for the going rate, however, an element of social capital was involved. Several group members, including a joiner and a property dealer, regularly secured work through the gym, for example, because they enjoyed a (good) reputation amongst other members. But this also helped their customers, both potential and actual, by lessening the uncertainty and risk that can attach to randomly selecting a tradesman from the telephone directory, and increasing the incentive for the tradesman to do a good job at a reasonable price – bad reputations spread as quickly as good ones and have negative consequences. This was very important for those members who, as noted above, were not natives of Manchester and didn’t ‘know a good joiner’. It afforded them access to ‘embedded’ economic markets (Granovetter 1985). In this respect the ability of workers in one domain (e.g. joinery) to recommend friends or associates in another (e.g. plastering) was also highly valued. Finally, many smaller favours which were not rooted in work competence, such as looking after pot plants when a person was on holiday, were also exchanged within the group.

The facilitative functions of the group for its members were manifold therefore. If, as the literature suggests, membership has positive benefits for its members (e.g. Putnam 2000; Halpern 2005), it is because membership entails these advantages. These functions are the mechanisms that explain the purported causal relationship between, for example, membership and health or happiness. And it is important to reiterate that these functions entered into the ‘vocabularies of motive’ (Mills 1967) that agents used to account for their attendance at the club. It was not uncommon for members to explain that they felt motivated to attend the circuit class because of their bonds with other members of the group. As one group member put it, participation in the group ‘sort of plugs you into allsorts’ and was valued for this reason. Assuming, as I have argued elsewhere, that vocabularies of motive genuinely steer the conduct of agents, we can thus argue for a degree of ‘path dependence’ in the
formation of social capital; the formation of social capital generates incentives to partake in collective activities which, in turn, bolsters social capital (see Crossley 2006). Moreover, we can see that the positive benefits which group membership generated for its members was, qua incentive, a mechanism which contributed to the survival of the group.

The dark side

A number of writers on social capital, including Putnam (2000), concede that it may have a ‘dark side’ (see Coleman 1990; Putzel 1997; Schulman and Anderson 1999; Fine 2001). In particular it has been argued: 1) that the enhanced capacity for action facilitated by social networks can be used for negative as well as positive purposes (e.g. crime, terrorism and nepotism) (Coleman 1990); 2) that membership of networks can be restricted by entry barriers and can create social disadvantage for those excluded (Putnam 2000 and Bourdieu 1980); 3) that tightly bound communities can impose sanctions on individuals accused of crimes which make it difficult for the latter to enjoy full constitutional protection (Brody and Lovrich 2002); and 4) that where social capital has economic benefits this can sometimes be to the detriment of political life and, if social capital is being deliberately cultivated as a matter of policy, can obstruct (necessary) forms of state intervention (Putzel 1997; Harriss and de Renzio 1997).

In my study I too encountered a ‘dark side’. Specifically, the formation of a group and what Putnam (2000) calls ‘bonding capital’, with the benefits this generated for those inside the group, appeared to generate ‘negative externalities’ for those outside of the group and also in the context of ‘inter-group’ relations. Strong bonding capital, as Putnam sometimes predicts, created problems in relation to wider relations outside of the group (‘bridging capital’). This is not a new observation. I want to develop it here, however, by way of a focus upon the dynamics of specific network structures or (following Elias 1978) ‘figurations’. I want to show how specific figurations can have particular effects, thus constituting what Tilly (2006) calls relational mechanisms. In addition, I will show that figurations can be modelled and analysed, empirically, by way of the techniques of social network analysis (see Scott 2000). I will focus on two figurations. The first, which I take from the work of Elias and Scotson (1994), is the established-outsider figuration. In an established-outsider figuration, as I define it, a given population of individuals, whose actions are interwoven in at least one context and are thus liable to mutual interference, divide roughly into a group who are relatively well-bonded and who mutually benefit from their interconnectedness (the established), and a remaining mass of isolates, dyads and triads who do not coalesce as a group (outsiders). Outsiders neither enjoy the social capital of the established nor generate their own, since they do not
form a group. Moreover, they find themselves subject to negative externalities deriving from interference by the established. Elias and Scotson conceptualize this as deliberate ‘nastiness’ on behalf of the established but by my definition this is not necessarily so. In the case I will report there was no deliberate harm but there were unintended negative externalities.

The second figuration is what I call, borrowing from Burt (2005), a brokerage-closure figuration; that is, a network structure in which a small number of individuals (brokers) connect separate but internally dense (closed) groups. Brokers ‘bridge’ what Burt (1992) refers to as ‘structural holes’ in a network; that is, gaps in the network that would otherwise cause it to break into distinct components. Brokerage and closure are central to social capital for Burt. Closure entails that any two interacting individuals share a high number of mutual contacts. This tends to generate trust, cooperation and goodwill, which in turn facilitate a range of actions not otherwise available to agents, because each agent is motivated to be co-operative and trustworthy by an awareness that failure to do so will generate a bad reputation for them amongst others upon whom they depend; a reputation which would disadvantage them. There is a danger with closed groups, however, that they will stagnate because these same conditions have a conservative effect, stifling innovation, and because there is little opportunity for fresh ideas, information or resources to reach the group. Closed groups are closed off from external influences and resources. Brokerage is important because it creates a bridge to such influences and resources. Brokers open a path to wider pools of information, ideas and resources. And brokers themselves stand to benefit from this both because their control over the resource flow is a source of power and because they are in a position to take credit for ideas and information which they relay from one group to another. My observation of the brokerage-closure figuration suggested quite a different dynamic, as we shall see, but this is what Burt found. And he offers ample support for his case.

**Established and outsiders**

The group I have been discussing was, as I have indicated, always in-process. Members left and new one’s joined. Furthermore, boundaries were sometimes blurred. Some members who left did so gradually, slowly dropping off and periodically returning. Likewise, new members of the group only gradually worked their way into its core. Nevertheless, the group itself was a relatively durable feature of the social structure of the circuit class over a number of years. There are different ways of modelling this structure. I adopted two different methods, with complementary strengths and weaknesses.

Firstly, I constructed an ‘incidence matrix’ (see Scott 2000), recording the participation of all individuals involved in: 1) two once-weekly circuit training classes over a period of three months; 2) corresponding after-class sauna
‘meetings’; 3) four ‘group meals’ over a six month period which incorporates the above three month period. The matrix involved 43 individuals and 52 events. Using multi-dimensional scaling it was possible to convert this into a bi-plot in which the degree of similarity between individuals’ patterns of participation is reflected in their proximity (see Figure I). Individuals whose patterns of participation were similar are positioned close to one another on the plot. In some cases individuals occupied exactly the same location. In these cases I have manually added a number indicating how many individuals occupy that location. This procedure allows us to visualize the clusters that took shape within the class and thus certain aspects of its social structure.

The key point to note is that agents tend to polarize to the left or right of the plot. This divide, which was also evident on the dendrogram of a hierarchical cluster analysis applied to the same data, reflects the distinction between those who attended ‘out of class’ activities and those who did not. Those to the right of the plot did. They are the group I have been discussing hitherto. Those to the left did not. The above-mentioned cluster analysis suggested further subdivisions of both of these two basic groupings. This is important. The social structure in question did not comprise two homogenous blocks. But the basic binary divide is the most important, and I will return to it. As both the cluster analysis and the MDS plot demonstrate, there was a fundamental division in the class over the period studied.

Whilst the MDS plot is useful for identifying clusters on the basis of participation in events, it does not map relations between people as such. As a corrective, therefore, I supplemented my analysis with a more conventional sociogram (see Scott 2000). I researched and observed relationships between participants, drawing up a ‘relational matrix’ (Scott 2000) in which any two members of the class were deemed ‘related’ if (1) they met for any purposes outside of the class (e.g. for work or social purposes) and (2) this registered in their interaction within the class: e.g. they interacted frequently and manifest what Goffman (1971) calls ‘tie signs’.

Figure I: Participation profiles for circuit training, saunas and ‘curry nights’
software, is presented in Figure II. In order to make this analysis comparable with the MDS plot in Figure I, nodes (technically ‘vertices’) are coloured. Individuals who only attended the circuit class and thus clustered to the left side of the MDS plot are coloured black, those who attended social events and clustered to the right are coloured white (the aforementioned cluster analysis was used to allocate groups). In addition, vertices are sized relative to ‘degree’; that is to say, the more connections a vertex has the larger its size on the plot. The sociogram has the value of showing both patterns of connection within each group and some connections between them. Moreover, though the same picture of two basic groupings emerges, it also indicates that one of these groups comprises a relatively dense, single network ‘component’, whilst the other comprises a fragmented mass of triads, dyads and isolates. We have an integrated group juxtaposed to a more or less atomised mass. This corresponds to the definition of an established-outsider figuration, as given above.

What impact did this have upon the class? I have argued elsewhere that the ‘doing’ of exercise in the class was changed by the relationships between some of its members (Crossley 2004). In addition to exercising they were ‘doing’ their relationships to one another and this changed the way in which they performed their exercises. Agents talked whilst exercising; played jokes upon one another; disregarded rules of ‘civil inattention’ that were otherwise adhered to; intentionally and playfully subverted collective aerobic routines (e.g. clapping out of time or making one another laugh and thus fall out of step). This was meant as fun. No harm was intended. However, by changing the class for themselves the group inevitably changed it for other participants too; participants who were not involved in the group and may not have wanted their class changing. There was an esprit de corps amongst the integrated group which gave its members the confidence and licence to act in ways that an isolated individual could not. Members of the group had a recognized identity.

Figure II: Social relations in a circuit training class
and status within it which gave them a licence to behave in ways that would not have been acceptable were they less integrated in the group. In other words, they benefited from social capital. Those outside of the group lacked access to such capital and were unable to take the same liberties within the class. Moreover, their lack of integration denied them the critical mass that might have counter-balanced the influence of the group. They were isolated individuals who found themselves up against a group. They suffered the externalities of group interaction, which some experienced negatively, without hope of redress. Social capital thus created a power imbalance, much in the way Elias (1994) claims for established-outsider figurations and Gould (2003b) suggests for relations of solidarity and conflict.

The sharp divisions and stigmatization of outsiders noted by Elias and Scotson (1994) in their study of established-outsider relations were not evident in my study. If anything the established were guilty of a sociocentrism which made them indifferent to and unaware of outsiders. However, some members of the established, upon becoming established, spoke of their prior sense of feeling intimidated by the group. As outsiders they had been very aware of and to a degree threatened by the group. Outsiders were thus perhaps more aware of the group than the group was either of them or of itself, and they experienced it negatively. Indeed there were occasions when ‘the established’ were subject to a degree of verbal hostility for what was deemed their ‘cliquishness’ or for ‘taking over’ the class or sauna. On a number of occasions I noted caustic remarks about ‘them’ or ‘that lot’, from outsiders, evidently referring to the established. Whatever its positive value, then, social capital in this context also generated social divisions, power imbalances and a degree of conflict.

The presence of an established-outsider figuration calls for some qualification to one of the key claims of this paper: namely, that social capital can form in private health clubs. We have to acknowledge, firstly, that even where this happens not everyone in situ belongs to the relevant network. The outsiders, to risk tautology, do not belong. Secondly, strong networks which have positive facilitative functions for those involved in them can have negative externalities for non-members in their context because they inevitably shape that context by shaping the activities of network members. They alter the dynamics and practices in a context and thus impinge upon others. Moreover, they create ‘outsiders’ and sometimes a sense of alienation amongst outsiders by the very fact of their existence as an ‘in-group’.

Brokerage and closure figuration

Social capital also generated a further type of (moderate) conflict. The group I have discussed here became connected to other groups with whom it competed; groups with equal levels of integration. This is of interest because of the different light it sheds upon Burt’s (2005) abovementioned claims regarding
the complementary advantages of brokerage and closure. I have no reason to challenge Burt’s thesis as applied to the business-organizational context in which develops and tests it but it does not fit the context I observed. This point needs to be unpacked.

A range of classes were held at the gym throughout most days and evenings. In so far as each attracted a ‘regular crowd’ it had the potential to give rise to friendship groups. Considered as a whole, therefore, one would expect to find a network structure comprising relatively closed and discrete clusters of friends, each containing a group of individuals who know each other by virtue of their regular attendance at a particular class. Not all clusters would have extended their contexts of association in the way described earlier in the paper but some degree of bonding might be expected to occur in most cases. Each of these clumps would be separated by structural holes, since everybody has an increased chance of knowing the others in their class but not much chance of knowing anybody in another class. However, these structural holes would be bridged, in some cases, because many agents attend a number of classes, in accordance with their interests and commitments. Friends may attempt to attend the same set of classes as one another but this is not always possible. So they attend some classes together and other classes separately, which in some cases leads to them having different groups of friends, in different classes, whom they bridge. Note that this is not, following Granovetter (1973), a matter of strong and weak ties. Ego may have equally strong ties to members of each cluster s/he brokers and each of these clusters may be equally closed. Figure III, which again uses Pajek, illustrates what the sociogram for such a structure may look like.

This may sometimes be a peaceful affair. In the case of the group I was observing, however, bridges to a second group led to tensions between clusters which had been formed around classes held at different times, and apparent

Figure III: Hypothetical example of the co-occurrence of brokerage and closure
pressures and social discomfort for the brokers who bridged the structural hole between them. This second group, some of whose key members also belonged to ‘my’ group, formed within an alternative circuit training class which, in terms of its social life, was also strongly connected to a running club. Like the first, and in partial replication of it, it acquired a collective identity and organized regular meals to mark such events as birthdays, Christmas etc.

The Pajek generated sociogram in Figure IV, which is based upon a retrospective reconstruction from a later point in time, when the opposed groupings had become more merged (see below), gives a rough impression of the overall network structure involved. Relations are deemed present between two agents if they (i) meet regularly in a class and (ii) meet on occasion outside of the class for social reasons. Three clusters are visible to the eye. One, at the top right of the sociogram, is the group I have been discussing throughout the paper. At the bottom right we have a cluster comprising agents who attended a different circuit class and, in most cases, a running club too. To the left we have a smaller and distinct cluster comprised, for the most part, of a group of female friends who attended the same circuit class as the agents at the bottom of the sociogram but not the running club, and who apparently formed a separate ‘out of class’ social group. My main concern is with the clusters to the top and bottom right, respectively, and with agents 3 and 9, who belonged to both. By all of the main measures of network centrality (degree, closeness and betweenness), 3

**Figure IV:** A concrete case of brokerage-closure coincidence
and 9 are the most central vertices on the graph and thus in the key positions for brokerage. And my ethnographic observation was that they did, indeed, act as brokers between the groups.

This network structure and the interactions generative of it created tension in at least three respects. Firstly, the participation of brokers in the social activities of one group was perceived, in some cases, as a snub upon the other group, particularly as brokers, at least initially, strove to keep the groups they belonged to separate and were thus forced, on occasion, to explain to members of one group that they were not invited to a social event that they had heard about because ‘it’s for the [other] group’. This raised issues of group loyalty and belonging. The *esprit de corps* of the group was threatened. Moreover, as Gould’s (2003b) work might lead us to predict, it raised issues of dominance and rank, provoking the conflict that often occurs when such matters are in question. Exclusivity of events was experienced by some as a contestable claim to superiority.

Brokers later attempted to deal with this tension by inviting members of one group to the events of the other, a strategy which did eventually succeed. In the first instance, however, this created a second source of tension as groups felt that ‘their’ event was being taken over by interlopers who were, in some cases, strangers to them. Moreover, the right of the broker to unilaterally invite outsiders to a group event was questioned.

Thirdly, as these first two points indicate and the work of Sartre (1969) and Simmel (1955) would both predict, the perceived existence of ‘the other’ sharpened the sense of collective identity in the groups, and tended to constitute identity in a (mildly) conflictual manner. Each group became more aware of itself, and defensively so, in the face of perceived competition from the other. The connection of two groups which, individually, generated positive social capital, had a negative effect; the two positive ‘charges’ repelled.

Brokerage is central here as it was the brokers who made each group aware of the other, who brought them into conflict over such issues as ownership of particular social events, and whose loyalty was, to some extent, a stake in the conflict itself. Brokers themselves suffered most in the conflict, however, as they were often the focus of ill feeling on both sides and it was they who found themselves in the awkward situations that group segregation generated. Closure is important here, moreover, as it generated an *esprit de corps* and demands for loyalty which brokers, seemingly, breeched. In other words, the very situation that Burt identifies with high social capital produced conflict in this particular situation, albeit conflict which was later overcome by a merging of the two groups and consequent elimination of the structural hole between them. We would have to question the claim that brokerage-closure figurations are always beneficial therefore. As in the established-outsider figuration, the internal cohesion of a group, whatever its internal facilitative functions, can generate tension at its interface with the external agents.
Conclusion

In *Bowling Alone* Robert Putnam considers the possibility that the growth of private health clubs and the rising rates of membership to such clubs might represent a counter-trend to his thesis on the decline in social capital. Fitness classes, he concedes, may generate social ties. In this paper I have explored this idea using ethnographic data. I have shown both that and how networks form in health clubs, and I have discussed the various ways in which these networks constitute social capital for their members. In addition, however, I have sought to explore the ‘dark side’ of this particular instance of social capital, relating it to specific network figurations. On the one hand I have argued that high integration amongst some members of a class can generate a power differential between those members and other, less integrated members who experience this negatively. On the other hand I have argued, with an eye on Burt’s (2005) important thesis on brokerage and closure, that brokerage between relatively closed clusters of agents can lead to intergroup rivalry and conflict, which, in turn, is experienced negatively, particularly by brokers. This may generate a pressure for brokerage to give way to a merging of groups. At least in the short term, however, it generates negative effects, particularly for those who, according to Burt’s thesis, should be advantaged. Clearly we need to qualify our claims about the advantages and benefits of brokerage and closure and to be more sensitive to both their contextual sensitivity and the agency of those involved in them (see Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994).

(Date accepted: January 2008)

Notes

1. http://www.esrctoday.ac.uk/ESRCInforCentre/facts/

2. I do not have the space to explore the data here but suffice it to say that the available evidence suggests a middle class bias in health club membership without coming close to the levels of social exclusivity that Bourdieu seems to have in mind.

3. That is, groups in which a high number of members are connected to a high number of other members (see Scott 2000).

4. A ‘component’ is a set a complete set of vertices, each of which can be reached by a connecting path within a network, by however indirect a route. Separate components are not connected. There is no path between them (Scott 2000).

5. When two or more people are in a relationship, Goffman argues, they tend to show this by way of their body language: e.g. they touch, hold hands, disregard ‘rules’ of ‘civil inattention’ and personal space etc.

6. *Pajek* is a free to download software package. To download it visit (http://vlado.fmf.uni-lj.si/pub/networks/pajek/). For a user friendly introduction to the software see De Nooy, Mrvar and Batagelj (2005).

7. See footnote 4.
Bibliography


Citizen Audit 2002 ‘Findings’ http://www.shef.ac.uk/politics/citizenaudit/findings.htm (consulted 01/03/06)


Merton, R. 1968 Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, Free Press.


Mintel 2003 Health and Fitness Clubs – May 2003, report available from http://www.mintel.com (last checked 17/01/08)


Tilly, C. 2006 Identities, Boundaries and Social Ties, New York, Paradigm.
