

Why We Should Value Urban Whitewater Parks:

Exploring Whitewater Paddler Social Benefits



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Background of the Study

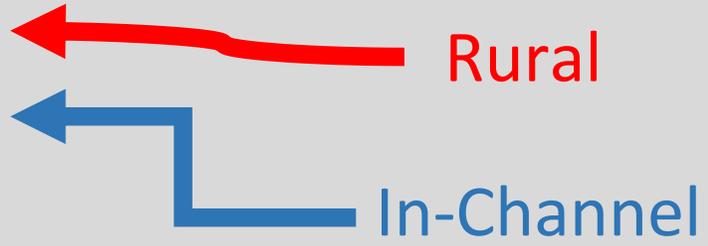


(Moorman, Schlatter, & Hurd, 2007)



(Mooreman et al., 2007; Podolak, 2012)





(American Whitewater, 2007)

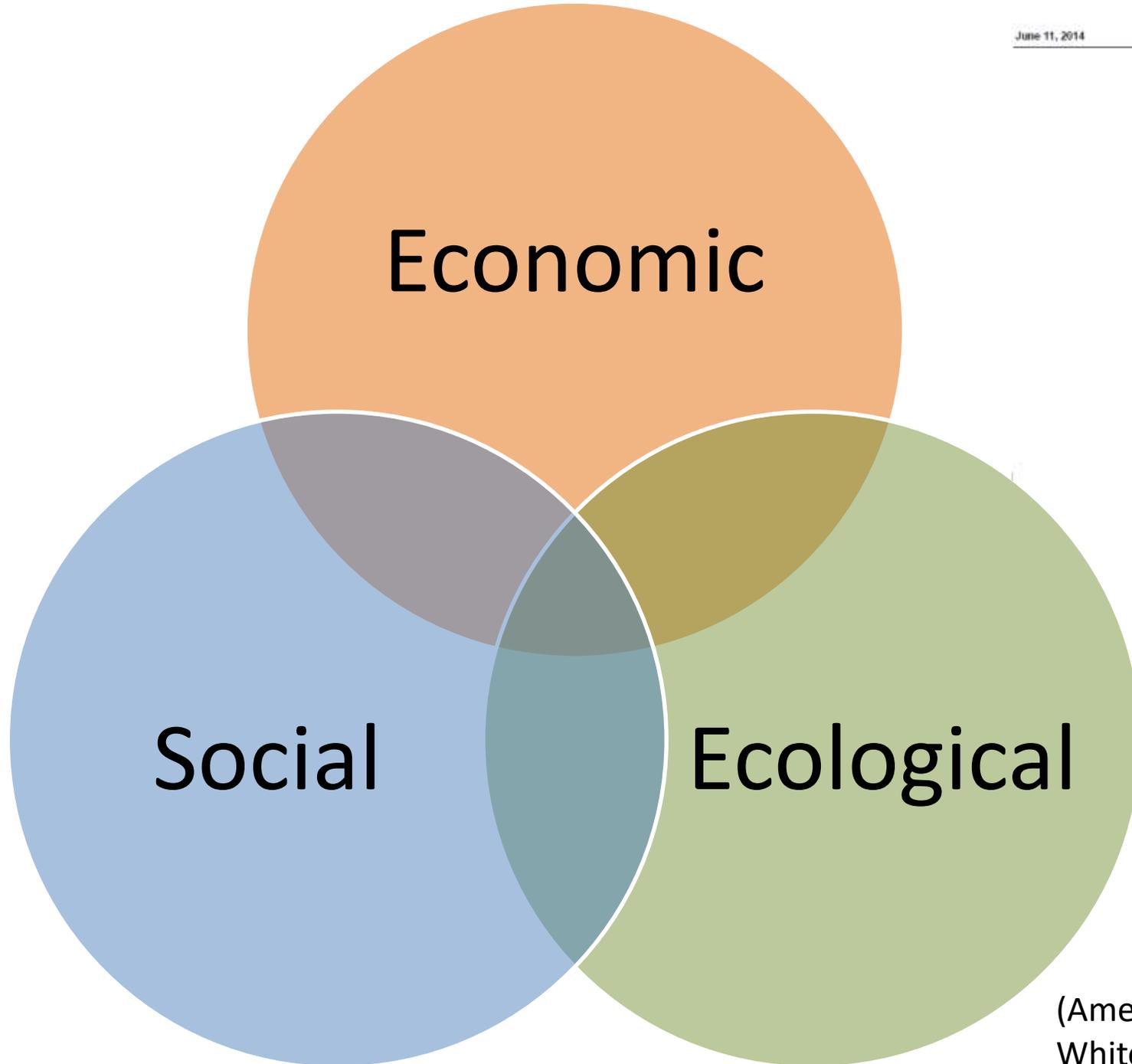
*Economic Benefits of the
Grand Rapids Whitewater
Project*

Prepared by:

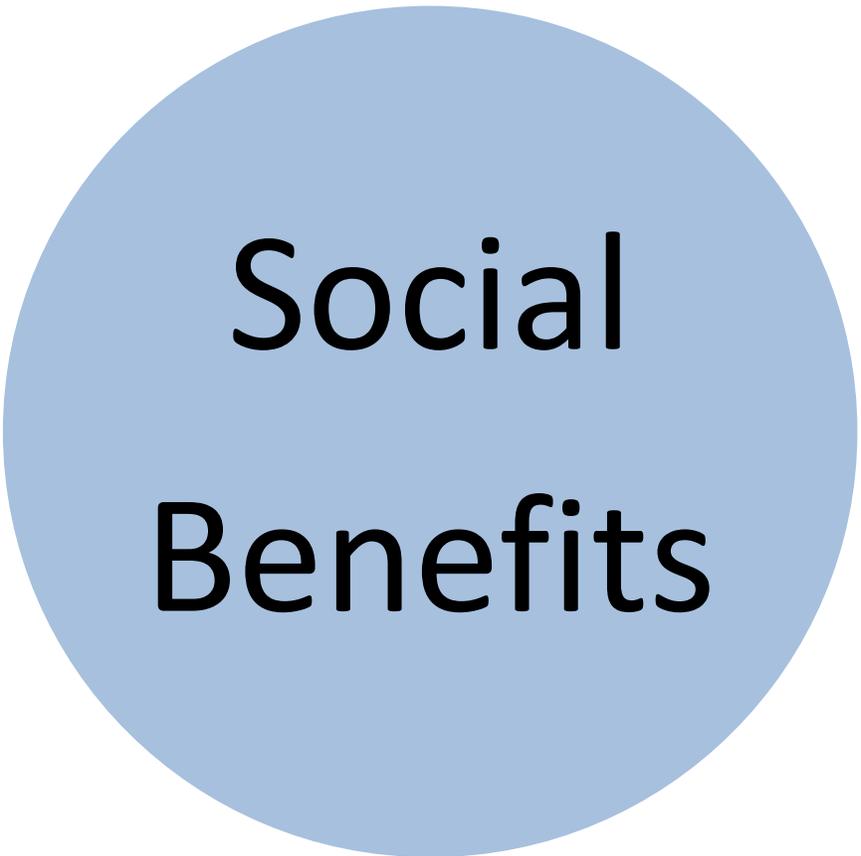
Scott D. Watkins, Senior Consultant
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Commissioned by:

Grand Rapids Whitewater, Inc.



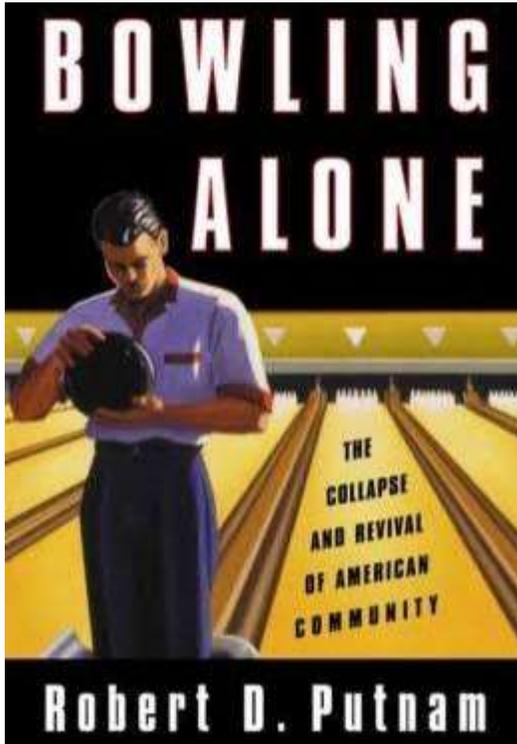
(American Whitewater, 2007; Gordon, 1996 Grand Rapids Whitewater Economic Report; 2014 Kang & Lansey, 2012)



Social Benefits

Podolak (2012) expressed, “Many of the project objectives were socially focused; however, assessing social change was challenging because there was a lack of available data” (p. 82). Existing social measures such as head counts, attendance rate, level of attractivity, site observations, or use of space, tell us little about the actual social benefits users obtain by attending an urban whitewater park.

Social Capital Theory



Intentional
Investment in
Social Networks



**Trust and Norms of
Reciprocity**

(Putnam, 2000)

“By virtually every conceivable measure, social capital has eroded steadily and sometimes dramatically over the past two generations” (2000, p. 287)

Research Questions

- 1) Do whitewater paddlers achieve **social benefits** as a result of urban whitewater park use?
- 2) What are these social benefits?



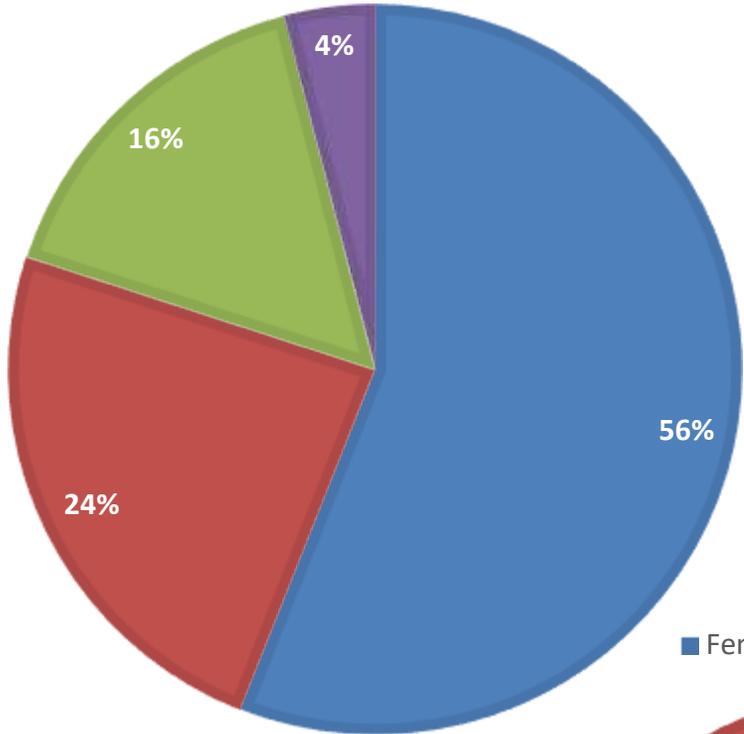
SALIDA

This town is a sweet retreat during the winter months and shoulder seasons in the high country. In the summertime, Salida is a must visit. The list of Amenities and Activities seem endless while the Art and Culture scene is a huge anchor. Bring a towel, a bike, and your best appetite.



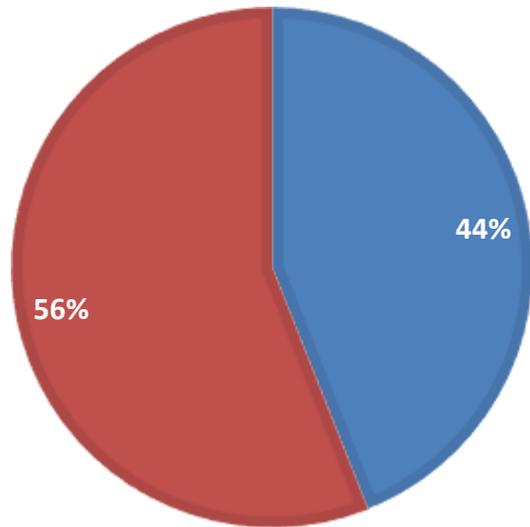
WATERCRAFT

■ Kayak ■ SUP ■ Raft ■ Canoe



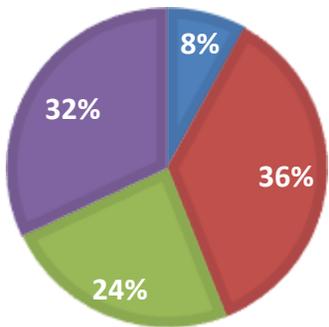
GENDER

■ Female ■ Male ■



SKILL LEVEL

■ II ■ III ■ IV ■ V



Participants

Previously Visited
= 92% (n = 23)

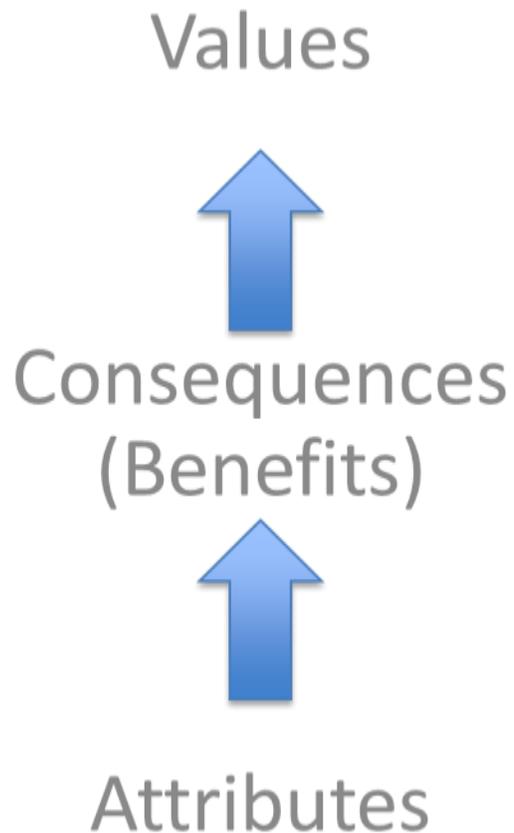
Average Age =
35.56

Travel distance =
48% (n = 12)
Locals

Average Time on
Water = 2.22
hours

Paddled with others
= 72% (n = 18)

Methodology: Means-End Theory



“It makes me **feel good about myself**. Throw a big monster loop, impress the boys”

>>>Interview 20

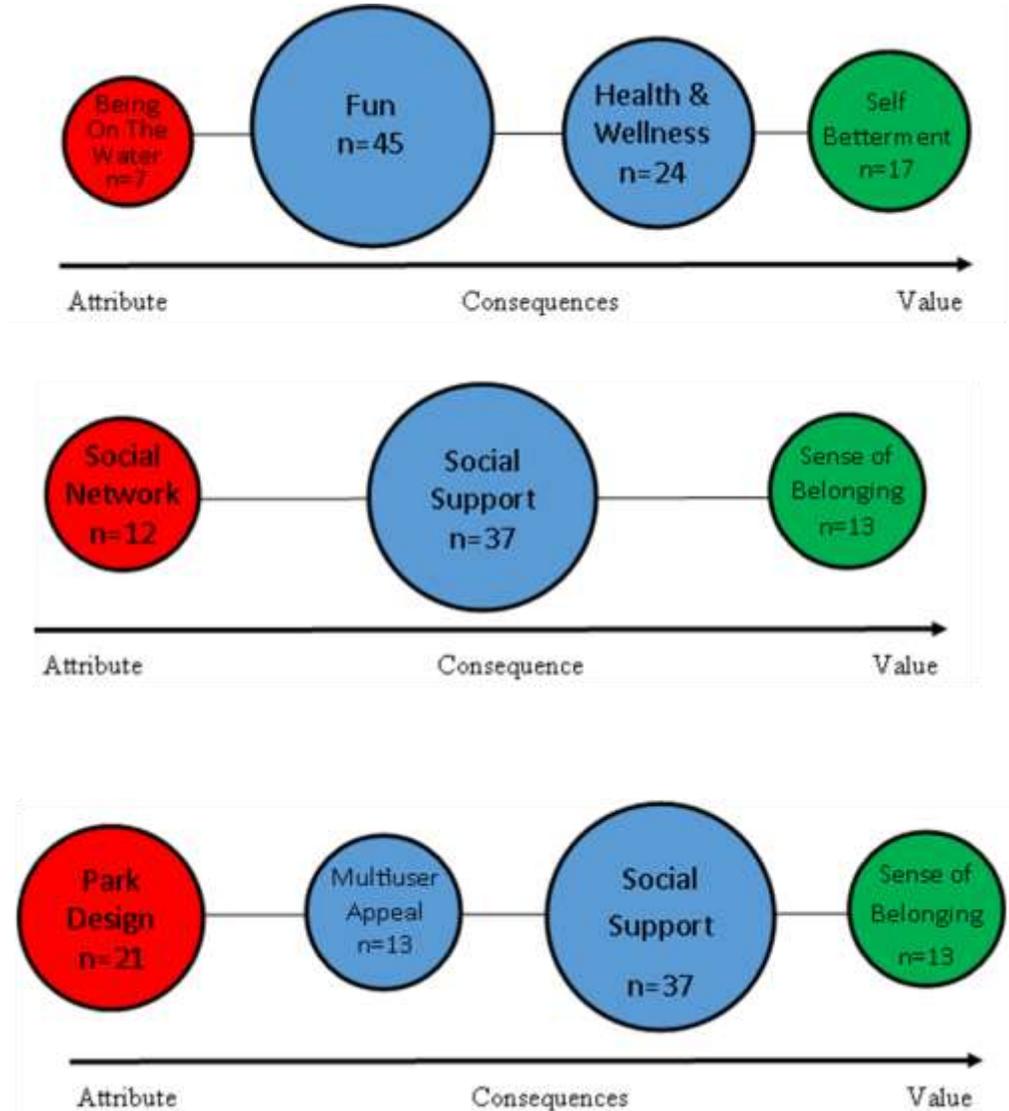
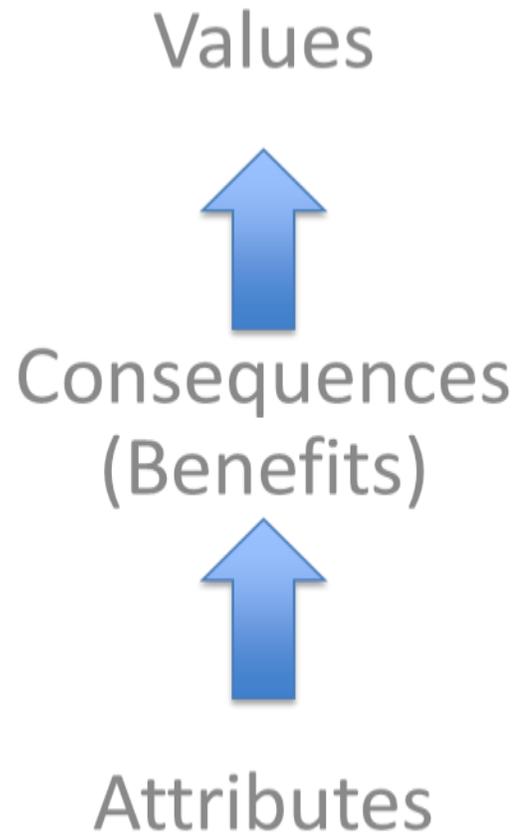
“And that's what's important. We came out **here to have fun**”

>>>Interview 25

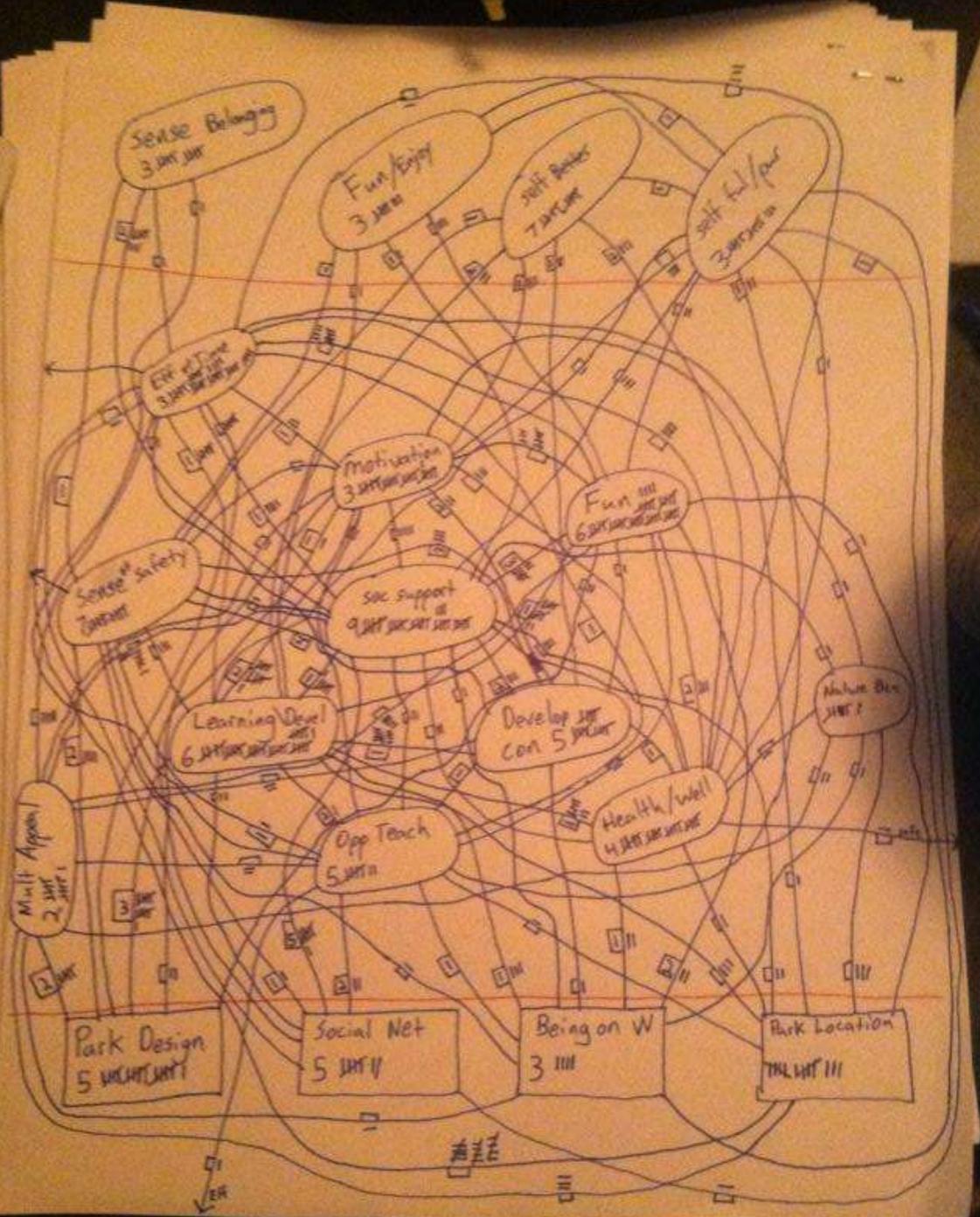
“Then when you have **those competitions** that community feel is not so much, oh I got to beat that person”

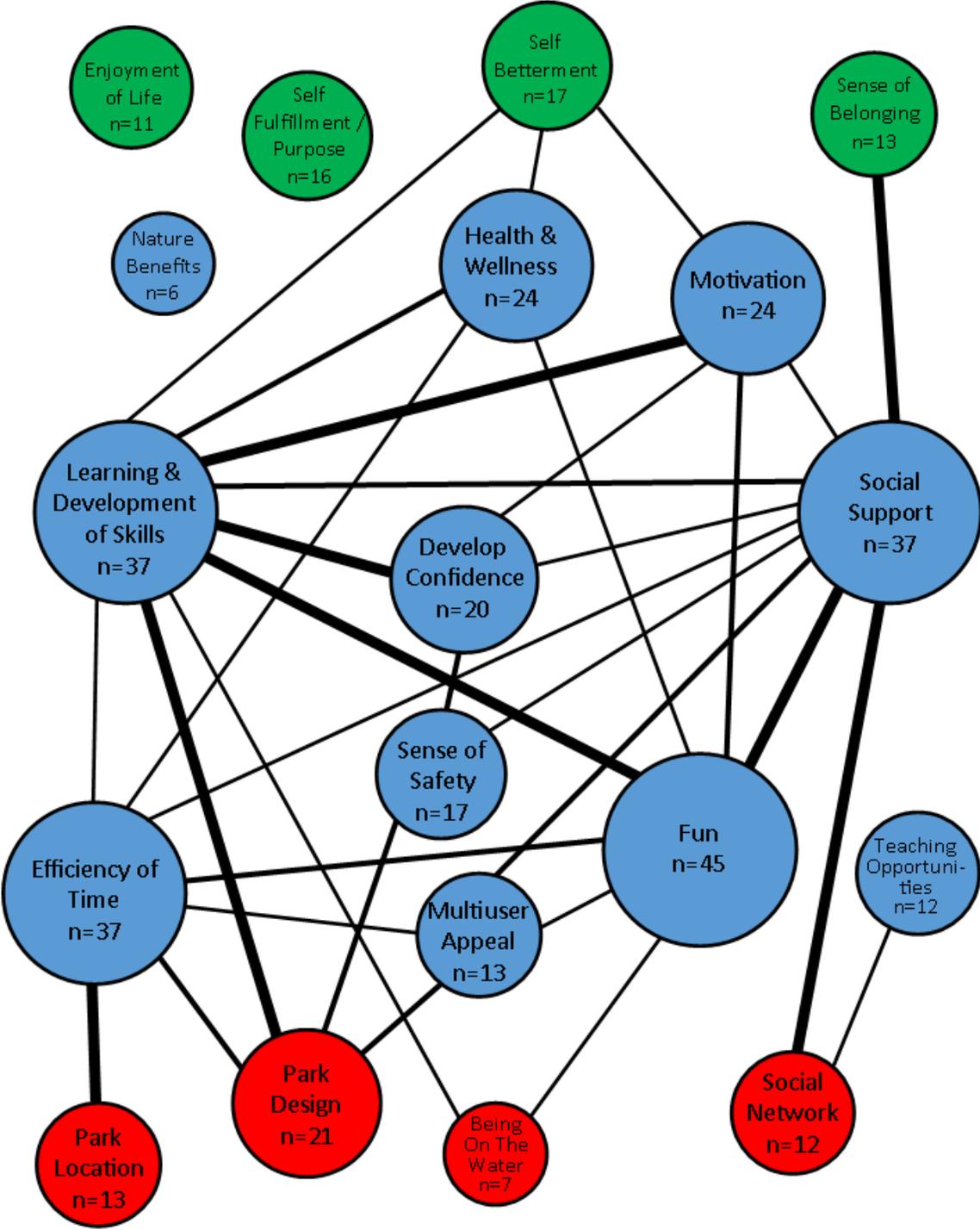
>>>Interview 7

Methodology: Means-End Theory

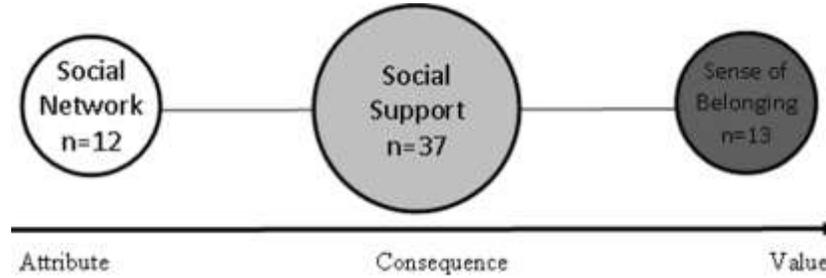


(Gutman, 1982; Reynolds & Gutman, 1988)





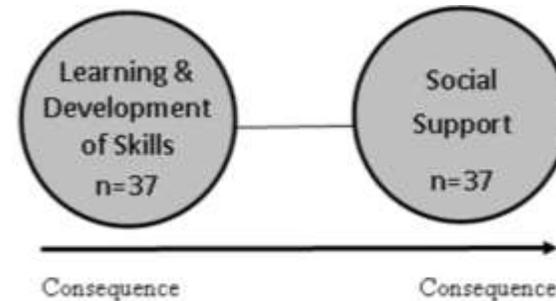
Results



Female, 33 SUP

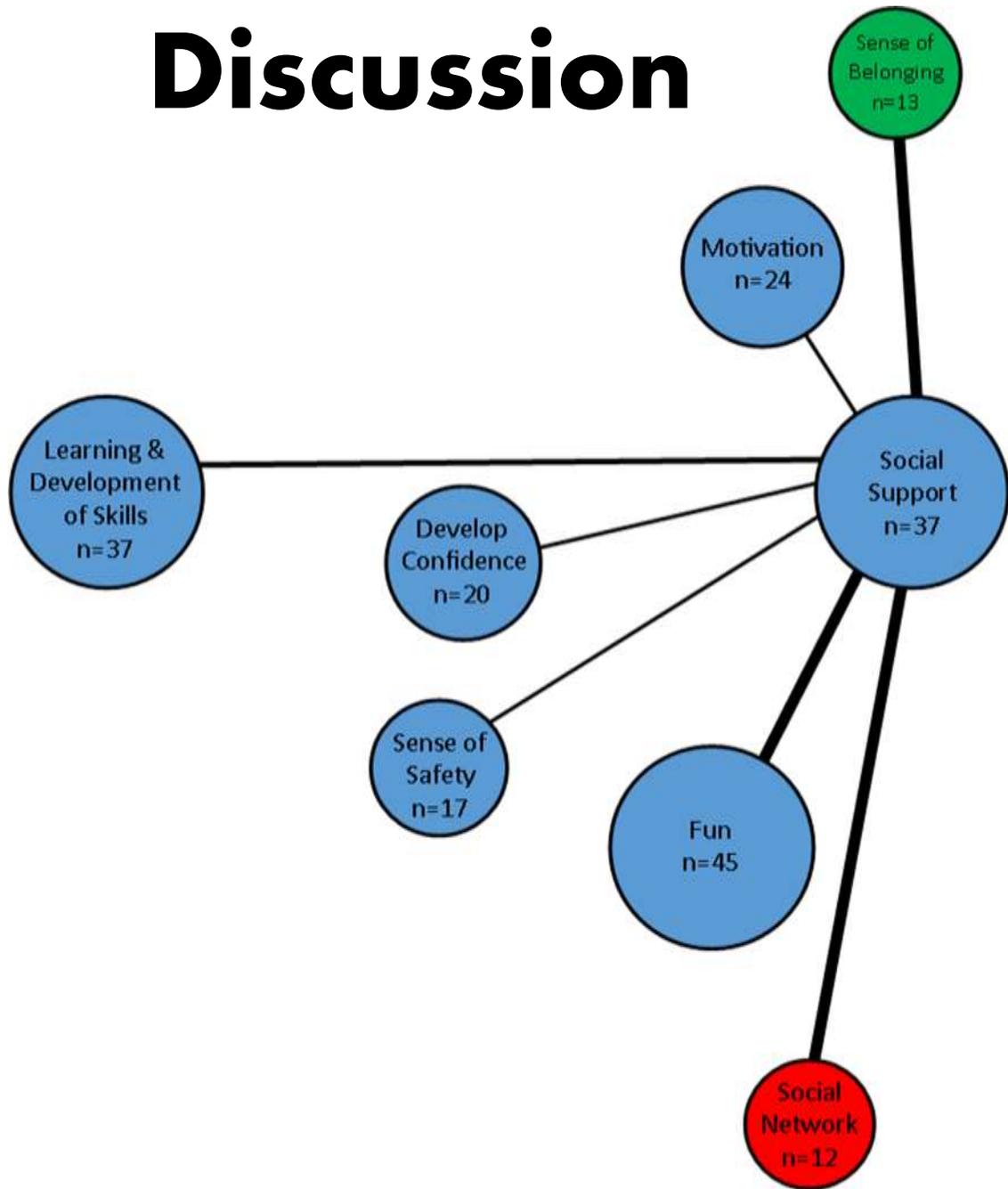


Male, 33 Canoe



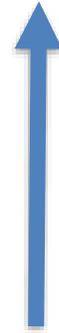
Female, 22 SUP

Discussion



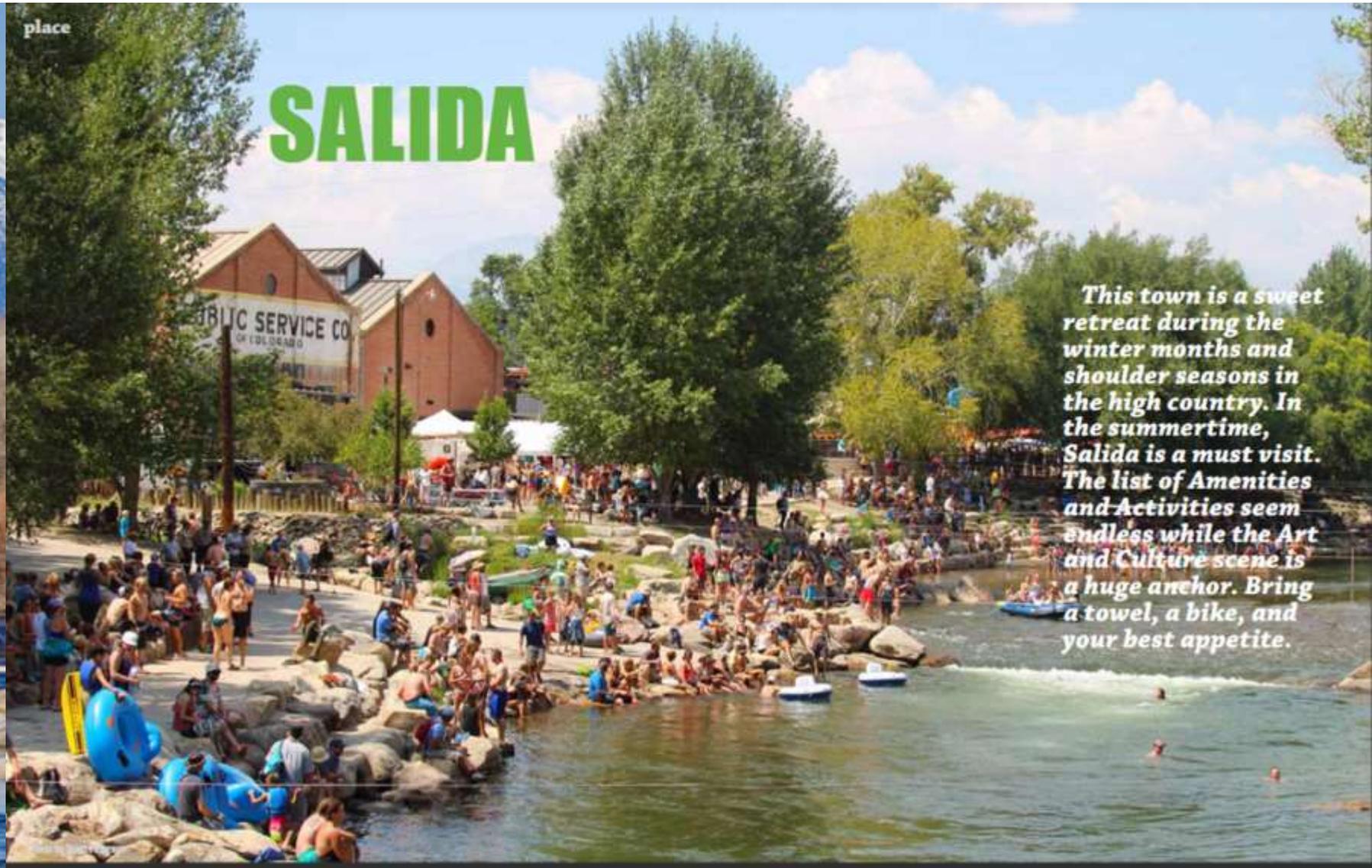
Social Capital =

**Trust and Norms of
Reciprocity**



Intentional
Investment in
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Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research



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Questions



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