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## Capacity for Change: Critical Factors in the Organizational Implementation of Gender Equity in Sport Initiatives

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Kinesiology

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## Abstract

National sport organizations (NSOs) address gender equity in their respective sports via programs designed for women. This study examined the organizational capacity of three NSOs to implement gender equity initiatives through programs that target increasing the engagement of women in sport as athletes, certified coaches, and officials. Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework of human resources, finances, relationships/network, infrastructure/process, and planning/development capacity was used. External factors that impact the capacity dimensions were also considered. Semi-structured telephone interviews ( $n = 15$ ) were conducted with board members and staff of the NSOs. The findings highlight the key capacity strengths and challenges in each dimension, and the connection between the dimensions. Human resources and relationship/network were identified as critical capacity dimensions, and the political climate and the lack of avenues to procure additional funding were common external influences on NSO capacity. The findings contribute to understanding critical aspects of organizational capacity that are essential to address gender equity in NSOs, with implications for building capacity to implement gender equity initiatives, and future development of policy that considers capacity for gender equity.

*Keywords:* Organizational capacity, gender equity, gender equity in sport, initiatives for women

### **Co-Authorship Statement**

This work is authored by the candidate, Swarali Patil, with contributions from her supervisor, Prof. Alison Doherty.

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## Table of Contents

Contents	
Abstract .....	i
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures .....	viii
List of Appendices .....	ix
Chapter 1 .....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2.....	5
2. Framework for Organizational Capacity.....	5
2.1 Conceptual Model of Organizational Capacity.....	6
Chapter 3.....	11
3. Organizational Capacity in Sport.....	11
3.1 Capacity in Community Sport Clubs .....	11
3.2 Sport for Development and Peace Organizations .....	16
Chapter 4.....	22
4. Method .....	22
4.1 Research Context .....	24
4.1.1 Case 1: NSO 1.....	24

4.1.2	Case 2: NSO 2.....	25
4.1.3	Case 3: NSO 3.....	26
4.2	Data Collection .....	26
4.3	Data Analysis .....	29
4.4	Researcher Positionality.....	31
4.5	Limitations .....	32
Chapter 5.....		34
5.	Findings.....	34
5.1	Case 1: NSO 1.....	34
5.2	Case 2: NSO 2.....	49
5.3	Case 3: NSO 3.....	59
Chapter 6.....		73
6.	Discussion.....	73
6.1	Multidimensionality of Capacity .....	73
6.2	Dimensions of Organizational Capacity .....	75
6.2.1	Human Resources Capacity .....	75
6.2.2	Financial Capacity .....	76
6.2.3	Relationship/Network Capacity .....	78
6.2.4	Infrastructure/Process Capacity .....	80
6.2.5	Planning/Development Capacity .....	82

6.3	Connections among Capacity Dimensions .....	83
6.4	External Factors .....	86
6.5	Implications.....	91
6.5.1	Theoretical Implications .....	91
6.5.2	Practical Implications.....	93
6.6	Limitations and Future Research .....	96
	References.....	98
	Appendices.....	104
	Appendix A: Interview Guide.....	104
	Appendix B: Letter of Information to NSOs .....	108
	Appendix C: Ethics Approval Letter.....	112
	Curriculum Vitae.....	113

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Profile of Participants Interviewed .....	29
Table 2: Framework of Critical Elements of the Dimensions of Capacity of National Sport Organizations .....	37
Table 3: External Factors Influencing NSO Capacity Dimensions .....	46



**List of Figures**

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Organizational Capacity (Hall et al., 2003, p. 7)..... 6

Figure 2: Links between Capacity Dimensions ..... 84

**List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Interview Guide.....	104
Appendix B: Letter of Information to NSOs .....	108
Appendix C: Ethics Approval Letter.....	112

## Chapter 1

### 1. Introduction

Capacity is defined as the ability of an organization to draw on and utilize resources to achieve its goals and objectives (Hall et al., 2003). Capacity is a multidimensional concept because an organization has different capacities, such as human resources and finances, and the potential to achieve its mandate can be dependent on a combination of these. Organizational capacity is an oft-researched subject area, and has been examined in different sectors such as community-based development organizations (Fredericksen & London, 2000), nonprofit community sport (Misener & Doherty, 2009), and public health agencies (Riley, Smith & Elliott, 2003). Research has shown that, in the nonprofit and voluntary sector, the dimensions of capacity are broadly the same but the critical elements that contribute to them can differ between types of organizations (Misener & Doherty, 2009). For any given dimension, the strength of critical elements can give an organization a strong dimension of capacity but weak critical elements may point to the capacity dimension needing more development.

Hall et al. (2003) identified five dimensions of capacity, and introduced a framework to classify them as financial capacity, human resources capacity, planning and development capacity, relationship and network capacity, and infrastructure and process capacity. The framework details the different capacity dimensions and their impact on an organization's achievement of objectives, while also highlighting the relationship among the capacity dimensions. The framework also includes external factors that may constrain the capacity of an organization. With the exception of the consideration of external factors, the framework has been used to study the capacity of sport clubs at the community level (Doherty, Misener & Cuskelly, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker, & Breuer, 2011), and in sport for

development and peace organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson, Hancock & Hums, 2017).

The current study followed the existing research, and aimed to examine organizational capacity in the context of national sport organizations (NSOs). NSOs are the governing bodies for their respective sports in Canada. They serve important functions in their individual sports such as selection and management of national teams, providing professional development for coaches and officials, and implementing national initiatives to develop and promote their sport (Sport Canada, 2017). Canada has 58 NSOs for sports ranging from alpine skiing to wrestling.

NSOs address gender equity in their sports through programs and services that cater to women. However, there is little empirical research on the capacity of these organizations to implement initiatives that promote the participation of women as athletes, coaches and officials. This research aimed to identify the capacity strengths of NSOs in addressing gender equity objectives, and the challenges they face in this process. The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) defines equity as, “the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities to both females and males” (Larkin, Baxter & Kent, 1993, p. 4). NSOs may address gender equity in line with directives from Sport Canada, and because doing so can present several benefits to the organization such as accruing a skilled pool of staff and increasing revenue streams by catering to a larger market segment (CAAWS, 2017). Addressing gender equity means change, from an inequitable situation. There are several historic and persistent gender inequities in sport, as reported in *Women and Girls in Sport* (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2017). For example, the report indicates that in Canadian university sports teams, women hold only 17% of all head coach positions, and 32% of head coach positions on women sports teams. Further,

women made up only 33% of the boards of directors of multi-sport organizations (MSOs) and 26.3% of NSOs (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2017).

Policies to achieve gender equity are not new. Sport Canada introduced its first policy on women in sport in 1986 to achieve “equality for women in sports... (by creating) an environment in which no one is forced into a predetermined role or status because of gender” (Sport Canada, 1986, p. 14). The 2009 policy, titled *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls* (Sport Canada, 2009) focuses on establishing a sport system where women and girls are active and valued participants and leaders, and aims to cultivate sport environments that provide “quality sport experiences and equitable support by sport organizations” (Sport Canada, 2009, p. 6). NSOs may address gender equity in their organizations via different initiatives such as workshops aimed to help women obtain coaching and official certifications, and delivering programs targeted towards increasing participation by young girls and women, while aiming towards a change in sustained hiring patterns and participation rates, respectively.

As the leading organizations for their respective sports, NSOs can be influential in ensuring an equitable system but their capacity to do so is dependent on their resources. For example, funds to offer programs and services may be a challenge to some organizations or the lack of sufficient volunteers and qualified staff can derail the delivery of these initiatives (Hall et al., 2003). The purpose of this research was to examine the capacity of NSOs to implement gender equity initiatives.

This research addressed the following questions:

1. What are the critical elements of capacity of NSOs to address gender equity?
2. What is the strongest capacity dimension of NSOs to address gender equity?
3. What is the dimension that needs the most development?

4. What is the most important dimension of capacity to address gender equity?
5. What are the critical external factors affecting the capacity of NSOs to address gender equity initiatives?

The findings from this research provide insight into the critical capacity strengths and challenges NSOs face in implementing gender equity initiatives. The study extends previous research on organizational capacity by also considering external factors detailed by Hall et al. (2003), including environmental constraints and facilitators, access to resources, and historical factors. The findings are expected to contribute to understanding critical capacity elements that are essential to address gender equity in NSOs, with implications for building capacity to implement gender equity initiatives, and future development of gender equity policy that considers capacity for gender equity. The findings will also advance organizational capacity theory in the context of sport and gender equity.

## Chapter 2

### 2. Framework for Organizational Capacity

The United Nations Development Program (1998) defines capacity as the “ability of individuals and organizations or organizational units to perform functions effectively, efficiently, and sustainably” (p. 118). Organizational capacity, specifically, is the ability of an organization to utilize available resources to achieve its goals and objectives (Hall et al., 2003). It is important to understand what those resources are, and the extent to which they are available.

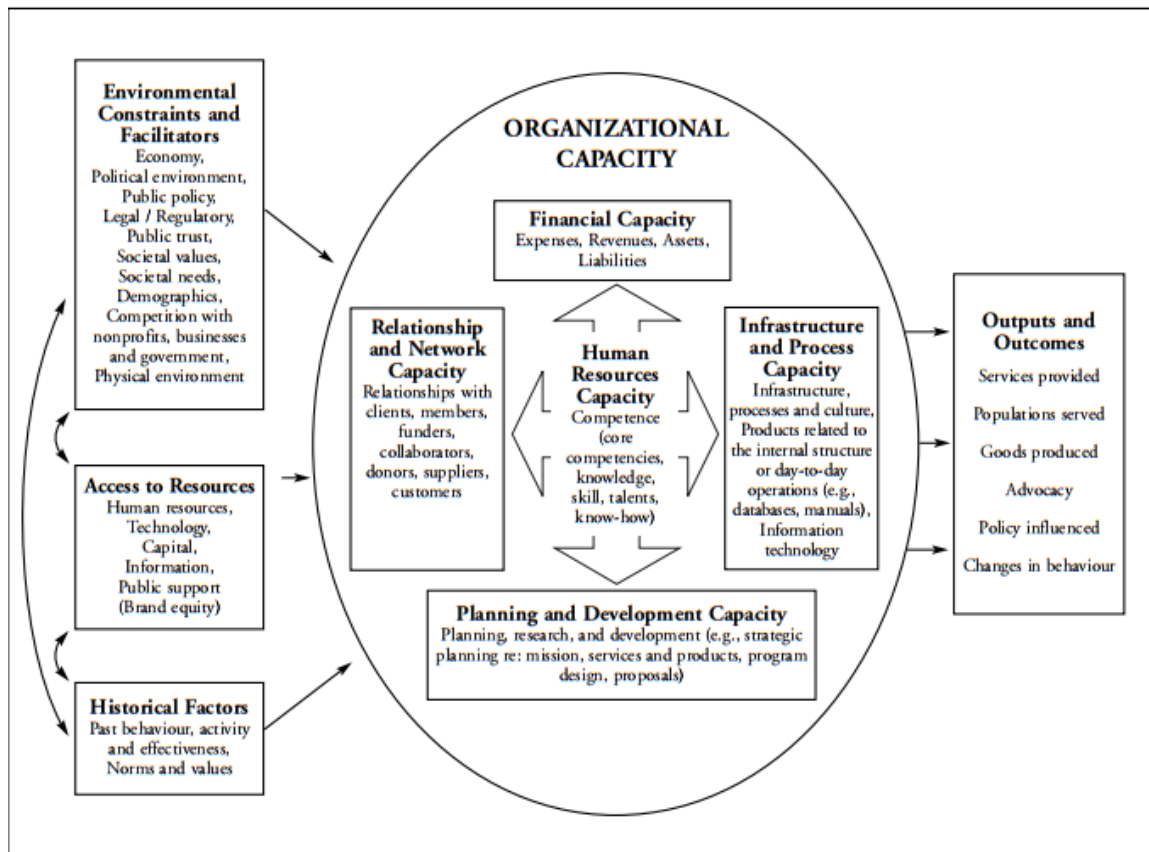
The ‘Conceptual Model of Organizational Capacity’ by Hall et al. (2003) framed the current study. It was derived as part of a project, titled *The Capacity to Serve: A Qualitative Study of the Challenges Facing Canada’s Nonprofit and Voluntary Organization* (Hall et al., 2003), exploring the capacity of nonprofit and voluntary organizations to contribute to Canadian life. During the project, the researchers consulted over 300 individuals in organizations representing several sections of Canada’s nonprofit and voluntary sector, including arts and culture, volunteerism, fundraising, and sports and recreation.

Framed by the model that recognizes organizational capacity as represented by five dimensions – human resources, finance, relationship and network, infrastructure and process, and planning and development – the research revealed several particular strengths and challenges within those dimensions. Specifically, enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers, secure funding sources, and the capacity to build networks and draw on relationships were the strengths identified. Conversely, challenges were identified that present roadblocks to goal achievement, such as difficulty recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers, lack of adequate funding, reliance on external sources of revenue, and the lack of better information technology to store and communicate information. The model (see Figure 1) summarizes the key capacity areas or

dimensions, their links to one another, and external factors that impact those. The model is applicable to different contexts in the nonprofit and voluntary sector, and can be used to answer research questions pertaining to capacity strengths and challenges faced by NSOs in implementing gender equity initiatives.

## 2.1 Conceptual Model of Organizational Capacity

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Organizational Capacity (Hall et al., 2003, p. 7)**



As the model shows, a nonprofit voluntary organization may be focused on the delivery of tangible outputs such as services, programs, and products, for various populations, and advocacy for important issues. In the context of gender equity initiatives in sport, for example, programs and services may comprise opportunities for professional development and sport participation. In the same context, outcomes may be changes in hiring patterns or participation rates, and sustained behavioral changes in this regard. An organization's ability to meet its



desired goals and objectives is a function of its multidimensional capacities; specifically, financial, human resources, infrastructure and process, relationship and network, and planning and development capacity (Hall et. al., 2003). The model also highlights the links between the five dimensions of capacity, such that the capacity of one dimension may impact another dimension. A description of each capacity dimension and key findings from the Hall et al. (2003) project are detailed below.

Human resources capacity is the ability to utilize human capital in the form of paid staff and volunteers within an organization. According to Hall et al. (2003), it includes competencies, skills and knowledge, general know-how, shared values and attitudes, commitment and motivation, and behavior of individuals within the organization. Key challenges in this dimension include the availability, training, management, and retention of volunteers. Hall et al. (2003) observed that human resources capacity may, for example, be impacted by an organization's financial capacity via the provision of sufficient funds to hire, train, and retain staff. Conversely, human resources capacity may impact other dimensions such as finances and relationship and network. Lack of skilled personnel may impact fundraising capacity, and the organization's ability to build and maintain relationships that are fundamental to its relationship and network capacity.

The financial capacity of an organization is its ability to generate and utilize financial capital (i.e., its expenditures, revenues, assets and liabilities; Hall et al., 2003). Financial capacity issues faced by organizations include the ability to generate sufficient operational revenue, a shift towards project funding by granting agencies, and management and accountancy of funds. Financial capacity may be impacted by relationship and network capacity because lack of partnerships may limit an organization's access to funding opportunities. Conversely, lack of

flexible and sustained funds may impact the planning and development capacity of an organization by limiting its autonomy to pursue projects.

The relationship and network capacity of an organization is its ability to draw on its relationships with members, funding agencies, the public, partners, clients, and the government. Hall et al. (2003) identified the time to develop and maintain external relationships as a key challenge in this dimension. This dimension may impact the infrastructure and process capacity as lack of relationships with external organizations may impede access to resources such as facilities.

Infrastructure and process capacity is the ability to draw on key features employed in the day-to-day running of an organization (i.e., databases, manuals, policies, and standard operating procedures). Hall et al. (2003) identified the ability to stay current with the latest developments in information technology as a major challenge in this capacity dimension. Financial capacity can impact this dimension as lack of flexible funding can fail to provide support for administrative and infrastructure costs in an organization. This dimension may impact relationship and network capacity because the existing culture and resources (human resources and finances) of an organization may direct the partnerships sought and collaborations formed.

The planning and development capacity of an organization is the fifth dimension identified by Hall et al. (2003). This is the ability to develop and implement strategic plans, policies, programs, and products. Challenges to this dimension include the lack of a planning culture, time constraints to undertake strategic plans, and competing needs between day-to-day operations and long-term planning. Planning and development capacity may be impacted by human resources if there is a lack of qualified individuals to fill board positions, and skilled staff members who can lead planning, research and development. This dimension may impact

relationship and network capacity because the strategic plans of an organization may guide the relationships developed with external organizations.

In addition to the five capacity dimensions, Hall et al. (2003) identified external influences that can impact an organization's capacity by affecting one or more capacity dimension. As nonprofit and voluntary organizations depend on and utilize external resources, such as funding from government sources, and volunteers, staff, and experienced board members, to deliver their programs and services, changes in the external environment may affect the "nature and supply of these resources" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 13), thereby influencing goal-attainment.

The first external factor is environmental constraints and facilitators, which includes forces such as the economy, political climate, societal values, and physical environment. Hall et al. (2003) noted the ever-changing funding environment as a major challenge; specifically, the reduction in government funding, delays in receiving funds from the government, the move towards project funding for particular programs and services, difficulties in accessing funds from corporations and businesses, and strains in financial management and accounting. Legislative restrictions on the amount of advocacy that charitable organizations can undertake, and inadequate policies that do not address the needs of the populations serviced were cited as additional influences (Hall et al., 2003).

The second external factor is access to resources, with resources such as finances, human resources, and technology being varied in terms of the needs of an organization. The change of values among youth and changing expectations were cited as factors for the reduced number of volunteers (Hall et al., 2003). Public perceptions of nonprofit and voluntary organizations as government funded and self-sufficient, and negative media coverage focusing on the problems

faced by these organizations were also noted as influential factors (Hall et al., 2003). The third external constraint is historical factors, which may be the existing norms in an organization and previous behaviors that impact its current operations. An organization's history and familiarity with its public, and maintaining the history and culture over time were noted as factors (Hall et al., 2003).

In summary, the model illustrates the multidimensionality of capacity, the linkages between the dimensions, and addresses the potential impact of external factors on capacity dimensions. The framework has previously been used in studies to examine the critical elements, and strengths and challenges of capacity in community sport clubs (e.g., Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011) but it has not been used in the NSO context. As NSOs operate as nonprofit entities delivering programs and initiatives to benefit the larger sport community, the framework is applicable and advantageous to examining the capacity strengths of these organizations and the challenges they face. The focus of this research was the capacity of NSOs to address gender equity initiatives specifically, as well as the external factors which impact their capacity to do so.

## **Chapter 3**

### **3. Organizational Capacity in Sport**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Hall et al. (2003) framework for organizational capacity provides a model to examine an NSO's capacity strengths and challenges in implementing gender equity initiatives. Additionally, the model enables external influences such as the environment, access to resources, and historical factors to be examined as potential challenges in the pursuit of accomplishing the initiatives. Without the consideration of external factors, the framework has previously been used to examine capacity in the context of community and grassroots level sport, and in sport for development and peace organizations. The findings from the existing literature provided a valuable reference point, and enabled the researcher to compare them to the findings from this study. The literature review below summarizes the findings from existing studies in the community sport and sport for development and peace context, looking at organizational capacity utilizing the Hall et al. (2003) framework.

#### **3.1 Capacity in Community Sport Clubs**

Community sport organizations (CSOs) are “nonprofit, voluntary organizations whose essential goal is to provide a range of opportunities to people of various ages to participate in sport and physical activity” (Misener & Doherty, 2009, p. 457). In examining the capacity of a grassroots recreation soccer club, Sharpe (2006) addressed the availability of resources, the use and distribution of these resources, and the ability of organizations to meet their goals when resources are scarce. The author examined the capacity of a local soccer club, and linked organization capacity to capital and used a three-dimensional model, following Hall et al. (2003), in stating that, “the capacity of an organization to work toward a particular objective depends upon the capital it is able to deploy” (Sharpe, 2006, p. 4).

Sharpe (2006) noted that financial capital was not a critical factor at the club because “volunteer labor” (p. 394) was available to complete tasks essential in delivering the sport. The club experienced challenges in finding sufficient volunteers, which related to its human resources capacity. Human resources capacity (i.e., the human capital of the club) was found to have various strengths such as volunteers with enthusiasm for the sport, shared values, and experience. Challenges in this dimension included the lack of skilled individuals to navigate the new regulations, raise funds, and keep up with legal and accounting procedures. This impacted the club’s ability to recruit and train new volunteers and coaches, and organize social events because the existing volunteers were primarily tasked with learning the league’s new guidelines to keep the club functioning. Sharpe (2006) noted the impact of low human resources capacity on the quality of experience on the field. Existing volunteers did not have the requisite skills to stay current with the administrative demands of the league, and spent their time acquiring new skills. This drew their attention away from managing the quality of the on-field experience.

Sharpe (2006) examined structural capacity (encompassing infrastructure/process capacity, planning/development capacity, and relationship/network capacity) as the presence of social capital in the organization. Sharpe (2006) stated that social capital “is generated through social networks and connections among individuals” (p. 390), and must be cultivated and invested in. Grassroots organizations operate in a social context, and their basic functioning positions them well to develop relations and networks that can be transformed into social capital. With the soccer club, Sharpe (2006) noted that the highest amount of social capital was found at the senior field with players, coaches, and officials who had navigated the lower leagues together and developed familiarity with each other. This social capital facilitated communication and

coordination, and had productive results for the league. The youngest members of the league had the least social capital, which led to them being the most dissatisfied group.

Following Sharpe (2006), Misener and Doherty (2009) uncovered key elements from the Hall et al. (2003) framework representing the strengths and challenges of a CSO. The subject of the study was a local gymnastics club, and human resources capacity was recognized as one of its greatest strengths. Shared values, and the skills and knowledge of volunteers were noted as particular strengths, which enabled the organization to service its members. The need for more volunteers was identified as a major challenge, along with the concentration of skills and resources in a handful of individuals that could limit future growth. In discussing financial capacity, the study did not find this element to be crucial to the club in goal attainment as the revenue base primarily consisted of membership registration and athlete fees. The lack of a long term financial plan and financial reporting were identified as challenges, primarily attributed to the absence of a qualified individual to take over the post of Treasurer. This highlighted the links between the financial and human resources capacities of the club. Connections between the club and its external partners, such as the media, funding agencies, university researchers, and the local sport council were noted as strengths for the club in its relationship/network capacity. Human resources capacity was identified as an influence on developing this dimension. The time and effort to maintain relationships, and the lack of a strategic plan to foster connections were noted as challenges on the relationship/network capacity because of their impact on the stability and success of the club.

Misener and Doherty (2009) further reported consistent and open communication between board members, an inclusive and supportive environment, and formal and standard operating procedures as strengths in the infrastructure/process capacity of the club, contributing

to its progress. Reliable access to a facility was emphasized as a challenge because the club did not have a permanent space to store equipment. This highlighted the link between the infrastructure/process and relationship/network capacities because the club was unable to collaborate with other facilities in the area for consistent access. The identification of the need for a formal strategic plan was considered to be a strength in the planning/development capacity of the club but the planning process was classified as informal and reactionary, and thus, a challenge to the process. Lack of organization development (recruiting and training volunteers, acquiring a long-term facility) and financial planning (no provisions for club development) were additional challenges identified in this dimension.

Building on the previous research, Doherty, Misener and Cuskelly (2014) conducted focus groups with 51 presidents of local CSOs in Ontario, and identified critical elements within each capacity dimension that impact goal attainment. In human resources capacity, the importance of dedicated individuals, sufficient and skilled volunteers, shared values, retaining and training volunteers, planning for succession, and providing professional development opportunities were noted. Club size was identified as a factor in the importance of sufficient, enthusiastic volunteers with a common focus on the good of the club, and who were supported by and continued with the club. Doherty et al. (2014) suggested that these factors may be particularly critical to larger clubs that rely on a greater number of volunteers and may be characterized by diverse perspectives. With regard to financial capacity, stable and consistent sources of revenue, predictable expenses, alternate sources of funding such as fundraising, donations, and grants, and practicing sound financial management and keeping a balanced budget were identified as critical elements. Though all clubs agreed on the importance of having alternate streams of revenue and fiscal responsibility, consistent revenues and expenditures were



more important to bigger clubs as they served a larger member base, and as such, these concerns may be magnified for them (Doherty et al., 2014).

In the infrastructure/process capacity dimension, Doherty et al. (2014) identified the formalization of policies, such as standard operating procedures, a formal board structure, defined roles, open and consistent communication, and the availability of appropriate and adequate facilities as critical elements. These elements were consistent across all clubs regardless of club size. In planning/development capacity, the need for long term planning by having a vision and direction for the club, creative planning methods by coming up with new ideas, and implementing the plan by not getting bogged down with the day-to-day operations were identified as critical elements. In relationship/network capacity, critical elements included establishing partnerships through personal connections, being engaged with partners and maintaining consistent communication, having balanced and fair relationships in terms of give-and-take, trusting the partners, and having flexible bureaucratic partners. All clubs warranted balanced, engaged, and reliable partnerships. Larger clubs relied on building partnerships from personal connections, perhaps owing to their larger member base, and thus, their ability to do so, as well as deal with bureaucratic partners may be associated with their own greater formalization (Doherty et al., 2014).

Taking a quantitative approach by using surveys as secondary sources of data, Wicker and Breuer (2011) examined the capacity of nonprofit sport clubs in Germany using Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). As organizations deploy resources from different capacity dimensions, the authors emphasized understanding the resource structure of an organization to determine its capacity. The study focused on four capacity dimensions from the Hall et al. (2003) framework: human resources capacity, financial resources capacity, network

resources capacity, and infrastructure resources capacity. The study found that human resources capacity was the most critical challenge faced by sport clubs, followed by financial resources and infrastructure resources. In discussing the human resources capacity of the clubs, scarcity of volunteers (recruitment and retention) was noted as the major concern. The analysis showed that the number of volunteers decreased between the years of 2005 to 2007 but the hours worked per volunteer increased. This aligns with previous research (Lasby & Sperling, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2009) that indicates a central core of volunteers is responsible for doing most of the work. The analysis of the financial resources capacity showed that, although membership fees and government subsidies contributed to the clubs' revenues, expenses such as the cost of the equipment and personnel fees outweighed revenues earned. The network resources capacity was deemed to be a strength of the clubs, with almost 80% of the clubs collaborating with external organizations such as other sport clubs, schools, and businesses. This capacity dimension was noted as the "proxy for all types of required resources" (Wicker & Breuer, 2011, p. 199) within an organization. Infrastructure resources capacity was noted as a minor weakness, with most clubs owning their own facilities. Clubs paying money to use public facilities were noted to place additional demands on the organization's financial resources capacity.

### **3.2 Sport for Development and Peace Organizations**

Subsequent to the research in CSOs, capacity has been explored in sport for development and peace (SDP) organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson, Hancock & Hums, 2017). SDP organizations are defined as those using sport as a tool to "exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution" (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311). They are different

from other nonprofit organizations such as community sport clubs in that they do not have paying members, and face considerable problems in volunteer and staff recruitment and funding due to different governance structures (Svensson et al., 2017).

Svensson and Hambrick (2016) explored the capacity strengths and challenges of a North American-based non-governmental organization (NGO), a small international SDP organization. Analysis of this NGO's human resources capacity revealed various strengths such as shared values among volunteers regarding a community driven approach, knowledge and expertise, and volunteer engagement. The challenges in this dimension included the need to recruit more volunteers, understanding cultural differences between volunteers in North America and the local region serviced (Africa), and time management, particularly in pursuing other endeavors for the organization such as fundraising. The availability of limited funds was classed as a critical challenge to the organization, impacting its ability to hire paid staff, and recruit, train and retain volunteers. Tax exemption status (obtained in 2014) was perceived as a strength because it allowed the organization to approach corporations for money, instead of relying on fundraising and gifts from friends and family members. Acquiring funds from diverse sources and establishing a strategic financial plan were noted as critical elements in developing the organization's financial capacity.

In analyzing the infrastructure/process capacity, Svensson and Hambrick (2016) found that lack of formalization (roles and processes) was a major challenge, which impacted areas such as inter-organization communication and difficulty in collaborating on projects. Team members perceived the ability of the organization to discuss issues and learn from previous mistakes as a strength of their planning/development capacity. Lack of objectives and a long-term vision were identified as challenges in this dimension, as they contributed to the lack of a

planning structure and difficulty implementing initiatives. Partnerships with external stakeholders such as local schools and sport clubs were strengths in the relationship/network capacity, as it enabled the development of fundraising strategies. Local partnerships also helped the organization raise awareness about its community sport clubs. Although a strong relationship with the national governing body (NGB) helped promote the organization, the informality of the connection was noted as a challenge due to its restriction of collaborations to simple communication.

Svensson and Hambrick (2016) also discussed the links between the capacity dimensions. The lack of paid staff and time constraints faced by volunteers impacted the organization's structural and financial capacities. For example, the lack of a full-time fundraising manager impacted the organization's financial capacity by limiting the number of grants it could apply for without the guidance of a professional. The financial capacity in turn impacted the human resources capacity, as lack of adequate funds limited the organization's ability in recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers. The lack of human resources capacity impacted relationship/network capacity, as the organization did not have a strategic plan of who it needed to partner with, and how to leverage existing partnerships.

Following Svensson and Hambrick (2016), Svensson et al. (2017) explored the critical capacity elements of urban SDP youth development nonprofit organizations that prioritize life lessons over sport skills and techniques. The capacity dimensions from Hall et al. (2003) were used to categorize the results from the study. Strengths of human resources capacity included the organizations' urban location and programming (combining sport and social issues) giving it a larger pool of qualified individuals to draw on to volunteer. Strengths also included the skills, knowledge, expertise, and commitment of the paid staff members. Consequently, paid staff being

over-utilized and overworked was one of the challenges of this dimension. Another challenge identified was increasing the engagement of existing staff, board members, and volunteers by matching individuals to roles that fit their skill sets. Human resources capacity of the SDP organizations was impacted by their financial capacity, as having a limited pool of money to function restricted their ability to recruit more paid staff and volunteers.

Svensson et al. (2017) cited creative fundraising as a strength of the financial capacity dimension. SDP organizations promoted their ventures in the local communities as sport-based programs combined with youth development to impact change. Organizations hosted special events to generate part of their operating budgets, further showcasing the appealing combination of “a sport and a social mission” (Svensson et al., 2017, p. 17). In addition to special events, organizations relied on alternate sources such as individual contributions, corporate sponsorships, and annual giving campaigns in lieu of federal funding. Challenges included curtailing expenditures, maintaining a balanced budget, and the necessity of a skilled staff member to handle the financial matters.

Svensson et al. (2017) identified lack of formalization as one of the biggest challenges in infrastructure/process capacity, leading to struggles with organizational processes such as planning, documenting policies, and programming. Reliance on partner organizations for a facility space was another challenge due to difficulties in navigating bureaucratic ‘red tape,’ and the rising costs of renting a space. Technology was identified as a strength of this dimension, and its use extended beyond internal communication, to development of an online platform for logging physical activity of youth participating in the program. In planning/development capacity, strategic planning was noted as a challenge for some organizations but a strength for others who engaged external consultants to map out a plan. Some engaged in board development

programs, attributed to the urban location of the SDP organizations. Implementation of the strategic plan was noted as a strength for some organizations but the high number of years to reach that point was highlighted due to the limitations and influence of the financial and human resources capacities.

Finally, Svensson et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of balanced partnerships as a critical element of the relationship/network capacity dimension. Organizations ensured they collaborated in meaningful ways with partners that could provide beneficial resources. Using Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) was another strength in this dimension because these documents clearly outlined the expectations from each party, and helped strengthen the partnership. A major challenge in this dimension was the high number of external relationships with entities such as corporations, schools, and municipalities. This necessitated additional staff members and time to manage the relationships, demonstrating the impact of human resources and financial capacities on this dimension.

The reviewed literature shows that the same theoretical model was applied to different settings and backgrounds with the same (and up to) five capacity dimensions. Within those dimensions, the critical capacity elements (and the particular strengths and challenges) differed between organizations and sectors. Capacity is context specific; that is, though the dimensions will be similar, the results may differ based on the environment being explored. Elements critical to one organization may not be relevant in another, and so the “nature of capacity must be understood before efforts can begin to address building that capacity” (Doherty et al., 2014, p. 126S). It is important to uncover the particular critical elements within each capacity dimension in different contexts.

To extend the research from CSOs and SDP organizations, this study used the Hall et al. (2003) framework and applied it to NSOs to uncover their capacity strengths and challenges in implementing gender equity initiatives. Previous studies have examined the capacity to achieve goals in general, and so this study extended research by examining organizational capacity with respect to a specific organizational objective or initiative. External factors such as environmental constraints, access to resources, and historical factors, and their impact on the capacity dimensions were also considered as part of the Hall et al. (2003) model.

## Chapter 4

### 4. Method

The aim of this research was to study a phenomenon (i.e., organization capacity) in multiple contexts (i.e., gender equity initiatives in three NSOs). Data were primarily collected via semi-structured interviews with key informants. Policy-related documents and the official websites of the NSOs served as secondary data sources. The intent of the interview process was to speak to multiple individuals in each NSO and gain detailed information about the formation, development, and implementation of the gender equity initiative. This qualitative research approach is known as a case study. A case study method is used when a researcher wants to understand a particular phenomenon but this understanding includes relevant contextual conditions (Yin & Davis, 2007). A case study method relies on multiple sources of information, and allows a researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest. The key stages of a case study method include (1) defining a case, (2) selecting the case, (3) collecting and analyzing data, (4) interpreting data, and (5) reporting the findings (Patton, 2015).

There are different types of cases: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective (Stake, 2006). A collective case study enables a researcher to explore the differences within and between cases to determine if findings are replicated across cases (Yin, 2003). An intrinsic case study is used to gain a better understanding of a case because it is the case itself that is the focus of the research (Stake, 2006). An instrumental case study is the study of a case (person, organization or a group) to obtain insight into a specific issue or to refine a theory (Stake, 2006). Instrumental cases enable a researcher to examine and scrutinize the contents of the case to pursue an external interest (Grandy, 2010). This research used an instrumental case methodology, which enabled the researcher to study each NSO to learn about the organization's capacity in implementing a



gender equity initiative. The researcher was able to delve deep into the area of interest through data collection from multiple sources and analyze collected data to infer results (Baxter & Jack, 2008). An instrumental case is classed as evidence-based research because findings generated from such research can be used to “inform changes in practices, programs and policies” (Patton, 2015, p. 270).

To gain an understanding of the phenomenon in several contexts, this research conducted multiple instrumental cases. Multiple cases allowed the researcher to examine any similarities and differences across cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). To understand “how things work and what to do about them” (Stake, 2006, p. 123), cases were carefully selected, using the following criteria:

1. The cases chosen were related to the phenomenon that is the focus of the research;
2. The cases chosen provided a variety of backgrounds and circumstances;
3. The cases chosen provided the opportunity to obtain deep and dense insights into a variety of contexts.

To ensure the criteria were met, cases were identified from NSOs representing different sports. Initial search efforts were aimed at the official websites of all NSOs to discover any programs directed at the promotion of women and girls in sport. Personal communication with leaders at CAAWS and Sport Canada helped with ascertaining information on NSOs engaged in gender equity initiatives within their sport. This search revealed 11 NSOs. However, organizations that listed an equity access or similar policy on their official websites but did not actively promote their equity efforts through programs and/or policies were excluded. Ultimately, three NSOs from a variety of sports were identified with an existing gender equity initiative to promote women and girls within the sport, and with a variety of key stakeholders willing to discuss the initiative.

The key element of case study research includes facilitating a link with one or more individuals involved with the initiative (Travers, 2001). At the outset, initial contact was established by the researchers with the most senior individual involved with the initiative at each NSO. The nature of the research and its purpose was explained to these individuals to secure their acceptances to participate in the study. Following this, a letter of information was emailed to the NSO, inviting key members from the organization connected to the initiative to participate in the study. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who consented to participate in the study. The interviews provided a contextual background of the different stages, from the initiative's development to its implementation.

#### **4.1 Research Context**

Three NSOs operating in mid-to-large Canadian urban cities were the focus of this research. To protect the organization and the participants, pseudonyms are used throughout the case studies.

##### **4.1.1 Case 1: NSO 1**

NSO 1 is located in a large urban city in central Canada, and serves a winter, team sport. NSO 1's initiative is a policy that targets increasing the number of women coaches in the sport.

The initiative was first introduced at the NSO 10 years ago through its coaching certification policy. That policy directed teams to include women on the coaching staff at each game. Owing to reasons such as a lack of understanding of the importance and the intent of the initiative, and the historical dominance of men in key administrative positions at different levels of the sport, some provincial and community sport organizations circumvented the directive, and used women trainers and/or managers to meet the requirements. To make the directive official, NSO 1 collated feedback from provincial and community sport leaders, successful women coaches in the sport, and external partners at CAAWS and the Coaching Association of Canada

(CAC), and drafted a new policy. The refined policy was presented to NSO 1's board of directors for ratification, and made official in early 2017 for implementation across all levels of the sport.

NSO 1 supports the policy through workshops, webinars and other educational resources. It has successfully implemented the initiative at the national level via its mandate of including a certified woman on the coaching staff for teams and events held within its purview. This includes the provincial junior and senior teams competing at national events and the national team competing at international events. To facilitate the implementation of the initiative at all levels, NSO 1 is deliberating benchmarks that provincial and community organizations will have to meet to be members in good standing in the sport.

#### **4.1.2 Case 2: NSO 2**

NSO 2 is located in a large urban city in Western Canada, and serves a winter, individual sport. NSO 2's initiative is a program that targets increasing the engagement of women in the sport as athletes, coaches, and officials.

The initiative was first introduced at the NSO in late 2006 by an intern, and implemented using funds acquired from a successful grant application to Sport Canada for servicing underrepresented groups (i.e., women). The initiative has been re-branded since its inception to appeal to young women and girls and to attract new sponsors, and continues to operate on a nation-wide basis with the assistance of provincial and local associations and their respective leaders. To encourage the participation and passion of girls and young women in the sport, nation-wide events are hosted that include day-long sessions led by certified coaches to provide tips and tricks to the budding athletes. The same events are used as training grounds for women interested in coaching and officiating by encouraging them to participate with, and learn from, experienced coaches and officials.

### **4.1.3 Case 3: NSO 3**

NSO 3 is located in a large urban city in central Canada, and serves a summer, team sport. NSO 3 is developing various initiatives that target increasing the engagement of women in the sport as coaches and officials. The initiatives will utilize a mentorship model, and provide training and education to women by pairing them with experienced coaches and officials.

NSO 3 recently participated in a pilot program organized by the CAC, which paired apprentice women coaches with experienced mentors to facilitate their learning via shared experiences. NSO 3 is currently developing various programs utilizing teaching points from that pilot program, and is aiming to implement the programs in the upcoming months. The programs in development will provide education to athletes, coaches and officials with the aim of retaining them in the sport system, and helping them progress through the ranks. High performance athletes, including former Olympians, will be targeted and introduced to coaching and/or officiating. Existing coaches and officials will receive the opportunity to train with an experienced mentor. NSO 3 will implement these programs on a pay-by-user basis, implementing a registration fee to partake in the programs, to ensure their continuity beyond the existence of a grant and/or external sponsorship.

## **4.2 Data Collection**

This research followed a constructivist methodology (Finlay & Ballinger, 2006). As data were collected from multiple interviewees, different perspectives were collated to generate an understanding of the capacity strengths and challenges of each NSO in implementing their gender equity initiatives. Policy documents and actions plans were a secondary source of data, and were used to enhance the researcher's understanding of the initiatives. These secondary sources aided the researcher to corroborate the findings, such as, the goals of the initiatives and

their outcomes, external partnerships formed by the NSOs, and the support provided to PSOs and CSOs in their implementation efforts through recommendations of training and mentorship programs. Using multiple methods of data collection allowed the researcher to check the consistency of the findings, thus employing triangulation to ensure trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Data collection commenced after formal consent was obtained for each NSO's participation in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all personnel who consented to participate, using a conversational approach (Patton, 2015). A conversational interview differs from a standard interview in that it allows for easy interaction with the interviewees, flexibility in the interview process, and the opportunity to build on responses (Patton, 2015). The researcher prepared for this process by conducting two pilot interviews to review the drafted questions, and by conducting interviews for a separate case study project to develop interviewing skills. Though the interview process consisted of a list of pre-determined questions, the conversational approach gave the researcher the flexibility to personalize the questions based on the responses of the interviewee. The researcher was able to build on information already obtained, probe for additional information, and engage the interviewee to gain rich insights.

The research was conducted between January 2018 and April 2018. The NSO contact was emailed a letter of information (See Appendix B) providing details on the study and inviting NSO staff, board members, and other relevant individuals to participate in an interview. The contact forwarded the letter of information to those he or she felt were most relevant to speak with. Individuals then contacted the primary researcher to indicate their interest in participating in the study. Participation was completely voluntary, and the NSO was not informed who had

accepted or declined to do an interview. Information provided in the interview was anonymized and has been kept confidential to protect the identity of the NSOs and interview participants from readers.

Semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews were conducted by telephone with personnel who had primary involvement in developing, shaping and/or informing the gender equity initiatives in each organization. The interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes, and all participants were interviewed once. An interview guide was developed based on the Hall et al. (2003) framework and previous work of Doherty et al. (2014). Interviewees were probed about the strengths and challenges the organization has experienced with respect to each capacity dimension (human resources, finances, relationship/network, infrastructure/processes, and planning/development) in the development, adoption and implementation of their particular gender equity initiative. Interviewees were also asked about the influence of external factors on those capacity strengths and challenges. See Appendix A for the final interview guide.

In Case 1, participants were three females and two males, encompassing different positions at the NSO including board members, former provincial leaders and certified coaches, and staff ( $n = 5$ ). In Case 2, participants were four females and two males, encompassing different positions at the NSO including board members, certified coaches, and staff ( $n = 6$ ). In Case 3, there were three female participants and one male, three of whom are senior staff and staff members at the NSO along with one board member ( $n = 4$ ). All board members and provincial leaders hold voluntary positions but the certified coaches and staff are paid a wage. The range of roles held by the participants, and their involvement as related to the gender equity initiative, specifically within each NSO, is noted below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Profile of Participants Interviewed**

<b>NSO</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Years at NSO</b>	<b>Involvement with Gender Equity Initiative</b>
<b>NSO 1</b>	Senior Staff	9.5 years	Leads the policy at NSO 1
	Board Member	2.5 years	Shares project management insights
	Board Member	26 years	Shares experiences from coaching in home province
	Board Member	2 years	Shares experiences from coaching in home province
	Senior Staff	5 years	Final authority on policy but little daily involvement
<b>NSO 2</b>	Senior Staff	2.5 years	Final authority on policy but little daily involvement
	Senior Staff	12 years	Had led the program for over 10 years
	Board Member	8 years	Worked on program's inception
	Former Staff	7 years	Responsible for the program's success for 7 years
	Staff Member	2.5 years	Current leader of the program
	Former Staff	5 years	Part of initial leadership group that shaped the program
<b>NSO 3</b>	Senior Staff	6 years	Leading the development of the initiatives
	Staff Member	10 months	Coordinates different projects related to the initiatives
	Board Member	1 year	Working on the officials' initiative
	Staff Member	10 years	Working on the implementation of the initiative through the youth development program

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Data analysis commenced with verbatim transcriptions of the audio recorded interviews. Member checking of the interview data was ensured by allowing the interviewees to review their individual transcripts. This gave the interviewees the opportunity to correct any errors or statements they felt did not represent their thoughts accurately, and provide any additional

information (Creswell, 1998). Member checking benefited the research process because it helped improve the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

The transcripts were read by the primary researcher and her supervisor, and both a priori and emergent themes were coded. Developing a coding scheme was the first step of data analysis (Patton, 2015). Coding allowed for data to be compiled in different groups, labeled, and organized. Coding helped link data collection and interpretation, thus becoming the foundation of the data analysis process, such as making comparisons, meaning making, and drawing conclusions (Patton, 2015). As the aims of this research had been determined and indicated in the research questions, coding enabled the researcher to categorize the data collected, and prioritize the themes to be reported in the findings (Patton, 2015). By thinking about how the findings were to be reported and discussed, broad categories of codes were developed by the researcher following the Hall et al. (2003) model and research of Doherty et al. (2014). Coding was conducted by multiple researchers (primary researcher and supervisor) to fill in any gaps in the interpretive analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Prior to data collection, a list of pre-set (open) codes were developed by the researcher and maintained in a code book. These open codes were guided by various sources including the Hall et al. (2003) framework, the research questions, and literature of previous studies. After the interview data had been collected and transcribed, a primary read-through of the transcripts was completed by the researcher and the supervisor. The coding process detailed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was followed, and data were coded independently by both researchers, based on the list of open codes. Constant comparison of the coded data to the list of open codes was ensured for consistent and accurate coding. After open coding, second and subsequent readings of the interview transcripts were completed to identify and code any common themes within the



broader categories of open codes. Known as emergent codes, these are themes, ideas, and meanings that come from the data. Constant comparison of the emergent codes to the list of open codes was ensured for accurate coding of an emergent theme within the broader open code category.

The subsequent readings augmented the coding process. The existing coding scheme was refined by the addition of new codes or sub-codes, combining codes, or deletion of codes. The coding process continued until all the emergent themes had been coded. The final codes were analyzed, and the themes were placed into their respective categories, representing the capacity dimensions and external factors described in Hall et al. (2003). Coding was completed within each case to discuss the themes that arise within each NSO individually. This helped highlight the different elements critical to capacity building within each NSO.

Subsequent to the data analysis process, the capacity strengths and challenges of the NSO were discussed to address the research questions posed. This helped determine the capacity dimensions most important to fulfilling gender equity initiatives, and the capacity dimensions that need more development to achieve related objectives. The links between the different capacity dimensions were highlighted, and the impact of external factors on the dimensions were also discussed in the findings.

#### **4.4 Researcher Positionality**

Researcher positionality refers to the perspective, background and beliefs adopted by the researcher when conducting a specific research task. Foote and Bartell (2011) state that researcher positionality may influence “what researchers bring to research encounters, their choice of processes, and their interpretation of outcomes” (p. 46). Qualitative scholars have

urged researchers to engage in reflexivity, honesty, and transparency about their position, and the implications of this position to those involved in the research (Amis & Silk, 2005; Frisby, 2005).

The primary and secondary researchers were both female academics who identified with the need for increased engagement of women in sport. In addition, in preparation for this study, the primary researcher familiarized herself with literature on gender equity initiatives in sport and on literature examining the capacity of sport organizations. As such, the researcher acknowledges that her assumptions were based on her understanding of the Hall et al. (2003) framework, the literature studied and reviewed, and on the challenges faced by women in sport as highlighted in mainstream media outlets and by pro-women organizations.

To ensure that the researcher's biases did not color the findings, extensive efforts were undertaken to demonstrate the emergent themes within ease case with supporting quotations from participants. As such, the participants' views were highlighted and given prominence in the discussions and implications for future research. In addition, triangulation was ensured by utilizing secondary sources of data and a secondary researcher to validate the findings.

#### **4.5 Limitations**

The study was limited in the following ways: (1) the findings may not be generalizable beyond the sample of NSOs studied, (2) the findings are cross-sectional and do not reflect the real-time process by which the NSOs have addressed their particular gender equity initiatives, and (3) the findings are based on insight provided by those NSO stakeholders who were willing to participate in and contribute to the study.

The study was also limited through the use of the Hall et al. (2003) framework. Though the model enabled the researcher to present a holistic view of the capacity of three NSOs engaged in addressing gender equity in their sports, certain findings such as women seeking

invitations to participate in sport did not fit the model, and hence, were not included in the findings reported. Therefore, findings that do not fit the Hall et al. (2003) framework that may provide valuable insights may have been excluded from this study.

## Chapter 5

### 5. Findings

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Hall et al. (2003) framework for organizational capacity was a viable tool to identify the critical elements of capacity of NSOs in implementing their gender equity initiatives, and the influence of external factors on the capacity dimensions. Data collection through semi-structured interviews with key informants and utilizing policy documents helped the researcher collate rich information. The critical capacity elements representing each dimension are presented for the three cases below. Connections among the capacity dimensions and the impact of external factors on the capacity dimensions are also noted within each case. A selected sample of quotations that best represent the emergent themes are provided throughout each case in support of the findings.

#### 5.1 Case 1: NSO 1

The NSO 1 initiative targets increasing the involvement of women coaches in the sport. The initiative is a policy that defines coaching requirements and directs teams to include women on their coaching staffs. The policy is supported by several programs for coaching education and development. There have been various outcomes since the formalization of the policy in 2017. As a positive outcome, the NSO has seen increased engagement of women in coaching positions on the provincial junior and senior teams at the national championships, and on the national teams at international competitions. A senior staff member explained:

The result is that a lot of provinces had that uptake where they had that requirement at their provincial championships. [NSO 1] had that requirement at our national championships. Our national teams this past World's in [month], I think out of the six or

seven coaches that we had on the two teams for the national junior and senior team, we only had one male coach.

A board member added, “In general, the outcome has been positive so far. From when I started to where I am today, definitely it’s helped. I see a lot more females coaching. I see a lot more females going to get certified.”

The policy has also contributed to the increased engagement of women in coaching positions at the provincial sport organization (PSO) and community sport organization (CSO) levels, although with considerable variability. Some provincial and local organizations have either chosen to ignore the directive from the NSO or circumvented it by employing a manager or trainer on the bench as the token female. A senior staff member stated:

[NSO 1] started finding interpretations. Different pockets of the country were either not up-taking it at all, saying, ‘Oh, it’s much too challenging, we’re not going to do anything’ Others were interpreting it as any certified female, so we could have a certified trainer or a certified manager, as long as it was female.

Another senior staff member described:

There was a feeling that [some PSOs] were doing it really well, and [some PSOs] were struggling a little bit with this notion of a female on the bench. There were people circumventing kind of the reason behind it. So [some PSOs] were finding ways to get around.

Critical factors representing each of the five dimensions of organizational capacity were indicated as contributing to the successful development and implementation of the policy, the coaching development programs that support it, and the positive outcomes to date. These included knowledgeable and experienced staff, staff recognition of and commitment to the need

for such a policy, allocation in the budget towards the initiative, collaborations with external organizations to shape and develop the initiative, alignment of the policy with the NSO's strategic plan, and a board governance structure that enabled formalization of the policy. Yet, challenges were indicated according to each dimension as well. These included limited staff dedicated to the initiative, a constrained budget for coach development and communication in support of the policy, communication challenges between the NSO and PSOs, and lack of clarity and specificity in the goals for the initiative. Critical elements in each capacity dimension are detailed below and summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Framework of Critical Elements of the Dimensions of Capacity of National Sport Organizations**

<b>Capacity Dimension</b>	<b>NSO 1</b>	<b>NSO 2</b>	<b>NSO 3</b>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Knowledgeable and experienced staff</li> <li>• + Committed staff and leaders</li> <li>• - Sufficient staff and volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Knowledgeable and experienced staff</li> <li>• + Committed staff and leaders</li> <li>• - Sufficient staff and volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Knowledgeable and experienced staff</li> <li>• + Committed staff and leaders</li> <li>• - Sufficient staff and volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Finances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Dedicated line item for initiative from core funding</li> <li>• - Sufficient funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Dedicated line item for initiative from core funding</li> <li>• + Sponsorships</li> <li>• - Sufficient / Sustained funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Dedicated line item for initiative from core funding</li> <li>• + Stable revenues</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship/Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Advice</li> <li>• + Financial and non-financial resources</li> <li>• + Link to other NSOs, PSOs and CSOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Advice</li> <li>• + Financial and non-financial resources</li> <li>• + Link to other NSOs, PSOs and CSOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Advice</li> <li>• + Financial and non-financial resources</li> <li>• + Link to other NSOs, PSOs, PTCRs and CSOs</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure/Processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Governing board</li> <li>• - External communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Organizational culture</li> <li>• + Operations</li> <li>• - External communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Organizational culture</li> <li>• + Technology / database</li> <li>• - External communication</li> <li>• + Quality facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Planning/Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Inclusion of the initiative in the NSO's strategic plan</li> <li>• +- Use of key performance indicators</li> <li>• - Identification of specific goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Inclusion of the initiative in the NSO's strategic plan</li> <li>• - Long term planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• + Inclusion of the initiative in the NSO's strategic plan</li> <li>• - Long term planning</li> </ul>

*Note.* + identified as a strength for the NSO; - identified as a weakness for the NSO

Within the capacity dimension of human resources, NSO 1 senior staff and board members identified critical strengths that include knowledgeable and experienced staff. A board member explained, “[NSO 1] staff definitely understand the sport. Most of [the staff] have been involved in the sport. I think the strengths are [the staff] know the people and the coaches that are coming up.” Another board member added, “Our [senior staff members] are all women who have played sport themselves. They have multi-sport backgrounds. Two of those three positions I mentioned played [NSO’s sport] in particular.”

Commitment to the initiative and strong leadership within the NSO for it were also identified as strengths in this dimension. A board member noted:

[NSO staff] are in tune with the fact that basically in order to put a future of the sport and for the future of women leadership in sport, we have to start somewhere. Modelling it through initiatives like this is the only way we are going to get there.

Another board member reinforced the NSO’s commitment to the initiative by saying:

The health of females in general to have these opportunities in the future is an important feature. I think with this sport in particular, the [NSO] latched on to that a few years ago. The leadership that you see in place, it will always be important to allow that to happen.

However, limited staff within the NSO, and thus overburdening those individuals, was identified as a critical human resources challenge. As a board member noted, this has limitations for “how far we can take a particular issue like the [policy].” This was reinforced by another board member who stated, “The [event] took a hefty amount of staffing time, so there is a defocus on the [initiative].” A senior staff member also noted delays in the progression of the initiative due to staffing capacity challenges and stated:



I would like it if [NSO 1] were more pro-active, specifically to the [initiative] where we are able to go to the provinces ... and do a deeper kind of analysis as to all of that. Then what is needed, where the gap is, are there education tools we that we can help develop? All of that from a capacity perspective, we just don't have the resources to be able to do that.

Another board member identified the contribution of limited staffing numbers to the NSO's narrow perspective by saying, "The staff is predominantly female. I don't think there is a male staff member now. [Existing staff] may not understand the male side of it, the dad side of the sport."

Within the capacity dimension of finances, NSO 1 strengths included the establishment of a dedicated line item in the budget towards communication regarding the policy and related programs that support its implementation, allocated through core funding from Sport Canada. As a senior staff member indicated, "I have pieces in my budget related to apprentice coaches. So knowing that [NSO 1] is going to be signing some female coaches as apprentice coaches, [the NSO] had to put some money in supporting them in training." Funding has also contributed to the provision of "some training resources to the PSOs to try and help encourage this move to have more females trained and certified" as noted by a board member.

Within finances, limited funds for (a) hiring sufficient staff, (b) providing coaching development, and (c) supporting PSOs to train coaches were identified as critical challenges. A board member noted that (in)sufficient funds set a "priority as to what [the NSO] can manage throughout the year, paying staff and to keep this thing moving." A senior staff member noted that insufficient funds limits "how much money [the NSO] can put aside for ... putting together a [policy] course." As noted by a board member, lack of financial support to the PSOs can be "a

financial strain on some of the provincial sport bodies. The associations have to pay the cost of the courses and stuff to get that done.” Another senior staff member identified that insufficient educational resources such as action plans to support and guide implementation efforts limit “how we can help people understand and create a culture shift.”

The findings highlight a link between the financial and human resources capacity dimensions. The NSO lacks sufficient funds to hire staff members who can be dedicated to the initiative and help educate the PSOs on the importance of the initiative. A board member highlighted this link and stated staff members have “many things and issues they are trying to achieve. To be able to do more than that, it’s a resourcing level that holds it back.”

In the relationship/network capacity dimension, connections with the PSOs, the CAC, CAAWS, and other NSOs were identified as critical strengths of NSO 1 because of the resources they provide. Specifically, connections with the CAC and CAAWS have contributed to the development of the policy through advice procured from experts at these organizations. A senior staff member stated that the NSO “brought in [expert] from CAC and [expert] from CAAWS because I thought they are two very expert women in their area and they would be able to provide some advisory kind of things.” One board member stated that when developing a policy, the NSO brings in an “[expert] that’s familiar and working in the policy area or from a sport organization or federation that can contribute towards ideas ... and we build on that for ourselves.”

For actual implementation of the policy, a collaboration with the PSOs was identified as crucial. PSOs provided the NSO with information on the implementation of the policy and with links to the CSOs. A senior staff member described this connection as important because “[PSOs] deal with all of the coaches in the province. [The PSOs] are a really key piece for [NSO

1] to get anything on the ground, to communicate directly to clubs and associations and to coaches.”

However, the wide scope and focus of external partners like the CAC and CAAWS was identified as a challenge in this dimension. In particular, NSO 1 procures resources from these organizations such as training manuals and action plans that have a broader focus and are applicable to several sports. A senior staff member noted that through the exchange of ideas with these partners, “things may surface that may not be feasible and realistic for [NSO 1] and [the NSO’s] environment and [the NSO’s] culture. These things aren’t cookie cutter, so you always have to tailor them to the sport, the culture, the environment that’s realistic.”

The findings highlight a link between the relationship/network and human resources capacity dimensions for NSO 1, as the connections with external organizations are driven by staff and board members. As such, a board member noted that because of limited staff, “the interactions and the chance to get together is minimal.” The findings also highlight a link between the relationship/network and financial capacity dimensions in terms of the NSO’s collaborations with its PSOs for implementation of the initiative. Working in conjunction with the PSOs helps alleviate some of the financial burden on the NSO as noted by a board member because “the associations pay for the training for all coaches, both female and male, so really, [NSO 1], I don’t think has a huge financial commitment compared to the associations.”

In the infrastructure/process capacity dimension, strengths of NSO 1 included the board as a governing unit, allowing it to utilize the diverse skills and experiences of the board members to develop and ratify policies rather than focus on operations of the club. A board member explained the structure of the NSO and stated:

We have got an office with a staff ... then we have got a board ... and the President. The [senior staff] runs the day to day operations. From an organizational perspective ... having the right constructs and frameworks in place, we're on the right path.

A senior staff member reiterated the point about the NSO's "governance model [being] an extremely important strength. Our board ultimately approves policies. That is an extremely important strength ... in how [the NSO] is structured." Another board member highlighted the change in the board structure "in the last few years when [NSO 1] moved from being a representative board to ... a governance model based on skill set. [The NSO] has been able to show ... leadership being taken without real bias."

In the infrastructure/process capacity dimension, communication with PSOs was a critical challenge identified. A board member stated that the NSO has "a huge challenge with getting the associations to [implement the policy] at a recreational level." A senior staff member explained that "trying to help [PSOs] understand the value of having a female on the bench, and the value of that individual truly being in a coaching capacity and not just opening doors" is the education piece the NSO needs to work on. Another senior staff member identified the breakdown in communication with the PSOs by saying, "By the time we get down to [the PSOs], it's like a bad game of telephone. We have lost some of the intent behind it, and [the PSOs] just use it as – one more thing they have to do." This has contributed to inconsistencies in the implementation of the policy across provinces. As explained by a board member:

There is a reliance on the PSOs to educate. There is a slight weakness because of the variance of the abilities of the PSOs. [NSO 1] needs to get better at building a national presence, which would then trickle down and make resources available to the PSOs.

The findings display a link between the infrastructure/process and the financial capacity dimensions. The NSO does not have sufficient funds to adequately communicate the importance of the policy on a national scale. A board member noted that the NSO should “not rely on [PSOs] to be the only voice in their local area. Instead have a coordinated national approach and it does take money.” The findings also highlight a link between the infrastructure/process and human resources capacity dimensions. Another board member explained that the NSO does not “have an actual Director of Development or Marketing. There’s not someone to coordinate those kind of communication strategies.”

In the planning/development capacity dimension, a strong strategic plan and the fit of the initiative within it was identified as a strength. In explaining this, a senior staff member noted:

[The NSO articulates] through our strategic plan, some of our objectives and our corporate values, the notion of female. We do strongly throughout it talk about female coaches and what that looks like. Identifying that continues to underpin why we are doing this and why this is important to us. Ensuring that it is embedded somehow through language within our strategic plan is important because it allows us to point back to something.

In speaking about the strategic plan, another board member stated that “it has got a lot of good initiatives. We have got all the key objectives laid out, specifically that’s where it talks about the focus on female coaches and our coaching development system.” A senior staff member explained the organizational support for the initiative by saying NSO 1 “had identified within our strategic plan, to have a priority or focus on female coaches.”

Implementing the initiative in stages was also identified as a strength in this dimension. A board member explained that the NSO has implemented the initiative “in a nice, controlled way.

From a planning perspective, I think doing it slowly really has helped [implement] the policy. You've got great examples of what went well and what didn't go so well."

The NSO uses key performance indicators (KPIs) as a lens to prioritize projects, which was another strength in the planning/development capacity dimension. A board member noted that to help the NSO move forward, "the strategic plan, the KPIs – the metrics are in place." A senior staff member explained that the NSO uses KPIs as a lens to identify if the objectives of the initiative "fit within the key priorities that [the NSO] has right now. We will get the green light on certain projects if it fits within that."

However, the NSO's inexperience in working with these KPIs was identified as a challenge in this dimension. A senior staff member noted:

Because it's new, we have kind of gone through some funny iterations ... because we don't really know what we are doing, and we are trying to figure that out in a way that's consistent but also efficient and effective in our wording and our identification. It's finding that balance of doing and then reviewing that administrative operational plan.

The lack of clarity and specificity in the goals of the initiative was also identified as a critical challenge in the planning/development capacity dimension. A board member acknowledged that the NSO hasn't "really dreamt how far [the initiative] can go and what that would mean for the PSOs in terms of making any further requirements. Like do we need more [women coaches] or is this enough to spur on some growth in that area." To help the initiative develop and to encourage implementation, a senior staff member stated that the NSO needs to "identify what [the NSO's] accepted [gender] balance is, what makes sense for our kind of sport."

The findings highlight a link between planning/development and human resources capacity dimensions. A senior staff member explained that limited staff play a role in planning/development because the NSO has to consider if staff members “have the time to implement some initiative out of the action plan.” A board member also noted that limited staff challenges the NSO in “getting away from the day-to-day kind of issues ... and give into a lot of forward thinking.”

At NSO 1, planning/development capacity for its gender equity initiative was inferred as the strongest dimension. Specifically, the inclusion of the initiative in, and the alignment of its objectives, with the NSO’s strategic plan were consistently noted as critical elements that have contributed to the development and progress of the initiative. Infrastructure/process capacity was inferred as the dimension that needs the most development. Communication with the PSOs and CSOs to help them understand the importance and intent behind the initiative was constantly identified as a critical challenge to successful and consistent implementation of the initiative.

In addition to the findings from the five capacity dimensions, several external factors that have influenced the NSO’s capacity to develop and implement its gender equity initiative were identified. These external factors are discussed below and listed in Table 3.

**Table 3: External Factors Influencing NSO Capacity Dimensions**

NSO 1	NSO 2	NSO 3
Lack of avenues to procure additional funding	Lack of avenues to procure additional funding	Lack of avenues to procure additional funding
Canadian geography	Political climate	Political climate
Historical dominance of men in sport	Climate change	Historical dominance of men in sport
Bias/Social pressures against women in sport	Access to volunteers	Access to volunteers
Canadian sport system		Canadian sport system
		Social pressures for gender equity

Lack of avenues to procure additional funding for the initiative was noted as an influence on the financial capacity of NSO 1. A senior staff member stated that Sport Canada does not have a “requirement yet to get additional funding if, as an example, you have X number of female coaches. Right now that correlation is not there.” As there is no link between the NSO’s commitment to the initiative and the funding it procures from Sport Canada and other organizations, NSO 1’s efforts to support the implementation of the policy are hampered. Another senior staff member reiterated this point and stated:

If I had funding from [external partners] to say, ‘We are looking at initiatives to get more females on the bench, can you do something with this?’ I would apply for it ... then they would help pay for courses or training or certification.

The Canadian geography was identified as an external influence on the infrastructure/process capacity of NSO 1. Owing to the vastness of the country, the provincial and local associations are often situated at large distances from the NSO. This was indicated as a challenge to the NSO in its inability to communicate the importance of the initiative in person



through face-to-face meetings across all provinces. A senior staff member explained that to ensure consistent implementation of the policy across provinces, the NSO needs to have in-person meetings with the PSOs to give the PSOs “the opportunity to understand really why [the initiative] is important and why [NSO 1 wants] to do this.... There’s the whole education piece that goes around it.” Another senior staff member reiterated that in-person meetings with PSOs are not always “realistic [because] geographically, it doesn’t work and [NSO 1] can’t bring everybody in at the same time.”

Another external influence identified was the historical dominance of men in coaching and administrative positions in the sport, and the culture from other sports transferring to this sport. A board member explained this and said, “The previous [senior staff member] was male, and a lot of the Presidents of the provincial organizations are men trickling down to coaches. This is the loud men in the room that are taking on roles.” One senior staff member stated, “On a coaching scale of it, men are still dominating. Sometimes these men come from a [comparable team sport] background and more often than not, that’s their reality. They are bringing the [comparable sport] culture into the game.” A board member noted that it is important to make efforts in “changing the mental attitude of males that are involved in the sport ... [because men] kind of have their buddies and [men] want to coach together.”

Additionally, social pressures against women in sport were also identified by participants as a critical external influence. A board member explained that it is the “social things. It’s the dads out there that think females can’t coach. [The men] need to be in charge.... That to me is the biggest roadblock in implementing this policy.” A senior staff member supported this notion and said:

There's this overall sense that females don't want to coach because they're busy having babies and taking care of their families. I think from a historical point, there's a lot of stereotypes that [NSO 1 needs] to help break down. We need to ... change that way of thinking.

This dominance by men in key decision-making positions across different levels of the sport, and the lack of understanding and acceptance of the need for this culture change have impacted the planning/development capacity of the NSO by contributing to the original delay in the initiative's development.

The Canadian sport system was another external factor identified. As the NSO can only enforce the policy for the teams and events under its purview, this has limited consistent implementation to the provincial teams competing at national events, and the national teams competing at international events. The NSO is unable to enforce the consistent implementation of the policy across the provincial and community sport level. A board member explained, "PSOs tend to think they run their own show, and it's hard to find consensus on [the importance of the initiative.]" The board member further stated that "some provincial sport associations have not been happy with the [policy]. Not because of the premise.... It's just a numbers game [and] it's difficult to impose" the policy on local associations. Another board member added:

Some of the provinces are probably going to get some pushback. [NSO 1 has] a huge challenge with getting the associations to [implement the initiative] at a recreational level. At a recreational level, there is nothing [NSO 1] can do.

This has impacted the infrastructure/process capacity of NSO 1 because the breakdown in communication between the NSO and its PSOs has contributed to an inadequate culture shift to support the initiative.

All the aforementioned external factors have impacted different capacity dimensions that contribute to the extent of the initiative's success at NSO 1. This, in turn, has impacted the outcome of the initiative in the number of women coaches engaged in the sport.

## **5.2 Case 2: NSO 2**

The NSO 2 initiative targets increasing the involvement of women in the sport as athletes, coaches, and officials. The initiative is a program comprised of events that (a) introduce the sport to young girls and women, and (b) provide training and professional development opportunities to women already in the sport. The events are delivered as half-day or day-long camps with heavy support from provincial and local associations that do most of the ground work in organizing the events. There have been various outcomes since the program was first initiated over 10 years ago. As a positive outcome, the NSO has seen increased engagement of women in the sport. As a senior staff member explained, "I take a look at our leadership right now within the organization and we do have some strong women leaders emerging." A former staff member added, "Because [the PSO] had that level of success a few years ago, [the province] now has more female coaches in [region] than male coaches." Another staff member stated that the number of events hosted by the NSO have "doubled. [Event] participation rates ... have had about a 28 to 30% growth over the last few seasons."

Although the policy has also contributed to the increased engagement of women at the provincial and community sport level, there is considerable variability. As a former staff member explained, this may be "because the on-the-ground work is done by the club, not by [NSO 2], [implementation of the initiative] really depends on the region." In discussing the impact of the program on general participation rates, another former staff member added, "I don't know if I saw [increased participation of women] as much. Not when I was actually doing

[implementation]. Hopefully a lot of women stuck with the [sport] because of those events more than they would have otherwise.”

NSO 2 requires women interested in the events to register for them through their respective provincial or local associations. One staff member noted that this provides NSO 2 with the basic information on “how many ladies have come through our camps in any given season.” But the same staff member continued to say the NSO has not invested in “looking at conversion or attrition rates” from the events. A senior staff member added that the NSO lacks “substantive data,” and thus insufficient information to evaluate the program. A staff member explained, “I don’t necessarily have the information to say, 15% of all of the women who came through a [camp] this year went on to seek additional opportunities or are just more skilled [athletes].... That’s a missing component.”

Critical factors contributing to the successful development and implementation of the program and the educational resources that support it were identified in each of the five capacity dimensions. These included experienced and passionate staff, allocation of organizational resources through core funding from Sport Canada, connections with external organizations for program delivery, the organizational culture and operations, and the inclusion of the program in the organization’s annual planning. Yet, challenges were also indicated in each capacity dimension. These include limited staff dedicated to the initiative, lack of sustained funding to support program delivery, communication challenges with the PSOs and CSOs, and a focus on short term planning. The strengths and challenges in each capacity dimension are detailed below.

Within the human resources capacity dimension, NSO 2 staff and board members identified critical strengths that include technically sound and passionate leaders, knowledgeable staff members, and commitment to the program and in creating opportunities for women in the

sport. A senior staff member described the people in the organization as “passionate and really leaders in driving [the initiative] for all the right reasons and for all the right pieces.” A board member explained that the NSO staff working with the initiative have helped it progress because they are “leaders in the sport ... people that believe in the cause and are willing to put in their own time and energy to help grow it.” Another staff member added that the program has benefited from these individuals who “have come from [sport] coaching backgrounds or are passionate [athletes].... There is an inherent passion or willingness to put energy towards these specific things.”

However, limited staff within the NSO, and thus overburdening those individuals, was identified as a critical human resources challenge. A senior staff member noted that the challenges are “in terms of people’s time, their bandwidth, so their energy.” Another staff member explained that this has contributed to the provision of limited support to the PSOs and CSOs because staff at the NSO are “spread fairly thin. It’s a challenge because you are not able to do one thing really well. You are constantly juggling.”

Within the capacity dimension of finances, NSO 2 strengths included the allocation of organizational resources towards the initiative through core funding from Sport Canada and success with small private sponsorships. A senior staff member noted that “there were good ... funding opportunities for underrepresented program development and implementation. We have had some success on small sponsorships in years past.” A board member added that the NSO had been successful in developing the initiative because there are “other organizations in Canada that are specifically supporting women in sport and women leadership” with financial resources, and “that’s a really positive thing.” A staff member explained that this has contributed to the NSO

allocating “resources towards those opportunities and initiatives ... we can get kind of extra grants or resources to help support these [initiatives].”

However, a limited working budget and lack of sustained funding were challenges in this dimension. The NSO has insufficient funds to (a) hire additional staff and (b) provide monetary support to the PSOs and CSOs to run events. A former staff member explained that insufficient funds have contributed to the NSO’s struggle in providing financial support to the PSOs and CSOs in running events because “over the last 11 years, [sponsorship funds] have only decreased.”

These findings highlight a link between the financial and human resources capacity dimensions. A board member explained:

Because [NSO 2] doesn’t have the luxury of having enough salary capacity to hold one person to look after one job, you often have one person looking after three or four jobs. It’s too many things on your plate, so it’s a time thing. Time you are able to dedicate to really getting something off the ground.

In the relationship/network capacity dimension, connections with the PSOs and CSOs, the CAC, CAAWS, other NSOs, and sponsors were identified as critical strengths of NSO 2 because of the resources they provide. Specifically, collaborations with the PSOs and CSOs have helped organize and deliver events. A former staff member said, “Relying on the provincial based clubs is smart.... [Provincial clubs] are the good ones that are ultimately going to make it happen.” Connections with CAC and CAAWS have contributed to the development of the initiative through knowledge sharing and networking. A senior staff member explained it as “leaning on others who’ve been there and leveraging off of their knowledge and experience.” One staff member described collaborations with other NSOs as “very much a pooling of

resources” and as an opportunity to “learn somewhat through what the [other NSO] had done in the past.” A former staff member identified how connections with external partners contributed to lower operational costs of events through the provision of “both money and goods ... which reduces costs to the clubs and adds value to the event.”

However, the wide scope of external partners like the CAC and CAAWS was cited as a challenge in the relationship/network capacity dimension. One staff member noted that collaborations were limited in number due to the “scope of what the [external] organizations offer” and thus, limited the NSO’s “opportunity to pursue projects that really align with what [NSO 2’s] scope or visions are.” A former staff member discussed the potential lack of benefits in promoting the events through collaborations with sponsors outside the sport and said, “Because [the external partner] wasn’t completely related to [sport], [NSO 2] didn’t really get credibility from those brands.”

Another challenge in this dimension was the heavy reliance on the PSOs and CSOs to host events for the initiative. A former staff member noted, “For the actual implementation of the events, [NSO 2] always relied on the clubs in the region and the leaders to come up with that. [NSO 2 staff] are still doing that.” This dependency has contributed to the inconsistent number of events hosted across provinces. A former staff explained this inconsistency as a “weakness when [the PSO/CSO staff] struggles or when they don’t have time.”

The findings highlight a link between the relationship/network and human resources and financial capacity dimensions. A senior staff member stated, “If [NSO 2] had a few more dollars, we could hire a couple more staff that could partner with different organizations and give us the ability to elevate the program.”

In the infrastructure/process capacity dimension, the organizational culture and operations were identified as strengths. In discussing the organizational culture and sense of belonging, a former staff member described that when working on developing the initiative:

The culture was strong [at NSO 2]. [I felt] that everyone was related or maybe used to be an [athlete in the sport] or a competitive [coach in the sport] or somehow touched some side of the sport. That part I felt great about because I knew I could talk to someone who could relate.

NSO 2's operations were also cited as a strength in this dimension. A senior staff member identified a colleague at the NSO as "a good person that does design and makes sure [NSO 2] has good marketing materials." A former staff member noted the role of the business department in securing sponsorships for events by doing "all that work. We would say, 'Here's our program, this is what we are doing this year, go out and sell [sponsorships].' Then the business department would go and sell it." Another staff member cited NSO 2's support of the initiative by training provided to the technical leaders in the sport through "hosting a webinar series ... on coaching the female athlete and how to create a performance environment for the female athlete within their program," and noted that "it was very well received."

A critical challenge in the infrastructure/process capacity dimension was the breakdown in communication with the PSOs and CSOs. One staff member explained the challenges in collaborating efficiently with the PSOs and CSOs and said, "A lot of these [events] provincially are organized by volunteers, and that's a challenge in communication." Another staff member added that it was challenging "keeping everyone in the loop.... Some of the provinces are big, there's lots of people involved, there was confusion on why we were [partnering]."



The findings illustrate a link between the infrastructure/processes and the financial capacity dimension. A board member explained that traditional means of communication such as advertising through print and media is a challenge in sport because there are difficulties in “getting the word out. Often the word costs money.... How do you get that communication out?”

In the planning/development capacity dimension, a focus on the initiative within the NSO’s annual planning process and in the strategic plan were identified as critical strengths. A senior staff member discussed the NSO’s commitment to the initiative by including it “as part of [the NSO’s] overall strategy.” The staff member further stated that a part of [his] role at the NSO was to ensure NSO 2 was “not only delivering on strategy but that we are delivering on the appropriate elements of strategy.” One staff member noted the NSO’s “good vision of what we are aiming for and how these [initiatives] help support that” with the help of “significant planning ... to look at aligning goals with specific funding opportunities.” A former staff member discussed the NSO’s ability to implement its plans during the season due to significant planning in the off-season. The staff member described how “the [leadership group] would get together normally in the [season] and everyone would go around and say ‘this is my plan for next year.’”

However, a proclivity for short-term planning for the initiative was identified as a critical challenge in this dimension. In discussing the challenges with long-term planning, a former staff member described:

It is always very seasonal. Hard to get [the association leaders] thinking about the [sport] or being focused in the off-season. That means planning isn’t necessarily done as well as it should be because it’s hard to get their attention until the season starts.

Another former staff member reiterated this and said, “[Planning] was more year to year or from the end of one season through till when the next season started. Only looking at the upcoming season.”

These findings illustrate a link between the planning/development and financial capacity dimensions. The NSO’s planning and implementation of the initiative are reliant on the resources available on an annual basis. In explaining the different events delivered as part of the initiative, a staff member said:

[A specific training event for women athletes and coaches] is one that isn’t necessarily as reliant on a big revenue stream, so this is mostly the one [NSO 2] has been going with implementing. It does change the way we plan depending on the resources.

The findings also highlight a link with the relationship/network capacity dimension. As the NSO is reliant on the PSOs and CSOs for delivering events, challenges arise in planning. One staff member explained:

When I am ready to do something, [PSOs and CSOs] are not ready to do it or have other work commitments in particular times that might take their attention away. In terms of planning and communication, that’s certainly a challenge.

At NSO 2, relationship/network capacity was inferred as the strongest dimension with respect to implementation of its gender equity initiative. Specifically, the NSO’s model of partnering with their provincial and community associations as well as other winter sport NSOs to organize and host events was consistently identified as critical to hosting events for the initiative. Financial capacity was inferred as the dimension that needs the most development. Insufficient funding was repeatedly identified as a challenge, contributing to the limited number of events held to support the initiative. Insufficient funds were consistently noted to limit NSO 2

in the allocation of (a) core costs in staff time and money dedicated to develop and implement the initiative, (b) support provided to the PSOs and CSOs in hosting events, and (c) resources to facilitate long-term planning.

In addition to critical elements from the five capacity dimensions, several external factors that have influenced NSO 2's capacity to develop and implement its gender equity initiative were identified. The current political climate was one external factor identified. A senior staff member noted that though the current political climate was "highlighted on gender equity, that has not translated to dollars into sport organizations, and thus, organizations including [NSO 2's gender equity initiative], don't have the full capacity to deliver and drive the [initiative] to its potential." A former staff member highlighted the link between the political climate and the funding the NSO receives from Sport Canada in saying, "When [gender equity] is a bigger political priority, then Sport Canada funds [gender equity initiatives] greater, therefore, there is more of an emphasis on [gender equity]. When that is not in place, [extra funding] doesn't happen." In discussing recessions that affect the government, a board member posited, "What's the first thing that's going to dry up? It will be the small programs that get hit first." The priorities of the current government and the way monies are allocated within the national budget are an inherent influence on the NSO's financial capacity, which impacts the NSO's ability to develop resources and hire dedicated staff to support program delivery for the initiative.

Lack of avenues to procure additional funding to support the initiative was another external factor identified. A board member noted that in the Canadian sport sphere, funding is "restricted in development because so much is focused on high performance," and though sponsorships can be secured, the process is "challenging and time consuming." A former staff member recalled that funding for the initiative "was a lot harder to secure than other funding or

male dominated initiatives. When there was funding that I heard about was being looked into or applied for, it didn't seem like there was that much available." The inability to secure additional funding has influenced the NSO's financial capacity, and contributed to various challenges identified in the financial capacity dimension as noted above.

The lack of sufficient volunteers was identified as an external influence on the planning/development capacity of NSO 2 because without being able to attract volunteers to run events, the NSO is unable to plan for them. A former staff member stated that it is "harder to find people. My consistent [volunteers] have been consistent, thankfully, but they don't want to do more." Another former staff member stated that insufficient volunteers were a challenge to the "people side of things. Not having enough. Not even just leaders running the event but enough coaches to be there. You don't want to have 1 [volunteer coach] for 20 participants." The unavailability of sufficient volunteers has impacted the provincial and local associations in organizing events for the program, and thus, is a further challenge to long-term planning for the NSO.

The climate was identified as another critical external influence. A senior staff member noted that "winter and [element] and access to [venues] is becoming for [NSO 2], and especially on the competition side, a significant challenge. We have had several competitions cancelled this year because of a lack of [element]." A former staff member identified "climate change as a huge challenge that needs to be mentioned because there were a few really hard seasons even up until now. People weren't going up to the [venues] as much because there wasn't as much [element] and the conditions weren't as good." The climate is an influence on the planning/development capacity of the NSO as uncertainties in the climate and seasons hamper the NSO's ability to make long-term plans for hosting events to support the initiative.

All of these aforementioned external factors have influenced NSO 2's capacity dimensions, which in turn has impacted the number of women participating and being engaged in the sport as athletes, coaches, and officials.

### **5.3 Case 3: NSO 3**

The NSO 3 initiatives target increasing the engagement of women in the sport as coaches and officials. The first initiative is two-pronged and aimed at the development of women coaches. The target audience for this initiative are athletes competing in the sport at all levels, from high school to the international stage, and women already coaching in the sport. As the NSO hopes to retain its athletes in the sport, it aims to provide them with information on becoming coaches and/or officials, giving them the option to choose one or both streams after the conclusion of their playing careers. For coaches already working in the sport, the NSO aims to provide further education and training. This initiative has been partially implemented in the youth development program the NSO has offered for several years. One staff member noted that due to the push to engage more women coaches in the youth development program, NSO 3 is “getting the coaches that are female coaches from the high school level involved because of the popularity of the sport.”

This initiative aimed at coach development will utilize a mentorship model and provide training opportunities to apprentice women coaches with experienced coaches. A senior staff explained this why initiative is important and said:

Because [women coaches'] employment piece is through USport [the governing body for Canadian Interuniversity Sport] and the CCCA [Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association]. So by educating females and getting them experienced ... [they are] prepared to be taking up some of the jobs.

The second initiative is aimed at the development of officials. This initiative will also utilize a mentorship model. From the outset, officials have been a separate entity in the sport. The NSO has recently finalized plans to bring officials under the NSO's umbrella. A board member explained the plans and said:

There are a lot of different things going on in a lot of different places within Canada. What [NSO 3] is trying to do is standardize the training and the information officials receive so that it is consistent across the country, in hopes that we can obtain a consistent product on the floor.

Ultimately, the goal of the program is to educate women, provide them with opportunities to network and with the requisite experience to be qualified for employment at the university and collegiate level, and retain them in the sport. These initiatives will be supported by the development of educational resources required for the delivery of the programs. The programs will be based on a pay-by-user system to ensure their sustainability beyond any funding and/or grants received to support program delivery. The initiatives are currently in development, and are expected to be rolled out in stages, commencing in late 2018.

Critical factors representing each of the five dimensions of organizational capacity were indicated as contributing to the successful development of the initiatives, and the resources that support it. These factors included experienced leaders advocating for women in sport, the allocation of organizational resources to support program delivery, relationships with external partners to shape, develop and ultimately deliver the initiative, the use of integrated technology to support the administrative tasks related to program delivery, and inclusion of the initiatives in the NSO's planning. However, challenges were also indicated in each capacity dimension. These included lack of sufficient staff to support the development of the initiatives, lack of sustained

funding, the wide scope of partner organizations, challenges in communicating with PSOs, and the tendency for short-term planning.

Within the capacity dimension of human resources, NSO 3 senior staff and board members identified staff members' experiences within the sport and strong knowledge bases as critical strengths. In discussing how staff members have helped shape and develop the initiatives, one senior staff member stated that staff members involved in the initiative have experience:

So, whether it's experience with mentorship or not mentorship [but] being a female within either coaching or programming, they have that experience. [She] has experience implementing a mentorship program. I participated in the program as a mentor, so I have experience in being trained. I want to try and build off and to try and regenerate and create this for others.

Another staff member discussed the importance of experienced staff members in developing initiatives and noted, "It provides better guidance. [The staff members] lend a scope in terms of the perception and how to promote more women coaches being involved in the program."

The commitment of staff members to promoting women in sport was also identified as a strength in this dimension. A staff member identified leaders working on the initiatives as "huge advocates for women in sport." Another staff member noted the development of the initiatives because of the commitment of leaders and described how "[the women leaders] lived through the times when it wasn't really important to have female-based initiatives.... They value those types of programs and initiatives. They are willing to be a leader in that area."

However, limited staff within the NSO and thus, overburdening those individuals was identified as a critical human resources challenge. Discussing the small staff numbers and their limited time devoted to working on the initiatives, one staff member said, "Everyone's plates are

very full. Time constraints is the main challenge and staff capacity.” A board member identified that “there are not a lot of people to be able to [work on the initiatives]. To have more people do little bits of things would be helpful.” A senior staff member reiterated that NSO 3 staff “all do more than what should be humanly possible,” and discussed challenges in devoting dedicated time to the initiative because of “having to manage so many pieces that [staff members] can’t pay [the initiative] the attention it deserves.”

Within the capacity dimension of finances, NSO 3 strengths included the allocation of organizational resources in staff time and money to develop the initiatives through core funding received from Sport Canada. A senior staff member identified that the NSO is “allocating core costs towards [the development of the initiatives]. It is happening as part of [NSO 3’s] day to day.” In discussing officials and the progress of the development of that initiative, a board member stated that the NSO is “earmarking some money specifically for the development of officials.”

A stable revenue stream through the utilization of a pay-by-user system was identified as another strength in the financial capacity dimension. Participants will bear a cost to receive training and education through the initiatives, and this money will be used towards the operational costs of the programs. A senior staff member described the fee charged as crucial:

For sustainability. The cost will be on the back of those that are getting mentored. The cost won’t be based on a grant. It’s a strength that it does allow for [the initiative] to exist past the time of a grant.

Within finances, limited or insufficient funds for (a) hiring additional staff, (b) developing sufficient resources for the initiatives, and (c) deploying marketing campaigns were identified as critical challenges. One staff member said:



[NSO 3] can't afford to hire another person. It would be great if [NSO 3] could say, we are going to bring a new person in ... and the new staff member would be in charge of specific groups like women. It's not in the budget to hire someone.

A board member added, "There's not a lot of money there to develop the [initiatives]. [NSO 3] just have to find the money." Another staff member reiterated that "there's not really any funding for [NSO 3] to develop those type of programs right now." In discussing the perceived impact of limited finances, one staff member noted that at the grassroots level, this has contributed to "very limited financial capacity to implement these [initiatives]."

These findings highlight a link between the human resources and financial capacity dimensions. The NSO lacks the requisite funds to hire staff members dedicated specifically to the development and delivery of programs to support the initiatives. One staff member explained that additional finances could help "these [initiatives] move forward at a greater rate. [NSO 3] can actually take the time and have the manpower to develop great [initiatives]."

Within the relationship/network capacity dimension, connections with other NSOs, PSOs and the provincial territorial coaching representatives (PTCRs) were identified as critical strengths. A board member explained that partnerships with other sports were beneficial to developing resources for the initiatives because:

With those partnerships [NSO 3 and other NSOs] can pool their financial resources in order to get things done. Part of [NSO 3's] initiative is starting up a new online platform ... that platform is being shared between a few sporting bodies.

One staff member spoke about utilizing partnerships with other NSOs to evaluate the initiatives because the connections "provide a larger test group to see how programs are working, and whether or not [the initiatives] are effective and if [the initiatives] are meeting the needs of the

audience they are intended for.” A senior staff member identified the benefits of being connected to PSOs and particularly PTCRS as “it negates some of the travel costs.... [PTCRs] can help [NSO 3] within that province, so [NSO 3 staff] don’t have to go there.” Another staff member discussed the wide reach of the youth development program because of external partnerships and described the partners as an “extension of who [NSO 3] are.... Partnerships help to reach out, work with groups and train coaches, get coaches involved.”

Connections with external partners like the CAC and CAAWS were also identified as strengths in the relationship/network capacity dimension because of the resources they provide. A senior staff member noted that the materials that “CAC and CAAWS have developed ... are graphically laid out pretty good.” Another staff member identified these partners as critical for “resource development and curriculum development. [NSO 3] is not reinventing the wheel. We are going to them and CAC and CAAWS already have that pre-made so we can use it.”

However, the wide scope of the partner organizations like the CAC and CAAWS, and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Boys and Girls Club of Canada were identified as challenges within the relationship/network capacity dimension. A senior staff member discussed the resources shared by external partners like the CAC and CAAWS and said they are “not tailored to [NSO 3’s] sport or for the needs within [NSO 3’s] sport.” Another staff member described the necessity of tailoring educational resources because “[the partner’s] focus is very large scale and bigger picture, and they don’t always get to nail down on-the-ground programming and how it will affect each province individually.” A staff member noted that at times, partner organizations like the YMCA that are involved in delivering the youth development program “look at what [NSO 3] is trying to do ... and combine [the initiative]” with their own programming. The staff member further stated, “[NSO 3’s] ability to monitor each one

of these groups and know what [the partners] are doing becomes a bit of a challenge.... [NSO 3's] ability to control or monitor becomes a weakness.”

These findings illustrate a link between the relationship/network and financial capacity dimensions. One staff member highlighted this link by identifying the connections with external partners as beneficial because “[NSO 3] can cost-share some of the expenses.” The findings also highlight a link with the human resources capacity dimension. A positive link with human resources was illustrated by a board member who identified the “smarts and experience and positive connections that [senior staff members] have built in the sporting community to be able to [share an online platform with training resources].” Conversely, the NSO does not have sufficient staff members to adequately monitor the delivery of the youth development program, and a staff member called it “impossible for a person like [the one staff member] in the office to police and monitor [X number of] groups running the program across the country.”

In the infrastructure/process capacity dimension, strengths of NSO 3 included the organizational culture and availability of quality facilities to support and deliver the programs. The organizational culture was described as inclusive and team-based, driven by committed and passionate individuals in a supportive office space. One staff member described the office as a “wonderful place to develop [initiatives] like these ... [with a] team-based approach.” Another senior staff member noted the “strength of the way [NSO 3] is laid out” in its space to develop these initiatives. The availability of sufficient facilities was also noted as critical for program delivery, as one board member said, “the venues that [NSO 3] utilizes for competition [are] top-notch,” allowing apprentice coaches and officials to work in high quality facilities. Another staff member indicated the facilities as “helpful in terms of having the space to deliver training material and get programs on the ground running.”

The use of integrated technology and the NSO's database of resources to support the initiatives were additional strengths identified in the infrastructure/process capacity dimension. A senior staff member identified the use of an online system the NSO has "already paid into" so when it comes to the "administration of [the initiative], [NSO 3] is pretty lucky that they have an automated system built into [the initiative]." As part of [her] role at NSO 3, a staff member maintains an "online database ... where coaches can register for courses, keep a record of NCCP [National Coaching Certification Program] courses [coaches] have completed, professional development, watch videos to learn [sport skills], [read] different documents on there." Another staff member identified the utilization of "operational guidelines and standard procedures" across different provinces to support the delivery of the youth development program.

However, communication between the NSO and its PSOs was identified as a critical challenge in the infrastructure/process capacity dimension. To continue the progress of the initiatives, a board member noted the challenges in communicating to "[partner organizations] that change is a good thing ... the need to continue to strengthen relationships with some of the stakeholders ... build a trust relationship ... and build a collaborative relationship."

The findings display a link between the infrastructure/process and human resource capacity dimension. One staff member described the challenge of communicating effectively with limited staff and said:

[Senior staff member] is one person. I am one person. The scope of what [NSO 3] is trying to do to reach out to the entire country relies on two [NSO 3] staff ... that has a huge capacity restraint in terms of what we are able to do. [NSO 3] would be able to do more with more staff.

The findings also display a link with the financial capacity dimension. A staff member explained that having more money would aid communication efforts by allowing the NSO “to build various campaigns; something small like a social media campaign to something bigger like a television, radio or media campaign” to promote the initiatives and build awareness.

In the planning/development capacity dimension, inclusion of the initiatives within the NSO’s planning process was identified as a strength. One staff member noted that the initiatives “are on the radar ... and on the list of priorities.” A board member noted the NSO 3 has a “vision, which is positive ... and the board being supportive of that vision,” to grow within the sporting community. To support the initiatives, the NSO tries to anticipate potential barriers and develop solutions through its planning process. For example, a senior staff member explained the NSO’s plans to organize “a place for the kids to go while the [moms] coach.”

A focus on short-term planning, and thus, the NSO’s inability to plan long-term to support the initiatives was identified as a critical challenge in the planning/development capacity dimension. A staff member described a defocus on the initiatives due to a priority placed on short-term goals like “trying to look to [upcoming months] because that is when [NSO 3] has [international events].” The same staff member added that this has forced the NSO staff to play “catch up on all the things that were missed or needed to get done in the past year,” and thus, impacted on how NSO 3 “sees the bigger picture and plans ahead.” Another senior staff member explained the NSO’s desire to “create a five year plan” but having to deal with the reality of “having it kyboshed from year to year ... [making it] tough to hold to that five year plan.”

These findings display a link between the planning/development and financial capacity dimensions. A board member explained how limited financial capacity forces “some of the initiatives ... to be put on a back burner for another time ... and not being able to meet certain

timelines.” The findings also display a link with the human resources capacity dimension. A staff member highlighted this link in saying, “In our department, driving these [initiatives], it’s literally [another staff member] and I ... and our plates are full.... We can’t add to it.”

At NSO 3, infrastructure/process capacity was inferred as the strongest capacity dimension. Specifically, the availability of quality facilities and the use of integrated technology to support the administrative processes of the initiatives were consistently noted as critical to the success of the initiatives. Planning/development capacity was inferred as the dimension needing the most development. NSO 3’s focus on short-term goals like upcoming meetings, events and competitions was repeatedly identified as a challenge, contributing to the allocation of resources in staff time and money to meet those goals, thereby leading to a de-focus on the initiatives.

In addition to the five capacity dimensions, several external factors that have influenced the NSO’s capacity to develop and implement its gender equity initiatives were identified. Lack of avenues to procure additional funding for the initiatives was noted as an influence on the financial capacity of the NSO. A board member discussed the lack of sponsorships and how NSO 3 is “competing with other big sports” for sponsorship dollars, which “is difficult.” Another staff member described the Canadian sport landscape as “very competitive,” and noted that though “[NSO 3’s sport] is growing and people are more engaged within the [sport], it is the sponsorship dollars within the market [for which NSO 3] is competing with other sports.” The staff member further noted how “in general terms of sponsorship, sponsors tend to want to sponsor the men’s program.”

The political climate was also identified as an external factor influencing the financial capacity of the NSO. One staff member noted that additional funding could be secured “if the government mandates a certain amount of funding [through] legislature that says X amount of

females need to be on the bench or each organization needs to have X females.” Another senior staff member noted the lack of sustained funding in “the way our government gives money. [The government gives] funding year by year, and the amount can change from year to year.” A change in the political climate can impact the funding priorities of the central government, thereby restricting the NSO’s avenues for sustained funding. Lack of sustained funding is an influence on the NSO’s financial capacity dimension, and through it, on the NSO’s ability to hire dedicated staff for the initiative and develop resources to support program delivery.

The Canadian sport system was another external factor identified. One staff member noted that a crucial piece in developing new programs was “securing buy-in from the provinces ... by building relationships and explaining how certain programs will be useful for the provinces and how [PSOs] can implement them.” Another staff member explained that though PSOs work with the NSO on the initiatives, “[PSOs] are a separate entity.... There are some aspects where [PSOs] can say they don’t want to.” A senior staff member added, “there are times when [the provincial partners] want to take away some of the pieces that we put in place.” This illustrates the influence of the Canadian sport system on the NSO’s infrastructure/process capacity. Though the NSO makes an effort in communicating the importance of the initiative to its PSOs and CSOs, it is unable to secure consistency in implementation of its initiatives across all levels of the sport.

Access to volunteers was also identified as an external factor. A board member explained that NSO 3 needs “volunteers to run tournaments and these [initiatives] they offer.” Also, because the initiatives will utilize a volunteer mentorship model, success of the programs depends on finding sufficient mentors. One senior staff member has identified the challenge of

“finding mentors that have time.” Volunteers are critical to delivering programs that support the initiatives, and thus an inherent influence on the NSO’s planning/development capacity.

Social pressure for gender equity was another external factor identified. One staff member agreed that “there is a social pressure for [NSO 3] to do [gender equity programming], especially if other NSOs start to take the lead.” Another staff member added that gender equity programming “has become a more prominent piece of what the [NSO] is trying to do.” A board member noted a “positive shift in [NSO 3] trying to be equitable in their programming for males and females” and how the initiatives “have promoted and supported the gender equity piece.” This has encouraged the NSO in its programming for the initiatives and been a positive influence on its planning/development capacity.

However, the historical dominance of men in administrative positions within the sport was cited as a negative influence on the NSO’s planning/development capacity. A senior staff member stated that at NSO 3, “although [men and women] hold the same positions, that pay is not equal, and [this is] driven from [NSO 3’s] board, which is mainly male.” The staff member further stated, “The workload between [men and women] is not even either” and it is a struggle to get “women hired into positions” of a coach on provincial teams despite “some of [the women] being more qualified.” This was attributed to the predominantly male leadership within the sport and the “principle of hiring like” (senior staff member). This dominance of men in key decision-making positions within the sport has impacted the planning/development capacity of the NSO and contributed to delays in developing the gender equity initiatives.

All of the aforementioned external factors have impacted different capacity dimensions at NSO 3 that contribute to the successful development of the NSO’s gender equity initiatives. This, in turn, has the potential to impact the implementation of the initiatives across all levels of



the sport, and through it, the number of women engaged within the sport in coaching and officiating.

The findings discussed above highlight the critical elements representing the capacity dimensions for the NSOs. Based on the findings, human resources capacity was inferred as the most important dimension across the NSOs to address gender equity in sport. Knowledgeable and experienced staff members committed to the gender equity initiatives were a strength for the NSOs. As an example, at NSO 1, steadfast staff members have contributed to the development and formalization of the gender equity initiative. However, a common challenge across NSOs was limited staff, and thus, overburdening of those existing staff members. As an example, at NSO 2, insufficient staff have contributed to the limited number of connections established with provincial and external partners, thereby limiting the number of events hosted to support the gender equity initiative.

Links between capacity dimensions were also identified, which highlighted the connection of human resources capacity to the other capacity dimensions. As an example, at NSO 3, staff members have helped forge partnerships with other NSOs, which has led to the development of an online training platform shared among several sports. Staff members have committed to the initiative, which has helped foster an inclusive culture at NSO 3 that values gender equity, and thus, develop operations that support it. This illustrates the links between human resources and relationship/network and infrastructure/process capacities respectively. These links between human resources and other capacity dimensions are identified across the NSOs, further signifying the importance of the human resources capacity dimension to NSOs engaged in implementing gender equity initiatives within their sport.

Besides the critical capacity elements, various external factors were identified. Some external factors were common across NSOs and some were unique to a particular NSO. These external factors have influenced different capacity dimensions at the NSOs, and through the dimensions, the successful development and implementation of the gender equity initiatives.

## Chapter 6

### 6. Discussion

The findings detailed in Chapter 5 provide an overview of organizational capacity to implement gender equity initiatives at the three NSOs. The findings from each case study highlight the critical elements (listed in Table 2) contributing to the implementation of the gender equity initiatives. External factors influencing the capacity dimensions of NSOs (listed in Table 3) are also noted. As noted in Chapter 5, the findings have some common elements across the three case studies and some elements unique to each NSO. This discussion explores the findings and their implications for meeting gender equity objectives at the NSO level, and recommends avenues for future research to further investigate the nature and impact of organizational capacity to implement gender equity initiatives.

#### 6.1 Multidimensionality of Capacity

This research used the Hall et al. (2003) framework for organizational capacity and considered multiple dimensions of capacity and their impact on the NSOs' abilities to implement gender equity initiatives. Hall et al. (2003), and previous studies examining the capacity of CSOs (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011) and SFD organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017) support the idea that an organization draws on a variety of resources to achieve its goals. This was also found in the current study where there was evidence that elements representing all five of the Hall et al. (2003) capacity dimensions were indicated. As noted in Chapter 5, the findings highlight the contributions of different elements from each capacity dimension to the development and implementation of the initiatives.

During the interview process, participants were probed about the strengths and challenges of each capacity dimension. This revealed critical elements in each dimension that have contributed to the gender equity initiatives. Particularly, the findings revealed multiple critical elements in each capacity dimension, and they are listed in Table 2. For example, at NSO 1, the critical elements in the relationship/network capacity dimension included advice, financial and non-financial resources, and link to other NSOs, PSOs and CSOs. Similarly, at NSO 3, the critical elements in the infrastructure/process capacity dimension included the organizational culture, technology/database, external communication, and quality facilities. Some critical elements were strengths for the NSOs. In the aforementioned example of NSO 1, all the elements identified in the relationship/network capacity dimension were strengths. However, in the aforementioned example of NSO 3, three of the four elements were strengths but external communication was a challenge. Some critical elements were common across the NSOs. For example, in the human resources capacity dimension, each NSO identified common critical elements, namely, knowledgeable and experienced staff, committed staff and leaders, and sufficient staff and volunteers. However, some critical elements were unique to the NSOs. For example, NSO 1's use of KPIs (planning/development), NSO 2's sponsorships (finances), and NSO 3's quality facilities (infrastructure/process).

These findings illustrate the multidimensionality of the capacity of NSOs to implement gender equity initiatives, and reinforce the notion that organizations likely draw on a variety of assets and resources to achieve their goals, including specific objectives like gender equity initiatives. The similarities in the critical elements identified may be attributed to the similarities in the type of organizations (i.e., NSOs) and goals (i.e., gender equity initiatives). However, the differences in the critical elements identified may be attributed to the differences in the

organizations and their overall capacities, as well the nuances in the initiatives (i.e., policies, events, professional development programs) themselves. Critical elements in each capacity dimension are discussed below.

## **6.2 Dimensions of Organizational Capacity**

The key elements of each dimension that emerged as perceived strengths or challenges for the NSOs were detailed in Chapter 5. The common critical elements in capacity dimensions across NSOs will be discussed below, distinguishing between elements that were strengths and challenges, as well as the unique critical elements.

### **6.2.1 Human Resources Capacity**

Within the capacity dimension of human resources, having experienced and knowledgeable staff with commitment to the gender equity initiatives was a common critical element that was noted as a strength. Across the NSOs, it was critical that staff with a passion for women's issues in sport and for the particular initiative were driving that effort. For example, at NSO 1, committed individuals contributed to the development and formalization of its gender equity initiative. Staff members dedicated to the development of the initiative went through a laborious process to gather data from experienced coaches and provincial staff to formulate an initial gender equity policy. These staff members established connections with external partners at the CAC and CAAWS who helped shape and inform the initiative. Staff members advocated for the initiative and secured the support of the board, leading to its formalization in a policy in early 2017.

Sufficient staff was another common critical element across the NSOs for implementing gender equity initiatives but it was noted as a particular challenge in each case. Limited staff, and thus, overburdening of existing staff meant these human resources were unable to dedicate

sufficient time to work on the initiatives. For example, at NSO 2, limited staffing resulted in multiple portfolios being handled by one person, thus over-extending staff members' capacities and leading to a constant juggling of priorities. Staff members' busy schedules constrained the energy and time they devoted to the initiative. This has limited staff members in the amount of support they have been able to provide to PSOs and CSOs who host events for the initiative.

The findings from this study align with Hall et al. (2003) and previous sport organization capacity research. The Hall et al. (2003) study identified sufficient volunteers and dedicated and committed staff members as factors in the human resources capacity dimension for voluntary, nonprofit organizations in general. Sharpe (2006) identified passionate volunteers with a common focus on the goals of the organization as critical factors in one sport organization, while Misener and Doherty (2009) identified dedication to the club, skills, knowledge and attitude of the staff, and sufficient volunteers in another organization. Doherty et al. (2014) also identified the passion and dedication of volunteers, knowledge and experience of the staff, a common focus, and sufficient volunteers as critical elements across a range of CSOs.

### **6.2.2 Financial Capacity**

Within the capacity dimension of finances, a common critical element across the NSOs was allocation of organizational resources to support the initiative designated through core funding received from Sport Canada. In the early stages of each initiative's development, there was no designated funding available from Sport Canada for organizations addressing gender equity within their sport. This led to the NSOs examined in this study to reinforce the importance of the initiatives by allocating monies to their development from their core funding. For example, at NSO 3, the gender equity initiatives are delivered as training and educational programs. NSO 3 has allocated organizational resources in money and staff time to support the development of

the initiatives. This has allowed the NSO to develop non-financial resources and design programs to support the initiatives. These findings illustrate the necessity of dedicating a line item in the budget towards initiatives for NSOs interested in addressing gender equity in their sport.

Another common capacity element for NSO 1 and NSO 2 was sufficient funding. Sufficient funding means the availability of requisite financial resources to support the initiatives through (a) dedicated staff members, (b) non-financial resources like training manuals, and (c) support given to PSOs and CSOs. However, lack of sufficient funding was identified as a challenge at NSO 1 and NSO 2. At NSO 2, insufficient funding contributed to inconsistencies in the implementation of the initiative across provinces. Limited finances have restricted NSO 2 in providing financial support to its PSOs and CSOs, thereby limiting the number of events held across provinces to support the initiative. Sufficient funding was not indicated as a critical element for NSO 3, perhaps because it has a plan in place to generate revenues to off-set some of the operational costs of the initiative. In this way, NSO 3 may be more like CSOs, for whom sufficient funding was also not a factor, but rather the focus was on stable funding (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009).

Several unique critical elements of financial capacity were also uncovered. Sustained funding was a unique element identified at NSO 2. Sustained funding means the availability of financial resources over a long period of time. NSO 2's gender equity initiative is implemented through events hosted across the country. Lack of sustained funding was a challenge for NSO 2 as it is critical for the organization to know that there will be funds available to plan to continue to host events in support of the initiative. The Hall et al. (2003) study identified the need for "better money" (p. 21), which refers to flexible funding, giving organizations the autonomy to

pursue activities and projects of their choice that align with their organizational priorities. Neither sufficient funding nor sustained funding were identified as critical elements of financial capacity in the CSO studies. As this study examined the capacity of NSOs in meeting specific goals (i.e., gender equity initiatives) as opposed to their overall objectives, the necessity of sufficient and sustained funding may be paramount in this particular context, and for implementing specific initiatives.

Another unique element identified at NSO 2 was sponsorships. NSO 2 has been successful in securing small sponsorships, which have contributed to supporting events hosted for the initiative. A unique element uncovered at NSO 3 was stable revenues. NSO 3 has utilized a pay-by-user system for its initiatives, which will contribute to the operational costs of implementing them. These unique elements were strengths in both NSOs. These findings align with Misener and Doherty (2009) and Doherty et al. (2014), where alternate sources of revenue and stable revenues were identified as critical elements for CSOs. However, these were not common elements across the NSOs, and so, again, may be particular to the specific gender equity initiatives.

### **6.2.3 Relationship/Network Capacity**

Within the relationship/network capacity dimension, a common critical element was connections with external partners like the CAC and CAAWS, and PSOs, CSOs, and other NSOs for resources. Across the NSOs, these resources included advice, financial and non-financial assets such as training materials, and links between the PSOs and CSOs for delivery of the initiatives. These partnerships were identified as strengths, and they have contributed to the initiatives in different ways at the NSOs. For example, at NSO 1, advice procured from partners at the CAC and CAAWS helped shape the gender equity policy. At NSO 2, events supporting the



initiative have been held in collaboration with PSOs, CSOs, and other NSOs. At NSO 3, partnerships with other NSOs have contributed to cost-sharing of expenses and a larger test group to evaluate the initiatives with.

Another common critical element across the NSOs was the wide scope of partner organizations like the CAC and CAAWS. This was a challenge for the NSOs. Though the resources like training manuals received from these organizations were helpful to the NSOs, the documents were noted to have a broad focus applicable to several sports. Thus, the NSOs needed to tailor these resources to make them applicable to their sports and gender equity initiatives. This has contributed to limiting the value found in external partnerships.

These findings broadly align with the Hall et al. (2003) study where a nonprofit organization's ability to draw on external partners to share resources and knowledge was identified as an asset. However, the critical elements identified in this study were not indicated in previous research by Misner and Doherty (2009) and Doherty et al. (2014). Misner and Doherty (2009) identified respect, trust, and openness with external partners, and Doherty et al. (2014) identified engaged and balanced partnerships, bureaucratic partners, dependable relationships, and personal connections as critical elements in the relationship/network capacity of CSOs. As those studies examined grassroots CSOs, the elements were derived from and may be specific to the nature of those organizations. For example, CSOs rely on volunteers for goal attainment, and it is these volunteers who use their personal connections to forge relationships with external partners. Partners may include organizations in the community such as schools, universities, local gyms, the city council, and PSOs. These partners are essential for CSOs as they may share facilities, support each other in the community, and have a general give-and-take relationship. NSOs are formal organizations with a paid staff who conduct the daily operations. In this study,

access to secondary resources such as advice and training manuals were identified as the reasons for forging partnerships with partners like the CAC and CAAWS. Also, as NSOs, PSOs and CSOs exist in the Canadian sport system as hierarchical partners who work on “distinct but complementary and often allied mandates” (Doherty & Clutterbuck, 2013, p. 324), the linkages may be based more on this hierarchy, than trust, openness or respect, or balanced and engaged partnerships, and perhaps particularly for specific initiatives.

#### **6.2.4 Infrastructure/Process Capacity**

Within the infrastructure/process capacity dimension, a common critical element across the NSOs was external communication. External communication refers to the exchange between the NSO and its PSOs and CSOs. This was a challenge across the three NSOs. For example, at NSO 1, communication with PSOs and CSOs included helping them understand the importance and intent of the initiative, so they may buy-in to the policy and help support its implementation. A breakdown in communication has contributed to the inconsistent implementation of the initiative across provinces. In previous studies (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009), communication was identified as a critical element in this dimension but that finding referred to communication between the members of the CSOs. The finding in this study illustrates the importance of external communication with PSOs and CSOs related to the initiatives to ensure consistent implementation across all levels of the sport, and this is attributed to the gender equity initiatives themselves, and the scope of their implementation across the country.

A common critical element for NSO 2 and NSO 3 was organizational culture. Organizational culture refers to the values and behavior in an organization that guides its operations (Schein, 2010). This has been a strength for both NSOs. At NSO 2, the culture and operations supporting the initiative have been critical to the organization because its gender

equity initiative is a program delivered through events in collaboration with its PSOs and CSOs. This coordinated approach to delivering the events for the initiatives necessitates a strong team-based culture and operations supportive of the initiative. At NSO 3, the culture of the organization has been critical because the initiatives are delivered through mentorship programs. This necessitates supporting the initiatives through a focus on technical details like quality facilities, a database, and integrated technology. These findings align with Misener and Doherty (2009) who identified organizational culture as a critical element in this dimension, and characterized it as an “inclusive and supportive environment” (p. 474). This highlights the importance of organizational culture on NSO 2 and NSO 3, who are implementing their gender equity initiatives through programs, which are facilitated through the coordination of operations in a positive culture. However, the NSO 1 initiative is a policy, which does not require the coordination of events to implement the initiative, thereby illustrating less of an emphasis on organizational culture.

A unique critical element in this dimension was NSO 1’s governing board comprised of board members with diverse skills. This has been a strength for NSO 1 and critical to the organization because, again, its gender equity initiative is a policy, which has been supported by the board through its initial ratification. The need for formalized operations was identified as a critical element in the CSO context (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009), and with respect to infrastructure capacity for general goal achievement. The findings illustrate that with respect to a specific formalized policy, NSO 1 focused on the governing board as a critical asset to get it ratified.

Another unique critical element in this dimension was NSO 3’s quality facilities. This has been a strength for NSO 3. Facilities provide coaches and officials the opportunity to receive

training in quality spaces. These findings align with Doherty et al. (2014) who identified facilities as a critical element in this dimension. However, the findings contrast the Hall et al. (2003) study where nonprofit organizations were identified as often possessing poor infrastructure and “less than optimal” (p. 41) working conditions.

### **6.2.5 Planning/Development Capacity**

Within the planning/development capacity dimension, inclusion of the initiative in the annual planning process was a common critical element and strength across the three NSOs. For example, at NSO 1, the initiative was included in the strategic planning process, which has contributed to the alignment of the initiative’s objectives with the organization’s overall goals. Similarly, NSO 3 has reinforced its focus on gender equity by including the initiatives in the strategic planning process. This aligns with the findings from Misener and Doherty (2009) and Doherty et al. (2014), where strategic planning was identified as a critical element in meeting the CSOs’ overall objectives. The inclusion of the initiative in the NSO’s strategic plan was notable in each case, indicating the organizations’ commitment to it, and accountability for it.

A common critical element for NSO 2 and NSO 3 was long-term planning. Long-term planning refers to identifying future needs and making necessary accommodations, and in this case, with respect to the gender equity initiative. This has been a challenge for these two NSOs. At NSO 2, planning was focused on the upcoming season, which has contributed to a lack of preparedness for seasons thereafter. At NSO 3, priorities have been given to short-term goals like upcoming events and competitions. This has contributed to a defocus on the development of the initiatives. These findings align with the Hall et al. (2003) study where long-term planning was identified as critical to an organization’s overall goal attainment. Long-term planning was also identified by Misener and Doherty (2009) as a critical element for CSOs. Doherty et al. (2014)

identified strategic planning, creative planning, and plan implementation as critical elements.

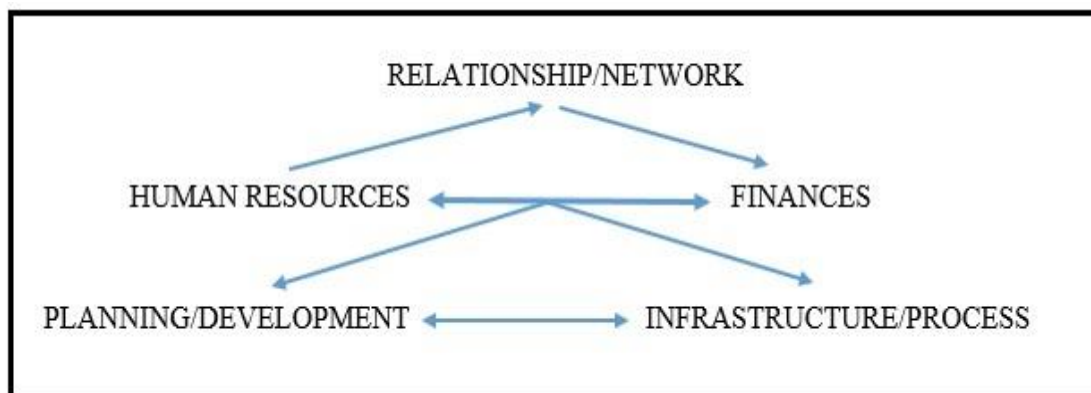
Doherty et al. (2014) identified plan implementation as a challenge to CSOs due to their focus on day-to-day operations, which aligns with the findings from this study. Creative planning (i.e., thinking outside the box) was not identified as an element in this study. The lack of a need for creative planning may be attributed to the specific focus of the gender equity initiatives, versus broader organizational goal attainment.

Two unique critical elements were identified in this dimension at NSO 1. The first unique element was the use of KPIs. KPIs are markers that allow an organization to evaluate results. This was a strength and a challenge for NSO 1. Using KPIs contributed to the inclusion of the initiative within the organization's strategic planning process. However, the inexperience of working with KPIs, which led to constant revisions of achievable goals was a challenge. The second unique element was the identification of specific goals, which means having clear and achievable objectives. This was a challenge for NSO 1, and contributed to the lack of sufficient development of the initiative. These are new findings that have not been identified in previous studies, and they illustrate the importance of specific goals and evaluation criteria in developing gender equity initiatives.

### **6.3 Connections among Capacity Dimensions**

The Hall et al. (2003) study suggested that the five capacity dimensions are interconnected, which further highlights the multidimensionality of organizational capacity. Evidence of connections among the dimensions is consistently noted throughout the findings and illustrated in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Links between Capacity Dimensions**



The findings consistently illustrated a link between the human resources and financial capacity dimensions across the three NSOs, in the organizations' inability to dedicate sufficient staff to work on developing and implementing the initiatives due to limited finances. Human resources and relationship/network capacity dimensions were also connected, and highlighted through the connections driven by staff and board members with external partners. These external partners provided the NSOs with financial and non-financial resources, thereby highlighting the link between the relationship/network and financial capacity dimensions. Connections were also noted between human resources and financial capacities, and the infrastructure/process and planning/development capacity dimensions. The NSOs' ability to make long-term plans for developing and implementing the initiatives was impacted by the availability of sufficient human resources and financial resources. Similarly, the unavailability of sufficient staff and financial resources were found to impact the communication between the NSOs and its PSOs, and the development of sufficient resources like training manuals and action plans to support the implementation of the initiatives.

The Hall et al. (2003) study noted the impact of human resources capacity on other capacity dimensions. The findings in this study align with Hall et al. (2003) and demonstrate the importance of human resources in developing the other capacity dimensions. Sufficient staff

leading the initiative and board members supporting it were critical across NSOs in (a) the organizations being committed to the initiative, (b) developing connections with external partners, (c) communicating with PSOs and CSOs on the intent and importance of the initiative, and (d) developing plans to support implementation. These findings display the connections between human resources and other capacity dimensions, and through it, highlight human resources as the most important capacity dimension across the three NSOs.

In addition, the findings in this study add to Hall et al. (2003) by demonstrating the importance of financial capacity as another key dimension impacting other capacity dimensions. Across NSOs, finances to support the initiative were derived from establishing a line item in the budget through core funding received from Sport Canada, and supported by sponsorships (NSO 2) or stable revenue streams (NSO 3). NSOs supported their gender equity initiatives through paid staff working on the initiative and the development of non-financial resources like training manuals and action plans. Therefore, insufficient finances challenged the NSO in (a) hiring additional staff to work on the initiatives, (b) developing sufficient resources to educate its PSOs and CSOs on the importance of the initiatives, and (c) making long-term plans for the initiatives. Again, these findings demonstrate the link between financial capacity and other capacity dimensions, and highlight its significance across NSOs in developing, supporting and implementing gender equity initiatives.

These findings reiterate the multidimensionality of capacity and the connections between dimensions to demonstrate that it is the combination of different capacity dimensions that impact an organization's goal-attainment. This necessitates future research to consider organizational capacity as multidimensional, and as a system of interacting capacities. Further, these findings represent the current status of three NSOs addressing gender equity within their sports through

different initiatives, which has implications for Sport Canada and other stakeholders focused on gender equity. The capacity of organizations to engage in gender equity is complex, and encompasses critical elements and particular challenges. The implications from these findings are discussed in more detail below in section 6.5.

#### **6.4 External Factors**

NSOs are nonprofit organizations that rely on and utilize resources from the external environment. As such, changes in that environment can impact the resources available to NSOs (Hall et al., 2003). Previous studies have recognized the need to consider external factors in evaluating the capacity of sport organizations (Wicker & Breuer, 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2015). Yet, studies utilizing the Hall et al. (2003) framework to examine the capacity of community sport organizations (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker, & Breuer, 2011;) and sport for development and peace organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017) have not considered the impact of external factors on capacity dimensions. This study considered the influence of external factors and noted their impact on the different capacity dimensions.

One external factor common across the NSOs was their inability to procure additional funding from external sources. This refers to the unavailability of discretionary funds from sponsors or donors and competition with other NSOs for these resources. Berrett and Slack (2001) inferred that due to reductions in funding received from government sources, it is imperative for NSOs to procure funds from alternate sources. Lack of funding from external sources was an influence on the financial capacities of the NSOs, which were the focus of this study. As an example, lack of avenues to acquire additional funds has impacted NSO 3's



financial capacity, which has further hampered the NSO's efforts to build its other capacity dimensions such as planning/development and human resources.

A common external factor for NSO 2 and NSO 3 was the political climate. This refers to the opinions and priorities of the current population regarding issues that affect them. This was also an influence on the financial capacities of NSO 2 and NSO 3. At NSO 2, the political climate was identified as a precursor to the ebbs and flows in funding procured from Sport Canada. Similarly, at NSO 3, the political climate was noted as an influence on funding received from Sport Canada. If the current government prioritized gender equity and its intention to focus on women's development, and supported this through legislation mandating a certain number of women participating in sport, Sport Canada could use that as a benchmark and provide additional funding to NSOs addressing gender inequity in their sport accordingly. The role of the political climate in the amount of funding received by NSOs has been examined by Havaris and Danylchuk (2007), who recommended the establishment of "internal accountability mechanisms" (p. 50) within NSOs to reduce their financial reliance on the federal policies and Sport Canada to drive their initiatives.

A common external factor for NSO 1 and NSO 3 was the historical dominance of men within the sport. This refers to the key administrative positions within the sport and at the NSO being held by men. This was as an influence on the planning/development capacities of NSO 1 and NSO 3. At NSO 1, the dominance of men in coaching and administrative positions has contributed to the original delay in the planning and development of the initiative. It has also impacted how the policy is ultimately implemented across provinces. At NSO 3, the dominance of men has contributed to the inequity in pay structures and workloads between men and women, and delays in planning and developing the initiatives. This was also found by Hoyden (2000),

who examined the dominance of white males in senior sport administration structures in Norway, which ultimately led to the exclusion of women from securing roles in senior positions. Further, the dominance of men can contribute to competing values in an organization, which may marginalize gender equity in lieu of other objectives such as revenue generation (Hoerber & Frisby, 2001). According to Hall et al. (2003), historical norms as an external factor can influence an organization's current operations, and this is illustrated by the findings with respect to the capacity for the particular gender equity initiatives at these two NSOs.

Access to volunteers was another external factor identified in common by NSO 2 and NSO 3. This refers to the lack of sufficient volunteers to run programs or events. Volunteers are an important resource to nonprofit sport organizations (Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011), and the struggles to recruit volunteers in sport clubs have been documented (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006). Lack of sufficient volunteers was an influence on the planning/development capacities of NSO 2 and NSO 3. At NSO 2, insufficient volunteers have contributed to the limited number of events able to be planned for and hosted for the initiative. NSO 2 needs experienced athletes, coaches and officials to volunteer their time and effort for running events. As NSO 2 has struggled in procuring sufficient volunteers, it has been unable to plan more events. At NSO 3, the initiatives are delivered through training programs that utilize a mentorship model. NSO 3 needs experienced coaches and officials to volunteer their time to work with apprentice coaches and officials during tournaments and training sessions. As NSO 3 has struggled in procuring sufficient volunteers, it has been unable to plan for training modules for the initiatives.

The influence of the Canadian sport system was identified as a common external factor by NSO 1 and NSO 3. This refers to the delivery of sport in Canada through the efforts of NSOs,

PSOs and CSOs that have unique mandates but often work in conjunction to service their sport (Doherty & Clutterbuck, 2013). NSOs are recognized by Sport Canada, and thus, the federal government as the governing bodies of their respective sports. However, PSOs operate at the provincial level under the purviews of the provincial/territorial ministries, which establish the strategies and provide funding for the sports within the province. The Canadian sport system was identified as an influence on the infrastructure/process capacities of NSO 1 and NSO 3, with specific challenges with communication. As success of the initiatives depends on the implementation at provincial and local levels, the Canadian sport system and the way sport is delivered in the country plays a role in the consistency of implementation across provinces. At NSO 1, power struggles have challenged effective communication of the policy initiative, which has limited consistent implementation at the provincial and club level. Similarly, at NSO 3, some PSOs have displayed a lack of acceptance of the initiatives and, at times, a lack of desire to implement the initiative. This is attributed to challenges with effectively communicating the importance of the activities and events to building gender equity.

Some external factors identified were unique to the NSOs. At NSO 1, the Canadian geography and social pressures against women in sport were identified as unique external factors. The Canadian geography refers to the vastness of the country and the large distances between each NSO and its PSOs. This has influenced the infrastructure/process capacity of NSO 1. Due to the distant location of many of its PSOs and CSOs, NSO 1 has been unable to personally communicate the importance of the initiative to those organizations. Face-to-face communication is beneficial because it helps establish personal connections that go beyond a business relationship, and facilitates the exchange of ideas, coming to a mutual understanding, overcoming misgivings, and thus, creating an environment that encourages communication

(Nardi & Whittaker, 2002). NSO 1's inability to communicate with PSO staff in person has led to a lack of buy-in, and ultimately, an imperfect understanding of the intent behind the policy, leading to its inconsistent implementation across provinces.

Social pressures against women refers to the societal influence on the attitudes and behaviors of women. Shaw and Hoerber (2003) have discussed stereotypical ideologies, which characterize women as "domestically oriented rather than career minded" (p. 487). These social pressures against women have influenced the planning/development capacity of NSO 1. Specifically, there is an inherent misunderstanding of women's involvement as leaders within the sport, their capabilities, and their commitment, which has contributed to the original delay in the planning and development of the initiative, and its inconsistent implementation across provinces.

Social pressure for gender equity was identified as a unique external factor at NSO 3. This refers to the influence and expectations of the general society. Shaw and Penney (2003) have discussed the development of tool kits and advocacy for the use of non-sexist language in programs as the products of social pressures to address gender equity. Social influences to address gender equity have been a positive influence on the planning/development capacity of NSO 3. Being aware of other NSOs addressing gender equity within their sports has made NSO 3 cognizant of its efforts. Therefore, pressure to do gender equity has impacted the NSO's approach in trying to be equitable in developing programs for its men and women athletes. It has also led to the inclusion of the gender equity initiatives in the NSO's planning process.

At NSO 2, climate change was identified as a unique external factor. Climate change refers to the change in weather conditions. This has influenced the planning/development capacity of NSO 2, which serves a winter sport. The unpredictability of the weather has impacted how NSO 2 plans for events. It has impacted how far in advance NSO 2 can plan for events (i.e.,

long-term planning), the number of participants in the events, and has also led to cancelled events. Thus, climate change is an influence on the number of events the NSO can plan for in support of the initiative.

The findings from this study highlight the influence of external factors on different capacity dimensions. The combination of capacity dimensions is critical to NSOs in achieving their gender equity objectives. As such, any external factors impacting capacity dimensions must be considered when examining the capacity of NSOs to achieve their objectives. Also, as noted with the capacity dimensions, the commonalities in the external factors identified may be attributed to the organizations all being NSOs and working on gender equity initiatives, but the unique external factors identified may be a result of the nuances in the organizations and the initiatives themselves.

## **6.5 Implications**

The findings from this study and the research questions it addressed provide insight into the capacity of NSOs to address gender equity within their sports. The findings have (a) theoretical implications for organizational capacity in the context of sport and gender equity, and (b) practical implications for Sport Canada in establishing policies that consider capacity in the context of addressing gender equity in sport, and for NSOs in building capacity to address gender equity.

### **6.5.1 Theoretical Implications**

The examination of organizational capacity across NSOs in this study provided a comprehensive picture of each capacity dimension and its contribution to the respective NSOs in developing and implementing their gender equity initiatives. This research builds on the existing studies examining the organizational capacity of CSOs (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener &

Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011) and SFD organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017), and extends organizational capacity research to provide insight into the capacity of NSOs. This study also advances organizational capacity theory by extending research from examining capacity in meeting an organization's overall goals and objectives, to examining capacity for implementing gender equity initiatives.

Specifically, this study answers its research questions in the following ways:

1. It identifies the critical capacity elements to address gender equity at NSOs. These include common capacity elements (i.e., knowledgeable and experienced staff, advice procured from external partners, and inclusion of the initiative in NSOs' strategic plans), and unique capacity elements (i.e., a governing board, sponsorships, and stable revenues).  
The findings from this study also illustrate the links between the capacity dimensions.
2. It identifies the strongest capacity dimension at these NSOs to address gender equity. These include planning/development (NSO 1), relationship/network (NSO 2), and infrastructure/process (NSO 3) capacity.
3. It identifies the capacity dimensions needing the most development. These include infrastructure/process (NSO 1), finances (NSO 2), and planning/development (NSO 3) capacity.
4. It identifies human resources capacity as the most important dimension across these NSOs to address gender equity. This is illustrated through the impact of human resources on the other capacity dimensions such as relationship/network and infrastructure/process.
5. It identifies the critical external factors that influence different capacity dimensions. These include common factors such as the political climate and the Canadian sport

system, and unique elements such as bias/social pressures against women in sport and climate change.

Through these findings, the study supports the multidimensionality of capacity as well as the impact of external factors identified in the Hall et al. (2003) framework, and thus, the use of the framework in future research on organizational capacity. The findings highlight the connections between capacity dimensions, and reinforce the importance of human resources and finances in particular, consistent with Hall et al. (2003). The findings illustrate several critical elements within each capacity dimension. Though some of the elements are common across NSOs, there are some variations, which highlights the complex nature of organizational capacity. These findings provide theoretical contributions in advancing the understanding of organizational capacity and the Hall et al. (2003) model, and organizational capacity theory in the context of sport and gender equity.

### **6.5.2 Practical Implications**

The findings from this study have practical implications for NSOs, and Sport Canada and other organizations that advocate for and support gender equity in sport. Within the limitations of generalizability, these findings may serve as a guide for other NSOs aiming to address gender equity within their sport. Robinson and Minikin (2011) state that organizations should analyze the “gap” between what they have, and what they need, to successfully implement initiatives. To achieve meaningful outcomes from their efforts, NSOs may identify their own capacities with respect to the critical elements identified in this study, such as experienced staff, effective communication with PSOs, and sufficient funding. In order to address any limitations, NSOs – including the cases examined here – may engage in capacity building, which involves developing an organization’s resources, and improving its ability to utilize those resources to respond to

changing conditions (Aref, 2011). A better understanding of critical capacity elements and external factors may aid NSOs in building their capacities to address gender equity within their sports. Millar and Doherty (2016) developed a model that outlines the process of capacity building, from identifying specific capacity weaknesses, to determining ways to strengthen or build those capacities, and acknowledging the organization's readiness to do so. This model may help NSOs build and subsequently maintain the capacity necessary to address their gender equity goals.

NSOs address gender equity in their sport through directives from Sport Canada, and though Sport Canada policies are useful in providing a direction to NSOs, Shaw and Penny (2003) caution that a 'one suit fits all' approach does not take into account the history and traditions of an organization that may impact the development of such initiatives. As this study highlights, gender equity initiatives may vary (i.e., initiatives may be policies, programs or professional development opportunities). Also, critical capacity elements and the external factors influencing capacity dimensions may be contextual to each NSO. In this study, some critical elements such as experienced staff and external partnerships were consistent across NSOs, but there were nuances such as stable revenues and quality facilities. Differences may be attributed to the differences in the capacities of NSOs, and the differences in the initiatives themselves. Therefore, when directing NSOs to address gender equity within their sports, Sport Canada should consider the variations in the capacities of NSOs, and their initiatives, and ensure that NSOs have sufficient capacity to be successful. Consideration of these factors may help Sport Canada and other agencies advocating for gender equity to draft policies that acknowledge variations, and thus, make the necessary accommodations to better support the efforts of NSOs engaged in gender equity.



To support the capacity building efforts of NSOs, Sport Canada can offer some assistance. For example, the particular importance of human resources capacity for NSOs engaged in gender equity initiatives is illustrated throughout the findings of this study. Sport Canada may help NSOs build their human resources capacities by providing these organizations with skills training linked specifically to gender equity initiatives. Workshops may include sessions such as successful grant writing, strategic planning, communication strategies, and developing relationships with external partners.

The findings from this study also highlight the importance of external partnerships. Across NSOs, partnerships with external organizations were identified as critical to the development and implementation of the gender equity initiatives. Partnerships with PSOs and CSOs were critical to ensure implementation of the initiatives across all levels of the sport, and partnerships with organizations such as CAAWS and the CAC were critical in procuring advice, and sourcing financial and non-financial resources such as educational documents and training materials. The importance of partnerships has been identified as critical to sport organizations in previous research (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Bayle & Robinson, 2007). Therefore, Sport Canada may encourage collaborations between NSOs pursuing gender equity initiatives, to share best practices and resources, and engage in creative thinking together. Increasing awareness about NSOs that are engaged in gender equity in their sports may provide other NSOs with an additional resource. Similarly, Sport Canada may direct CAAWS, the CAC and other organizations that support gender equity initiatives to organize symposiums or workshops, bringing together staff members from different NSOs to further encourage collaborations between these organizations. As the findings from this study demonstrate, external partnerships

need not bear a cost but have the potential to provide financial relief to NSOs through sharing databases, online platforms, training materials, and even participants.

In addition, as the external factors highlight, the missing link between gender equity efforts undertaken by NSOs and the provision of funding from Sport Canada to support these initiatives may influence the NSOs' financial capacity dimension, with further implications for other dimensions. Having a robust application process may alleviate the burden on Sport Canada to provide funding to any and all NSOs implementing gender equity initiatives. Sport Canada should consider an application process, which includes NSOs identifying (a) the specific goals of their gender equity initiatives, (b) timelines to reach their goals, (c) their capacity to successfully implement the initiatives, and (d) gaps in the organization's capacities, and (e) efforts undertaken to develop those capacities. This can help Sport Canada determine the readiness of NSOs to successfully implement gender equity initiatives in their sport, and provide funding to those organizations that can support their efforts through an evidence-based approach. This may also help NSOs competing for funds to receive recognition for their efforts through financial support, which may aid their efforts of capacity building to successfully implement gender equity initiatives in their sport.

## **6.6 Limitations and Future Research**

Although this study provides valuable insights and support for the Hall et al. (2003) framework of organizational capacity, its limitations must be acknowledged, along with directions for future research. The multiple case study approach used here uncovered rich details that allowed for comparisons of critical capacity elements and external factors across three NSOs but the results may not be generalizable across all NSOs. Regardless, the Hall et al. (2003)

framework has broader application, and future research may uncover critical capacity elements and external factors not found in this study.

To build on this study, future research may utilize the Hall et al. (2003) framework to examine: (a) a larger sample of NSOs engaged in gender equity initiatives to identify the critical elements of capacity, and external factors that influence capacity dimensions to add to the current findings, (b) the capacity of NSOs as they engage in initiatives targeting other underrepresented groups, such as, the Indigenous youth and athletes with a disability, to identify the critical elements and external factors in implementing those initiatives, and (c) the capacity of PSOs and CSOs as they implement initiatives, to generate a holistic view of the system capacity of the organizations within a sport as they engage in gender equity. Future studies may involve longitudinal research, uncovering the change in critical capacity elements of NSOs as they engage in capacity building to address gender equity (Millar & Doherty, 2016). Future research will complement the current study, and add to the body of knowledge on organizational capacity, particularly in the context of gender equity in sport.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Interview Guide**

#### **Uncovering Organizational Capacity for Gender Equity Initiatives**

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. I would like to ask some background questions first.

#### **Background**

1. What is your role with the organization?  
(Probe: What do they do?)
2. How long have you been with the organization?
3. We are going to talk about [the NSO's] capacity in [implementing] this [initiative]. Can you give some information about the [initiative]? When did it start and what was the desired outcome from this?
4. What point is it at as far as the implementation?
5. What impact do you think this has had, if any, yet?
6. What was/is your involvement with regard to [the gender equity initiative]? (Probe if they have not addressed this in answering questions 4 or 5)

Thank you for that information. Now we will discuss the aspects of organizational capacity with regard to [the gender equity initiative].

#### **Human Resources Capacity**

1. So in thinking about [the gender equity initiative], what have been the strengths of the people involved in your organization?
2. What have been the main challenges or weaknesses in terms of the people involved in your organization when it comes to the [initiative]?

3. What difference have these strengths and challenges made to the organization in [implementing] this [initiative]? (Probe for this if needed and not answered by the interviewee in the first 2 questions)

### **Financial Capacity**

1. With regard to [the gender equity initiative], what have been the financial strengths of the organization?
2. What are the main financial challenges or weaknesses with regard to [the initiative]?
3. What difference have these strengths and challenges made to the organization in [implementing] this [initiative]?

### **Relationship and Network Capacity**

The relationship and network capacity of the organization is the external connections it has.

1. What connections or relationships does [name of NSO] have with regard to the [initiative]?
2. What are the strengths of these relationships?
3. What are the challenges in these relationships with regard to the [initiative]?
4. What difference have these strengths and challenges made to [implementing] the [initiative]?

### **Infrastructure and Process Capacity**

Infrastructure and process capacity is the operations, processes, and culture of the organization.

1. With regard to the [gender equity initiative], what have been the strengths of the organization's infrastructure?
2. What have been the weaknesses or challenges in the organization's infrastructure with regard to the [initiative]?

3. What difference have these strengths and challenges made in [implementing] the [initiative]?

### **Planning and Development Capacity**

1. With regard to the [gender equity initiative], what have been the planning and development strengths of the organization?
2. What are main challenges with planning and development with regard to the [initiative]?
3. What difference have these strengths and challenges made in [implementing] the [initiative]?

### **External Factors**

Thank you. We have just spoken about the organization's people, finances, external relationships, infrastructure, and planning with regard to [the gender equity initiative]. I want to go broader now.

1. Do any factors in the organization's external environment impact its capacity to [implement] the [initiative]? How about factors like the economy, the market or social pressures, the political climate or any policy regulations?  
[Probe: Depending on answer, what does [this factor] specifically impact?]
2. Does access to resources such as people, technology, information and so on, impact the organization's capacity to [implement] the [initiative]?
3. Do any historical factors pertaining to the organization, things it has done in the past, its norms and values, impact its capacity to [implement] the [initiative]?

**Wrap up**

Thank you. We have completed the interview. Are there any additional comments you would like to make before we wrap up?

Thank you very much for the information, and for your time.

## Appendix B: Letter of Information to NSOs

Dear [Mr/Mrs XXXX],

Thank you for your interest in this study. As discussed, we are interested in understanding the factors that facilitate and impede the organization in implementing [the gender equity initiative]. We would greatly appreciate you having an administrative assistant forward the following letter of information to any individuals in the organization who have been involved with this initiative. They can contact us directly with any questions or to participate in the study.

Thank you,  
Swarali Patil  
Master's Candidate

Alison Doherty  
Professor



### Capacity for Gender Equity – Case Study of a [NSO] Initiative

#### Information

The research team of Ms. Swarali Patil (Master's candidate) and Professor Alison Doherty invite you to participate in a study of the capacity of NSOs to engage in gender equity initiatives. The project will examine the capacity of three NSOs to address gender equity through a particular initiative identified within their organization. We are interested in understanding the strengths and challenges of [NSO] with regard to implementing [the gender equity initiative]. The case study of [NSO] will consider the impact of human resources, finances, infrastructure, planning, and external relationships and networks on this initiative. We are also interested in understanding

what facilitators and constraints in your NSO's environment impact that. In depth case studies of several NSOs will generate a picture of particular aspects that facilitate and impede gender equity initiatives, with implications for strengthening NSO capacity to address such initiatives.

[NSO] has agreed to be involved in the study, and we are inviting individuals associated with **[the gender equity initiative]** to participate in a personal interview. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on the implementation of the initiative within [NSO] with a particular focus on the organization's strengths and challenges in doing so.

If you are willing to speak with us, please contact Swarali Patil at **[email]** for further information or to schedule an interview.

**Participation:**

Participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time and withdraw any information collected to that point. Whether you participate or not will have no impact on your involvement with the organization. The information reported to us will be held in the strictest confidence. Findings will be aggregated across all participating individuals in your organization to ensure that individual participants cannot be identified. The interview will be conducted by **telephone**, and is expected to take about 45 minutes. It will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission. You may ask that the recording be stopped at any time during the interview. If you do not want to be audio-recorded then handwritten notes will be taken. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

**Benefits:**

The interview will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on the implementation of **[the gender equity initiative]** within [NSO], and the strengths and challenges in doing so. This may

flag for you areas of the organization that could benefit from building capacity for addressing gender equity. Together, the case studies of three NSOs will generate a still broader picture of particular aspects that facilitate and impede gender equity initiatives, with implications for strengthening NSO capacity to address such initiatives.

**Confidentiality and Potential Risks:**

There are no known risks to participation. Your name, the name of your organization, and any other identifiers will be removed from the interview transcripts, and fictitious names will be used in the summary report and any publicly reported results from the study. A master list linking the fictitious names and participant identifiers will be securely stored separately from the study data for seven years. No one in the organization will know if you have participated in an interview or not. A copy of all transcribed interviews will be kept on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researchers conducting the study. Audio files will be deleted once the interviews have been transcribed. We will provide you with access to your transcribed interview through the OWL system at Western in order to verify the statements. Changes can be made to the transcript if you feel that your thoughts and opinions were not properly conveyed.

Representatives of the Western University Research Ethics Board may contact you or require access to your study-related records to monitor conduct of the research.

**Contact:**

This letter is for you to keep. If you have any questions about the study, you can contact us at the numbers given below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics at **[phone]** or **[e-mail]**.



Thank you for your consideration,

Ms. Swarali Patil

Master's Candidate, Sport Management

School of Kinesiology, Faculty of Health Sciences

Western University

Dr. Alison Doherty

Professor, Sport Management

School of Kinesiology, Faculty of Health Sciences

Western University

## Appendix C: Ethics Approval Letter



**Date:** 18 December 2017

**To:** Prof. Alison Doherty

**Project ID:** 110432

**Study Title:** Capacity for Gender Equity: A Multiple Case Study of National Sport Organization Initiatives

**Application Type:** NMREB Initial Application

**Review Type:** Delegated

**Full Board Reporting Date:** 12/Jan/2018

**Date Approval Issued:** 18/Dec/2017 15:20

**REB Approval Expiry Date:** 18/Dec/2018

Dear Prof. Alison Doherty

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

**Documents Approved:**

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Interview Guide - 110432	Interview Guide	27/Oct/2017	1
Letter of Information_Organization_Revised2_Clean	Recruitment Materials	17/Dec/2017	
Letter of Information_Participants_Revised2_Clean	Recruitment Materials	17/Dec/2017	
Verbal Consent for Telephone Interview_Revised_Clean	Verbal Consent/Assent	17/Dec/2017	

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Harris, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).*

## Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Swarali Patil

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** Western University  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2016 – 2018, Master of Arts (Kinesiology), Management & Leadership

Coventry University  
Coventry, West Midlands, United Kingdom  
2009 – 2012, Bachelor of Arts (Honors), Sport Management

**Other Education:** Graduate Student Innovation Scholar  
Western University, December 2017

University Certificate in Teaching and Learning  
Western University, May 2017

**Honors and Awards:** Packianathan Chelladurai Award for academic achievement  
Western University, May 2018

1st Place, Sporting Event Bid Competition  
University of Michigan, September 2017

Packianathan Chelladurai Award for academic achievement  
Western University, April 2017

Top-3 presentation, Kinesiology Graduate Student Symposium  
Western University, April 2017

**Related Work Experience:** Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant  
Western University  
2016-2018

### Presentations:

Doherty, A., Misener, K. & **Patil, S.** (2018, June). Networks of Volunteer Social Capital: A Comparative Case Study of Sport and Non-sport Member-based Community Organizations (oral presentation). Presented at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Halifax, NS.

**Patil, S.,** & Doherty, A. (2018, April). A Case Study of Organizational Capacity to Promote the Participation of Women in Sport (oral presentation). Presented at the 25th Graduate Student Leisure Research Symposium, University of Waterloo, Kitchener, ON.

**Patil, S., & Doherty, A. (2018, April).** A Case Study of Capacity to Implement Gender Equity Initiatives (oral presentation). Presented at the 15th Annual Sport Management Student Research Colloquium, Brock University, St. Catherines, ON.

**Patil, S., Doherty, A. & Misener, K. (2017, November).** The Volunteer Social Capital Network in a Grassroots Community Membership Association (poster presentation). Presented at the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Conference, Grand Rapids, MI.

**Patil, S. & Doherty, A. (2017, September).** Capacity for Change: Critical Factors in the Organizational Implementation of Gender Equity in Sport Initiatives (poster presentation). Presented at the Sport Canada Research Initiative, Toronto, ON.

**Patil, S. & Doherty, A. (2017, April).** Bonding and Bridging Social Capital in Community Sport Organizations (oral presentation). Presented at the Kinesiology Graduate Student Symposium, Western University, London, ON.

### **Publications:**

TO2028 Global Games: Diverse, Sustainable, Spectacular, University of Michigan, May 2017  
In the University of Michigan Sporting Event Bid Competition (SEBC), student teams prepared a bid to host a major sporting event. The goal was to generate and share new ideas about how event organizers, host cities, sport institutions, and other stakeholders can collaborate to deliver major sporting events.

Bid document accessible at [https://www.kines.umich.edu/sites/default/files/uwo\\_final\\_bid.pdf](https://www.kines.umich.edu/sites/default/files/uwo_final_bid.pdf).