

Sport and Recreation Partnership: A Municipal Perspective

by

Christena M. Dykstra

Bachelor of Recreation and Sport Studies, University of New Brunswick (2016)

A Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts Sport and Recreation Studies

in the Graduate Academic Unit of Kinesiology

Supervisor: Jonathon Edwards, Ph.D., Faculty of Kinesiology

Examining Board: Stephan Dombrowski, PhD., Faculty of Kinesiology, Chair
Cynthia Stacey, PhD., Faculty of Kinesiology
Cory Kulczycki, PhD., Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies,
University of Regina

This report is accepted by the
Dean of Graduate Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

March 2022

© Christena Dykstra, 2022

ABSTRACT

This report examines partnership development and maintenance factors between recreation and sport delivery systems, the process used to explore inter-organizational relationships, and how partnerships are evaluated. Using municipal recreation departments who have experience working in sport partnerships, it was found that reputation management is at the core of partnership development and, conversely, partnership breakdown. Reputation management could be summarized into three components; contract management, relationship management, and evaluation, which play a pivotal role in how, when, and why partnerships are developed. The study suggests that even though municipalities may have all of the components of a partnership, this does not always indicate success.

Keywords: Interorganizational Relationships, Partnership, Reputation, Reputation Management, Evaluation, Municipal Recreation

DEDICATION

For Dad

The cows have been milked.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to the participants of this study and the important work you are all doing to keep municipal recreation departments running during these challenging times. I see you, and I appreciate you.

I would like to thank Dr. Edwards for his patience and guidance throughout this process. Your encouragement and unwavering belief in me have gotten me to where I am at today, and I cannot thank you enough. Additionally, I would like to thank Drs. Jackie Oncescu, Cory Kulczycki, and the UNB Kinesiology Faculty thank you for your commitment to this project and me. The last three years have not been easy, but you have made this dream a reality, and I know you also share pride in this accomplishment.

To Mum and my siblings, you have stuck with me through it all, and when it would have been understandably acceptable to throw in the towel, you held me up and encouraged me through our grief. I love you all more than you will ever know, and I am so proud to be your daughter and sister. Thank you for always being in my corner and for being my people.

To my partner, Ryan, thank you for everything you have done to support our family and me; we are lucky to have you. I love you.

Lastly, thank you to my Dad; you have been my light in my darkest hours, and I can never repay you for loving me through it. Even on your hardest of days, you made sure I could find the strength to carry on, even if that meant without you. I know you are looking down with pride in your eyes and a smile on your face. Kesalul <3

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
Conceptual Models and Frameworks.....	12
Factor Management	14
Evaluation	18
Summary	19
Chapter 3: Methodology/Methods	21
Methods.....	22
Sampling	22
Participants.....	23
Data Collection	24
<i>Interviews</i>	24
Pilot testing	25
Data Analysis	25
Trustworthiness.....	27
Ethical Considerations	29

Research Bias.....	30
Chapter 4: Findings.....	31
Reputation Management.....	35
Contract Management.....	42
Relationship Management	49
Evaluation	53
Partnership Success.....	56
Summary.....	57
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	58
Components of Reputation within the Context of this Report.....	60
<i>Identity</i>	60
<i>Image</i>	62
Conceptualizing Reputation.....	63
<i>Being Known</i>	64
<i>Being Known for Something</i>	66
Managing Reputation.....	68
Contract Management.....	69
Relationship Management	71
Evaluation	72
Success.....	74

Partnerships and Reputation Management.....	74
Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations.....	76
Limitations	77
Recommendations For Future Research	78
Bibliography	80
Appendix A.....	97
Curriculum Vitae	

List of Tables

Table 1. 20 Factors Influencing Successful Collaborations	23
Table 2. Themes and Factors of Partnerships	37
Table 3. Factors Impacting Reputation	44
Table 4. Examples of other Types of Partnership Agreements	53

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Reputation Management	78
---	----

Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout Canada, there has been a decline in physical activity and sport participation among children and youth since the late 1990s (Cousens et al., 2012). It has been reported that 45% of the Canadian population participated in sport programming in 1992, though only 28% of the same population participated in 2005 (Ifedi, 2008). A recent report entitled “Health Status of Canadians 2016” indicated that roughly 20% of adults and 10% of children met physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes per week and 60-minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day (Tremblay et al., 2011). Furthermore, it was reported that boys and individuals ages six to eleven were more active than individuals aged 12 – 17. Of these age groups, less than 35% reached the recommended 60-minutes of vigorous physical activity each day (Colley et al., 2017). To meet these recommendations, policymakers in Canada have encouraged government and non-government bodies to work collaboratively to increase physical activity rates among children, youth, and adult populations. Coordinated efforts among various actors within the sport and recreation system have identified grassroots or local level programs as an important provider of physical activity, recreation and sporting experiences. Municipal recreation departments are a prime example of program delivery within recreation and sport delivery systems and will be the focus of this research.

A system is defined by Robbins et al. (2006) as “[..] a set of interrelated and independent parts arranged in a manner that produces a unified whole” (p. 39). Actors within these systems play an integral role in ensuring participants have the access and physical literacy to remain active for life or pursue the sport at a competitive level. Key

actors within these systems include but are not limited to government agencies, governing sport bodies, not-for-profit recreation and sport organizations, and education and health sectors. These actors work within systems to ensure the delivery of recreation and sport programming in various settings throughout the country. This research explores the relationships between the key actors involved in recreation and sport. The primary focus will be on municipalities, and the partnerships explored to increase recreation and sporting opportunities throughout municipalities in Canada.

Three pivotal documents guide the delivery of recreation and sport in Canada: The National Recreation Statement (1987), Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015), and the Canadian Sport Policy (CSP) (2002, 2012). The National Recreation Statement (1987) was the first document developed to guide the increasing demand and consumption of recreation experiences and services at that time. Recreation Ministers from across the country came together to commission this report in 1978 after provincial and territorial governments recognized their responsibility for bringing forth recreational opportunities. The report states, “recreation has an almost unlimited potential to develop life skills, to enhance communities and to promote and maintain healthy, independent lifestyles which contribute significantly to the quality of life in Canada” (p. 5). This statement was pivotal in establishing the legitimacy of recreation within Canada. Several years and a national statement later, this report defined roles and responsibilities for all levels of government and stakeholders within the field by highlighting the need for coordination of efforts to meet outcomes (National Recreation Statement, 1987). A particular importance of this statement was that it outlined the role of the community within the context of recreation and became the foundation for which future coordination

is seen throughout the document and has helped to inform future frameworks and policies.

One of the influential documents to draw from the National Recreation Statement was the development of the CSP, which was created in 2002 to mitigate the interconnected concerns of sport delivery over the next ten years. In CSP 2002, the government and traditional stakeholders within the sport community were responsible for the implementation and action of the policy. This policy provides four specific goals; Enhanced Participation, Enhanced Excellence, Enhanced Capacity, and Enhanced Interaction. A critique of the CSP 2002 was that the policy developers failed to recognize the role of grassroots sport, recreational sport and community sport as a feeder system to competitive and high-performance sport. The primary focus of the policy was on immediate sport excellence and high-performance sport and less on developing a system for sustained long-term sport development. As this policy expired, a new policy was developed called CSP 2012, which focused on the next 10 years of sport development.

The CSP 2012 upholds the roles and responsibilities of the government and stakeholders within the system. However, a notable difference can be seen in the partnerships with organizations beyond the sport system (Sport Canada, 2012). The CSP (2012) states, “the policy will be implemented by complementary action plans developed by governments individually and collectively, bi-laterally and multi-laterally, and by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the sport and related sectors” (p. 3). This call to action means all levels and components of recreation and sport systems are communicating with one another and working toward unified goals. The unified whole, as Robbins et al. (2006) has alluded to within the context of this study, goes beyond the

traditional sport system observed in CSP 2002 and now incorporates various stakeholders, multiple levels of government and other related sectors that have an impact on sport, recreation and physical activity.

The final document that the National Recreation Statement was influential on was the recently developed Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015). This framework is a national guiding document for recreation that provides a renewed definition of recreation as "... the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing" (p. 4). Elaborating on the coordination component of the National Recreation Statement (1987), the 2015 framework focuses on collaboration and convergence of existing policies and common mandates seen in public, private and not-for-profit sectors and marginalized population groups. Collectively these documents help inform the strategic development of recreation and sport delivery systems in Canada and provide strategic goals for stakeholders to follow.

In theory, these guiding documents should help create coordinated policy development in various government sectors, resulting in a more succinct recreation and sport delivery system. However, this has not been the case throughout municipalities or grassroots recreation organizations. Recreation and sport policy objectives and issues/priorities provide sport organizations at the national and provincial levels a clear pathway to implement policy recommendations. However, there does not appear to be a strong foothold for municipalities to implement recommendations as there is no grassroots perspective embedded within these documents.

Each policy and framework has indicated the importance and benefits of establishing inter-organizational relationships between multiple sectors and various levels of government. However, the implementation of policies and frameworks does not inherently filter down to the local or community level of recreation and sport. Recreation and sport delivery systems tend to operate in siloes with little to no interaction between the systems and actors, and if there is the interaction, it can be seen as one-way (Cousens & Barnes, 2009). This siloed approach to program development and delivery has created a misalignment between recreation and sport delivery systems regarding policy (Green & Collins, 2008; Houlihan & Green, 2008), funding opportunities (Hayhurst, 2009; Wilson & Hayhurst, 2009), programming and key performance indicators. This has resulted in inefficiencies of program delivery at the grassroots level, impacting performance in sport's competitive and high-performance levels (Kidd, 2008; Hayhurst & Frisby 2010).

Organized sport has its own set of objectives, focusing on competition and performance, while recreation focuses on participation and inclusion. However, the results of these different systems have led to a fragmented sporting system where support and resources are spread too thin, and the inherent objectives of each system are not being upheld. The misalignment between the recreation and sport systems has been noted throughout the Canadian literature but has also been mentioned internationally (Green & Collins, 2008; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010) and the use of partnership and collaboration to bolster recreation and sport delivery systems.

Partnerships can be understood in academic literature as Interorganizational Relationships (IORs). Terminology differs throughout IOR literature based on the sector, formality and the organizations involved. Scholars have identified IORs as partnerships,

collaborations, inter-agency relations, coordinated efforts, and relationships throughout the literature. IORs can be used as an umbrella term to encompass all these terms, however, for this report the focus will be on partnerships. A broadly used definition of partnerships is “a voluntary agreement between two or more organizations to work together to achieve a set of shared outcomes” (Gillies, 1998 in Casey et al., 2009, p. 3).

Partnerships are beneficial to organizations as they provide unified goals and strategic alignment to allow organizations to be more efficient and effective with their delivery of programs and services, ultimately creating a stronger network of systems. There has been an increase in partnerships between non-profit, private and public sectors in recent years (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Coaffee & Coulson, 2005; Hodge & Greve, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Maxwell & Husain, 2005) due to the limited resources made available, leading to the development of partnerships out of necessity rather than a truly voluntary approach. Using a conceptual framework developed by Mattessich et al. (2001), which outlines factors influencing successful partnership development, this research will explore the factors within municipal partnership development.

Previous research has identified the constraints and enablers of establishing partnerships between sport and recreation delivery systems. However, few have looked at the process municipalities take when exploring partnership development and how/if this process is evaluated. Thus, the purpose of this research report was to explore recreation and sport partnerships development and evaluation in Canadian municipalities. The following research question will be investigated:

- 1) What factors influence partnership development with sport organizations from a municipal perspective?

2) What process, if any, do municipalities use to evaluate partnerships?

The following chapters will discuss the literature of partnerships, first in a broad context and then within sport and recreation, outlining the key concepts throughout literature, benefits and drawbacks to establishing such partnerships and highlighting the gap among municipal partnership inquiry. The methodology will be discussed, outlining the research approach and data collection and analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Partnerships are not a new phenomenon, as they have been noted throughout the literature in various sectors such as private (Aldrich & Whetten, 1981; Frisby et al., 2004; Narcus & Anderson, 1987; Tutton & Urban, 2001), health (Butterfoss et al., 1993; Casey et al., 2009; Butterfoss et al., 1996; Kegler, Steckler et al., 1998; Kreuter et al., 2000; Misener & Misener, 2016), not-for-profit (Barnes et al., 2007; Cousens et al., 2006; Frisby, Thibault & Kikulis, 2004; Thibault & Harvey, 1997), and sport (Babiak, 2003, 2007; Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Parent & Harvey, 2009, 2017). Partnerships have been categorized regarding their usefulness, impact, and how to be best established and maintained.

Partnership definitions have varied throughout the literature, with many researchers and scholars' suggesting there is no universal definition of a partnership as each definition is specific to the organizations involved and the environment in which the partnership exists (Glendinning, 2002; Wilson & Charlton, 1997). Gillies (1998) defined a partnership as voluntary and requiring two or more organizations working toward a common goal. Lowndes (2001) argued that a partnership is a "variety of arrangements with different purposes, time scales, structures, operating procedures and members" (p. 2). One of the most widely used partnership definitions comes from Gray (1989), "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can explore their differences constructively and search for solutions that go beyond their limited vision of what is possible" (p. 5). A notable difference in Gray's definition is the voluntary aspect, signifying that organizations enter into an agreement on their own accord without the influence of political agendas, policies or mandates. Throughout the literature, it has been

noted that forced partnerships, meaning partnerships that have been mandated either through organizational or government policies, experience increased tension between partners (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Casey et al., 2009). Given that sport and recreation organizations often have accompanying policies related to federal or provincial mandates to increase sport participation and physical activity, this study must consider the involuntary nature that exists among sport partnerships. Therefore, Gray's (1989) definition of partnerships will be used for this research report.

Until the mid-60s, the focus of partnerships could be summarized into the three levels of observation, micro, meso and macro (Argyris, 1957, 1964; Bennis, 1968). Partnerships were examined as a collective whole, encompassing many fields of study. For example, psychologists focused on the individuals with an organization (micro). In contrast, social psychologists focused on the relationship between the individuals within the organization (meso), and sociologists focused on informal groups and structural attributes of the organization (macro). Overall, these interactions among the three levels influenced partnership formation and provided a hierarchical structure in which partnerships can exist. However, a significant challenge to partnership development has been that the organization's environment was not considered a unit of measurement or analysis when determining if a partnership could be successful.

Evan (1965) notes that prior literature surrounding partnerships is complex due to the nature of "boundary-relation problems confronting all types of social systems, including formal organizations" (p. 218). Evan (1965) notes that boundary relations pose enormous complexities, thus leading to the body of research focused on understanding role-sets within organizations, sets of organizations within networks, and networks within

a system and how they pertain to partnerships. Jay (1964) was used in Whetten (1965) to define a network as the “totality of all the units connected by a certain type of relationship” (p. 138) and is established by identifying the links between organizations or organization-sets. Moving through the 1970s and early 1980s, research focused on these role-sets (micro), organization-sets (meso), and networks (macro) and the interplay between the three components, which in turn make up a system (Aldrich, 1976; Aldrich & Whitten, 1981, Hall et al., 1977; Perrucci & Pilisuk, 1970; Warren et al., 1974).

It is important when examining partnerships to understand how a system is discussed and defined. partnerships operating within a system require the ability to identify the different types of partnerships that are possible throughout varying sectors and the degree of stability within these role-sets and organization-sets, and the impact this has on the stability of the network as a whole. For example, from a sporting context, Green’s (2005) pyramid model for sport development outlines three levels of the sport system with mass participation on the bottom as the largest component, followed by competitive sport in the middle and lastly, high-performance sport. This system relies on the entrance, retention and advancement of athletes from mass participants to high-performance athletes. Green poses the questions,

...how do we bring athletes into the sport system? How do we keep them involved and enhance their commitment to the sport? In addition, once they are involved, how can we best ensure their advancement, particularly the advancement of athletes whose development shows promise? (p. 4)

These questions broadly identify the roles organizations must play and the interactions between organizations to continue advancing athletes up the pyramid, creating an

effective sport system. Without mass participation, the likelihood of retaining skilled athletes decreases and subsequently, the number of high-performance athletes would be reduced. Furthermore, without the stability of mass participation, the system and the networks within the system would crumble. When looking at networks and their relation to systems, it is necessary to understand what factors make partnerships within networks and systems successful.

Partnership research began to identify factors of successful partnerships, which is predominantly researched throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Throughout the literature, these factors have been called determinants (Oliver, 1990), critical contingencies (Oliver, 1990), success factors (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Mattessich et al., 2001), critical success factors (Wildridge et al., 2004) and criteria of effectiveness (Babiak, 2009). Oliver (1990) began to compile a list of generalizable determinants of partnerships, which set the stage as a starting point for future research.

In the 2000s to 2010s, researchers began refining these characteristics (autonomy, communication, mutual trust, and shared interest) about specific demographics, populations and environments. Furthermore, researchers began to connect successful partnerships and management strategies. Partnership management literature focused on the varying levels of organizational infrastructure and hierarchy, which in and of itself has a set of success factors (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Frisby et al., 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Misener & Misener, 2016; Parent & Harvey, 2009). The 2010s to present-day research is now beginning to focus on evaluating partnerships while considering aspects of frameworks and management (Babiak, 2009; Provan & Milward, 2001; Parent & Harvey, 2017).

The complexities within the partnership paradigm are vast, and the literature has taken many approaches to understand them. Partnerships, by their nature, have many variables due to the strictness/leniency of boundaries between organizations. Three key concepts are identified throughout the partnership literature, each becoming more prominent as time passes and providing beneficial insight while adding more complexities to partnership formation and maintenance. Those concepts consist of 1) Conceptual Models and Frameworks; 2) Factor Management, and 3) Evaluation; collectively, these concepts begin to examine partnerships as an evolving field of study rather than a simple formula for success.

Conceptual Models and Frameworks

There are three seminal pieces of research, which act as the starting point of partnership development utilizing conceptual frameworks. The seminal pieces include six critical contingency factors, a framework for successful collaboration and a continuum of connectedness. These conceptual frameworks provide best practices in partnership development, though there remain inconsistencies around the definition of success, among other variables.

The first seminal piece of research is by Oliver (1990), who surmised joint ventures, board interlocks and interagency relations to identify consistent factors among them regarding partnership formation and the type of relationship that exists. From there, six critical contingency factors of relationship formation were established: Necessity, Asymmetry, Reciprocity, Efficiency, Stability and Legitimacy. Oliver (1990) was one of the first to analyze if "...one type of partnership is relevant to predicting other types of

partnerships. In this way, important insights may be transferred across historically divergent lines of inquiry” (p. 3). Furthermore, these contingency factors for relationship formation were put into practice throughout six different types of relationships. Oliver (1990) suggested that partnerships develop for various concurrent reasons, and varying conditions make any one contingency more probable over others. This research identified that previous theoretical frameworks have failed to capture the complexities of partnerships, thus leading to conceptual models and frameworks to be developed. Oliver (1990) states, “... rigorous adherence to the explanation of a single theoretical paradigm or contingency is likely to reveal only a part of the truth about why inter-organizational linkages develop” (p. 21).

Mattessich and Monsey’s (1992) work with the Wilder Research Centre began reviewing and summarizing the body of literature on collaborations and identifying factors influencing successful collaborations is the second seminal piece. The literature screening included 133 studies, with 18 of those studies fitting their specific research criteria. In total, 19 success factors were identified to influence successful collaborations. In 2001, Mattessich et al. incorporated a 20th factor to this list; these will be elaborated on in the factor management section. However, it is important to note that these factors have been grouped into the following themes, *Environment*, *Membership Characteristics*, *Process and Structure*, *Communication*, *Purpose*, and *Resources*, making up the conceptual framework for successful collaborations. Collectively these themes influenced the formation of definitions for collaboration, cooperation and coordination by theorist Michael Winer. These definitions are later used in identifying levels of integration in horizontal or hierarchical structures such as government delivery systems.

Frameworks provide the structure of the process that takes place when identifying potential partnerships and boundaries that organizations should be respecting. The framework used throughout this study will be Mattessich et al.'s (2001) framework for successful collaboration. This conceptual framework creates a starting point for research regarding success factors used in the sport and recreation sectors. The intention is to further identify gaps within the literature specific to partnerships in sport and recreation and provide a more accurate list of “ingredients” for organizations to develop individual “recipes” needed to establish and maintain successful partnerships.

Factor Management

Factors of partnerships, much like conceptual models and frameworks over the last 30 years, have evolved throughout the literature, though some factors have stood the test of time and remain unchanged. Common critical success factors noted throughout the literature are mutual trust, shared vision, organizational resources and funding, clear and consistent communication, organizational leadership, clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability, autonomy, and a process to manage change. Additional factors such as skilled leadership, transferrable skills, the flexibility of budgets, and power differentials have been noted in recent years as indicators of success regardless of the sector(s).

Competing mandates between recreation and sport play a large role in partnership success, as each organization may have differing target audiences, organizational capacity and financial resources. Local governments partnering with sport organizations often struggle with these mandates and cannot compromise as one is focused on grassroots or local-level programs and the other on elite sport (Alexander et al., 2008;

Babiak, 2003; Misener & Misener, 2016). Government policies often group recreation and sport organizations together using a top-down approach to promote mass participation and high-performance success, though funding and resources available to achieve this mandate continue to be problematic. Organizations competing for the same pool of limited resources are expected to achieve the same performance indicators when their target audiences differ while achieving policy outcomes specific to their sector. Furthermore, partnerships mandated by a policy is less effective compared to voluntary, participatory and organic partnerships (Best et al., 2003; Misener & Misener, 2016), especially when partnerships encompass many sectors (Alexander et al., 2008; Frisby et al., 2004; Misener & Misener, 2016). This is largely due to power differentials, time demands, competing mandates, and resource disparity among partner organizations (Alexander et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2012; Shaw & Allen, 2006).

Researchers continue to focus on identifying the above factors and how they are managed (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003; Frisby et al., 2004; Hanf & O'Toole, 1992; Parent & Harvey, 2009). Formal communication is a key element in successfully managing a partnership (Shaw & Allen, 2006; Frisby et al., 2004), and it is recommended that partnership management plans map out communication strategies to ensure adequate supervision and monitoring, allowing for early detection of problems (Frisby et al., 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Additionally, a lack of planning, policy guidelines, unclear roles and numerous reporting channels had a greater risk of hindering the potential for a successful partnership (Frisby et al., 2004). In contrast, partnerships with clear communication channels and authority had greater chances of success (Alexander et al., 2008).

Babiak and Thibault’s (2009) research on challenges in multiple cross-sector partnerships delved into the Canadian sport system investigating the partnership of a sport organization with private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. This research revealed that managers of multiple cross-sector partnerships must consider these partnerships as a “web of alliances” (p. 24) and not multiple independent relationships. Furthermore, managers of such partnerships should focus on working to better the whole system and not the organization specifically. Employing complementary skills and matching one organization’s weakness with another organization’s strength can make the group more effective and efficient as a whole. Additionally, recognizing where partnerships may falter due to conflict, limited funding or changes in structure, and developing contingency plans to navigate these concerns, can allow managers to establish clear roles and communication plans.

Using Mattessich et al.'s (2001) framework for successful collaborations, the following 20 factors will be the starting point to examine sport and recreation partnerships developed by municipalities in Canada. Table 1 outlines the 20 factors influencing successful collaboration and is grouped into six themes as mentioned in the conceptual models and frameworks section.

Table 1. 20 Factors Influencing Successful Collaborations (Mattessich et al., 2001)

Factors related to the Environment	
1	History of collaboration in the community
2	Organization viewed as a legitimate leader

3 Favourable social and political climate

Factors Related to Membership

4 Mutual respect, trust and understanding

5 Appropriate cross-section of members

6 Members see alignment with self-interests

7 Ability to compromise

Factors Related to Process and Structure

8 Members share a responsibility in process and outcome

9 Multiple layers of decision making

10 Flexibility regarding structure and methods

11 Clear roles and policy guidelines

12 Ability to manage change

13 Pace of development

Factors Related to Communication

14 Clear and consistent Communication

15 Formal and informal communication links

Factors Related to Purpose

16 Clear, realistic, attainable goals and objectives

17 Shared vision

18 Unique purpose

Factors Related to Resources

19 Sufficient resources (funds, staff, time)

Mattessich et al.'s (2001) framework for successful collaboration has not been used throughout the recreation and sport sectors. However, it encompasses many of the factors mentioned in the sport and recreation partnership literature. This framework served as the starting point in identifying success factors in sport and recreation partnerships of municipalities in Canada.

Evaluation

Partnership evaluations or outcomes have rarely been empirically studied, often due to the complex nature of partnerships and the diversity of the partners involved. Quantifying or qualifying outcomes of partnerships in sport and recreation sectors has been challenging, as there are no set standards for evaluations (Atkinson, 2005; Babiak, 2003; Frisby et al., 2004). Given that partnerships as a whole are an emergent process (Gray, 1989), the partnership evaluation process within sport and recreation may require a summative evaluation versus and formative evaluation (Parent & Harvey, 2017).

Formative evaluations provide a glimpse of progress at a specific time, whereas a summative evaluation accounts for the entire process of the partnership, start to finish. Regardless of when the evaluation takes place, the challenge is determining what to evaluate to determine success. Is it the financial benefits of the partnership, the increased organizational capacity of one partner or the other, participation increases, member satisfaction, program reach or the ability to overcome constraints? Shaw and Allen (2006) recommend that the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be embedded

within the partnership formation process as a means of quantifying partnership success. Chalip (2006) explained, “it is not sufficient merely to determine whether a particular sport-based intervention has made a difference; we need to discover the characteristics of interventions that are effective or ineffective under particular conditions and pursuant objectives” (p. 6).

The evaluation process is incredibly complex and is limited in scope. Given that partnerships exist within three levels (micro, meso, macro), evaluations can take place within these three levels to truly understand the success of the partnership within the system(s) it belongs to. Provan and Milward (2001) began to understand this complexity and noted that partnership evaluation needs to occur throughout these three levels to provide best practices for partnership development within a specific scope. This exploratory research examined partnerships that municipalities have established and maintained and the factors associated with these partnerships.

Summary

The challenging part of partnerships, summarized in almost every decade of literature from the 1960s onward, is that most partnerships operate within a system. However, one notable observation when looking at the entire partnership literature is that these relationships exist between organizations within systems. These systems also operate within systems, which increases the complexity of partnerships and impacts the ability to establish and maintain successful relationships partnerships.

When beginning to break down each part of the partnership process, the roles that the three conceptual models/frameworks play in partnership development and

maintenance become apparent. Frameworks provide the process of identifying potential partners and entering into an partnership. Success factors outline the key elements needed to succeed, though incorporating these factors into the process does not inherently equate to success. Keast et al. (2007) note that there are many options and strategies available, and this causes barriers in selecting the right mix. Rhondes (1997) further supports this sentiment stating, “It’s the mix that matters” (p. 47). The management of these factors and the intrapersonal relationships developed between the partners within the partnership play a pivotal role in the success or, conversely, the failure of partnerships. Ultimately, having the correct ingredients and the right resources is paramount, though evaluating partnerships provides the final step in the partnership process. Without understanding how an partnership determines success or failure, the partnership has failed before it has even begun.

Providing clear KPIs or thresholds, be it based on program registrations, revenue generation, or social media presence, identifying the line of success versus failure is needed. Building evaluation tools into management strategies or plans are proactive approaches to evaluation, given that multiple check-ins can be made over a period of time indicating if and where specific criteria have been met. Alternatively, these check-ins provide a level of expectation and the criteria needed to continue or terminate an partnership (Frisby et al., 2004). Furthermore, utilizing the appropriate mechanism for evaluating these KPIs or thresholds gives all parties involved a standard of evaluation and a means of building upon or moving toward successful partnerships.

Chapter 3: Methodology/Methods

This research used a qualitative research design for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research provides the opportunity for information to flow and arise naturally through the environment or phenomenon in which the data is collected, allowing for subjective meaning or interpretation. Crotty (1998) recognized the qualitative research approach as a meaningful way of conducting social research and generating meaning, feeling, or interpretation of the world (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997; Smith & Chaddick, 2012). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, 2005), qualitative research evolves based on the environment and takes a more naturalistic approach to data collection and interpretation. Qualitative research can use an inductive approach to formulating questions from past interviews, observations, field notes or other forms of data collection to inform future questions or interactions with research participants (Olivier & Fishwick, 2003). Developing qualitative research protocols or procedures is a fluid and ongoing process, subject to change throughout a study and is incompletely defined at the onset of the research (Olivier & Fishwick, 2003; Peled & Leichtentritt, 2002).

Through a qualitative research approach, this research sought to explore factors influencing municipal Interorganizational Relationships between recreation and sport delivery systems. An emergent design approach was used throughout this research study. An emergent design approach to data analysis allowed for flexibility and the adaptation of unexpected information to occur, adding richness to the overall data collection (Doll, 1993; Pailthorpe, 2017).

Existing partnership literature has focused predominately on case study design in various settings such as non-profit (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Misener & Doherty, 2009;

Shaw & Allen, 2006), health (Misener & Misener, 2016), education (Flintoff et al., 2011), public/private (Culver et al., 2009; Phillpots et al., 2011) and multi-sectorial (Casey et al., 2009; Alexander et al., 2008), though little research has been done utilizing an emergent design within a recreation or sport context. This research can fill the gap within existing literature around partnership development using an emergent design for data collection and analysis.

Methods

This section outlines the sample population, data collection process, NVivo computer software and the framework used for data analysis. Furthermore, trustworthiness, ethical considerations and researcher bias are also discussed.

Sampling

The purpose of this research was to examine the factors that influence partnership/partnership development with sport organizations from a municipal perspective. Purposeful sampling was employed to recruit municipal recreation staff in Canada who have experience working with sport partners. Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research due to the subjective nature of choosing participants who will contribute and "...inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 158). Purposeful sampling maximizes researcher efficiency, effectiveness of limited resources and validity of the participants as they have relevant lived experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2014). Furthermore, participants can articulate or reflect accurately on

the subject, providing more depth and understanding (Bernard, 2017; Palinkas et al., 2015; Spradley, 2016).

Participant recruitment was based on staff availability, geographic location, and staff experience within a municipal recreation setting. Classification of municipalities varies between provinces throughout Canada; the term municipality will be used as a general term to encompass “regional authorities and any designated communities providing recreation services” (National Recreation Statement, 2015, p. 10). Furthermore, for this research report, recreation departments were classified as departments that design and implement plans or strategies related to parks, recreation, individual/team sports, arts, culture, nature and outdoor activities (Leone, 2008). Municipal recreation settings included towns and cities within Canada.

Participants

Study participants were selected if they were management or senior management level municipal recreation employees throughout Canada. The rationale for choosing management and senior management level position was based on authority and decision-making ability within the municipality. These individuals have the authority to determine if a partnership should be developed, moved forward, or terminated.

Data Collection

Interviews

Data collection occurred by conducting semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with municipal government employees who work within sport and recreation systems. Interviews were conducted and recorded using videoconference through Zoom software.

Open-ended questions were used during the interview process to draw on the professional experiences of the employees regarding partnership development, the constraints and enablers associated with establishing and maintaining such partnerships and if these partnerships can foster a more integrated approach between recreation and sport delivery systems. An open-ended format allows for greater insight and a more concise understanding of the municipal employees' perspective (Patton, 2014) and provides a two-way dialogue between the researcher and participants through probing to ensure flow and ease during the interview experience (Shank, 2002).

Research completed throughout the literature review helped inform the interview schedule (see Appendix A). Interview questions were derived from a conceptual framework using Mattessich et al.'s (2001) work on factors influencing successful collaboration. From Mattessich et al.'s (2001) work, 20 success factors were identified and subsequently organized into six themes: 1) Environment, 2) Membership, 3) Process/Structure, 4) Communications, 5) Purpose, and 6) Resources. These six factors have helped to guide the development of the interview schedule. Although these factors were given the term "success factors," for this research, these factors were used as a

framework and were not used to evaluate the success or non-success of a partnership. For the remainder of this research, these 20 success factors will simply be called factors.

An introduction was given to each participant to outline the background information of the study, duration of the interview and expected timelines, in addition to participant consent forms and information regarding the removal of personal/identifying information from the study. Interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes, dependent on the detail of participant responses and interview probing. The interview followed the interview schedule consisting of 16 questions focused on developing partnerships between recreation and sport delivery systems and exploratory questions about the constraints and enablers of partnership development municipalities' experience.

Pilot testing

The interview schedule was piloted to evaluate the flow and relevance of questions for trustworthiness. Pilot testing occurred with municipal employees throughout Nova Scotia who had experience in municipal recreation partnerships. Interviews were conducted in a virtual format (e.g., Zoom), recorded and analyzed with a debriefing with each participant to gather feedback. The pilot-test data was only used for validation purposes and has not been included within the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Each interview was electronically recorded, transcribed, and analyzed concurrently as future interviews took place. Initial interview transcription was done using Otter.ai transcription software in conjunction with Zoom with a follow up review of the transcription to ensure transcription matched the interview audio. Data analysis

consisted of an adapted version found in Edwards and Skinner (2009) and originally discussed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Analysis was comprised of three steps: 1) Familiarization 2) Thematic Framework, Indexing, and Charting; and 3) Interpreting. Step one focused on becoming familiar with the data by listening to, reading and reviewing each data set.

The conceptual framework from Mattessich et al. (2001) was used in step two to deductively code using the 20 success factors. Following this step, the interviews were inductively coded using an open format, which is conducive with emergent design methodology. This approach allowed for novel information not previously mentioned in Mattessich et al. (2001) six themes and 20 factors that influence collaboration to be identified from the data. Novel information was organized into themes. Themes were identified through indexing which is a process of matching codes with quotes from the raw data. This was done inductively, where relevant subthemes were identified based on the number of times they appeared throughout each interview. Constant comparison was crucial when employing this emergent design approach as each data set/interview was coded and compared, utilizing the previous interview as a reference for emerging themes (Dick, 2005).

Charting was then used to organize the data by quotes, themes and subthemes. The process of charting used NVivo 12 software, which was used to assist with thematic analysis, coding and charting. This software was chosen for its ability to manual handle the information in comparison to other software programs. The use of software programs allowed for enhanced research rigor and data analysis, allowing the researcher to remain

immersed within the data, increasing the validity and trustworthiness of the overall study (Sotiriadou et al., 2014).

The third and final stage of data analysis - interpreting, focused on common themes derived from the raw data and trends within the charting. Interpretation was done by comparing the novel information from the data with the conceptual framework from Mattessich et al. (2001) 20 factors influencing collaboration. This comparison took the form of a matrix, which involves “the crossing of two or more main dimensions or variables [or themes and categories] to see how they interact” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 239). Findings were organized into a matrix model highlighting novel information and a quote(s) to support each finding. Novel information can take the form of factors influencing collaboration and/or a new theme or subtheme not seen previously.

Trustworthiness

Creswell (1998) identifies eight validation strategies for qualitative research and suggests that use of at least 2 strategies in order to ensure the integrity of the researcher and participants and trustworthiness of the overall study. The eight strategies include: 1) Prolonged Engagement; 2) Triangulation or Multiple Data Sources; 3) Peer Review or Debriefing; 4) Negative Case Analysis; 5) Clarifying Research Bias; 6) Member Checks, 7) Rich, Thick Description; and, 8) External Audits. This study used the following validation strategies; Peer Review, Member Checks, and Clarifying Research Bias to ensure trustworthiness.

Peer Review refers to an external check with someone who is outside of the research team. This person often plays the role of a “Devil’s Advocate” and asks hard

questions regarding research methods, meaning and interpretation of the data as a means of keeping the research honest. An ongoing dialogue was kept with meeting notes or comments recorded to show a written account of these peer review sessions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member Checks solicit the participation of the study's participants to ensure their views are conveyed accurately, thus increasing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The process of member check is considered to be the "most critical technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). Stake (1995) believes that participants should "play a major role directing as well as acting", meaning participants have a pivotal role to play to ensure researchers are accountable to them and are credible sources for knowledge sharing and transfer. All participants had the opportunity to participate in member checks once their interview was transcribed to ensure the data collected was portrayed correctly. Two participants provided interview clarification to the researcher.

Clarifying Research Bias in the beginning of a study helps the reader to understand the researchers position on the topic and any biases, which may impact the interpretation or delivery of the questions and/or responses of participants (Merriam, 1988). Outlining these biases, the researcher was able to bring to light past experiences that have likely molded the approach to the study and the interpretation of the data. In addition to these validation strategies, the pre-testing of the interview schedule adds to the credibility of this study (van Wijk & Harrison, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

This research study sought out the approval of the University of New Brunswick's Ethics Board and outlined any potential risks and/or perceived risks for participation within this study. Mostly notably the perceived risk of participant's compromising their employment within their respective municipalities. To safeguard the participant's confidentiality, every measure was taken to ensure participants remained anonymous. Measures included, assigning pseudonyms for each participant, and removing any identifying factors such as names of municipalities or name of partnerships mentioned throughout the interview process. With the permission of each participant, interviews were recorded via voice recording technology with audio files stored in a password-protected drive in a secure office space.

Verbal consent was given prior to the beginning of the interview. Participants received information through email communications outlining what the study was about, that participation within the study was voluntary, and contact information for the primary researcher. Participants were reminded that consent can be withdrawn at any time, though any information provided up until that time will be included within the study unless participants requested it to be removed. All participants provided informed consent, and all proceeded with the interview. All participants received an electronic copy of their interview transcription and had an opportunity to provide feedback on their interviews. Two participants provided interview clarification.

Research Bias

The primary researcher of this study had knowledge and experience working for municipalities that establish and enhance sport partnerships. The researcher's lived experiences were the inspiration for the development of this study and it should be noted that several strategies were put in place to safeguard the integrity of this study. The primary researcher no longer works for a municipality, though their knowledge and understanding of municipalities could influence their interpretation. As such, frequent meetings with the researcher's supervisor took place; journaling and avoiding potentially bias situations (i.e., interviewing previous employers) were utilized to identify and address any biases moving forward. In addition to these strategies, the researcher kept a journal throughout the data collection and analysis and met with their supervisor throughout the duration of this study to discuss the results of the journaling and to discuss the researcher's bias.

Chapter 4: Findings

This research set out to examine the factors that influence Interorganizational Relationship development with sport organizations from a municipal perspective. Using the conceptual model developed by Mattessich et al. (2001), deductive coding was utilized to identify factors impacting partnership development (see Table 2).

Additionally, the table below provides interview quotes for the factors that were identified throughout the interview process. It is important to note that not all 20 factors were identified throughout the research, though this does not indicate that these factors are not relevant to the municipalities, rather these factors were not indicated as having impact on the examples provided by the municipalities.

Municipalities ranged in population size from 9,800 to 987,000 residents.

Recreation department sizes also ranged in terms of staffing, resource allocation, funding, scope of work, and municipal priority areas for recreation delivery.

Table 2. Mattessich and Monsey (2001) Themes and Factors of Partnerships

Themes	Factor	Quote/Summary	Municipality #
Environment	History of collaboration in the community	<i>“We do have a lot of people that have spent years and years in these organizations and that sometimes can be an issue for us. That they know that history that is maybe always not great.”</i>	Municipality #3
	Organization viewed as a legitimate leader	<i>“They're the ones that have the subject matter expertise.”</i>	Municipality #5
	Favourable social and political	<i>“We get user groups or individuals, community members that are sent to us through our political channels</i>	Municipality #4

	climate	<i>[...] where we wouldn't necessarily fit them in our hierarchy of partners, we then have to pivot and kind of see how we can make that work. So I would say that's a greater challenge."</i>	
Membership	Mutual respect, trust and understanding	<i>"[Partnership] It's kind of like building a friendship to a certain extent, and that we can trust them, they can trust us and we can set out with different objectives. We can both adhere to those and reach those objectives on a daily, weekly, monthly annual basis."</i>	Municipality #1
	Appropriate cross section of members	<i>"When we set out how we intend to work with different people from different groups, surrounding yourself with good people makes [partnership] easier."</i>	Municipality #1
	Members see alignment with self-interests	<i>"To me when I think of partnerships, and I don't know if this is just my bias mindset, but I think win-win."</i>	Municipality #2
	Ability to compromise	This factor was not mentioned throughout the interview process.	
Process & Structure	Members share a responsibility in process and outcome	<i>"We put on paper what we're sharing in terms of resources, so the [municipality] will provide XYZ and the community group will provide XYZ, and then we go from there."</i>	Municipality #4
	Multiple layers of decision making	All municipalities have mentioned their decision-making process, so are more in depth than others, but this is dependent on the size and scope of the partnership being developed. Regardless, all municipalities have a vetting process to ensure pursuing	All

		partnership is agreed upon at multiple levels in the organizations.	
	Flexibility regarding structure and methods	<i>“Every partnership is so different. To be quite honest, we like the flexibility because it allows for us to be as dynamic as possible.”</i>	Municipality #5
	Clear roles and policy guidelines	All municipalities have mentioned that importance of defining roles and responsibilities of the partnership. Some municipalities have partnership templates in place or partnership policies, but not all. The ones that do not have these policies or templates in place see the value in developing these practices.	All
	Ability to manage change	<i>“Our city is growing; we're going to be growing by another million, that's significant and huge. It will change the way we are structured and how we're maintaining our land and our agreements.”</i>	Municipality #5
	Pace of development	<i>“So we've had a few definitely that where they just kind of grown too quickly, and they don't have the resources or the manpower to offer the services.”</i>	Municipality #6
Communication	Clear and consistent Communication	<i>“Communication would probably be the first thing that comes to mind; if you don't have a positive sounding board back and forth [...] you'll never get off the ground.”</i>	Municipality #1
	Formal and informal communication links	This factor was not mentioned throughout the interview process.	
Purpose	Clear realistic, attainable goals	<i>“[Partner] has a definable objective that they're trying to meet,</i>	Municipality #1

	and objectives	<i>meet our goals, and that they're able to do it in such a manner that it's efficient and effective and doesn't become too cumbersome.</i> ”	
	Shared vision	<i>“Our vision fosters a collective impact approach to make sure that [residents] have an opportunity to embrace an active lifestyle. We partner with the school boards and community leagues, YMCA, [City] Health Services, Sport Councils. So we sort of have this network of partners to advance that that work.”</i>	Municipality #5
	Unique purpose	<i>“Often these partnerships are a very short duration, and then they don't continue on, but they have a long standing impact because you actually resulted in accomplishing [your goal].”</i>	Municipality #2
Resources	Sufficient resources (funds, staff, time)	<i>“We’re able to take the money that we have, and the resources we have, and do so much more by partnering with community based organizations.”</i>	Municipality #2
	Skilled leadership	<i>“Surrounding yourself with good people. Our staff is an extension of what we’re trying to accomplish here. I have a very good team.”</i>	Municipality #1

While additional factors impacting partnership development were not identified, factors around the process of partnership development were discussed by the study participants, which had not previously been discussed in Mattessich et al. (2001) conceptual model. Because deductive coding was used to identify factors that fit within the conceptual model throughout the initial data analysis, a secondary analysis took place

where inductive coding was used to identify new themes. The process of partnership development refers to the steps municipalities take to ensure the partnerships they enter into are reciprocal; meaning there is an appropriate amount of give and take, beneficial; indicating that the partnership has a positive impact on the public and that goals or objectives are being met, and service or address a need not previously met. The process of developing partnership is not “black and white”, and each partnership can differ based on the above factors previously outlined.

Reputation Management

A significant finding of the partnership development process is that reputation is the overarching factor in partnership development. Throughout the data, reputation is viewed as how the public and/or partners view or perceive the municipality’s ability to deliver high quality programming and events, how difficult they can be to work with, and how skilled their staff/leadership are to effectively provide recreation and sport services.

Reputation can be difficult to manage for municipalities, as they cannot be everything to everyone, all the time. This is the primary reason why municipalities enter in partnerships. Municipalities want to extend their limited resources, bring in high quality programming from organizations that have the passion and expertise to meet these needs. Factors identified as impacting reputation are: political influence, communication, clarity of roles and responsibilities, staff/volunteer turnover, and documentation of partnership. Table 3 has outlined these factors which impact reputation along with quotes from the data to support these factors.

Table 3. Factors Impacting Reputation

Factors Impacting Reputation	Municipal Quote	Municipality #
Political Influence	<i>We had said that we don't want to continue to partner with this person, but then we were still told we have to give them free space to them just offer their own thing. That is definitely a challenge in terms of being in a municipality and having political influences that way.</i>	#4
Communication	<i>But what we try to get out there is that the line of communication is clear to their [the partners] participants as to who is responsible for the delivery of the program, the cost of the program and that sort of thing. A lot of times people see that a certain activity or program is taking place within one of our facilities, and we're the ones that get the phone call. We don't ever want to be seen as passing the buck and say 'Oh no, that's not us, that's someone else.' That creates a lot of frustration for our caller.</i>	#1
Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities	<i>I would say overall, we do pretty well when we decide to get into a partnership. We try our best to establish the terms within legal agreements that really set out, who's doing what and who's responsible for what. We really try to manage through those established lines right off the hop.</i>	#5
Staff/Volunteer Turnover	<i>Groups and our organization transition; people come and go. Often in the past, there was often confusion from year to year and as people turned over, you'd end up having to go back into your notes to try to find out what they had said the previous year. And they, you know, they would say, "Well, it wasn't me, that was Joe."</i>	#3
Documentation of Partnership	<i>We have a legal document that's very wordy and long that legal is involved in and kind of spells out the relationship. That's something that we would use and have on files for any of those groups.</i>	#4

Political influence plays a role in reputation management when it comes to the partnership development process. All but one municipality indicated that they felt pressured to enter into partnership with organizations they did not feel were reciprocal,

but were politically driven. When asked if they have ever been pressured to partner, Municipality #1 stated:

[...] most of its politically driven. To keep a certain segment of the population happy, especially when your four years is coming to an end and you're looking for re-election. It's kind of cyclical in that respect, or soon after an election takes place. You see a lot of politically driven partnerships develop. (Municipality #1)

Municipality #4 supports the above statement while adding the challenge of politics regarding partnership development:

We get user groups or individuals, community members that are sent to us through our political channels or whatnot, that says, oh, this is a great group, partner with them. I'd like to give them free space or whatever. Where we wouldn't necessarily fit them in our hierarchy of partners, we then have to pivot and kind of see how we can make that work. So, I would say that's a greater challenge. (Municipality #4)

Furthermore, the pushback for severing or disaffiliating from a partner is even more pronounced when there is political involvement. Municipalities often forego this route for fear of developing a poor reputation among the public or fear of potential partners viewing them as difficult to work with. Often, municipalities are told to “play nice” or to “make it work” with difficult partners who were brought to them through political channels and were made to partner with (Municipality #6, Municipality #5, Municipality #4). For example, Municipality #5 described a situation where they had a hard time getting out of a partnership that was brought to them through political channels. The partnership was difficult for the municipality to navigate and it was not reciprocal;

there was lack of trust and communication on both sides of the partnership. When the municipality brought these concerns to their leadership, municipal staff were told to they needed to make this partnership work:

We've had an instance, we've just gone through it, and we've had a certain group operating a major facility. We're locked into an agreement and on several occasions, we tried to show [leadership] how there was breach [of the agreement]. Then in several cases, we'd issue a breach of the agreement. Every time we did [issue a breach] it would kind of jump up to that political decision; political or high-level administration. We quickly understood that we had to make it work; just get through this. You know, when you have that feeling of this is not the right thing to do was really difficult for me and my staff and those involved to keep playing nice and trying to help [the partner]. (Municipality #5)

In an effort to work with these partners, municipal employees have suffered from anxiety, workplace harassment, and discrimination when broaching the topic of severing or disaffiliating from a partner that was established through political channels. When Municipality #6 asked senior leadership about severing an agreement with a difficult partner, they were turned down and instead were asked to bring in mediation services to help the municipality and the partner navigate difficult conversations and try to get to the bottom of the problem. Municipality #6 explained:

We don't sever [the partnership] which is really, really difficult and there's been times where we've actually had to bring in like volunteer services to help sort of mediate relationships between [partners] and the city, because it could get quite tense. I went through one of them with a [partner]. I know many of my colleagues

have also been put in that place where the [partner] feels power and authority over the city worker.

When asked how these mediations have gone in the past, Municipality #6 indicated that the partner did not attend the mediations and they were told that they [the city employee] were the problem, not them [the partner]. Additionally, when asked what would deter the municipality from severing the agreement, Municipality #6 stated:

I just I think it's perceived reputation. I even talked to volunteer services. I'm like, "Hey, guys, what can we about [this partner]? They're causing me anxiety, and, you know, discrimination in the workplace and harassment? Like, these are pretty big things that I'm dealing with, but I'm not getting any support. I should not have to put up with this in the work force."

When looking to amend or disaffiliate a partnership, municipalities have a lot at stake and want to find a way forward working with their partners. Disaffiliation is the last resort for fear of repercussions from the public, the partner and potential partnerships in the future. The act of severing a partnership can take such a toll on a municipality's reputation that they were rather grind through it and find a way to make it work, than jeopardize their reputation and simply sever the agreement. For example,

I'm not sure if there's a specific clause in [our policies] that talk about disaffiliation. Regardless of if there is or if there isn't, the politics of disaffiliating a minor sports organization would be significant. Just because it would be perceived is that we're not supporting the organization and then you've got a significant, especially [here], where it's a hockey town, if we ever did that with hockey, the ramifications would be pretty significant. ... it wouldn't be reasonable

to think that we would be able to go to that [disaffiliating]; we would have to work with them anyway, which would take years to kind of figure out where we need them to go and how to get them there. We just wouldn't be able to pull affiliation. (Municipality #6)

Municipality #5 notes that entertaining or getting into partnership is easy but navigating the “ups and downs” while sticking to the agreed upon contract either informally or formally is the more challenging part. When looking to standardize their partnership process, Municipality #5 struggled with gaining the trust of their leadership because the shift in contract and relationship management seemed too significant of a risk. If partnership fallout were to occur, the municipality’s reputation would be damaged. For example,

It's super frustrating when you're trying to clean things up and make changes and then there's a hesitation [from leadership], either, from a political standpoint, a financial risk perspective. There are lots of things that come into play. So, getting into partnership is a big deal. Getting out is even harder. (Municipality #5)

The cycle of political influence can put pressure on municipalities to partner with organizations. The pressure is most prominent during times of re-election, either on a two- or four-year cycle depending on the municipal structure. Municipality #1 discussed their political cycle that they encounter:

Definitely politically driven. Not necessarily anything I can think of financially driven. No most of it's [partnership development] political driven. To keep a certain segment of the population happy, especially when your four years is coming to an end and you're looking for re-election. It's kind of cyclical in that

respect, or soon after an election takes place. You see a lot of politically driven partnerships. (Municipality #1)

There are many factors that impact reputation with regards to ending a partnership to pursuing one that includes clear communication with the partner, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, staff turnover/consistency, and documented partnership contracts. However, politics were found to be at the forefront of these factors and ultimately direct with whom, when and how often organizations establish partnerships. Municipality #4 provides an example where a partnership was presented to them through political channels. The partnership ultimately was not a good fit, though the municipality was still pressured into pursuing this partnership;

We had an individual who is actually quite motivational in terms of their ability to work with youth and had quite a social media presence on empowering youth and being a voice for youth [in our community]. They reached out to a city councilor who came to us and said that they'd really like to see this individual be a partner with us. Essentially, we were told we had to partner, which is fine, but we just knew that the individual didn't have the capacity based on our conversations [with them]. After a couple of different programs; they were offering a drop-in type program with us, but this time they [the individual] were on their own, and there was very little in terms of quality insurance, in terms of program delivery, and also in appropriateness and interaction with the youth. We just knew that this wouldn't be somebody that we would typically partner with. We had heard, that there was some inappropriateness with between the facilitator and the youth, and that had ended up showing up at the program. We had said that we don't want to continue to partner with this person, but then we were still told we have to give them free

space to them just offer their own thing. That is definitely a challenge in terms of being in a municipality and having political influences that way.

When Municipality #4 was asked further how they navigated this situation, they said:

We did have to sit down with them and say, “we can’t partner with you, we can’t provide what we had said we would provide in terms of staffing support and whatnot, but you can still access our space and the individual ultimately felt like the city wasn’t being supportive to their youth, as opposed to our [municipality’s] concerns about the legitimacy of this operation.

Throughout this research factors impacting municipal reputations emerged and are as follows: *Contract Management*, *Relationship Management*, and *Evaluation*. These factors can positively or negatively impact municipal reputation and if enough attention is not given to all three throughout the partnership process, municipal reputation can be impacted.

Contract Management

From the onset of partnership development, contract (also identified as agreement) management is critical in ensuring that all partners feel valued, that their goals are in alignment with each partner appropriately contributing to these goals, and roles and responsibilities are being upheld. Contract management can refer to length of partnership contract, type of contract, either handshake agreements, historical agreements that are assumed to continue from year to year, or more formal agreements with contracts being drawn up by legal teams.

Municipalities and their partners, whether they are with not-for-profit groups, private organizations or corporations, or multiple municipalities working together, enter into contracts either informally through handshake or bartering agreements or formally through legal channels. The type of partnership (informal or formal) is based on the capacity of the municipality and the partner to uphold the agreement. The variety of partnership type is designed to meet the communities or partners needs and to achieve the common goal (see Table 4). Regarding the need for varying types of partnership, Municipality #5 states:

[...] what we've really found in the world of partnerships is that it's really tough to have a playbook. Every partnership is so different. To be quite honest, we like the flexibility because it allows for us to be as dynamic as possible. Everybody, every time is bringing something different to the table, so we have to be able to be flexible and see those opportunities as they are presented.

Table 4. Examples of other Types of Partnership Agreements

Type(s) of partnerships	Quote	Municipality #
Informal Agreements	<i>We definitely have informal agreements where groups will do this for a facility. And we'll do this and we'll support them by doing a, b and c, and they bring this to the table. There's nothing formalized because the group is not in a place to support that I think is the best way to describe it.</i>	Municipality #3
Formal – Legal Agreement	<i>They have what we would consider a lease agreement with us. It's more</i>	Municipality #4

formalized, it's done kind of in partnership with our legal team because we're giving them keys and access to the space and that kind of thing.

**Informal
transitioning
to formal
agreement**

Yeah, we have a few handshake ones [agreements] that we've put them into more of a modern system or modern agreement, but very difficult to stray away from what was originally decided upon. We have more clear lines of delegated authority; how long we can get into an agreement, how much is it worth, who is signing off on it, those types of things are established a little more clear now, as a corporation, which is helpful.

Municipality #5

The contracts can be based on facility lease agreements, rental agreements, bartering agreements, facility development agreements, or affiliation agreements. Some municipalities have developed templates based on these partnership types in an effort to create clearer boundaries of the partnership being established (Municipality #3, #4, #5, #6). For example, Municipality #3 states:

The level of the agreements has stepped up to be far more, thorough and covering all the areas that should be covered in a proper agreement. Identifying the roles and responsibilities clearly on both sides of the table, putting us in a much better position to actually deal positively with the users and with these groups. It puts them in a better position; they know what they can expect on an annual basis, etc.

These agreements have been positive in terms of getting that detail in place, so people understand clearly how it works.

Municipality #3 also provided context as to who they want to pursue partnership with and indicated that the preference for partnership development is with maturing organizations. Contracts are used to help manage the maturing relationship with the partner:

It [the agreement] takes into account, their responsibilities and what their maintenance responsibilities may be, it takes into account any fundraising and projects that they want to enter into down the road. It's more of a tool to manage that maturing relationship. (Municipality #3)

Contractual length changes over time to accommodate partner initiatives, capacity of both partners and cost of the partnership. Agreements tend not exceed more than 10 years, providing both partners the opportunity to renew, establish stronger relationships, amend, or disaffiliate altogether. Municipality #1 and #2 tend to opt for shorter-term agreements focused on projects or capacity building for the partners. Municipality #3, #4, and #5 focus on longer-term agreements aimed at facility development and sustainability.

While ending a contract is not the desired outcome, it does happen from time to time, however, municipalities will go to great lengths to prevent the disaffiliation of a contract. Municipalities will often try to work with the partner in a capacity building approach to ensure that the partner can become self-sufficient and achieve the mutually agreed upon goals or objectives:

We've said, like, getting out of partnerships, is something we don't do very well, we're not interested in that [getting out of a partnership]. If we get into a

partnership, we want to make it work. So, it's not like it [disaffiliation] happens all the time, where we have to get rid of a partner, that's not something that we're interested in. (Municipality #5)

Ending a contract can be challenging for municipalities to explore, especially when the partners are well-known in the area or within a specific sport. Municipality #5 spoke of the hardships of getting out of partnership and the risks associated with it. When asked about feeling pressured into establishing or maintaining a partnership they spoke of an experience of ending a partnership with a baseball franchise:

There as whole bunch of reasons to be reserved about change. Particularly in this case, the group that was in there (the facility space) has the rights to a ball team. So if he [the partner] were to go, then it was taking a risk on whether a new ball franchise could come in [to take his place]. (Municipality #5)

Establishing contracts with sport clubs can be challenging for municipalities due to the fact that their board of directors are volunteer based and there is consistent turnover. As Municipality #1 notes “[...] especially with a local sport organization, not so much the provincial or the national sport organizations, but the provincial sport organizations have such a high turnover of volunteers, like their presidents, every year, you could be dealing with somebody new.” Furthermore, Municipality #1 commented on the challenge that volunteer turnover can create when trying to establish relationship:

I find that’s very difficult from year after year, if there was more continuity or more consistency and those board of directors or those groups, it might be easier to grow relationships longer and partnerships have a better relationship, but to a certain extent, you start over every year to every two years.

Non-profit organizations with volunteer boards, which are the primary partner for most municipalities in this study, that consist of a wide range of individuals with specialized skills. An example given was around board members who are parents of athletes within the club. These parents had a wide range of skills that were beneficial to the board and resulted in stronger contract negotiations given the parent's experience working for businesses, legal teams, and marketing firms. These skill sets equipped the parents with more knowledge than the average volunteer who might have settled on a contract with less. Some of the skills mentioned were marketing (Municipality #2), business owners (Municipality #3), and lawyers (Municipality #3). Municipal #3 provided a specific example:

You have the person that started the program just because they wanted their kids to play. In the evolutionary process, you end up with the lawyer who's looking to make sure that his organization is getting everything it can from the city, and we're [municipality] gonna protect it. So, it's an interesting process to watch it evolve over time, and to see the level of sophistication grow.

Supporting these partners and their sophisticated volunteers can be difficult for municipalities because the partner can play off of other municipalities in the area looking for the best deal; adding another layer to managing contracts and expectations. This is most common in smaller municipalities rather than larger urban centers based on proximity of neighboring municipalities. Municipality #1 spoke of the difficulty they had when navigating rental fees for partners. Partners would approach them to get a quote on rental fees, only to have the partner go elsewhere for a better deal, or use it as leverage to secure a lower rate with the municipality. In the past the municipality gave into this and

settled for varying rental rates and it tarnished their reputation among the partners for their lack of consistency. As a result, Municipality #1 chose to go with a flat rate rental fee to avoid any pushback from the public or partners should partners find out that rental fees were different for group A than they were for group B:

We kind of stay away from it [varying rental fees], because we don't want to get in a situation where it gets found out that group A is getting a deal for \$25 an hour and someone else has \$40 an hour and someone else has it for \$50 an hour. So, I think that cost us but I know other municipalities have done that but we just want to be fair, so we don't want to be seen as playing favorites in some respects.

In contrast to Municipality #1's experience, Municipality #3 appreciated these negotiation skills and they were able to work with the partners to foster a more meaningful and beneficial contract due to this level of sophistication of the volunteer board:

[I]t helps us in terms of planning those types of things, and in terms of providing a better service. [...] So that's that level of sophistication that starts to grow. First, "I'm interested, I love playing [sport], therefore, I'm interested in running this league." They take it to the next level; someone needs to have some of that organizational skill and understand, to get to us and get that support.

Understanding the skillset of the partnering organizations is beneficial to the municipality when brokering a successful contract. Executive boards which are boards that are made up of individuals with specialized skills, be it an accountant, a lawyer, a politician, are able to take on more roles and responsibilities of the partnership, which allows the municipality time to plan and budget accordingly and make the best use of

their limited time and resources. Municipality notes the importance of being effective and efficient with their resources and the need to partner with individuals who are bringing something to the table. For example, “You have limited resources, and you want to do things right the first time” (Municipality #2).

Relationship Management

While considering a partnership agreement and working through contract negotiations, nurturing the relationship between both parties was found to be crucial for the development of a partnership. Developing trust and rapport with your partners takes time and is necessary to be open to exploring the partnership further. The idea of a partnership as a marriage was noted throughout the data. While, the goal is for the partnership to continue on and innovate as needed to continue moving forward. During the course of the relationship, both parties experience highs and lows as each partner works through the challenging times in an effort to meet the partnership goals. When asked about the partnership dynamic, Municipality #5 explained the importance of partnerships to the municipality and that the city would look very different if these partnerships did not exist:

Brokering the partnerships and thinking innovatively and the willingness and openness to explore, I think we're really good at. We see it and value the partnership, we know that we could never be the city, you know, that we are without these diverse opportunities. So we always entertain them. That's the easy part, I think. We talked about the marriage of a partnership, and it's like never ending. We have ebbs and flows, and we get through them.

Furthermore, partnership has also been referred to as a relationship or friendship between the partners. The importance of having the right people at the table was also identified in exploring and building these relationships with the partners. Municipalities all indicated trust as a primary factor in partnership development; trusting your team or staff to nurture these relationships and for the partner and municipality to trust one another to hold up their end of the contract. In addition, when asked what enables partnerships to flourish, Municipality #1 stated:

Surround yourself with good people. Not every group that we deal with in terms of our recreation department comes through me. I have three key staff in our department; one is arts and culture; one is events and programming and the third is youth and family. They all foster those relationships; they are going to be the ones to build those relationships.

Municipality #3 noted the responsibility of a public servant is the willingness to develop relationships with partners and to foster positive relationships: “We still have the responsibility and obligation and, in some senses, privileged to work with them to sort of help them develop space, to look for additional space, because they are a growing community in our city” (Municipality #3). Furthermore, Municipality #3 also added that aligning multiple partners with similar interests or needs benefits the municipality by requiring less work and maintaining positive relationships between the municipality and the partners:

So, they [the partners] become one body that we can allocate [resources] to, rather than two bodies competing for a time at our venues. When we have an operating agreement, we give them a blanket permit for the space, and they do the allocation

for games and practices. It makes obviously, a lot less work for us, if we're just giving them one permit, and they do all their scheduling, and we give them 'X' amount of money every year; and it prevents us from being in that position of trying to adjudicate between them, who gets what time at what facility.

(Municipality #3)

Failure to make strong connections between partners is indicative of poor relationship management which can lead to frustrations for both partners, poor communication, animosity and can ultimately impact the municipality's reputation and chances for future partnership development. Municipality #6 notes that partnership communication is necessary; not only for the municipality, but also for the end users and the relationship the municipality and the partners have with the public. Municipality #6 spoke of a partnership where the partner signed a facility lease agreement to run a program out of a municipal building. A municipality would provide administrative services and handle the registration process for the partners program. However, ownership of the program was poorly communicated to the end user and when complaints regarding the program delivery were being made, the end user was unaware that the program was not hosted by the municipality, but rather by a partnering organization. The municipality, although frustrated, wanted to make the partnership work:

It's hard for people to understand that the city actually doesn't run the programs, it's the [partner]. The [partner] contracts out instructors, that's who actually runs it. So, when people are like, "Oh, the city's running your crappy karate club", actually, it's the [partner] running the program, I just want to make that clear, but people don't understand it, because it's happening in our buildings. So, you have

to be very political and support and even when we just want to, like, throw our hands up in the air and scream, we just make it [the partnership] happen.

(Municipality #6)

A lack of communication with the public regarding who is leading a program versus who is hosting it can create public confusion and municipal frustration with partners. This was also noted in interviews with Municipality #1 and Municipality #3. According to Municipality #1,

What we try to get out there (to the public) is that the line of communication is clear to their [the partners] participants as to who is responsible for the delivery of the program, the cost of the program and that sort of thing. A lot of times people see that a certain activity or program is taking place within one of our facilities, and we're the ones that get the phone call. We don't ever want to be seen as passing the buck and say 'Oh no, that's not us, that's someone else.' That creates a lot of frustration for our caller.

Municipalities indicated that relationship management can have broader implications as they are looking to broker positive, nurturing relationships in all sectors to help extend their resources, support local businesses and organizations, and provide a better service to their residents and to establish a more reciprocal relationship with partners. Municipality #1 summarizes this with:

We're trying to grow our community and I think if we're going to grow our community, we're going to have to take on some initiative to help drive business to those establishments. So, we're trying to figure out how we can create

partnerships so that we can give them back something instead of just asking for something all the time.

Municipality #1 and #2 both indicated that proper communication and rapport with partners is pivotal to achieve the goals of the partnership being developed, along with managing the relationship between the two parties:

It's either myself reaching out or a group reaching out to their community and we start the relationship by exchanging information about our space and they exchange information about the program they want to offer and then we kind of just grow from there and working out the details. (Municipality #1)

Municipality #2 added that open channels of communication are necessary to ensure resources were not being wasted, regardless of whether the goal of the partnership was to create a new park or to establish a facility lease agreement:

You don't want to do it for someone you want to do it with someone. You don't want to waste time or money by doing something and saying, 'Here you go', and someone say, well, that's not what I wanted. It's really much more efficient too [having open communication] so that you actually ensure that you meet the needs of the people that you want to meet the needs of, you know, a targeted focus of sport for example.

Evaluation

Noted throughout the data, municipalities found that getting into partnership or entertaining partnership development is easy, though maintaining partnerships or ending one is very challenging to do without the proper supporting documents. Municipality #5

stated, “I think that evaluation piece has to come in a little stronger. You can't just think that getting into partnerships and managing public assets is an easy thing, because it's not.” While most municipalities do not enter into partnership expecting it to end prematurely, having some form of evaluation system can be beneficial when partnerships are up for renewal. If there are budget constraints and the municipality is no longer able to entertain all former partnerships, an evaluation system enables these decisions easier to navigate. Municipality #5 indicates that an evaluation of the partnership is important:

We are finding that work in the evaluation side is increasingly becoming more important because of the budget constraints. To showcase what we are doing through partnerships, it's going to be even more important that we have some numbers behind it to show.

Some municipalities indicated that they use evaluation tools in the form of a financial audit (Municipality #1, Municipality #3, Municipality #5), reports (Municipality #1, Municipality #4), registration numbers (Municipality #1, Municipality #5), or attending the partners annual general meeting (Municipality #1, Municipality #6). However, there were three municipalities that took a more subjective approach to evaluation and focused on the quality of the relationship rather than the outcomes. Municipality #5, though they do not have a robust evaluation tool, have found that putting an emphasis on the quality of the relationship first and outcome-based measures second has had a positive impact on relationship development. Municipality #2 focused on a project debrief with the partner to understand what went well and where the partnership could be improved. Municipality #1 worked with senior management staff

who participate in an annual debrief to discuss their relationships with the municipalities various partners and work to improve them.

Evaluation strategies are often an area that municipalities within this study felt they did not have the capacity to evaluate and to effectively capture the partnership but felt they were necessary to determine and make efficient use of resources and aid in decision making. As a result, most municipalities in this study opted for informal, unstandardized forms of evaluations such as a group debrief with staff and partners. Municipality #4 notes that flexibility in evaluation tools has worked well for their municipality:

I guess if the working relationship between the partner and us is good and we're working together and flexing with the needs of whoever we're working with, I think that's the success. And if we're measuring outcomes, whether the measurements are good or not, we're having that conversation every session, that's a success.

A challenge noted by Municipality #1, is that it would be difficult to make an evaluation tool reflective of the various types of partnerships that are developed and that the process of evaluation may be too cumbersome to develop. Rather than go this route, the municipality chose to do more informal evaluations by having conversations with municipal staff and the partner. Municipality #4 indicates the reason they have not developed a standard evaluation tool is because every partnership is different and requires different resources and supports:

It [evaluations] would be individualized. I'm not sure if we'll go down that road eventually, where we'll have a standardized measure. It's definitely because each

with each partnership, our shared resources are different so they would be evaluated differently. We work at that initial conversation to identify kind of shared outcomes or interests and what we are specifically looking for with that partner. We would just ask them to kind of report back on that to make sure that we were still all on the same page with those outcomes.

Partnership Success

Throughout the course of the interview process, municipalities offered their thoughts on what a successful partnership looks like to them and components needed for successful partnerships emerged. Terms such a “win/win”, “reciprocal relationship” and “achieving the goal” were mentioned as a means of determining if a partnership is successful. For example,

From a municipal point of view, a program or relationship that continues to grow over an extended period of time, one that has a positive impact on our local residents. Everything we do is for our residents or the surrounding area or neighboring communities. I think that would be something that we would view as having a positive long-term effect. (Municipality #1)

Municipal #2 described partnership success as, “I’ve said this before in the interview, to me when I think of partnerships, and I don't know if this is just my bias mindset, but I think win/win.” Finally, Municipal #4 explained,

I guess if the working relationship between the partner and us is good and we're working together and flexing with the needs of whoever we're working with, I think that's the success. And if we're measuring outcomes, whether the

measurements are good or not but we're having that conversation every session, that's a success. [...] There has to be that reciprocal relationship that it's mutually beneficial for us as the city and for the partner as well for us to consider it a success.

Summary

Overall, findings of this research suggest that there are evolving factors that influence how municipalities engage in and maintain partnerships. Municipalities enter into partnerships for a variety of reasons, most notably to identify and amend gaps in their service delivery, to provide higher quality programming for participants, to extend limited resources, to broaden their community reach, and to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Initially, Mattessich et al. (2001) factors were used to examine the results of this current study, which was based on the following themes; *Environment, Membership, Process and Structure, Communication, Purpose, and Resources*. The findings did not present anything new with regards success factors for partnership development; however, the findings did present a new “outlook” as it pertains to partnership maintenance within municipalities. What is evident from the findings, is that the factors influencing why municipalities engage in partnership range from improving gaps in service delivery, providing high quality programming, or extending already limited resources. As such, partnerships are an identified necessity for municipalities to meet the ever-growing needs of the communities they serve. However, what is not discussed that became apparent from the findings was partnership maintenance in the context of reputation and is something new to the literature for this particular setting. The components of reputation, conceptualizing reputation, and the process of navigating and managing reputations while exploring partnership development will be discussed.

The process of reputation management has been noted throughout sport literature (Deephouse, 2000; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; J. R. Edwards & Byers, 2015; Lang et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2005; Washington & Edwards, 2016; Washington & Zajac, 2005). Reputation has been defined as the desirability or relative standing in relation to similar counterparts (Shrum & Wuthnow, 1998), image (Shenkar & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1997), or esteem (Dollinger et al., 1997; Fombrun, 1996; Hall, 1992; Heugens, 2004; Shrum & Wuthnow, 1998). Fombrun and van Riel (1997) provide the definition of reputation as “a collective representation... it gauges a firm’s [organization’s] relative

standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders” (p. 10). Unlike Shrum and Wuthnow’s (1997) definition, it is important to mention that in the context of this study, municipalities often do not have similar counterparts or other municipalities who are vying for the same sport partners. While this situation is possible and was presented once throughout this study, it is not the norm given the geographic locations of these municipalities and their proximity to neighbouring communities. Therefore, using Fombrum and van Riel’s (1997) definition of reputation as a collective representation is better suited for this context given that reputation can be viewed differently if internal to the municipality, or external as a partner or citizen.

Reputation within the context of partnerships has been found to be a source of trust that develops within the relationship (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011). Furthermore, Barringer and Harrison (2000) explained that Saxton (1997) found that there is a “positive relationship [partnership] between partner reputation, the degree of cultural compatibility between alliance partners, and alliance success” (p. 392). Partnerships enable actors within the relationship to “gain powerful allies, improve their reputations and legitimacy, become connected with other more distant organizations, and gain access to greater and more diverse sources of social capital” (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011, p. 1115). Essentially, reputation can be a predictor of quality as it relates to the outcome and reliability associated with the partnership (Shonk & Bravo, 2010). Thus, reputation plays a critical role in development and maintenance of partnerships and predicted success.

Components of Reputation within the Context of this Report

Within the context of this study, reputation could be summarized as how the public and/or partners perceive the municipality's ability to deliver high quality programming and events. Barnett et al. (2006) indicate that reputation consists of two things, identity and image, while Wartick (2002) suggested that identity, image and reputation are terms that can be used interchangeably. For the purposes of this research, the findings suggest identity as being viewed as the perception employees have about their organization while image is the perception that external observers have of the organization. Babiak's (2007) work demonstrates the impact that partnerships can have on reputation and the importance of engaging in the correct partnership to boost an organization's image to the public with this statement, "Engaging in an partnership would allow an organization [in this study-municipality] to improve its reputation, image, or prestige and impress other members in its network such as resource-granting agencies, external stakeholders, or the general public" (p. 342). The findings of this research support this notion that partnerships, reputation, identity, and image are all interconnected.

Identity

Identity for municipal employees and staff has been noted in the findings by several municipalities within this current study. Drawing on the work of Whetten and Mackey (2002), they explain that identity is the most "central, enduring, and distinctive" (p. 394) thing about an organization, or when applied to this research context, municipality. Municipal staff, as representatives of the municipality, views themselves as

public servants who want to meet the needs of the communities by establishing partnerships and fostering relationships with organizations that can help the municipality meet the community needs. Furthermore, Whetten and Mackey (2002) explained that, “The most basic requirement of identity articulation for purposes of social intercourse and social accountability is to distinguish the self from the other both in general and in specific comparisons” (p. 396). Municipal employees want to establish and foster positive and reciprocal relationships because without them, the municipalities would not be able to do a fraction of what they can with partnerships. Municipal staff take pride in the role they play in pursuing partnerships, sitting on partnership committees, and combining resources to maximize potential impact. Hardy et al. (1998) stated that,

Individual identities are created as people talk particularistically about an individual, constituting her or his reputation. Thus, one acquires an identity through inclusion, by being “on” the collaboration team; for being “a member” of the management committee, for being “important,” perhaps by sending out the memos, for deciding where the meetings are held. (p. 7)

The identity of a public servant is relevant to this study as it demonstrates the lengths municipal staff will go to maintain positive relationships. Thus, civil servants will “tend to act in ways consistent with the company’s [or municipality] identity” (Fombrun, 1996, p.111). Some municipal staff spoke of the privilege they have in serving their communities and the partnerships they have nurtured. This privilege is rooted in the organizational identity. Organizational identity has been conceptualized as a shared belief concerning the values of an organization (Hogg & Terry, 2001). Furthermore, Whetten and Mackey (2002) suggest that “identity is what identity does’ (p. 3), meaning what

organizations choose to do versus what they say they will do can influence whether or not an organization has a positive or negative identity among staff. If staff struggle with this identity, that can have influence in the image the organization is portraying to outsiders, which can influence the organization's reputation (Dutton et al., 1994).

Image

The literature drawing the connection between reputation, partnerships, and image is limited in scope (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Image has been understood in three ways: 1) internally, what members think outsiders think about their organization (or municipality) (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991); 2) externally, what the outsider thinks about the organization (or municipality) (Berg, 1985); and, 3) what members are doing or saying about the organization to shape the outsider's perception of the organization (or municipality) (Whetten et al., 1992). Organizational image has been defined as "what organizational agents want their external stakeholders to understand is most central, enduring, and distinctive about their organization" (Whetten & Mackey, 2002, p. 9).

Image is based on what the organization wants the outsider to connect with, know, and understand about the organization. From an organizational perspective (or municipal perspective), highlighting what is most distinctive about the organization, and how this sets them apart from the rest, can create a positive or negative image. How the public or partners perceive the work of municipal staff, good or bad, is the basis of understanding image. Maintaining a positive image to outsiders is necessary to uphold a positive reputation and this has been demonstrated throughout the data for this study.

Municipalities are eager to meet the needs of the public and their partners, and work to

ensure that partnerships reflect the best interest of the communities they serve. This is a balance in “pleasing” everyone, which sometimes can be a struggle in terms of which areas of a partnership are priority.

Following Whetten and Mackey (2002), “identity is what identity does” (p. 397), municipalities who demonstrate and uphold the organizational values outlined by each municipality, it would be easy to assume that these municipalities have a positive image with the public, stakeholders, and their partners. However, working to maintain a positive image with the public and partners, there have been instances where municipalities have had negative experiences with partnership. Whetten and MacKay (2002) stated that, “Reputation, as the reciprocal of image, is treated as feedback from others concerning the credibility of an organization’s self-definition” (p. 400). Whether this negative experience is attributed to poor communication, mistrust, or failure to meet the expectations of the partnership agreement, municipalities are hesitant to end partnership contracts on bad terms, fearing this could lead to negative image and ultimately a damaged reputation. This hesitancy was noted throughout the findings section and highlights the interconnectedness that image has on municipal reputations.

Conceptualizing Reputation

While image and identity are the key components of reputation, there are additional components that can shape organizational reputation. Washington and Edwards (2016) used Rindova et al. (2005) to explain that an exchange of information between partners can shape reputations as well as social influences within a marketplace such as the media, politics, economic environment, and third-party stakeholders.

Furthermore, three conceptualizations help shape organizational reputation: being known, being known for something, and generalized favourability (J. R. Edwards & Washington, 2015; Dai et al, 2010). This discussion will provide context on why being known and being known for something is important when it comes to establishing and maintaining partnerships and the role that reputation plays in the partnership process.

Being Known

Throughout the literature, being known is a pivotal component of reputation. Being known can be equated to an “awareness” (Shamsie, 2003) indicating that the public or stakeholders are aware of the organization itself. This level of awareness is simply that, being aware of the organization, but reserving judgement about the organization (Fombrun & van Reil, 1997). Saxton and Dollinger (2004) refer to being known as a brand name used to gain the attention of a target audience. Shamsie (2003) notes that organizational reputation is the “level of awareness that [organization’s] have been able to develop for itself” (p. 199). Bromley (2000) defines reputation “as the way key external stakeholder groups or other interested parties actually conceptualize the organization” (p. 241).

Lange et al. (2011) further note that familiarity with an organization plays a large role in the organization’s reputation with outsiders, regardless of the outsider’s judgement. Being known is a way that organizations can enhance their reputation through forms of branding and marketing strategies (Fombrun, 2001), through the organizations current or former partners (Rindova et al., 2005), and using forms of publicity such as media outlets and influential third parties (Deepphouse, 2000; Rindova et al., 2005).

Throughout the findings of this study, municipalities note the various ways they marketed themselves to potential partners either through the local paper, community newsletters, social media pages, or through their current partners. Two municipalities spoke of exploring potential partners through a Request For Proposals (RFP) process. The municipality would post an idea or initiative through their various marketing channels and ask interested potential partners to submit a proposal outlining how they could help and what they could offer. Municipalities, through a committee or tasks force would then review the proposals submitted, scoring each proposal in various categories and ultimately identifying a winner.

The RFP process can be beneficial at times, as it allows new partners to come forward. However, some municipalities spoke of the challenges RFPs present when a former partner, that the municipality has had a falling out with, submits a proposal for review. It is especially challenging if the tasks force has not been privy to these prior partnerships. In one instance, an RFP tasks force ended up selecting a former partner after their partnership had ended under negative circumstances. In this instance, municipalities working to get their name or projects out into the community in the hope of attracting new talent ended them back at square one.

Other municipalities spoke of the ways that existing partners help get their name out there and raise the level of awareness within the community regarding the services they provide and the opportunities for future partnership. One municipality mentioned the use of social media and social media influencers as a way to target a specific group or demographic that matches the demographic of a service the municipality offers. The example provided was around youth and young adults. A social media influencer is

someone who uses their social networks and platforms to cultivate a personal brand in an effort to achieve a sort of ‘micro-celebrity’ status (Khamis et al., 2017). Social media influencers use their ‘celebrity’ status and social capital to generate as much attention possible to reach as many people possible. Marketers and companies capitalize on this attention by partnering with influencers to promote a product or service, increasing the public’s awareness and furthering the company’s social media reach.

Being known is important for municipalities to get their name out there, highlight upcoming projects or potential opportunities to partner with local organizations. Being known is essential for establishing partnerships because you cannot partner with someone you do not know exists.

Being Known for Something

While being known is important, being known for something is equally important when it comes to maintaining partnerships and attracting potential partners. As it relates to this study, being known for something has played a role in how municipalities navigate partnership development. Being known as a municipality that meets the needs of the community and being known as; easy to work with, fair, positive, and a beneficial partner are some of the reasons why sport organizations want to partner with municipalities. Municipalities do not want to be known for being hard to work with or unfair to their partners. Maintaining the reputation of a beneficial partner is also the reason why municipalities are cautious when altering or ending a partnership agreement. Municipalities throughout this study were fearful of the consequences to their reputation if they ended a partnership agreement, especially with a partner who was well known,

like a professional sport team. While some partners identified throughout this study were prominent organizations who are known for their sport or team specifically, municipalities were able to establish a stronger sense of ‘being known’ simply by being a partner with these professional sport organizations.

Altering or ending these partnership agreements could have consequences to the municipality in the future given the reputation of the partnering organization and the influence they have on future potential partners. An example was given of a partner who owned the rights to a baseball franchise who had partnered with a municipality to develop a facility. This partnership became strained given that the partner was not maintaining the facility as written in the agreement. The municipality was faced with a tough choice between continuing on in the agreement, or ending it and risking the fall out and the possibility of not having another baseball franchise take the partner’s place. After the municipality ended the partnership, the municipality lost partnership agreements with local baseball clubs and organizations. The result of a negative partnership experience with a professional sports team began to filter down to minor sport and local sport groups who then followed the professional sports team’s lead by disassociating with the municipality. Other examples of this impact on reputation were evident throughout the data analysis, specifically the organizations current or former partners, and influential third parties through social media channels.

Being known for something, be it stellar service, high quality programming, or successful partnership, is essential to maintaining existing partnership and establishing new partnerships. Having a resume of productive and positive relationships can boost the municipality’s reputation, making them more appealing to potential partners in the future.

Managing Reputation

Based on the above application of identity, image, and reputation, Figure 1 was developed to better understand reputation management within the context of the findings for this study. Understanding the role that image and identity play in reputation influences a municipality's potential for conceptualizing reputation through being known and being known for something. Municipalities who have this understanding of reputation are then tasked with managing it. Throughout the findings, managing reputation can be comprised of three components; contract management, relationship management and evaluations. If these components are managed correctly, not only will the municipality's reputation be intact, the partnership will be successful, perhaps.

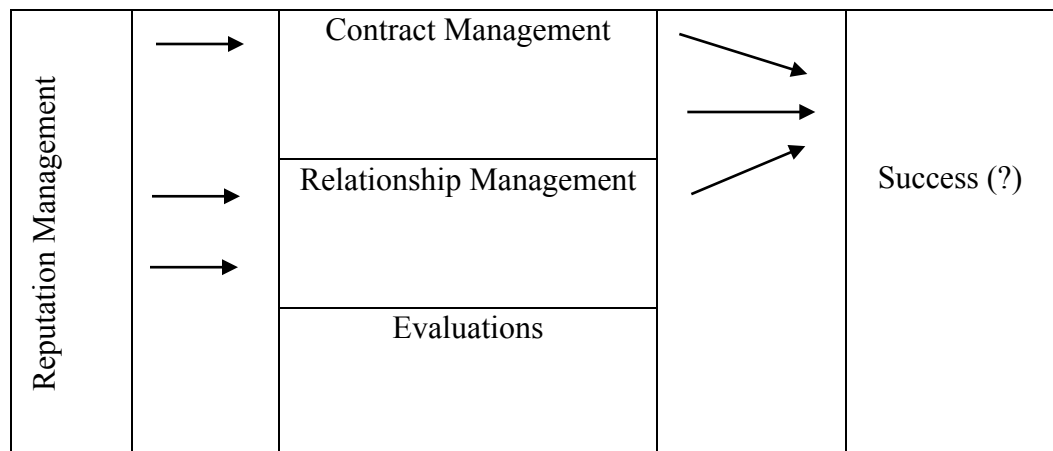


Figure 1 – Reputation Management

Reputation management aims at creating shared interests with stakeholders (Helm et al. 2011). The management of reputation entails everything that an organization does or does not do in order to communicate plans of action that affect both internal and external stakeholders. Davies et al. (2010) have identified the importance managing external reputation through internal reputations among staff. This process involves staff

in building a reputation, which resonates throughout the organization, improving external reputations as a result.

Throughout the findings, many participants referred to their organizational plans, mission statements, values, and priorities to determine what types of partnerships they would seek out or be interested in engaging in. Ensuring there was strategic alignment of partnership goals, objective goals, and positive impact for key demographics in their communities is another way that municipalities worked to ensure their reputations were being upheld when engaging in partnerships

Figure 1, further, provides context of the municipal partnership process with reputation management. Reputation Management is comprised of Contract Management, Relationship Management and Evaluation. The changing dynamics of partnership development and the role that contract management, relationship management and evaluations play in keeping municipal reputations intact can influence how and if municipalities achieve success in these partnerships.

Contract Management

Being known provides municipalities the opportunity to enter into contract with various partners in order to meet the need of the community or objective on a municipal initiative. However, these contracts can pose challenges to the municipality when it comes to the cost of maintaining the contract, capacity of both partners to achieve the goals set out in the contract, and the capacity to manage both sides of the partnership.

In Lowe (2007), contract management has been defined as “... the process which ensures that all parties to a contract fully understand their respective obligations enabling

these to be fulfilled as efficiently and effectively as possible to provide even better value for money’’ (p 317). Throughout the literature, contracts have been associated with the law, financial institutions, businesses, and procurement. These are often wordy and lengthy documents, which outline the terms and conditions that both parties or partner(s) agree upon. However, there is a gap within the literature when it comes the more informal kind of contracts that have been seen throughout this study’s findings. These handshake agreements as they have been referred to by participants not yet found a place within the literature. This is not surprising; given the subjects of previous studies have been businesses, firms, or organizations that have the resources to effectively manage large, robust contracts. Municipalities often do not fit that criterion or have the capacity to manage contracts to the same extent.

Municipalities in this study have developed partnerships over time, with the initial agreed upon contract changing as the needs of the municipality and/or the partner’s needs change. This organic adjustment to contracts can be refreshing when compared to the level of rigidity of formalized, legal contracts, allowing opportunity for innovation and flexibility to achieve a common goal. However, informal contracts can be harder to monitor or evaluate if the contract has not been written down, witnessed, or formalized in any way. For instance, a verbal handshake or barter agreement with a sports club 12-years ago could be grandfathered into municipal plans year after year, though when the initial staff/partners who made this verbal agreement change positions either within the municipality or the sports club or leave altogether, these verbal contracts can get lost in the transition. This is a primary reason why municipalities are shifting to a more modern approach to contract management by formalizing contracts, bringing in legal teams and

witnesses, all to ensure contract information is distributed, contracts are upheld, and staff are able to monitor the agreement and the partnership. Failure to uphold a contract could result in a damaged reputation for the municipality. Being known is important to secure the contracts, though being known to uphold the contracts has the potential to create a positive image to the public and potential future partners.

Regardless of the contracts status; either informal or formal, there is a cost associated with contract management. While not all contracts are monetary, there are financial and human capital costs associated with contracts; cost of planning, monitoring task completion, and the cost of managing the contractual relationship (Turner & Simister, 2001). These costs, be it financial or human capital, all work toward building and maintaining a positive relationship and an overall positive image and reputation.

Relationship Management

Being known for something provides the opportunity for municipalities to pursue a relationship with a potential partner. These partners, the public, and municipal staff are all considered stakeholders of the municipality. Stakeholders have been defined by Fassin (2012) as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (p 85). Stakeholders have all invested time, money, or reputation into the organization in order to meet objectives. These objectives could be large scale, municipal wide objectives such as strategic plans, or smaller, project specific objectives such as increasing participation rates at a local recreation facility.

It can be difficult for municipalities to give enough time to these stakeholders while still remaining focused on the contract objectives, optics of the project, and the

overall reputation of the municipality. Johnson and Scholes (2002) note the importance of each stake holding group and the amount of attention that should be given to them depends on where the stakeholder is positioned in the power/interest matrix. Meaning, if the stakeholder is a community group who will be directly impacted by a project, they should have more attention than the general public the municipality serves, simply due to the fact the stakeholder has a stronger interest in the project and their opinions hold more weight than that of the general public. However, Gregory (2011) argues that just because a stakeholder group appears not to have significant interest or power, does not mean that they are unimportant; these are still valuable voices, just not as valuable as those who are directly impacted.

Finding the right balance within the power/interest matrix can be challenging to navigate for municipalities and they may be seen as giving preference to a group that the partners, or the public do not feel is fair. Managing the relationships within the partnerships and those who are impacted by the partnership is important and challenging work for municipalities to navigate.

Furman (2010) and Otubanjo et al. (2010) argue that the establishment of a trustworthy relationship helps organizations interact with a wide range of stakeholders, both current and future, through communication processes designed to establish and support the organizations reputation through public relations and media relations.

Evaluation

Although the development of evaluation tools for partnerships could be difficult, municipalities cited the benefits of having more standard tools for evaluations would be

helpful in providing evidentiary support for disaffiliating from a partner or further supporting partners with additional resources such as staffing and facility allocation or development. Furthermore, evaluation tools could be utilized to better understand how municipalities could support partners. Additionally, the evaluation could provide another level of communication between partners to further enhance accountability and clarification of roles and responsibilities. Partnership type has provided boundaries for contract templates to be developed, though this same process has not been adopted into the evaluation of these partnerships, regardless of type. Shaw and Allen's (2006) recommendation for the development of KPIs at the initial stages of partnership development was not reflected in the partnership development process of municipalities in this study. Further support from provincial and national policy makers around evaluation techniques and implementation would be beneficial in aiding municipalities around partnership evaluation.

Provan and Milward (2001) indicated that evaluation should take place in all levels of the system (micro, meso, and macro). National, provincial and municipal levels within the sport system should be equally equipped with evaluation techniques to support the development of partnerships as recommended by national and provincial policy makers, though no such road map exists for these municipalities.

Partnerships vary from municipality to municipality, therefore the way in which these partnerships are evaluated varies as well. As such, there is no one way to evaluate an partnership, contract, or relationship. This would indicate that an evaluation would need to be developed for each specific partnership, contract or relationship. This time consuming, yet pivotal component of municipal reputation management is often left

undone, potentially leading to poor decision-making when municipalities choose to continue or disaffiliate a partnership.

Success

When taking into consideration the interconnectedness and influence contract management, relationship management and evaluation have on reputation, it is difficult to identify the “give and take” of partnerships in order to achieve success. From Mattessich and Monsey’s (2001) conceptual model, there is a general understanding of the components needed to have the best chance of a successful partnership, though due to the complexity of the partnership process, there is no one size fits all approach to establishing and maintaining successful partnerships.

Partnerships and Reputation Management

The components that make up reputation; identity and image provide the basis for how an organization ought to lead partnership development. Identity is rooted in the values the organization operates within; image is how those values are portrayed to stakeholders; and reputation is closely the values are being portrayed to what has been outlined by the organization. Without a strong staff who believe in those organizational values and take on that identity you are missing an integral piece of the reputation puzzle. Additionally, without stakeholders who sees the portrayal of these values as a positive image, organizations are not able to establish or uphold a positive reputation.

Municipalities often have organizational plans and guiding values and mission statements that help guide the development of projects, events, and partnerships. Exploring and selecting partnerships that strongly align with municipal values played a

role in if and when a partnership flourished. Additionally, the creation of supporting documents such as contracts and evaluation tools can provide accountability among partners to state clear objectives and achieve them. Should there be a need to end or modify a partnership, municipalities can use these documents to justify this and provide proof to senior management or their leadership teams as to why the partnership was not a good fit or needed a change.

Partnerships and managing reputations go hand in hand; without clear, concise roles and responsibilities, goals and objectives, and timelines, partnerships shift from true collaboration to merely a coordinated effort – a means to an end.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

This research set out to examine the factors that influence partnership/partnership development with sport organizations from a municipal perspective and to understand how and if municipalities evaluate partnerships. Data was collected from six municipalities from across Canada. After data analysis, it was found that partnership development could be surmised that reputation is at the heart of partnership development and that managing one's reputation had additional hurdles to overcome in order to achieve success.

The challenging part of managing reputations and the role this plays in partnership development is that each contract, relationship, and evaluation will require a different set of circumstances in order to succeed. It is also important to note that while all of the above components are necessary, it is unclear of which order they should be explored. This leads to the question: Does a municipality need to have a strong reputation in order to develop the relationship in order to get the contract?; or, Do municipalities build a relationship, secure a contract and build a reputation from there?

It is a what came first mentality or the chicken or the egg scenario; though it is understood that each of the above components are needed in order to further build a reputation of the municipality, expand their networks, appease stakeholders, and ultimately achieve success. The road to success, however, will look different for each municipality as each partnership contract will have different objectives, different stakeholders, and different networks of support. This empirical context highlights the

need for municipalities to explore partnership development with flexibility, with support from senior management and decision makers. Partnership development is not black and white; in fact, this research suggests that partnerships exist in a grey world where what works from one will not work for most.

Municipalities are challenged to navigate the labyrinth that is partnerships without a roadmap; no clear recipe to success, but rather an ingredient list to ensuring they have the right components but perhaps not the right quantities of each. Rhodes (1997) noted that “it’s the mix that matters” (p. 47) and this still holds true today. When applying the analogy of a “baking recipe”, bakers know and understand the ingredients. If the baker combines all of the dry ingredients together, and separately combines all of the wet ingredients together, and finally combines the wet and dry ingredients together, the baker will more likely to end up with a muffin rather than a cupcake. Still a great result, but perhaps not what was intended. Partners need to understand what is needed to achieve the partnership objectives, who is responsible for what and when, the timeline of the partnership, and what justifies ending an partnership. Partners need to understand the ingredients in order to find the right mix to end up with result they want. Without this knowledge, partners might set out to bake a pie, but end up with a loaf of bread.

Limitations

This research was initially given approval prior to the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The subjects of the study were on work from home orders to help reduce the spread of the virus. Setting up phone calls, scheduling meeting and reaching out to potential participants was challenging for the research as most of the contact information

for municipal recreation staff is not readily available online. Gathering participants for this study was difficult when their time was devoted to ensuring their communities had the necessary outlets for physical activity and the connection with mental health to make it through the initial waves of the pandemic. This research has a small sample size due to the challenge of selecting participants. As such, data saturation was not reached in the data collection and additional research could be conducted with a larger sample.

Having more participants in this study as initially intended would have provided the opportunity for a more robust, data rich collection, allowing the researcher to draw upon existing literature a bit more. Qualitative research at its core is subjective, grey, and open to interpretation. Choosing an emergent design for this research opened the door for many, varying research rabbit holes to go down. At the end of the day, sometimes you do not collect the data you thought you would, and sometimes that isn't a bad thing.

Recommendations For Future Research

Initially this research set out to use the Continuum of Connectedness (Brown & Keast, 2003) to better understand how municipalities establish and maintain municipal partnerships with the sport sector and how closely integrated recreation and sport systems are. This continuum focused on informal cooperation between organizations, semi-formal coordination in partnership, and formal collaboration within the partnership. While this study did not have the robust data collection to support this inquiry, there is still merit in exploring where municipalities exist on this continuum. The development of criteria for coordination, cooperation, and collaboration could better support municipalities in exploring partnerships and partnership development to better understand where municipal

partnerships exist within the continuum and how municipalities and sport partners can work together to create an integrated sport and recreation delivery system.

The recommendation could be for researchers to explore municipal partnership development outside of a business lens where everything will not fit into pre-determined areas. It is important to recognize that the relationships are all different and customizing a contract ensures that the reputation of both parties are maintained. It is also important that municipalities recognize the importance of reputation management, but conversely do not allow for the partnering organization to get whatever they want out of the municipality.

A recommendation could be given to municipalities to take a deep dive into their partnership agreements to better understand how/if these partnerships are beneficial to their organization and to outline evaluation tools to determine when and how municipalities sever partnership agreements. Future research into the sport perspective of partnership with municipalities could also be explored to provide a well-rounded scope of partnership at the grassroots level.

Lastly, a recommendation to policymakers at all levels of a system, develop draft templates for evaluation tools for the users of these policies, such as municipalities, to at least provide a starting point for grassroots evaluation. Utilizing the Continuum of Connectedness (Brown & Keast, 2003), the development of criteria for coordination, cooperation, and collaboration could further support grassroots implementation of national policies and guidelines by providing a clearer road map for municipalities and grassroots organizations to explore partnership development and ways to evaluate them.

Bibliography

- Agranoff, R., & McGuire, M. (2003). *Collaborative public management: New strategies for local governments*. Georgetown University Press.
- Aldrich, H. (1976). Resource dependence and interorganizational relations: Local employment service offices and social services sector organizations. *Administration & Society*, 7(4), 419-454.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/009539977600700402>
- Aldrich, H., & Whetten, D. A. (1981). Organization-sets, action-sets, and networks: Making the most of simplicity. *Handbook of organizational design*, 1, 385-408.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Howard-Aldrich/publication/245024261_Organization_Sets_Action_Sets_and_Networks_Making_the_Most_of_Simplicity/links/0c960535ff5a6b167b000000/Organization-Sets-Action-Sets-and-Networks-Making-the-Most-of-Simplicity.pdf
- Alexander, J. A., Weiner, B. J., Metzger, M. E., Shortell, S. M., Bazzoli, G. J., Hasnain-Wynia, R., ... & Conrad, D. A. (2003). Sustainability of collaborative capacity in community health partnerships. *Medical Care Research and Review*, 60(4_suppl), 130S-160S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077558703259069>
- Alexander, T., Thibault, L., & Frisby, W. (2008). Avoiding separation: Sport partner perspectives on a long-term inter-organisational relationship. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 3(3), 263-280.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJSMM.2008.017192>

- Argyris, C. (1957). The individual and organization: Some problems of mutual adjustment. *Administrative science quarterly*, 1-24.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2390587>
- Babiak, K. (2007). Determinants of interorganizational relationships: The case of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization. *Journal of sport management*, 21(3), 338-376. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.21.3.338>
- Babiak, K., & Thibault, L. (2009). Challenges in multiple cross-sector partnerships. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly*, 38(1), 117-143.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764008316054>
- Babiak, K. M. (2003). *Examining partnerships in amateur sport: The case of a Canadian National Sport Centre* (Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia).
- Babiak, K. M. (2009). Criteria of effectiveness in multiple cross-sectoral interorganizational relationships. *Evaluation and program planning*, 32(1), 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2008.09.004>
- Barnes, M., Cousens, L., & MacLean, J. (2007). From silos to synergies: A network perspective of the Canadian sport system. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(5-6), 555-571. 10.1504/IJSMM.2007.013967
- Barringer, B. R., & Harrison, J. S. (2000). Walking a tightrope: Creating value through interorganizational relationships. *Journal of management*, 26(3), 367-403.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063\(00\)00046-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(00)00046-5)
- Bennis, W. G. (1968). *Interpersonal Dynamics; Essays and Readings on Human Interaction*.

- Bernard, H. R. (2017). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Best, A., Stokols, D., Green, L. W., Leischow, S., Holmes, B., & Buchholz, K. (2003). An integrative framework for community partnering to translate theory into effective health promotion strategy. *American journal of health promotion, 18*(2), 168-176. <https://doi.org/10.4278/0890-1171-18.2.168>
- Brown, K., & Keast, R. (2003). Citizen-government engagement: community connection through networked arrangements. *Asian Journal of Public Administration, 25*(1), 107-131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02598272.2003.10800411>
- Butterfoss, F. D., Goodman, R. M., & Wandersman, A. (1993). Community coalitions for prevention and health promotion. *Health education research, 8*(3), 315-330. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.487.8273&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Butterfoss, F. D., Goodman, R. M., & Wandersman, A. (1996). Community coalitions for prevention and health promotion: Factors predicting satisfaction, participation, and planning. *Health education quarterly, 23*(1), 65-79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819602300105>
- Canadian Heritage (2002) *The Canadian Sport Policy*, Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada, 22pp., http://www.amateur-sport.gc.ca/pc-ch/pubs/sport_e.cfm.
- Casey, M. M., Payne, W. R., Brown, S. J., & Eime, R. M. (2009). Engaging community sport and recreation organisations in population health interventions: Factors affecting the formation, implementation, and institutionalisation of partnerships

efforts. *Annals of leisure research*, 12(2), 129-147.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2009.9686815>

Chalip, L. (2006). Toward a distinctive sport management discipline. *Journal of sport management*, 20(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.20.1.1>

Cigler, B. (2001). Multiorganizational, multisector, and multicomunity organizations: setting the research agenda. Getting results through collaboration: *Networks and network structures for public policy and management*, 71-85.

Colley, R. C., Carson, V., Garriguet, D., Janssen, I., Roberts, K. C., & Tremblay, M. S. (2017). *Physical activity of Canadian children and youth, 2007 to 2015*. Statistics Canada.

Coaffee, J., & Coulson, A. (2005). A plague on all your partnerships: theory and practice in regeneration. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550510584973>

Cousens, L., & Barnes, M. L. (2009). Sport delivery in a highly socialized environment: A case study of embeddedness. *Journal of Sport Management*, 23(5), 574-590.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.23.5.574>

Cousens, L., Barnes, M., & MacLean, J. (2012). Strategies to increase sport participation in Canada: The role of a coordinated network. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 12(3-4), 198-216. [10.1504/IJSMM.2012.052667](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSMM.2012.052667)

Cousens, L., Barnes, M., Stevens, J., Mallen, C., & Bradish, C. (2006). "Who's Your Partner? Who's Your Ally?" Exploring the Characteristics of Public, Private, and Voluntary Recreation Linkages. *Journal of Park & Recreation Administration*, 24(1). <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Martha-Barnes->

3/publication/288264111_Who's_your_partner_Who's_your_ally_Exploring_the_characteristics_of_public_private_and_voluntary_recreation_linkages/links/5adcb82f458515c60f5f26ae/Whos-your-partner-Whos-your-ally-Exploring-the-characteristics-of-public-private-and-voluntary-recreation-linkages.pdf

Cresswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed method research*. 2nd Sage. *Thousand Oaks, CA, 201*.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

Crotty, M. (1998). Introduction: The research process. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*, 1-17.

Culver, D. M., Trudel, P., & Werthner, P. (2009). A sport leader's attempt to foster a coaches' community of practice. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 4(3), 365-383. <https://doi.org/10.1260/174795409789623900>

Davies, G., Chun, R., & Kamins, M. A. (2010). Reputation gaps and the performance of service organizations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 31(5), 530-546. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.825>

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 1–43). Sage Publications, Inc.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. sage.
- Dick, B. (2005). Grounded theory: A thumbnail sketch. Retrieved from <http://www.aral.com.au/resources/grounded.html>
- Doll Jr, W. E. (1993). *A post-modern perspective on curriculum*. Teachers College Press.
- Dutton, J. E., & Dukerich, J. M. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of management journal*, 34(3), 517-554. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256405>
- Edwards, A., & Skinner, J. (2010). *Qualitative research in sport management*. Routledge.
- Evan, W. M. (1965). Toward a theory of inter-organizational relations. *Management Science*, 11(10), B-217. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.11.10.B217>
- Fassin, Y. (2012). Stakeholder management, reciprocity and stakeholder responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(1), 83-96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1381-8>
- Ferkins, L., & Shilbury, D. (2010). Developing board strategic capability in sport organisations: The national–regional governing relationship. *Sport management review*, 13(3), 235-254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2010.01.009>
- Flintoff, A., Foster, R., & Wystawnoha, S. (2011). Promoting and sustaining high quality physical education and school sport through school sport partnerships. *European physical education review*, 17(3), 341-351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X11416731>
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Realizing value from the corporate image*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

- Fombrun, C. J., & Van Riel, C. B. M. (2003). 'The reputational landscape, corporate reputation review 1 (1). *Revealing the Corporation: Perspectives on Identity, Image, Reputation, Corporate Branding and Corporate-Level Marketing*, Taylor & Francis, London, 5-13.
- Fombrun, C. J. (2005). Corporate reputations as economic assets. *The Blackwell handbook of strategic management*, 285-308.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/b.9780631218616.2006.00011.x>
- Frisby, W., Thibault, L., & Kikulis, L. (2004). The organizational dynamics of under-managed partnerships in leisure service departments. *Leisure studies*, 23(2), 109-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0261436042000224482>
- Furman, D. M. (2010). The development of corporate image: A historiographic approach to a marketing concept. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 13(1), 63-75.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/crr.2010.3>
- Gillies, P. (1998). Effectiveness of alliances and partnerships for health promotion. *Health promotion international*, 13(2), 99-120.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/45152407>
- Glendinning, C. (2002). Partnerships between health and social services: developing a framework for evaluation. *Policy & Politics*, 30(1), 115-127.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/0305573022501601>
- Gray, B. (1989). *Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

- Green, B. C. (2005). Building sport programs to optimize athlete recruitment, retention, and transition: Toward a normative theory of sport development. *Journal of sport management, 19*(3), 233-253.
- Green, M., & Collins, S. (2008). Policy, politics and path dependency: Sport development in Australia and Finland. *Sport management review, 11*(3), 225-251. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.19.3.233>
- Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (1997). *The new language of qualitative method*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Hall, R. H., Clark, J. P., Giordano, P. C., Johnson, P. V., & Van Roekel, M. (1977). Patterns of interorganizational relationships. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 22*, 457-474. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392183>
- Hanf, K., & O'Toole Jr, L. J. (1992). Revisiting old friends: networks, implementation structures and the management of interorganizational relations. *European journal of political research, 21*(1-2), 163-180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1992.tb00293.x>
- Hayhurst, L. M. (2009). The power to shape policy: Charting sport for development and peace policy discourses. *International journal of sport policy and politics, 1*(2), 203-227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940902950739>
- Hayhurst, L. M., & Frisby, W. (2010). Inevitable tensions: Swiss and Canadian sport for development NGO perspectives on partnerships with high performance sport. *European sport management quarterly, 10*(1), 75-96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184740903554140>

- Health Status of Canadians (2016). Retrieved from
<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/department-ministere/state-public-health-status-2016-etat-sante-publique-statut/alt/pdf-eng.pdf>
- Hardy, C., Lawrence, T., & Phillips, N. (1998). Talking action: Conversations, narrative and action in interorganizational collaboration. *Discourse and organization*, 65, 83. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas-Lawrence-7/publication/247697877_Talk_and_action_Conversations_and_narrative_in_interorganizational_collaboration/links/54d9d4be0cf25013d0432779/Talk-and-action-Conversations-and-narrative-in-interorganizational-collaboration.pdf
- Helm, S., Liehr-Gobbers, K., & Storck, C. (Eds.). (2011). *Reputation management*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: how many interviews are enough?. *Qualitative health research*, 27(4), 591-608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344>
- Hill, C. L., Baird, W. O., & Walters, S. J. (2014). Quality of life in children and adolescents with Osteogenesis Imperfecta: a qualitative interview based study. *Health and quality of life outcomes*, 12(1), 54.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-12-54>
- Hodge, G. A., & Greve, C. (Eds.). (2005). *The challenge of public-private partnerships: Learning from international experience*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Hogue, T. (1994). Community-based collaboration: Community wellness multiplied. *Oregon Center for Community Leadership, Oregon State University*.

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/community-based-collaboration-community-wellness-multiplied>

Green, M., & Houlihan, B. (2008). Comparative elite sport development: Systems, structures and public policy. *Great Britain: Elsevier*.

Huxham, C., & Vangen, S. (2000). Ambiguity, complexity and dynamics in the membership of collaboration. *Human relations*, 53(6), 771-806.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700536002>

Ifedi, F. (2008). *Sport participation in Canada, 2005*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Statistics Canada, Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. (1987). National recreation statement. In *National Conference of Ministers Responsible, Quebec*.

Jackson, M., Harrison, P., Swinburn, B., & Lawrence, M. (2015). Using a qualitative vignette to explore a complex public health issue. *Qualitative health research*, 25(10), 1395-1409. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315570119>

Jay, E. J. (1964). 177. The Concepts of 'Field' and 'Network' in Anthropological Research. *Man*, 64, 137-139. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2797693>

Keast, R., Brown, K., & Mandell, M. (2007). Getting the right mix: Unpacking integration meanings and strategies. *International Public Management Journal*, 10(1), 9-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967490601185716>

Kegler, M. C., Steckler, A., Mcleroy, K., & Malek, S. H. (1998). Factors that contribute to effective community health promotion coalitions: A study of 10 Project ASSIST coalitions in North Carolina. *Health education & behavior*, 25(3), 338-353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819802500308>

- Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity studies*, 8(2), 191-208.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292>
- Kidd, B. (2008). A new social movement: Sport for development and peace. *Sport in society*, 11(4), 370-380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430802019268>
- Kreuter, M.W., N.A. Lezin, and L.A. Young. 2000. Evaluating Community-Based Collaborative Mechanisms: Implications for Practitioners. *Health Promotion Practice* 1:49–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/152483990000100109>
- Lawson, H. (2002). Improving conceptual clarity, accuracy, and precision and facilitating more coherent institutional designs. *The Contribution of Interprofessional Collaboration and Comprehensive Services to Teaching and Learning, The National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook*, 30-45.
- Legard, R., Keegan, J., & Ward, K. (2003). In-depth interviews. *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, 6(1), 138-169.
- Leone, M. (2008). What gets plans off the shelf?: a multi-site case study of the factors influencing municipal recreation plan implementation.
https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesescanada/vol2/002/MR51907.PDF?is_thesis=1&oclc_number=718166526
- Leutz, W. N. (1999). Five laws for integrating medical and social services: lessons from the United States and the United Kingdom. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 77(1), 77-110. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.00125>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1999). *Naturalistic inquiry* 1985 Beverly Hills.

- Lowe, D. (2007). Contract management. *The Wiley guide to project technology, supply chain, and procurement management*, 317.
- Lowndes, V. *Local Partnerships and Public Participation*. London: Institute of Public Policy Research, 2001.
- Mattessich, P. W., & Monsey, B. R. (1992). *Collaboration: what makes it work. A review of research literature on factors influencing successful collaboration*. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 919 Lafond, St. Paul, MN 55104.
- Mattessich, P. W., Murray-Close, M. & Monsey, B. R. (2001). *Collaboration: What makes it work* (2nd ed.). St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
- Maxwell, K., & Husain, T. (2005). Public private partnerships: building capacity while effecting change. *Evaluation and program Planning*, 28(3), 349-353.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2005.04.015>
- Merriam, S. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M.B, and Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2nd Ed., p. 10-12. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Misener, K., & Doherty, A. (2009). A case study of organizational capacity in nonprofit community sport. *Journal of sport management*, 23(4), 457-482.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.23.4.457>
- Misener, K. E., & Doherty, A. (2012). Connecting the community through sport club partnerships. *International journal of sport policy and politics*, 4(2), 243-255.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2012.674962>

- Misener, L., & Misener, K. E. (2016). Examining the integration of sport and health promotion: partnership or paradox?. *International journal of sport policy and politics*, 8(4), 695-712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2016.1220405>
- Mokaeane, S. B. (2017). Examining corporate reputation management in a local municipality in the Vaal region: a case study (Doctoral dissertation). <http://hdl.handle.net/10352/416>
- Oliver, C. (1990). Determinants of interorganizational relationships: Integration and future directions. *Academy of management review*, 15(2), 241-265. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1990.4308156>
- Olivier, S., & Fishwick, L. (2003, January). Qualitative research in sport sciences: Is the biomedical ethics model applicable?. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 4, No. 1). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-4.1.754>
- Otubanjo, O., Amujo, O. C., & Cornelius, N. (2010). The informal corporate identity communication process. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 13(3), 157-171. <https://doi.org/10.1057/crr.2010.18>
- Pailthorpe, B. C. (2017). Emergent Design. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0081>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and*

mental health services research, 42(5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

Parent, M. M., & Harvey, J. (2009). Towards a management model for sport and physical activity community-based partnerships. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 9(1), 23-45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184740802461694>

Parent, M. M., & Harvey, J. (2017). A partnership-based evaluation of a community-based youth sport and physical activity programme. *Sport in Society*, 20(1), 7-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2015.1124561>

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage publications.

Peled, E., & Leichtentritt, R. (2002). The ethics of qualitative social work research. *Qualitative social work*, 1(2), 145-169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147332500200100203>

Perrucci, R., & Pilisuk, M. (1970). Leaders and ruling elites: The interorganizational bases of community power. *American Sociological Review*, 1040-1057. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2093381>

Phillpots, L., Grix, J., & Quarmby, T. (2011). Centralized grassroots sport policy and ‘new governance’: A case study of County Sports Partnerships in the UK—unpacking the paradox. *International review for the sociology of sport*, 46(3), 265-281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690210378461>

Provan, K. G., & Milward, H. B. (2001). Do networks really work? A framework for evaluating public sector organizational networks. *Public administration review*, 61(4), 414-423. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00045>

- Rhodes, R. A. (1997). From marketisation to diplomacy: It's the mix that matters. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 56(2), 40-53.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.1997.tb01545.x>
- Robbins, S., Coulter, M., & Langton, N. (2006) *Management*, 8th Cdn. Ed., Toronto ON: Pearson Education Canada Inc.
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., ... & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & quantity*, 52(4), 1893-1907.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>
- Shank, G.D. (2002). Qualitative research: A personal skills approach. Columbus: Merrill
- Shaw, S., & Allen, J. B. (2006). “It basically is a fairly loose arrangement... and that works out fine, really.” Analysing the dynamics of an interorganisational partnership. *Sport management review*, 9(3), 203-228.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3523\(06\)70026-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3523(06)70026-2)
- Slack, E. (2003). Municipal funding for recreation. *Actions speak louder: Making the case for youth recreation*.
https://laidlawfdn.org/assets/municipal_funding_for_recreation_final_draft.pdf
- Smith, B., & Caddick, N. (2012). Qualitative methods in sport: A concise overview for guiding social sport research. *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*, 1(1), 60-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21640599.2012.701373>
- Sotiriadou, P., Brouwers, J. & Tuan-Anh, L (2014). Choosing a qualitative data analysis tool: A comparison of NVivo and Leximancer. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 17(2), 218-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2014.902292>

- Sport Canada. (2012). Canadian Sport Policy 2012, 24. Retrieved from
http://sirc.ca/CSPRenewal/documents/CSP2012_EN_LR.pdf
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *The ethnographic interview*. Waveland Press.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Suter, W. N. (2012). Qualitative data, analysis, and design. *Introduction to educational research: A critical thinking approach*, 2, 342-86.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483384443.n12>
- Thibault, L., & Harvey, J. (1997). Fostering interorganizational linkages in the Canadian sport delivery system. *Journal of sport management*, 11(1), 45-68.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.11.1.45>
- Thibault, L., Frisby, W., & Kikulis, L. M. (1999). Interorganizational linkages in the delivery of local leisure services in Canada: Responding to economic, political and social pressures. *Managing leisure*, 4(3), 125-141.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/136067199375805>
- Tremblay, M. S., Warburton, D. E., Janssen, I., Paterson, D. H., Latimer, A. E., Rhodes, R. E., ... & Murumets, K. (2011). New Canadian physical activity guidelines. *Applied physiology, nutrition, and metabolism*, 36(1), 36-46.
<https://doi.org/10.1139/H11-009>
- Turner, J. R., & Simister, S. J. (2001). Project contract management and a theory of organization. *International journal of project management*, 19(8), 457-464.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863\(01\)00051-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863(01)00051-5)

- Tuten, T. L., & Urban, D. J. (2001). An expanded model of business-to-business partnership formation and success. *Industrial marketing management*, 30(2), 149-164. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0019-8501\(00\)00140-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0019-8501(00)00140-1)
- Warren, R. L., Rose, S. M., & Bergunder, A. F. (1974). *The structure of urban reform: Community decision organizations in stability and change*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Weis, L., & Fine, M. (2000). *Speed bumps: A student-friendly guide to qualitative research*. Teachers College Press.
- Wildridge, V., Childs, S., Cawthra, L., & Madge, B. (2004). How to create successful partnerships—a review of the literature. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 21, 3-19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-3324.2004.00497.x>
- Wilson, A., & Charlton, K. (1997). *Making partnerships work: A practical guide for the public, private, voluntary and community sectors*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Wilson, B., & Hayhurst, L. (2009). Digital activism: Neoliberalism, the Internet, and sport for youth development. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 26(1), 155-181. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.26.1.155>

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Municipal Recreation Employees

Introduction

We would like to welcome you and thank you for volunteering for this study. The answers you provide will be helpful in examining municipal partnership development in recreation and sport delivery systems. The interviews for this study will follow a semi-structured format. This means that the main categories for questions will remain consistent across each interview, however prompts may vary depending upon the expertise and knowledge base of each participant.

Ethical Preface:

Thank you for your participation. I expect to need approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time. If you agree to participate, the information you provide me will be used in anonymous form, and will be treated as confidential.

I would like to inform you that the interview will be audio recorded. Once the interview is completed, you will receive a copy of the transcripts for your review. At any point during the interview, if you wish to end the interview early, any information you have provided up to that point will be included in the study data unless you ask me not to include it. You are able to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence.

(GO OVER THE INFORMATION LETTER)

Because I am conducting this interview virtually, I will ask verbally if you consent to participate in the interview and I will be recording your answer. I will then get into the interview.

Do you consent to participating in this research? Do you acknowledge understanding and agree to the information outlined in the participant's information letter?

- 1) Tell me a little bit about your organization. *Probe* – population size, number of facilities, size of staff
- 2) What demographics would you say your organization serves? *Probe* – age ranges, SSE, disabilities
- 3) What kind of partnership opportunities has your organization pursued in the past? *Probe* – education, health, private or not-for-profit sectors
- 4) Can you tell me a little bit about the process you use to develop those partnerships?
- 5) What have been the constraints to partnership development?
- 6) What have been the enablers to partnership development?
- 7) Did you have any guiding documents that were used when exploring or establishing the partnership(s)? *Probe* – budget allocation, policies
- 8) Who has the final say on if a partnership is approved?
- 9) What type of organizational structure is followed for decision-making?
- 10) How have you gone about finalizing a partnership? *Probe* – formal contracts, handshake agreements.
- 11) Can you tell me about any experiences where you felt pressured to develop or enter into a partnership? *Probe* – Staff directives, policy objectives, mandates
- 12) Have partnership failed in the past and if so, why do you think that is? *Probe* – lack of communication, trust, KPIs
- 13) Can you tell me about any evaluation tools or techniques that you use when working in partnerships?
- 14) In general, what are your thoughts on partnerships? *Probe* – are they beneficial, more of a nuisance, a waste of resources
- 15) When you think about successful partnerships, what comes to mind?
- 16) Do you have anything you would like to add about recreation and sport partnerships?

Thank you again for your time. It is greatly appreciated. We will be in touch once the interview has been transcribed to ensure accuracy of the interview and context of answers are accurate.

Curriculum Vitae

Candidate's full name: Christena Maria Dykstra

Universities attended (with dates and degrees obtained):

University of New Brunswick – Bachelor of Recreation and Sport Studies (2016)

Conference Presentations:

- Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Sport Summit (Halifax, NS) – November, 2021
- International Physical Literacy Conference Europe (Umeå, Sweden) – September 2019
- International Physical Literacy Conference (Winnipeg, MB) – May 2018
- Sport for Life Canadian Summit (Gatineau, QC) - January 2018
- Recreation New Brunswick Conference (Fredericton, NB) - October 2017
- Recreation Nova Scotia Conference (Sydney, NS) – October 2013