Partnership Evaluation Practices in Public-Nonprofit Community Sport Relationships: Understanding Resource Dependency

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Interorganizational relationships (IORs) can offer community sport organizations (CSOs) a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address the complex issues in their environment (Misener & Doherty, 2014). IORs offer each partner access to specialized knowledge, information, and material resources (e.g. human, financial, infrastructure) that otherwise may be unattainable on their own (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). One type of partnership that may offer significant benefit to CSOs is public-sector partners such as municipal recreation departments who work closely with CSOs to coordinate facility use and offer support for sport delivery in their communities (Thibault, Frisby, Kikulis, 1999). However, the resource exchange and evaluation of IORs between CSOs and municipal partners has not been well understood (Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, & Smith 2018).

The study draws on resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) as a lens for understanding how organizations can navigate power and resource flow in order to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009). For CSOs, access to specific resources, and particularly infrastructure/facilities, is crucial to achieving their mandate. However, cross-sector partnerships may not achieve their potential because of imbalanced resources, misalignment of values, and different accountability structures and missions (Misener & Misener, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnership.

Partnership evaluation is often overlooked due to the absence of objective metrics, lack of evaluation skills, and inadequate time devoted to assessment (Babiak & Willem, 2016). Key components of evaluation include scoping, planning, managing, resourcing, and sustaining/terminating partnerships. In light of possible resource dependencies that shape the nature of public-CSO relations, it is essential to understand how resources influence evaluation practices in these partnerships (cf. Provan & Milward, 1998; Babiak, 2009). The purpose of this qualitative study is two-fold to (1) understand the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnerships, and (2) explore how resources influence partnership evaluation practices in CSO-public partnerships.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Manager/Coordinator/Director of Community Sport Relations (or similar position) within the Department of Recreation Services in five mid-size municipalities in Ontario. These individuals are responsible for managing facility distribution, providing support, collaborating on events, and managing communication with CSOs. Interviews were then conducted with 19 CSO Presidents (or their representative) from these communities who represent different sports and sizes of CSOs. The sample population provided a range of rural (2) and urban (3) municipalities as well as ten different sports (i.e. adult or youth) with varying resource capacities. Gaining the perspective of different sector partners enabled a more holistic understanding of partnership practices and evaluation strategies (Babiak, 2009). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using inductive and deductive methods (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013).

Analysis of the data revealed that the approach to the provision of resources and benefits exchanged between CSOs and the public sector represent more of a cumulative or “package” approach to resource exchange which expands our understanding beyond a "this for that" conceptualization of resource exchange that is more typical in the literature and offers a holistic understanding of the nature of resource exchange. In addition, five core themes; equity in decision making, fostering common vision, offering mutual support, increasing coordination and

efficiency, and reducing uncertainty and promoting organizational stability emerged as effective ways to help public and CSO partners navigate resource uncertainty, dependency, and power influence in their environment. Finally, public and CSO partners mutual dependence for resources to achieve a similar objective of community sport development strongly influenced evaluation practices. Since both partners are unable to produce the quality and quantity of resources on their own, their dependence on each other remains high. Indeed, the total "package" approach of resources being exchanged also increased partners value and dependence in the relationship. Typically, even when a resource was considered low, other resource desires are still being supported and fulfilled, therefore decreasing partners needs to evaluate. Considerably, the lack of formal evaluation activities within this partnership can be attributed to partners vested interest in community sport development and their high interdependence on one another for resources.

The present study contributes to the body of knowledge and practice of sport-based IORs at the community level. In addition, this research extends scholarly literature on public-CSO partnerships within a Canadian context. Finally, the study offers new understanding into resource exchange and dependency in public-CSO partnerships, while also offering insight into the influence of resource dependence on evaluation practices in this IOR relationship.

Keywords: *Interorganizational Relationships (IORs), Community Sport Organizations(CSOs), Public-sector, Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), Evaluation*

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List of Abbreviations

IOR	Interorganizational Relationships
CSO	Community Sport Partnership
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RDT	Resource Dependency Theory
PSO	Provincial Sport Organization
NSO	National Sport Organization

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Globally, sport organizations are shifting how they are conducting business (Babiak, Thibault, & Willem, 2018; Thibault, Frisby, & Kikulis, 1999). Complex and changing environmental pressures, as well as increased competition and resource scarcities have made it difficult for sport organizations to achieve their sport delivery and social mandates (Frisby, Thibault, & Kikulis, 2004; Thibault et al., 1999). Pressures such as globalization, innovative technologies, economic challenges, political pressures, evolving social expectations, and competition for resources within their environment has brought about a change to organizational structures and operations (Babiak, 2007). As a result, organizations have opted for a more strategic approach (Alexander, Thibault, & Frisby, 2008; Babiak, 2007; Babiak et al., 2018; Thibault et al., 1999).

Interorganizational relationships (IORs) have emerged as an effective management practice for sport organizations to cope with the pressures and fiscal restraints of their environments (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2007; Thibault et al., 1999). Broadly, IORs provide organizations with the ability to address various problems that may be too complex or too far-reaching to be resolved by themselves alone (Misener & Doherty, 2013). Babiak (2007) suggests that seeking and establishing IORs, organizations are able to improve access or create new markets, anticipate the environmental changes, share financial resources and risks, acquire new knowledge, skills or expertise. Essentially, sport organizations have greater opportunity to achieve their goals and missions by engaging in IORs (Harris & Houlihan, 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Wicker, Vos, Scheerder, & Breuer, 2013).

At the community sport level, clubs are managed almost entirely by volunteers and typically constrained by various resources such as people, time, finances, and infrastructure (Cuskelly, 2004; Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2012). Recent research has noted that IORs can be a positive way to build capacity in these areas while also contributing to the effects of positive programming by increasing social capital, and providing greater exposure for an organization to the public. Likewise, scholars have also suggested that IORs contribute to the development of social networks between and among various organizations or individuals in the community and further improves community cohesion (Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, & Smith, 2017; Misener & Doherty, 2012; 2014; Wicker et al., 2013).

Community sport organizations (CSOs) maintain a unique position in the heart of communities and are often many people's first experience with organized sport (Doherty et al., 2014; Miller, 2015; Misener & Doherty, 2014; Sharpe, 2006). Specifically, these small nonprofit, local voluntary sport clubs are known to be important sport and leisure providers at the local level in many countries (i.e. Australia, Canada, and European countries), as their essential mandate is to provide recreational and competitive sport services to their members (Cuskelly, 2010; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013). Moreover, CSOs not only provide a range of participation opportunities in sport and physical activity to children and adults, but also offer social programs and services (Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013). It is suggested that programmes provided by CSOs have the ability to develop individual and social benefits (Misener & Doherty, 2012; 2013; 2014). These benefits can range from youth development, social integration, community cohesion, generation of social capital and foster active citizenship through volunteerism; while also facilitating physical activity and well-being for those who

participate (Jones et al., 2017; Misener & Doherty, 2012; 2013; 2014; Nichols, Taylor, James, Holmes, King, & Garrett, 2005; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker et al., 2013). Therefore, making CSOs an important part of every community (Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013).

Over the years, CSOs have experienced a dramatic growth (Coakley, 2010) and typically these organizations manage all aspects of their sport delivery process from administration, scheduling, coaching, and officials (Legg, Jones, & White, 2018). Some examples of CSOs include, local soccer, baseball, rowing club, and basketball clubs, along with cycling and biking groups (Doherty et al., 2014; Miller, 2015). These types of clubs generally start as a response to an identified need by parents or participants themselves in the community (Doherty et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2017). In many countries, CSOs may be further classified as grassroots membership associations due to their informal structure, reliance on volunteers, and modest budgets; where majority of the financial gain comes from membership fees to operate at the community level (Sharpe, 2006). CSOs are responsible for financing the programmes and services they offer. Some of their financial expenditure includes paying coaches or administration staff salaries, paying for the maintenance and use of sport or other facilities (e.g. club house), and paying for additional expenses when organizing and running competitions. Often CSOs turn to various income streams such as "revenues from membership fees, admission fees, donations, fundraising, sponsorship, service fees, commercial activities (e.g. selling of food or beverages), and government funding" to cover costs (Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013, p. 297).

However, CSOs are continuously struggling to fulfill their goals and missions as they face numerous pressures in their environment such as infrastructure deficits, declining volunteer rates, increasingly complex demands from stakeholders (Babiak, 2007; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Babiak et al., 2018; Doherty & Murray, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2012; Misener & Doherty;

2014; Wicker & Breuer, 2012), and a shift in the level of financial and organizational support from the federal government (Babiak & Thibault, 2009). In particular, many clubs struggle to access these financial resources or can only access some of them, which results in a higher total expenditure than their total income (Cuskelly, 2010; Sotiriadou & Wicker, 2013). Thus, it is necessary for nonprofit sport organizations to seek out alternative and diverse financial support in order to fund their operations, continue to provide accessible programming, and maintain their membership fees at a low and reasonable rate (Misener & Doherty, 2014).

In the community sport context, there is a need for organizations to secure resources to help stabilize the conditions in their environments. Moreover, the effectiveness of the CSO is contingent upon its ability to identify, access, and leverage resources in their environment to achieve desired goals and objectives (Jones et al., 2017). However, recent research has noted that the acquisition of resources is difficult within the nonprofit sector, as organizations struggle to find ways to grow their capacity amid declining resources and increased competition for similar resources (Jones et al., 2017). In order to survive and grow, clubs are having to continually adapt, embrace new approaches, refine their practices, and look beyond their membership revenues (Misener & Doherty, 2012; 2014). Engaging and developing relationships with partners within and across different sectors has been shown to be a beneficial means of financial and organizational support and stabilize their resource environments through the exchange of resources (Babiak, 2007; Cousens, Barnes, Stevens, Mallen, & Bradish, 2006; Frisby et al., 2004; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, & Smith, 2018; Misener & Doherty; 2012; Thibault et al, 1999; Wicker et al., 2013).

Partnerships can offer sport organizations a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to address the complex issues in their environment, while also affording them a

strategic competitive advantage (Babiak & Willem, 2016). One particular type of partnership that may offer significant benefit to CSOs in particular may be public/municipal recreation providers. These public sector partners work closely with CSOs to offer support and facilities which enable physical activity and sport in their communities (Hunter & CPRA task group, 2013). Across Canada, municipal recreation environments plays a key role in contributing to all residents' quality of life, while also maintaining their continued support and work with community sport organizations as a part of their scope and service mandates.

Relationships between these sectors have been conceptualized within a broader framework of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the literature. According to Bovaird (2004), PPPs are "working arrangements between a public-sector organization and any other organization outside the public sector" (p. 200). Misener and Misener (2017) also point out that the framing of public-private partnerships is highlighted by a "central commitment to a shared goal or mutual dedication to achieve a joint outcome, as well as the additional, non-contractual value within the relationship" (p. 699). Numerous authors have also hinted toward the importance of this cross-sector relationship between CSOs or other local sport providers such as sport for development organizations and public sector providers due to their similar values and common grounds (Parent & Harvey, 2009; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Vos & Scheerder, 2014).

In the North America youth sports system, PPPs have been regarded as somewhat of a hallmark in public service delivery with many CSOs often relying on public partners for the use and management of facilities to operate their programs (Legg et al., 2018). However, as with all cross-sector relationships, there is still potential for values to clash or be misaligned based on different accountability structures and organizational missions (Misener & Misener, 2017). According to Legg and colleagues, a better understanding of the formation, management, and

evaluation of partnerships is needed, as far less consideration has been given to this important type of relationship in community (Legg et al., 2018).

Notably, local municipalities maintain a significant amount of power that can restrict access to public resources such as sport infrastructure and facilities to their partners (Kennedy & Rosentraub, 2000). Thus, imbalance of power may exist as each partner requires resources that they are not able to acquire independently (Sortiriadou & Wicker, 2013). In light of possible resource dependencies that shape the nature of public-CSO relations, it is essential to understand how to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these partnerships (cf. Babiak, 2009; Provan & Milward, 1998), which has often been a neglected step of overall IOR management in both research and practice.

Overall, the role of local municipalities as a key partner and mechanism for the delivery of sport and recreation at the community level has not been well understood despite the prevalence of these partnerships (Frisby et al., 2004; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Vos, Vandermeerschen, & Scheerder, 2016). Further, evaluation and assessment of relationships is often overlooked both in practice and research. Therefore, it is essential to address this gap in knowledge to further understand the critical issues and possibilities for these particular types of relationships.

1.2 Purpose Statement

The two-fold purpose of this study was to (1) understand the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnerships, and (2) explore how resources influence partnership evaluation practices in CSO-public partnerships.

1.3 Significance of Research

In Canada, sport and recreation programs are an integral part of community life (Cousens & Barnes, 2009). Even now I can still picture my younger self heading to the local municipal swimming pool for practice and my time spent participating on various community club teams. I am also fortunate to have had numerous opportunities to volunteer, intern, instruct, coach, or work in the sport and recreation management setting, as well as obtain post-secondary education and certifications to expand my knowledge and understanding of the field. These experiences have been invaluable and as I look back, I often find myself thinking how drastically different my life and who I am would be, if I did not have them. Based on these experiences, I am commited to enhancing our understanding of how best to support and enhance the community sport sector's ability to provide sport participation experiences and how best to manage the clubs that offer these services. Given the influence of IORs on local clubs, I am drawn to this research area.

Now more than ever, sport organizations are continuously facing increased pressure to compete and changes in funding regimes (Misener & Misener, 2017). As well, for many sport organizations scarce resources are greatly impacting their ability to maintain and build capacity (Jones et al., 2017). Challenged by their environments, community sport organizations are engaging in creative and more strategic solutions to maintain their operations and achieve their social mandates (Frisby et al., 2004; Thibault et al., 1999). The strategic approach of using IORs has grown considerably in community sport practice and as a result has received increased interest in scholarly research. Within the sport IOR area, there is growing interest in the community sport setting given that these organizations are embedded within a wide network of partners (Babiak et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2017; 2018). Although, empirical studies on

collaboration in other disciplines (e.g. human services) on the nonprofit sector has been ongoing since the 1970s and scholarly interest on government privatization in collaboration has increased since the 1990s (Gazley, 2017), there still seems to be a gap in the sport IOR literature that addresses the CSOs capacity to collaborate with public agencies (Frisby et al., 2004; Misener & Misener, 2017). Nonetheless, there is a strong mutual desire of both practitioner and scholar to understand how successful IORs can be fostered between these partners (Gazley, 2017; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Vos, Vandermeerschen, & Scheerder, 2016). Futhermore, in the sport and leisure field, one area of interest that has been significantly overlooked in both practice and in research is the evaluation of IORs (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003).

According to Babiak and Willem (2016), "one of the most challenging and complex aspects of engaging in partnerships and collaborations is that of evaluating their impact and effectiveness" (p. 288). Numerous scholars have also recognized the complexity of IOR evaluation (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003; Babiak, 2009; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Pope & Lewis, 2008; Provan & Milward, 1998). Specifically, researchers stress the difficulty in creating formal evaluation processes when IOR formation, management, and alliance structures are already complex. Similarly, the varying aims and objectives of an IOR present certain challenges to evaluating IOR success (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak & Willem, 2016). Additionally, in their book chapter on IORs, Babiak and Willem (2016), note that the dimension of evaluation and assessment of relationships is often neglected in practice. For many busy practitioners, this is overlooked due to the absence of objective metrics to evaluate, a lack of skills and competencies in evaluation methods, and ultimately a lack of time to complete an assessment.

In the context of sport, a few scholars have made advancements in the evaluation of partnerships and the programs developed through collaboration (Babiak 2009; Parent & Harvey,

2009; Parent & Harvey, 2017). Researchers have provided some insights in different contexts of IOR evaluation and assessment, including sport sponsorship relationships (Cousens, Babiak, & Bradish, 2006) and evaluation of a cross-sector sport program partnership initiative in professional sport (Kihl, Babiak, Tainsky, and Bang, 2014). Across these contexts it is clear that evaluation of IORs is no simple task, nevertheless it needs to be considered for long-term partnership success (Pope & Leiws, 2008; Provan & Milward, 1998). Developing an understanding of evaluation activities to the sport industry rather than adopting broad all-encompassing models from various disciplines would be beneficial to the field (Babiak et al., 2018; Babiak & Willem, 2016). For instance, providing frameworks specific to sport at the grassroots level would allow practitioners the means to determine a successful or unsuccessful collaboration, thus further reducing the potential cost or negative consequence from a partnership that does not achieve its purpose. As well, formal evaluation frameworks could potentially help to reduce the level of power and the influence one organization has over the other. Furthermore, this would provide sport practitioners with the knowledge, skill, and competency to efficiently and effectively evaluate their partnerships without absorbing a significant portion of their time during day-to-day operations.

Therefore, the sport and leisure management literature would greatly benefit from further insight and understanding into partnership evaluation practices. Thus, this study aims to address the notifiable gaps in existing literature related to the dimension of partnership evaluation, specifically at the community sport club level. In addition, the study will focus on a central partnership type in community sport: public sector (i.e., municipal) recreation/sport providers in order to gain further insights on this under-researched IOR type.

2 Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the knowledge to date on interorganizational relationships (IORs), focusing on key advancements from the literature. The first section will focus on defining IORs and positioning these types of relationships in contrast to other types within the context of sport. The second section will explore IORs in and between sport organizations, identifying the rationale behind sport organizations entrance into relationships. The actors involved in IORs within the context of sport will be discussed in the third section. Specifically, the section discusses the pros and cons of partnering with the various sectors and what they bring to each partnership. The fourth section will focus on IORs in community sport and review the literature on CSOs and public partnerships. The following section will explore the research to date on IOR evaluation. The final section will provide an overview of resource dependency theory as the guiding theory for this study. Lastly, the chapter will present a brief conclusion leading to the outline of the study.

2.1.2 Interorganizational Relationship (IORs)

Interorganizational relationships (IORs) have emerged as a growing field of interest for researchers and practitioners alike (Babiak, 2007; Babiak et al., 2018). For decades, multiple disciplines have embraced the study of IORs, which has led to numerous theoretical and empirical advancements (Austin, 2000; Babiak, 2003; 2009; Babiak et al., 2018; Gazley, 2017). Traditionally, IORs are a common practice in the business and management sector, where leaders motivation to collaborate is based on their need to innovate and outperform competitors. In comparison, sport offers a unique setting for collaboration and sport scholars have recognized distinct features in combination with one another that contribute to sport-based IORs. For

example, the inherently collaborative nature of sport to create, the nation sport system dependency on the operations of numerous sport organizations and the available resources from these organizations, and finally the successful involvement and collaboration of volunteers (Babiak et al., 2018). As such, IORs have become a central component of the operations, structure, and function of a variety of sport organizations (Babiak, 2003; 2007; Babiak et al., 2018).

The sport industry has seen an increase in alliances and partnerships throughout the 21st century and in turn academic interest has also grown on the topic. In the field of sport management, research on IORs has explored a range of issues such as formation, structure, management/process, scope of interaction, function, and outcomes of IORs. Additionally, the scholarship on IORs has been conducted in a variety of industry contexts from public-private partnerships (PPPs), sponsors and sponsees relationships, nonprofit community contexts, and even elite sport context (Babiak et al., 2018). Various aspects of partnerships have also been examined including the formation, antecedents, motivation, process, management, and outcomes of partnerships. A number of authors have argued that the majority of the research has focused on the formation and management of IORs (Babiak, 2007; 2009; Babiak et al., 2018; Frisby et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Thibault et al., 1999). Moreover, authors have identified that much of the research on IORs has been based in the for-profit sector, however studies on the nonprofit sector have also increased in recent years (e.g., Babiak, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2013).

2.2 Defining Interorganizational Relationships (IORs)

Engagement in IORs is a process of ongoing communication and negotiation which is controlled by neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms (Babiak et al., 2018). These

relationships can range from dyadic partnerships which incorporate only two organizations, or can comprise multiple organizations to formulate a network (Babiak et al., 2018; Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008). IORs can be formal and fully integrated interactions or loose exchanges that are informal in nature (Babiak et al., 2018). Interactions can occur between all types of organizations from government, public, nonprofit, and commercial that are within-sector, cross-sector, or multisector (which are all sub-areas of IORs more broadly) (Babiak, 2007; Babiak et al., 2018; Misener & Doherty, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, it is essential to position IORs within the various types of relationships that exist. According to Cousens et al. (2006), the word "partnerships' is frequently used in research and practice to describe interorganizational relationships despite many IORs having variances in duration, strategic value, and exchange of resources. However, not all IORs are the same and it is necessary to clarify different types of relationship formations (Cousens et al., 2006). The following will explore and define these varying types of relationships, as it is fundamental to understand these terms before discussing the implications and relevance of IORs (Babiak, 2003, Babiak, 2007; Babiak et al., 2018; Parent & Harvey, 2009).

2.2.1 Positioning IORs vs Other Types of Relationships

In both practitioner and academic settings, the terms used to describe IORs have varied from exchange relationships, partnerships, collaboration, networks, linkages, strategic alliances, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, and others. Researchers have not been able to reach a consensus on using one term to discuss or define partnering, instead a number of terms are used interchangeably when discussing relationships (Vail, 2007). In order to understand the similarities and differences of IORs, previous literature has identified and explored a number of

relationship types. This section will briefly highlight some of these relationship types to aid in the positioning of IORs for the purpose of this study.

As mentioned earlier, relationships can range from dyadic (e.g. two interacting entities; exchange relationships, partnerships) or multiple entities (e.g. a minimum of three autonomous entities) to form a network (Babiak & Willem, 2016). For example, Cousens et al. (2006) state that *exchange relationships* often occur between buyers and sellers and they are typically temporary and instrumental in value with the goal being to gain access to necessary resources in the form of money, services, or products. Relationships such as these tend to be more adversarial in nature, as buyers will tend to search for the lowest price in the market and sellers will look for the highest return on goods or services sold (Greenhalgh, 2001). Whereas, *partnerships* indicates increased continuity, loyalty, and mutual understanding in comparison to those relationships between organizations that are exchanged based (Cousens et al., 2006). Partnerships offer a certain number of advantages over and above exchange relationships, which include promoting long-term interactions between partners, minimizing the adversarial nature of exchanges, easing the management between organizations, and reducing boundaries between organizations (Greenhalgh, 2001). However, the concept of partnerships as indicated here is limited in scope, as it serves a narrow set of objectives that often only address certain environmental risks (Doz & Hamel, 1998).

Strategic alliances can involve multiple entities to pool specific skills and resources by the cooperating organizations. This is done in order to achieve one or more common goals related to the strategic objectives of the allied partners and individual goals (Varadarajan & Cunningham, 1995). According to Cousens et al. (2006), strategic alliances are interdependent relationships that can be characterized by their capacity to foster or further improve the quality of

organizational learning. Organizations that engage in such alliances should learn from one another in order to grow in competencies, although this requires organizations to abandon a part of autonomy in order to achieve competitive advantage. In addition, *joint ventures* have been identified in IOR literature as legal and binding relationships whereby two or more organizations create a separate or third entity (Harrigan, 1988; Thibault & Harvey, 1997). This presents new possibilities for each partner to broaden their reach without having to expand in size (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). The third entity will encompass competencies from each organization, which enables both organizations to pursue an opportunity (Cousens et al., 2006). It is also possible for the total integration of two organizations where one organization ultimately experiences a loss in identity. This type of action is a result of market power, resource control, and reducing dependence on other organizations which is referred to as *mergers and acquisitions* (Cousens et al., 2006).

Thibault and Harvey (1997) define *linkages* as "complex arrays of relationships between firms" (p. 46). Often, these organizations are referred to or known as partners or stakeholders (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). These types of relationships are established through interactions with one another, which implies the organization's investment in building the relationship (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). In addition, linkages can be formed in response to organizations strategic or deliberate intentions or be emergent (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Lastly, networks can also be viewed as a web of partnerships that involve various organizations, governments, businesses, and public interest groups (Jones et al., 2018).

The term *collaboration* is frequently used interchangeably with IORs. Early research by Wood and Gray (1991) stated that "collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engages in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms,

and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain (p.146). As identified by Babiak (2003), *collaboration* is not a one-time occurring interaction, but a "dynamic ongoing process that changes and evolves over time" (p. 5). In essence, the term encompasses important components to interorganizational relationships such as; maintenance of organizational autonomy, interaction and exchange, and a common problem domain. As well, there are no assumptions on which or how many stakeholders participate, at what level collaboration will occur, will the structure be temporary or not, what are the intended outcomes, and whether or not the collaborated efforts will succeed (Wood & Gray,1991), but the definition is still missing a few critical elements (Babiak, 2003). A significant aspect that organizations consider before entering into IORs is whether or not the relationship will be mutually advantageous. This critical aspect to IORs is missing from Wood and Gray's (1991) definition of collaboration, although identified in Spekman, Forbes, Isabella, and MacAvoy (1998) definition of alliance. Moreover, it is necessary to consider the issue of voluntary or conscious membership and organization, which is addressed by Roberts and Bradley (1991) and Park (1996), but is missing from Oliver's (1990) definition of IORs (Babiak, 2003).

For the purpose of this thesis, the conceptualization of *interorganizational relationships* will be used as it captures the notion of partnering with one or more organizations without changing the nature or structure of either organization. Additionally, it addresses all the critical elements that are considered when partnering (Babiak, 2007; Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Misener & Doherty, 2013). As such, the thesis draws on Babiak's (2003) definition of IORs "as a voluntary, close, long-term, planned strategic action between two or more organizations with the objective of serving mutually beneficial purposes in a problem domain" (Babiak, 2003, p.6). This definition provides a clearer understanding of IORs, and includes the integrated components

compiled from other definitions provide relevance to the notion of IORs (Babiak, 2003). Numerous sport scholars have adopted this definition by Babiak (2003) to help frame their research on IORs in sport settings (e.g., Babiak et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Misener & Doherty, 2013). The following section will discuss the research on IORs in sport organizations to provide a brief overview of its history within this context.

2.3 IORs in Sport Organizations

The growth and prevalence of collaboration among sport organizations at the practitioner level have led to numerous studies and theoretical advancements in academic literature (Babiak, 2009; Babiak et al., 2018). Vail (2007) notes: "there is a tremendous amount of research on the topic of partnerships. Whether the terminology used is *linkages, alliance*, or *collaborations,* all researchers emphasize the importance of knowing how to develop, manage, and evaluate successful partnerships" (p. 576). The earliest research on IORs within a sport context explored the relationships between a National Collegiate Association and its member organizations to understand the affect these competitive relationships had on the monitoring and punishment of rule violation (Babiak et al., 2018; Stern, 1979; 1981). According to Babiak et al. (2018), scholarly interest in IORs among sport organizations occurred gradually over time with initial studies on IORs in sport organizations beginning in 1993 and increasing from 2003 onward. However, Babiak et al.'s (2018) analysis shows that the greatest number of studies appeared from 2005 to 2017.

To fulfill their objectives, sport organizations need to collaborate with others, whether collaboration be within sector, cross-sector, or multisector (Babiak, 2007; Babiak et al., 2018; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Ideally, collaboration will enable organizations to deal with common problems, while also providing creative and forward-thinking

strategies to achieve organizational goals or objectives that otherwise would not be possible to attain individually (Vos & Scheerder, 2014). For both proactive and reactive reasons, sport organizations have embraced seeking and establishing IORs. Through the utilization of IORs sport organizations have the potential to access or create new markets; anticipate changes in social, political, and technological environments; share financial risk; reduce uncertainty; capitalize on opportunity; gain power or control over other organizations, meet specific objectives, enhance legitimacy, and obtain knowledge, skill, and expertise that may not be available to the organization internally (Babiak, 2007; 2009).

Numerous studies have explored the formation of IORs in a sport context, the first phase of development between organizations (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2009; 2018; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Thibault et al., 1999; Vos & Scheerder, 2014). Scholary research has identified a number of determinants underlying the motives to engage in IORs. These include; asymmetry, reciprocity, necessity, legitimacy, efficiency, and stability (e.g. Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2007; Oliver, 1990; Vos & Scheerder, 2014); as well as, inderdependence and network presence (e.g. Babiak, 2007; Kouwenhoven, 1993). Research indicates that it is often a combination of these motives that determines the engagement of IORs within and between cross-sector organizations (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2007; Oliver, 1990). In addition, Vail (2007) states that one key precondition for the formation of partnership is that all stakeholders involved perceive that interdependence is strong with the other organizations and that the stakes are high. If this perception is not shared by all stakeholders than there is potential for some partners to be less committed (Vail, 2007). Research has also shown that sport organizations who engage in IORs with other organizations can achieve desired outcomes and acquire specific resources. These outcomes may be considered tangible (e.g. program growth and development, improved

operations, coordinated services, access to facilities) or intangible resources (e.g. social trust, reciprocity, and stronger sense of community) (Alexander et al. 2008; Babiak, 2003; Babiak, 2009; Misener & Doherty, 2012, 2013, 2014; Thibault et al., 1999).

The development and engagement of interorganizational relationships provides sport organizations the opportunity to acquire and share physical, financial, and human resources, as well as acquire information and aid in the coordination of work related activities in order to maintain or enhance service quality (Babiak, 2007; Frisby et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty, 2012; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Thibault et al., 1999). For example, Thibault and colleagues (1999) found that partnerships aided sport and leisure organizations in the public, nonprofit, and for-profit contexts to share human, financial, and infrastructure resources to reduce cost and improve service quality. Similarly, cross-sector partnerships have benefited sport and recreation organizations in order to gain access to equipment, venues, transportation, and infrastructure (Jones et al., 2017). Misener and Dohery (2013) explored community sport organizations (CSOs) engagement in IORs in order to gain a better understanding of the impact IORs have on CSOs ability to achieve their mission. In particular, IORs are of interest to nonprofit community sport organizations, as they tend to operate with minimal staff and inadequate resources, which hinders the organizations ability to deliver their mission. According to these authors, CSOs use IORs as an effective way to acquire needed resources, knowledge, and other social benefits, while also building community cohesion and achieving important public purposes (Misener & Doherty, 2013). In their qualitative study of CSOs, the authors identified important deliverables from IORs in the form of physical, financial, and human resources which enabled organizational goal fulfillment (Misener & Doherty, 2013).

Additionally, Misener and Doherty's (2014) research on CSO-sponsor relationships found physical and financial resources as key outcomes of IOR engagement.

However, as reported by Misener and Doherty (2012; 2013; 2014), outcomes can extend beyond the basic acquisition of deliverables in the form of tangible benefits. For example, social capital was a positive resource and by-product of relationships where developing and nurturing club relationships with multiple organizations has the potential to increase community connection and improve social cohesion (Misener & Doherty, 2012). Other non-tangible outcomes include community presence through enhanced club reputation or image, awareness of the club, and connection to the community (Misener & Doherty, 2013). Therefore, the research outlined above in the nonprofit sport sector has shown that by engaging in IORs, nonprofit sport organizations can increase their visibility and legitimacy within communities, build social capital, and improve leadership in the community (Jones et al., 2017).

One aspect of IORs that researchers understand the least is the process of partnering itself (Vail, 2007). Many organizations face the complex and challenging problem of deciding how to structure and manage relationships with other stakeholders or actors in their environment (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Within recreation, Uhlik (1995) identified five steps to consider when implementing IORs, which are; 1) partners must educate themselves on the needs and resources of others, 2) partners should conduct a needs assessment and resource inventory, 3) partners should focus on the identification of potential partners and research the organization's mission and accountability, 4) partners must compare and contrast the needs and resources of each actor involved to ensure equal levels of benefit in the relationship, 5) partners must develop a proposal that describes the relationships objectives, intentions, and outcomes, while also identifying shared resources and mutual benefits (Vail, 2007). As well, Decker and Mattfled

(1995) identified an additional step, which was evaluation of the IORs to ensure contiuous improvement and development (Vail, 2007). Vail (2007) also suggest that implementation of a motivational leader or convener (i.e. champion) to facilitate the planning process. Moreover, a number of researchers have identified key attributes such as, enagagement, balance, consistency, mutual trust, shared vision, concrete goals, mutual interdependence of members, appropriate governance structures, interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, and technical skills; as well as, partners who have regular, open communication, interaction/involvement, and joint-problem solving (i.e. Frisby et al., 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2001; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Shaw & Allen, 2006). However, researchers have discussed the hurdles to IORs which can included, power, lack of trust, competing agendas (i.e. self-serving bias), and fear of loss of autonomy (Shaw & Allen, 2006; Vail, 2007).

It is evident from this brief overview that IORs are complex, requiring intentional management strategies and ongoing evaluation (Babiak et al., 2018). The following section will review the actors involved in IORs in this particular context of sport.

2.3.1. Cross-Sector Collaboration

IORs can occur between all types of organizations from public, nonprofit, and commercial that are within sector, cross-sector, or multisector (Babiak, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2013; Babiak et al., 2018). In the following sections, I will provide a brief overview of cross-sector relationships and then further explore the public and nonprofit sectors. This study does not specifically examine the commercial sector and thus an overview of that sector has been excluded as it is beyond the scope of the study although CSOs do interact with the commercial sector for specific purposes (see Misener & Doherty, 2014).

A number of theorists have identified and explored the challenges that are associated with same-sector or cross-sector relationships. However, sport organizations are often entering into multiple cross-sector relationships in order to achieve organizational missions and goals (Babiak & Thibault, 2009). Cross-sector collaboration has been defined as cooperation between two or more providers from different sectors (Vos & Scheerder, 2014, p. 9). As well, cross-sector relationships are one sub-area of IORs more broadly. A great deal of literature has focused on relationships with the for-profit sector (i.e. voluntary sport clubs and sponsors or local governments and private sport providers) (Babiak, 2007). According to Alexander et al. (2008), public and nonprofit IORs are emerging as a way to deal with the fiscal restraint and environment pressure, as a result more research on this partnering is needed. For the purpose of this thesis, cross-sector partnerships between public and community sport organizations will be further examined to address this recognized gap in the literature.

2.3.1.1 Public Sector

The public sector encompasses the different levels of government, which includes the Federal, Provincial, and Municipal (Babiak et al., 2018; Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Thibault and Harvey (1997) identify the critical role that municipal government plays in the arrangement of facility provision (e.g. sport fields, outdoor facilties, ice arenas, pools, gymnasiums, and other indoor facilities), early skill development and exposure programs (e.g. municipal lessons), and services for both sport and recreation to the population. As well, public partners are involved in the coordination and communication (e.g, assignment of staff to act in a liaison role with all sport groups), enhanced coaching capacity (e.g., supporting the provision of National Coaching Certification Programs (NCCP), allocation policies and subsidies (e.g., providing community sport subsidization levels for fees), and joint use agreements/sport hosting (e.g., developing

agreements with schools to use facilities or create programming) (Hunter & CPRA task group, 2013). Thibault and colleagues (1999) further emphasize that the focus of local government has always been to fulfill their community's sport and leisure needs with quality programs and services. Moreover, Becker and Patterson (2005) argued that partnerships formed with the public-sector are to improve community life through the provision of social services and/or public facilities. In addition, the public sector may also hold specific mandates or powers to target complex issues (Andrews & Enwistle, 2010) and "may be in a stronger position to generate reliable resource streams and set priorities based on democratic political processes" (Misener & Misener, 2017, p. 698). Furthermore, Brinkerhoff (2002), recognizes national governments as a public partner affording legal and institutional frameworks; along with scale, financial, and material resources to their partners.

However, given the economic shift in the 1990s, local governments have experienced an increase in economic, political, and social pressures. These pressures have placed fiscal strain on the government, which has resulted in continual budget cuts and redistribution of existing public spending to various programs to make efficient use of existing public financial resources (Frisby et al., 2004; Thibault et al., 1999). To be specific, government financial support was reduced significantly in Canada during the 1990s and in some cases many non-profit sport organizations saw a dramatic decrease. Similar reports were identified in Australia, Britain, Finland, and Poland. As a result, many sport organizations turned to corporate sponsorship to obtain the additional funding for their operations (Doherty & Murray, 2007).

For instance, in a study conducted in Australia by Sortiriadou and Wicker (2013), the authors note that community sport clubs often resort to government grants in order to offer services, to pay coaches or administration staff (if employed), to pay for maintenance and use of

sport or other facilities (e.g. fields, club houses), and certain expenses that are associated with running and organizing events or competitions. The authors further suggest that CSOs turn to various income streams to help finance these endeavors, however, not all sports clubs have access to all the income streams or government funding and the result is a higher total expenditure than total income. The importance of government funding to CSOs is also stressed by the authors and that it may differ from country to country, as not all sports clubs receive financial support from the government (Sortiriadou & Wicker, 2013). This could be due to the increased complications that municipal recreation administration is experiencing, as well as more competitive and tighter funding environments to be able to support sport organizations (Leone, Barnes, & Sharpe, 2015). As well, when making decisions municipal governments are also having to balance a variety of interests in their community from residents, private businesses, and city departments (i.e. transportation or police), and often respond in a reactive mode to issues (i.e. if issues become crisis level) (Leone et al., 2015). However, often CSOs way of coping with financial difficulties in their communities is by turning to government funding, although funding is not simply provided by request to these organizations (Sortiriadou & Wicker, 2013). Despite the many challenges that may arise with this type of cross-sector relationship, local municipalities have been significant to the delivery of sport at the community level. In particular, public partners provide specific resoucres and infrastructure to CSOs which are essential to the organizations success and achievement of its purpose.

2.3.1.2 Nonprofit Sector

The nonprofit sector is the pillar of the community sport and sport for development systems (Babiak et al., 2018). Specifically, nonprofit organizations in Canada are often considered the focal point for the delivery of sport programs and services (Babiak et al., 2018).

Eighty percent of these non-profits operate with less than four paid staff members and rely heavily on volunteers to contribute to their operations, with fifty-four percent being entirely reliant on volunteers (Gumulka et al., 2006).

Nonprofit sport organizations are also facing pressures to compete amongst themselves as well as pressure for greater accountability to their stakeholders, increased concerns for athletic excellence in competition, and increasing globalization of the marketplace (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Misener & Misener, 2017; Thibault, 2009). As a result, nonprofit organizations have realized that in order to survive in these challenging times they must adopt a more business-like model and professionalized operations. Therefore, interorganizational relationships have emerged as a strategy for organizational leaders in all sectors, recognizing the importance of alliances in the achievement of their objectives. Furthermore, for nonprofit organizations, partnerships represent a strategy to deal with the environmental and societal pressures (Babiak, 2003; Babiak, 2007; Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Cousens et al., 2006; Frisby et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty; 2012; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Thibault et al., 1999).

According to Andrews and Entwistle (2010), partnering with nonprofit organizations brings a distinct advantage to different sectors. Nonprofits have the greatest capacity to communicate with those groups who are disadvantaged, excluded, or underrepresented, which enhances the equity of service outcomes. Additionally, voluntary organizations have the ability to personalize their services and allow a certain level of competition among service providers to offer or adjust services to particular groups (Misener & Misener, 2017). Austin (2000) also identifies that nonprofit organizations have a number of distribution channels, members, and other various assets, although they don't necessarily know how to fully make use of them which makes them a potential partner. For public organizations, partnering with nonprofits have

thought to lead to more equitable public service outcomes, tackling social problems more effectively and efficiently. Nonprofit and community partners represent the views of not just their own organization, but also offer a way to connect with, and learn from a variety of voices in civil society (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010).

However, Babiak (2003) identifies the complexity of partnerships in the nonprofit sector due to the variety of available partners, the environmental challenges, and their presence in competing sectors. To clarify, nonprofit organizations are often located in competing sectors, which can result in pulling of the organization between institutional spheres. The influence of relationships can have an impact on the nonprofits responsibility for societal concerns, as organizations in different sectors will have their own managerial values, beliefs, norms, expectations, and ideologies. Consequently, the focal nonprofit organization may be forced into new directions that may potentially be incompatible with their own and may even experience conflict with their partners. Specifically, conflicting goals and objectives, differing perceptions of the rationale behind the formation of the partnership, or varying expectations about the partnership outcomes, which they may not even be aware of (Babiak, 2003).

2.4 Interorganizational Relationships in Community Sport Organizations (CSOs)

For nonprofit sport organizations, developing relationships with partners is beneficial, as it supports them in accessing and acquiring much needed resources and knowledge, maintaining and enhancing service quality, which further reduces their uncertainty (Babiak, 2007; Cousens et al., 2006; Frisby et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty; 2012; Thibault et al., 1999). In addition, IORs at the community level are thought to promote effective solutions to complex social problems, adapt to changing demands of their constituents, and provide greater access to embedded resource systems (Jones et al., 2017). Specifically, the acquisition of needed resources provides

CSOs an opportunity to create or to better develop current programming, which will not only improve the program, but increase the organizations visibility. As well, greater visibility can potentially lead to increases in memberships, resources from the government, and resources from organizations in other sectors (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Establishing partnerships can enhance the collective pool of resources and potentially reduce individualistic behavior (Jones et al., 2017). Ultimately, the creation of interorganizational partnerships is encouraged in the nonprofit sector and "often perceived as the only alternative in the wake of decreasing financial support from traditional funding agencies such as various levels of government" (Babiak, 2003, p.9).

However, IORs in the community sport context are not always used effectively and CSOs often struggle to establish effective relationships. As well, practitioners often report limited understanding in building relationships (Vail, 2007) and difficulty with managing and sustaining these relationships (Jones et al., 2017). Research suggests that even when partnerships are established, many are constrained by poor communication, power imbalances, issues of trust, and limited resources (e.g., Frisby et al., 2004; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Jones et al., 2017; Misener & Doherty, 2012). Typically, nonprofit sport organizations are drawn to partnerships to acquire resources to run programming and a lack of collaboration can significantly impact their ability to deliever services and achieve their mandate. Similarly, collaboration among community leaders is considered central to capacity building, where skills, people, plans, motivation, commitment, economic and financial resources, policy development and supportive institutions, and physical resources are required to strengthen the community and solve local problems (Vail, 2007).

Previous empirical research involving youth sport nonprofit organizations has focused on key features of dyadic relationships, such as mutual values, trust, and communication. As well, research on actor characteristics, such as organizational capacities have also been

highlighted as important factors influencing effective partnerships (Jones et al., 2017; 2018). Recently, Jones and colleagues (2017) identified a lack of cohesiveness among youth sport organiztions in a network, which potentially could be creating structural disadvantages that limit the effectiveness of partnerships. However, information on network configurations in other contexts is still needed. Additionally, there is minimal evidence in current research that addresses sport organizations ability to establish partnerships for the purpose of using sport to address community needs (Vail, 2007). According to Vail (2007), research within the sport sector appears to be isolated in its approach to addressing community needs and issues, although research from other sectors supports the value of partnership approaches.

Furthermore, research on partnerships with the public sector have been positioned as useful strategies to acquire resources and maximize efficiencies (Legg et al., 2018). In Vail's (1992) study, she found that the role of parks and recreation departments was central to the effectiveness of a large Canadian city community's sport delivery system. Specifically, the findings indicated that the community sport providers did not communicate effectively with others within the community's sport delivery system and due to the lack of communication, numerous organizations (i.e. other sport clubs, private facilities, and schools) were unknowingly competing with one another for similar resources and the result was a duplication of programs and services (Vail, 2007). However, current research by Legg and colleagues (2018) findings show that relationships between puplic-nonprofit sport organizations are constrained due to limited resources on both sides and in order to operate effectively PPPs require substantial resources (Legg et al., 2018). Additionally, research on public recreation departments have indicated that these providers are stretched to capacity which is impacting their ability to manage partnerships (Frisby et al., 2004). Similar, to the findings of Vail (1992), Frisby and colleagues

(2004) found that local leisure service departments (i.e. park and recreation departments) lack the capacity to effectively manage the numerous and complex partnerships they have with the local CSOs (Frisby et al., 2004). According to Legg and colleagues (2018), the number of youth sport providers is continuously on the rise and the importance of sufficient resources has been a key finding in empirical research, therefore it becomes necessary to critically evaluate these relationships to understand how these organizations can navigate power and resource flow. Moving forward, I will provide an overview of the current research on the concept of IOR evaluation, which has been recognized as an overlooked concept in practice and in research by numerous scholars (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003; Babiak et al., 2018). In particular, nonprofit and public organizations could greatly benefit from further insight in evaluation practices (Frisby et al., 2004), which will be explored further in the following section.

2.5 Evaluation of Interorganizational Relationships

It has been recognized by numerous scholars that the evaluation of IORs has been overlooked in not only practice, but in research as well (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003). Alexander and colleagues argue that there has been limited research focused on IOR evaluation in the context of sport and only a few studies have focused on outcome evaluation. The authors further suggest that this is not surprising given the complexities with IOR formation and management that additional problems with evaluation would arise (Alexander et al., 2008). Additionally, Babiak (2003) acknowledges the difficulty with evaluating the effectiveness of IORs as it is frequently common for unforeseen or unintended outcomes to emerge throughout partnership interaction. Theses outcomes can be either beneficial or detrimental to the success of the relationship (Babiak, 2003). Notably, partnerships generally focus on complex issues where outcomes can take time which makes examining outcomes particularly challenging (Pope &

Lewis, 2008). Furthermore, Brinkerhoff (2002) acknowledges that there still remains a gap on assessment and evaluation on partnership relationship themselves. While discussion on evaluating the results or outcomes of the IOR is abdundant in the literature and important to ensuring quality, responsiveness, and accountability; simply focusing on this aspect alone does not provide much information in terms of how to improve public service delivery or enhance efficiency. This is especially true when results are unsuccessful (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Despite these known challenges, the utilization of partnership in practice is continuing to rise and although evaluation is no simple task it needs to be consider for long-term partnership success (Pope & Leiws, 2008; Provan & Milward, 2001). As specified by Pope and Lewis (2008), evaluation information is critical to assessing; 1) whether the partnership is performing to expectations; 2) whether or not improved decision-making is a result of the partnership than it would have been possible if the organization was on its own (the 'value-added); and 3) whether the desired outcomes at the outset of partnership were achieved. Moreover, it is essential for good evaluation practices to move beyond focusing soley on results/outcomes and account for all key factors that may potentially influence outcomes (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Literature on partnership outcomes and evaluation is prevalent, however, frameworks that target the evaluation of partnership relationships is needed (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Brinkerhoff (2002) proposes a framework for assessing partnership relationships that is process-oriented, continuous, participatory, and developmental (Appendix A, Figure 1). The process-oriented component in this proposed framework encompasses the processes by which partners interact and provide goods or services to each other, as well as, the assessment of specific criteria or priorities identified by partners (i.e., what needs to be measured in the framework) and implemented to achieve partner goals. A process-oriented framework also serves "to bring

conflict into the open, provide a platform for agreement, and increase the legitimacy of "proposed measures" (Brinkerhoff, 2002, p. 219). Additionally, the developmental component encompasses an evaluator, who acts as an organization development consultant to apply evaluative logic to assess performance and provide improvements. The proposed assessment framework encompasses five general areas of assessment which include; "1) compliance with prerequisites and success factors in partnership relationships, 2) the degree of partnership practice, 3) outcomes of the partnership relationship, 4) partners' performance, and 5) efficiency" (Brinkerhoff, 2002, p. 220). These categories are thought to be linked and some may even overlap. Within the assessment framework Brinkerhoff (2002) provides a summary of the proposed targets and methods, which can be found in Appendix A, figure 2.

According to Brinkerhoff (2002), partnership should be examined as both a means and an end in itself. The proposed assessment framework addressed the challenges within evaluation, especially when integrating institutional arrangements and processes into a performance measurement system. The framework is insightful to our understanding of partnership and its effectiveness as an institutional arrangement for achieving results and also contributes to our understanding of relationship performance and program outcomes, while further enhancing our knowledge on partnership theory and practice. Although, this framework is insightful and contributes to our understanding on partnership and partnership effectiveness, it is not sport-based specific. Nonetheless, a few scholars have explored the notion of evaluation in the context of sport, which will be discussed next.

Evaluating partnerships successes and failures is often omitted from practice, although adopting evaluation practices can provide important feedback to make necessary improvements that will enhance the current partnership in the future and potential future partnerships (Parent &

Harvey, 2009). In their partnership model, Parent and Harvey (2009) (Appendix A, Figure 3) recognize that partnership evaluation is an important final step. However, the authors also stress that partnership evaluation at the community-based level can be a real challenge due to scare resources. Further suggesting that partners at the community level believe that devoting much-needed resources to evaluation takes away from programming. As well, implementing evaluation practices are often difficult and take time.

Parent and Harvey (2009) draw from previous literature to highlight the necessary components within partnership evaluation (Boutin & Le Cren, 2004; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Weech-Maldonado, Benson, & Gamm, 2003). Parent and Harvey (2009) identify five types of partnership evaluations that highlight the link between management of the partnership and evaluation, which were originally identified by Boutin and Le Cren (2004). These evaluation types consist of; *process evaluation, impact evaluation, outcome evaluation, formative evaluation,* and *summative evaluation* which will be further defined next.

Process evaluation is an ongoing evaluation of results within the partnership. Following this is *impact evaluation*, which considers "the short-term effects (i.e. goal of the partnership) of a project or program on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of the targeted population" (p. 37). Next, *outcome evaluation* considers the extent to which the partnership achieved its long-term objectives. *Formative evalution* will then follow to examine the immediate feedback provided during the partnership. This evalution is conducted to help improve and refine the partnership's overall goal and further ensure that desired outcomes are reached. Finally, *summative evaluation* highlights the results at the end of the partnership or the end of its project/program. These evaluation types should be carried out during the duration of the

partnership as they are necessary to ensure partnership success and achievement of partnership goals (Parent & Harvey, 2009).

In addition to these five evaluation types, Parent and Harvey (2009) stress the importance of determining the successfulness and effectiveness of the partnership. Specifically, determining the satisfaction of the partners and finally examining the project's outcome (Parent & Harvey, 2009). Moreover, evaluation in the nonprofit sector should focus on the value produced from the partnership not the financial performance of the relationship (Babiak, 2003; Brinkerhoff, 2002). For nonprofit partnerships, evaluating if the organizational mission or goals have been achieved, increased legitimacy or awareness, and the procurement of needed resources or power is essential (Babiak, 2003). Furthermore, the model developed by Parent and Harvey (2009) was theoretical and not put into practice until their 2017 study. The authors also stress that the model is not all inclusive, nevertheless it contains basic components to the formation, management, and evaluation of community-based partnerships in the context of sport and physical activity (Parent & Harvey, 2009).

The partnership model by Parent and Harvey (2009) was tested to examine the partnership component of a community-based youth sport for development program (Parent & Harvey, 2017). Parent and Harvey (2017) found the (2009) partnership model to be helpful in the examination of partnerships and processes involved in community-based youth sport-for-development projects. Although the authors found the model to be useful and the findings provided an empirically-supported approach to community-based partnerships, they did uncover additional subcomponents to be considered for future studies. As well, the model is still limited in its generalizability since it was used for a single-case behind a community-based youth sport for development program project. It would be useful to examine the model in other community

contexts, as well as explore the partnership model beyond a community-based program (Parent & Harvey, 2017).

Babiak (2009) adopted a framework by Provan and Milward (2001), which was originally used to evaluate IORs in the nonprofit and public sectors, to empirically compare the effectiveness criteria of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization and its partners in a multiple cross-sectoral relationship. In this framework, the authors identify three broad categories; the principles, the agents, and the clients, while further highlighting three evaluation levels to include the community level, the network level, and the organizational level (Babiak, 2009; Provan & Milward, 2001). The results of the study provided insights to the evaluation of cross-sector IORs between nonprofit, public, and commercial sector. However, within this multisport context of Babiak's study, the IOR consisted of partners from nonprofit, public, and commercial sector, which made it difficult to assess the organizational effectiveness since it is compounded in the examination of the whole network. Numerous stakeholders with diverse interest created significant challenges to assessing the effectiveness at the organizational level (Babiak, 2009). Babiak (2009), further stresses the difficulty in separating the effects of one particular organizational relationship from other organizations in the IOR and other activities, which should be considered in future research. Overall, "the framework does little to address the quality of the relationships among organizations" or offer insight into how the relationships "can be improved to contribute more effectively to outcomes" (Brinkerhoff, 2018). Furthermore, Babiak (2009) suggest that there is no "best" evaluation framework that can be used and applied to all partnerships, however, context-specific evaluation forms should be developed.

Comparably, Alexander et al. (2008) utilized the same framework by Provan and Milward (2001) to evaluate the outcomes of a dyadic IOR. The authors conducted a three-year

case study between a public sector sport and recreation department and a nonprofit provincial sport organization (Tennis PSO) within a Canadian sport context. The Tennis PSO developed a formal strategy or joint initiative with the local sport and recreation department, which was part of the municipal administration in the city, to enhance the tennis program and its delivery in the urban area. At the time, prior research rarely demonstrated sport organizations having formal partnership strategies, which presented a unique and rare opportunity to study this type of IOR. Overall, both partners deemed the relationship successful despite only a modest improvement in the desired outcome of the partnership. The authors recommended that further consideration of desired outcomes at the community, network, and organizational level is needed by the sport managers. As well, additional evaluation tools would have been beneficial in order to obtain information on desired outcomes for IOR success (Alexander et al., 2008). Furthermore, the authors found that the stages of formation, management, and outcomes of IOR are more interrelated than distinct individual stages, which should be acknowledged by practitioners and further regard evaluation throughout the stages of IOR.

Interorganizational relationships have been regarded as both a solution to reaching efficiency and effectiveness objectives within the literature (Brinkerhoff, 2002). However, in order to retain valued partners, it is essential for practitioners to implement evaluation mechanisms. These practices can provide evidence of IOR success, as well as recognition of partner contributions (Frisby et al., 2004). For example, the findings from Frisby and colleagues (2004) study showed that some managers and staff believed assessment of relationship values was important. Although, they felt assessment to be challenging due to the intangible nature of benefits from jointly developed leisure service programmes, they still regarded evaluation as a necessary component. The authors further suggest that creating an evaluation component into

partner management plans could potentially provide the necessary criteria required to terminate unsuccessful partnership agreements (Frisby et al., 2004).

Furthermore, organizational partnerships do not operate in isolation as each actor is also interacting with many other partners, and those relationships may also influence the whole network of organizations involved. For example, Jones and colleagues study (2017) found that many CSO administrators were unaware of other youth sport nonprofit organizations in their municipality (Jones et al., 2017). This can be significant to public-nonprofit relationships, as nonprofits in the same location are often competing for similar resources and can potentially be relying on similar partners. Therefore, it is also important to understand the number of nonprofit organizations in partnership with the local municipality which would further create a network of relationships.

This study draws on resource dependency theory (RDT) (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) as a lens for understanding how organizations can navigate power and resource flow in order to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009). In particular, RDT has been used throughout IOR research in the nonprofit sector and due to the potential resource dependencies that shape the nature of public-CSO relations this theoretical lens will be rather insightful to evaluation practices among these partnerships (cf. Babiak, 2009; Provan & Milward, 1998). The following section will provide an overview of what resource dependency theory is and further explore the theory's use in the IOR literature.

2.6 *Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)*

Respectively, within IOR research, a number of theoretical perspectives have been utilized to better understand the various facets of IORs in and among sport organizations (e.g. strategy or management perspective, network theory, relationship marketing, resource

dependency theory, institutional theory, and stakeholder theory) (Babiak et al., 2018). For the purpose of this thesis, Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) will be used as a focal theoretical lens. This will be explored further below, focusing on what RDT is, what has been previously discovered in the literature on RDT, and finally why it will be utilized for this thesis.

The influence of external environments and resources on organizational action is important to the understanding of Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) (Jones et al., 2017). In the year of 1978, RDT was developed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, who are Amercian business and organizational theorists (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The concept of RDT can be found in their publication "*The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*" which was the first published work on RDT (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978).

Resource dependency theory has provided researchers with a lens to understand organizations behavior within their environment (O'Brien & Evans, 2017; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) suggest that "the ecology of the organization" (p. 1) consists of various resources in the environment that organizations need in order to survive as well as other organizations that the main organization interacts, competes, or collaborates with in the pursuit of those necessary resources. The RDT approach assumes that the scarcity of resources in an organization's external environment has motivated organizations to initiate and establish interorganizational relationships with other organizations (Oliver, 1990; Wicker et al., 2013). According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), in RDT an organization is characterized as an open system, who is dependent on contingencies in the external environment and in order to understand the organizations behavior, than it is necessary to understand the context of the behavior (i.e. the environment of the organization). Therefore, organizations are "the

fundamental units for understanding intercorporate relations and society" (Hillman et al., 2009, p. 2). This theory also recognizes that external factors have an influence on organizational behavior and organizations can be constrained by a network of interdependencies when involved with other organizations (Pfeffer, 1987). Essentially, these organizations are not autonomous. Additionally, the concept of power is central to managers and administrators actions in RDT. The notion of power in this context can be understood as control over those vital resources and managers act to reduce uncertainty and dependence in their environment. However, these actions are often never completely successful and tend to produce new patterns of dependence and interdependence (Pfeffer, 1987). According to Hillman et al. (2009) "organizations attempt to reduce others' power over them, often attempting to increase their own power over others" (p. 2).

The notion of power imbalance has also received substantial attention in RDT research (e.g., Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005; Emerson, 1962; Gulati & Sytch, 2007; Hillman et al., 2009; O'Brien & Evans, 2017). More specifically, researchers have identified asymmetrical resource distribution as a contributing factor to power imbalances and loss of autonomy (Emerson, 1964; Filo, Cuskelly, & Wicker, 2015; Misener & Doherty, 2014; Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Early work by Emerson (1964) suggests that when an organization is dependent on resources from another organization, the entity providing those required resources will hold power over the dependent organization. Essentially, "power stems from the nature of interdependencies between organizations" (Filo et al., 2015, p. 556) and partnerships with asymmetrical power relations occur when the less dependent organization wields it power over the dependent organization. However, researchers have also argued that this construction of power only applies in those cases where organization A retains complete control over those resources desired by organization B (Emerson, 1962; O'Brien & Evans, 2017). Moreover, previous literature has suggested that

relationships can take on different forms as well as vary in relation to how power, interests, and substance are organized (Armstrong-Doherty, 1996; Filo et al., 2015; Vos & Scheerder, 2014).

In previous research, RDT approaches have received the highest attention and has been repeatedly cited as a condition in the development of IORs (Oliver, 1990; Wicker et al., 2013). The notion of resource scarcity can be understood as a means for organizations to generate needed resources that otherwise are unable to them when operating as a silo (Oliver, 1990). In the context of sport, Babiak (2007) study revealed that resource scarcity was a major factor in the decision for most organizations to partner and the acquisition of resources plays a key role in the formation of relationships. In the community sport context, there is a need for organizations to secure resources to help stabilize the conditions in the environments that they operate in (Guo & Acar, 2005; Jones et al., 2017). According to Jones and colleagues (2017), resource dependence motivates organizations to combine complementary resources, thereby, encouraging interaction with other organizations in their environment and ultimately to the development of IORs (Jones et al., 2017; Thibault & Harvey, 1997).

Furthermore, Babiak (2007) found that the ability for the partner organizations to possess key resources provided heightened levels of power and control over strategic direction and decision-making. The theory of resource dependency considers IORs as a means to reduce competition between organizations and help them to increase their power over providers. For youth sport nonprofits, the reduction of competition is especially important, as many youth sport clubs compete over fixed commodities such as, fields, pools, facilities, and equipment (Jones et al., 2017). However, those organizations who control the most resources may exert power over those organizations in need of such resources (Jones et al., 2017; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Wicker et al., 2013). Arguably, the loss of operating autonomy can be one of the greatest cost to

these relationship activities (Guo & Acar, 2005). Although, if an organization already has a rich supply of resources there would be less of a need to acquire them and interact or align with other organizations (Provan, Beyer, & Kruytbosch, 1980; Thibault & Harvey, 1997). These findings are key to the advancement of IORs in sport, as it stresses the importance of valuable resources to the organizations.

For the purpose of the current thesis, the relationship between nonprofit sport organizations (CSOs) and the local municipality (public partner) will be explored. The utilization of resource dependency theory (RDT) is important to this study as a body of literature on IORs in the context of nonprofit organizations has tended to focus on their need to acquire certain resources (Babiak, 2003; Babiak et al., 2017). Additionally, literature suggests that competition over resources often occurs and acquiring necessary resources affords a competitive advantage (Babiak, 2003; Jones et al., 2017; Vos & Scheerder, 2014).

When examining community sport organizations and public sport organizations, Vos and Scheerder (2014) stress the importance of similar values and common grounds. Both these actors prefer collaboration with organizations who focus on social and intangible benefits (i.e., their focus to serve the public for social good) (Vos & Scheerder, 2014). The authors found that public sport organizations and voluntary sport clubs share facilities, materials, and resources or offer a combination of services, promotions, staffing, and collective training sessions. However, as previously mentioned it has been suggested that competition over resources and power imbalances among or between these partners can occur and public partners may negotiate from a position of power since they control critical resources required by nonprofit organizations (Jones et al., 2017). As a result, a considerable challenge for individual organizations is determining

how to balance between managing resource dependence while also sustaining their organizational autonomy (Guo & Acar, 2005).

Indeed, resource scarcity has made partnership and collaboration a necessity in the nonprofit sector. Especially, when an organization is facing economic instability and change, however issues of power and dependence become an increasingly more salient feature for these organizations. Therefore, the theory of resource dependency is rather insightful, as an important element of RDT is understanding the sources of power and dependence between organizations, and linking this to how organizations can navigate power and resource flow in order to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence (Davis & Cobb, 2010; Hillman et al., 2009). In many cases, organizations may seek to obtain control over resources that are not owned by the organization and having the power over such resources is often more critical than ownership of resources, thus survival is dependent on the resources an organization can mobilize when needed (Babiak & Willem, 2016).

Research on resource dependency has focused on dyadic relationships between two partners, which has generally been between commercial partners and nonprofits (Babiak, 2003). As a result, there is a gap in the literature on partnerships between CSOs and their relationships with the local municipality as they often control those essential resources that CSOs need to achieve their strategic, functional, and operational purpose (Babiak, 2007). In light of possible resource dependencies that shape the nature of public-CSO relations, it is essential to understand how to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these partnerships (cf. Babiak, 2009; Provan & Milward, 1998). The next chapter will provide an overview of the chosen methodology and methods that will be used to conduct this study.

2.7 Research Questions

The two-fold purpose of this qualititative study was to (1) understand the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnerships, and (2) explore how resources influence partnership evaluation practices in CSO-public partnerships.

The research will address the following questions:

1. What resources are exchanged between CSOs and their public-sector partners?
2. How do public and CSO partners navigate resource flow and dependence?
3. What evaluation activities/practices are used in CSO-public partnerships?
4. How does resource dependency influence the CSO-public partnerships and evaluation?

3 Methodology and Methods

3.1 Reseacrh Context

This research was conducted within five medium-sized municipalities across Southwestern Ontario, Canada. The study focuses on the community sport organizations (CSOs) relationship with their local municipality in each of the five mid-sized communities. The sample population provided a range of rural and urban municipalities as well as nine different sports with different organization sizes and resource capacities. Specifically, the types of sports offered by CSO groups in this study were; figure skating, basketball, baseball, soccer, hockey, swimming, synchronized swimming, gymnastics, and sledge hockey. These sport clubs also provided either; a combination of both competitive and recreational programming/activities to their participants, or focused on offering entirely competitive or entirely recreational programming/activities to their participants. These sport organizations also varied in membership size or population. Particularly, this included sport organizations with a membership size as small as fifty members to sport organizations with large membership sizes that exceeded over three thousand members.

Furthermore, the municipal or public-sector representatives included in this study have been in their positions for a number of years (i.e., five years or more years) and had a range of responsibilities such as managing facility and resource distribution, providing support and guidance, collaborating with the CSOs, and managing communication with CSOs. Moreover, the number of CSOs that each public partner worked collaboratively with varied between each municiality. For instance, a public partner in a rural municipality maintained ongoing collaborative relationships with a total of six CSOs, while a public partner in an urban

municipality maintained ongoing collaborative relationships with over a hundred CSOs in another community.

3.2 Purpose Statement

The two-fold purpose of this qualititative study was to (1) understand the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnerships, and (2) explore how resources influence partnership evaluation practices in CSO-public partnerships.

3.3 Study Design

Interorganizational relationships are a complex phenomenon and as such, adopting a qualitative approach allowed for the collection of rich data to gain a better understanding of the complexity of this phenomenon. Qualitative research aims to understand the meaning of individuals' experience of social phenomena and how they interact within that reality (Merriam, 2002). When adopting a qualitative approach, it was important to consider the multiple constructions and interpretations that exist in each situational context. As well, that individual's worlds or reality is not fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable, but is constantly in flux and subject to change over time (Merriam, 2002). The primary interest of this study was to understand the phenomenon of IORs in CSO-public-sector partnerships in order to inform our understanding of resource dependency and evaluation practices. Further insight into each partner's individual experiences and their interactions was required to interpret their situations and the nature of that setting, recognizing that each setting would have different meaning for each individual involved. Therefore, a qualitative approach was selected to elicit depth, quality, and richness from the data (Babiak, 2009).

The study employed a basic interpretative qualitative approach to understand resource exchange and dependency as well as the potential influence resources have on partnership

evaluation in CSO-public partnerships**.** A basic interpretive qualitative study is one of the most common forms of qualitative research found throughout disciplines and in many fields of practice (Merriam, 2002). According to Merriam (2002), a basic interpretive study is concerned with; "1) how people interpret their experiences, 2) how they conduct their worlds, and 3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 38). This was a useful approach for studying IORs as every relationship is an interpretable process and requires engagement from more than one individual (i.e., both parties). In recognizing that resource dependence and possible power imbalance may be present in these relationships, it was appropriate to ask participants about their experience in managing the IOR and their perception of the outcomes associated with a given relationship (cf., Babiak, 2009).

Patton (2015) explained that qualitative research can be practical, suggesting that concrete questions about people in a situation can be explored as the researcher can "skillfully ask open-ended questions of people and observe matters of interest in real world settings to solve problems, improve programs, or develop policies" (Patton, 2015, p.154). The use of qualitative methods addressed the study's two-fold purpose while grounding the analysis and discussion in the prior literature and theory outlined above. This offered flexibility to the study's design to conduct qualitative research that may be useful for drawing implications which would be relevant to the focal organizations in the study. The following sections will provide a detailed overview of the methods used to achieve the study's purpose.

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 Participants

The initial step in the data collection process was the selection of participants (Englander, 2012). A combination of criterion-based selection and purposeful sampling was utilized (e.g.,

participant must be 18 years or older male or female, participant should have worked in the position for at least one year, participant works for the CSO or the municipality, participant is a key relationship manager and has direct contact with CSO or municipality). Participants from both municipal and community sport organizations from five mid-size municipalities in Southwestern Ontario were selected. Participants were recruited through a number of means which included public websites as well as referrals from participants and friends.

I recruited participants from five mid-sized municipalities across a range of rural and urban municipalities across Southwestern Ontario and three CSOs from each municipality (i.e. fifthteen in total). For the purpose of this study, sampling five municipalities was beneficial as it provided a range of rural and urban municiapalities as well as different resource capacities.

Specifically, six participants who held a position as the Director of Community Sport Relations (or similar position) within the Department of Recreation Services across five municipalities were selected. These individuals were key relationship managers in the municipality (while this would be typically one main person, in some cases there was more than one). They were responsible for managing facility distribution, providing support, collaborating on community or sport events, and managing communication with CSOs. Each of the public participants had been in their role for six or more years (Table 1). *The Public Participant Profile Table* outlines each public partner assigned participant number/pseudonym that will be used to reference direct quotations throughout this thesis.

The first phase of interviews were conducted with the six public-sector representatives. At this time, a list of CSOs in each of the municipalities of focus were requested and gathered through the initial interviews with the public representatives. In the second phase of interviews, I began by selecting 3 CSOs (from each municipality) which represented a variety of sports and

club sizes. Therefore, a total of 15 CSO Presidents or their representative from these communities were selected. These participants had a degree of familiarity and expert knowledge of their organization's relationship with the municipality. Respectively, 15 CSO Presidents (or their representative) participated in the study and each CSO participant had been involved in a leadership role in their organization from one year to twenty years, whether in their current position or a different role on the board (Table 2). In addition, gaining the perspective of different sector partners enabled a more holistic understanding of partnership practices and evaluation strategies (Babiak, 2009) and engaging both perspectives has been typically left out of the community sport IOR literature thus far (Misener & Doherty, 2014). It is important to note that one interview included two participants, therefore a total of 14 CSO interviews were conducted and analyzed. It is also important to clarify that although I selected 15 community sport organizations (3 from each municipality); achieving this was not possible and the number of CSOs recruited from each municipality did vary. The final number of CSOs from each municipality ranged from 2 to 4.

Furthermore, participants were contacted by phone or email and provided with a detailed outline and purpose of the study. Once participants agreed to an interview, a follow-up email or phone call was conducted to go over any additional questions they may have and a meeting time for the interview was scheduled. Prior to conducting the interview which occurred either in person or over the phone, each participant was sent the information letter and consent form via email. The consent form was also reviewed before the conduction of their interview. Nine interviews were conducted in person (two interviews with two people in each) and a total of ten interviews were conducted by phone.

Table 1. *Public Participant Profile*

Public Partner	Gender	Position	Number of Years in Position	Number of CSOs partners
Public 1	Male	Manager of Sport Development	10	43
Public 2	Female	Coordinator Sport and Recreation	9	36
Public 3	Female	Manager of Community Development	6	160
Public 4	Female	Facility Supervisor	9	6
Public 5	Male	Director of Community Services	6	20
Public 5	Male	Facility Administrator	5	20

Table 2 provides an overview of the CSO participants who were interviewed for this study. Each CSO representative was also assigned a number as part of their pseudonym to further differentiate the CSOs from one another when using direct quotations.

Table 2. *Community Sport Organizations (CSOs) Participant Profile*

CSO Partner	Gender	Position	Number of Years in Position	Size of Organization
CSO 1	Male	General Manager	9	Large
CSO 2	Female	Scheduler	20	Large
CSO 3	Male	Interim President	5	Medium
CSO 4	Female	President	1	Small
CSO 5	Female	Executive Director	4.5	Large
CSO 6	Female	President	18	Large
CSO 7	Male	Executive Director	1.5	Large
CSO 8	Female	President	5	Medium
CSO 9	Female	President	6	Small
CSO 10	Male	Operations Manager	10	Small
CSO 10	Female	Coordinator of Fundraising and Operations	10	Small
CSO 11	Female	President	6	Small
CSO 12	Female	Vice President	6	Small
CSO 13	Female	Vice President	3	Small
CSO 14	Male	President	14	Medium

In these tables, gender and number of years in position are provided for informational purposes however, these characteristics were not central to the purpose of the study and therefore were not used in the analysis of the data. Number of CSO partners and size of the organization

(i.e. small, medium, or large) are included in the tables as a reference point to provide some context for the participant comments. Size of the organization was determined by asking each CSO about their membership population.

3.4.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which are a common method within qualitative research (Roulston, 2010). The use of semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate method to address the purpose of this study, as it allowed for some general structure to the interview process with a prepared interview guide (Appendix F and G), while also providing flexibility to seek further clarity and detail during the interview discussions (Roulston, 2010). Questions in the interview guide were developed from previous literature on IOR management and evaluation (e.g., Alexander, 2003; Babiak, 2003; Parent & Harvey, 2009).

Each interview began by reviewing the information letter and purpose of the study, the consent forms, addressing any additional questions, and thanking the participants for agreeing to participate in the study. Next, the interview guide served as a useful starting point for each semi-structure interview as the questions were open-ended in nature and when needed further probing of responses was possible to elicit additional insight during interview discussion (Roulston, 2010). Semi-structured interviews provided a supportive format to ask questions, while also allowing for further probing, rephrasing of questions, and the ability to ask additional questions as conversations evolved in order to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge on the public-CSO relationship.

The approach used for the interview process ensured that participants were able to be involved in the study at their convenience, at their level of comfort, and within their desired geographic location. In addition, follow-up interviews were conducted with two public

representative and two CSO representatives by email, however, these were shorter in length, asking one or two additional questions, and only pursued if initial interviews were shortened due to interruptions, or to clarify or seek further detail on responses. All face to face interviews were conducted in a location chosen by the participant, such as a coffee shop or an office for their organization and others selected a phone interview due to severe weather conditions which impacted meeting at the participants chosen geographic location. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, with the exception of two interviews that were conducted with two participants in each. To clarify, incorporating two people in the interviews was suggested by the initial recruited participant, as they felt that the second person would provide additional expertise, insights, and perspectives to the conversation as they could speak to other elements of the public-CSO relationship. During these interviews, the second person was, in fact, able to speak to additional elements and pieces of the relationship as well as provide in depth examples that offered additional clarity and detail. Interviews ranged between 40 and 150 minutes, with the majority of interviews averaging approximately 60 minutes in length. All interviews were audio recorded (Babiak, 2009).

The initial phase of interviews with public participants was completed in March – April 2019 with follow-up communication completed in May 2019. The second phase of interviews with CSO participants was completed in April - June 2019 with follow-up communication completed in July 2019. Follow-up interviews were determined when interviews were shortened (e.g., participants had another meeting to attend and/or participants daily schedules changed which shortened their availability for the interview) or interrupted (e.g., participants needed to take a phone call during the interview). As well, follow up interviews were conducted if clarity or detail on participant responses was needed. For example, follow up was conducted with a

participant who's interview was completed over the phone as a result of audio recording issues. In particular, when listening to the audio recording later it was difficult to hear or understand some of this participants responses, therefore follow up was necessary to clarify the participants responses. Additionally, all participants received a feedback letter (Appendix H) after the completion of their scheduled interview. Conducting the interviews in two phases was beneficial as public participants were able to not only provide a current and updated list of CSO partners and the contact information of the person they regularly engage with, but also offered insights and recommendations on their community sport organizations that I otherwise would not have been aware of should I have randomly selected them myself. As well, conducting interviews with public participants first elicited additional thoughts and potential probes for future interviews with CSO leaders. For example, this allowed for more focused questioning surrounding the type of support and resources that are being exchanged between public and CSO partners as well as elicited additional probing questions to ask around the nature of power or control within resource exchange to gain a greater amount of detail and more in-depth understanding of resource exchange and control within the relationship.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using inductive and deductive methods (Patton, 2015). An inductive approach to analysis was conducted first to gain an understanding of participant experiences to generate new concepts and meanings. Through my interactions with the data I was able to identify patterns, themes, and categories. Following induction, I turned to deductive analysis and drew out themes that had been established in prior IOR literature and resource dependency theory (e.g., Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003; Parent & Harvey, 2009; 2017). During this deductive phase, I examined the data and looked to

understand how the emerging findings extended or complicated already existing literature. Furthermore, I examined possible alternative perspectives from any common patterns as these were also important to the development of robust categories and themes (Patton, 2015).

The development of a manageable classification or coding scheme was the first step in anaylsis. This helped to organize the data into topics and files. I began my analysis by reading through my transcriptions, making comments in the margins that contained my notions about the data, which further allowed me to construct topics or labels for different parts. During my first read through, I identified a number of themes or patterns that helped in the development of the coded categories or classification system. The second read through involved formally coding the data in a systematic way. However, I conducted several readings of the data before the interviews were completely indexed and coded (Patton, 2015).

According to Patton (2015), when developing codes and categories in qualitative analysis, the analyst often deals with the notion of "convergence". Convergence in this case was figuring out what things fit together and identifying recurring regularities or patterns in the data. Once patterns were identified, they were then sorted into categories. However, the categories were first judged on two criteria. The first criterion that the catergories were judged on was internal homogeneity which was concerned with how the data held together or belonged in a specific category in a meaningful way. The second judgement criterion was external heterogeneity which was concerned with "which differences among categories were bold and clear" (Patton, 2015, p. 555). During this stage, I worked back and forth between the data and the established coding framework to verify the accuracy of categories and placement of data. Moreover, when several classification systems emerged from the data, I established priorities to determine which categories were most important and best illustrated the findings.

Furthermore, once analyzing for convergence was completed, I examined for divergence (Patton, 2015). At this time, I "fleshed out" the patterns or categories by process of extension, bridging, and surfacing. Extension involved building on and going deeper into the identified patterns and themes of the data in order to make connections or bridge different patterns or themes. This was then followed by surfacing to propose new categories that fit the data. Conducting divergence allowed for careful and thoughtful examination of the data. Divergence ensured that the categories had been saturated for new themes to emerge and bring to the forefront clear ideas. As well, it helped to identify those unique cases that did not fit the dominant patterns identified from the data (Patton, 2015). Finally, a deductive approach involved the formulation of a pre-set coding scheme, which was based on the emerging themes from the literature review. Once the coding scheme was established, I applied the codes to the data (Patton, 2015).

3.5 Ethical Considerations & Trustworthiness

Qualitative interviews probe the human existence in detail and give the researcher access to the subjective experiences of people's life worlds. In turn, this allows the researcher to describe participants' experiences to further our understanding of interested phenomenon. Therefore, human interaction within qualitative inquiry affects both participants and researcher (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2006). Consequently, it was necessary for ethical issues to be addressed in this research. To attend to ethical considerations**,** ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB), at the University of Waterloo prior to conducting the study. Once approval was obtained from the University of Waterloo REB, participants were contacted and informed of the purpose of the study (Fritz, 2008). To ensure that participants were free from coercion and comprehend the potential benefits and risks of the study, they were

made aware that their involvement within the study was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw their participation at any point (cf. Tracy, 2013). As well, due to the voluntary nature of the study, participants had the right to decline any of the interview questions. Prior to conducting interviews, recruitment letters and consent forms were created and reviewed by the Research Ethics Board and my supervisor. A copy of the informed consent forms for participants is included in Appendix B, C, and E. Additionally, information letters were also provided to participants, which summarized their rights and the voluntary nature of participation, this can be found in Appendix D.

Permission and consent were obtained from all participants before the conduction of their interview (Fritz, 2008). Information and consent forms were emailed to participants in advance of their scheduled interview. Prior to the interview, I was also available by phone or email for participants to have the opportunity to ask any additional questions about the research or research process. Additionally, should further clarification arise, I informed participants that they could connect with myself, my research supervisor, or the University of Waterloo REB throughout the conduction of the study. Throughout the study, raw and processed data were kept locked and/or password protected to ensure that participants anonymity and confidentiality was secured (Fritz, 2008) and will further continue to be locked and/or password protected. Furthermore, participants were assigned pseudonyms instead of personal identifiers (Tracy, 2013). For this study, pseudonyms represent the participants organization (i.e. public or CSO) along with an assigned number, as well as their position within that organization and in some cases these positions were generalized to ensure participant amonimity.

Aside from ethical considerations, it was also necessary to attend to trustworthiness when conducting qualitative research. Specifically, “how researchers go about representing findings to

others is integral to the demonstration of quality" (Roulston, 2010, p. 85). According to various authors, trustworthiness in qualitative research follows four aspects: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) (Krefting, 1990; Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2015; Shenton, 2003).

To address credibility; I employed well established research methods that were in line with the purpose of the study (Morrow, 2005; Roulston, 2010). Moreover, meetings with my supervisor were maintained to discuss and debrief the research process along with the use of a research journal throughout the study to monitor and be reflexive of my subjectivity (Shenton, 2003). To address transferability, detailed and thick descriptions of the research process including the phenomenon, research design, its implementation, data collection, data analysis, and addressing/evaluating the overall effectiveness of the process was undertaken. I took the necessary steps throughout the research process which included planning, execution, and description of results to be as detailed and clear as possible to ensure that the experiences of participants were accurately represented and the research is dependable (Krefting, 1990). Finally, confirmability was addressed by attending to opportunities for potential feedback from colleagues and peers to gain fresh perspectives on the study (Shenton, 2003).

Throughout the research process, I acknowledged that I had my own experiences in the sport setting and was sure to engage in self-reflective practices to monitor my personal subjectivity throughout the conduction of this study. Furthermore, I maintained regular communication and meetings with my research supervisor and committee members, who have not only provided guidance and insights to the study but have also supported and challenged my thinking throughout the research process to ensure the contribution of a strong empirical study to the sport and leisure field.

4 Findings

The findings of this study offer valuable insight and a greater understanding into the role of local municipalities in the delivery of sport and recreation at the community sport level in a Canadian context. This chapter presents the findings in four sections which address the two-fold purpose statement of the study. The first two sections describe the resources exchanged between public-CSO partners. The third section focuses on how they navigate resource dependency and power influence in their environment. The final section outlines the extent to which resources influence evaluation practices as well as offers insight into partner's philosophy toward evaluation, partners' current evaluation practices, and partners' critique of evaluation within their relationship.

4.1 Nature of Resource Exchange In Public-CSO Partnership

The following section outlines the findings of the first purpose of the study to: *understand the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnerships*. First, the section begins by identifying the specific resources that are being exchanged between public and community sport organization partners in five mid-size (i.e. urban and rural) municipalities in Southwestern Ontario. Following this overview, the CSOs resources exchanged with their public partners will be outlined. Notably, most of the resources provided or exchanged from each party are not necessarily the same in type, quality, or quantity. That is, one party did not provide a particular type of resource in direct exchange for another particular resource. Rather, each party offered a suite of resources that were cited as valuable to the other partner. This cumulative or "package" approach to resource exchange expands understanding beyond a "this for that" conceptualization of resource exchange and offers a holistic understanding of the nature of resource exchange.

The public partners outlined a total of seven unique resources and services that were regularly exchanged in these partnerships; (1) offer governance support, (2) facilitation of executive, special, general, and annual meetings, (3) access to infrastructure/facilities, (4) identifying, supporting, and providing grant opportunities, (5) promotion and advertising of CSO and programming, (6) volunteer management and training, and (7) access to other organizational partners. The nature of each resource will be outlined below.

4.1.1 Offer *governance Support*

The first main resource that each participant from the public sector identified was that of offering governance support. In particular, public partners explained this to be a service offered to help community sport organizations with their overall governance functions (i.e., strategic planning, developing policies), as well as establishing frameworks and procedures to help with the running of their programs. CSOs also highlighted how they use this support and reach out to their public partners to "leverage them as subject matter experts" (CSO4, President) and also using their governance expertise to help guide them down the right path to be successful (CSO4, President) on governance function and business practices. Specifically, public representatives discussed wanting to support the clubs in following best practices and procedures:

> So, what we'll do is make sure that they kind of follow best practices and procedures, so ask them about their bylaws, or the policies and we will say, Well, what does it say? Are you following it? Did you document it properly, like basically making sure that they did their due diligence. We help them that way. And then we usually, as a City, will support the organization and if there are gaps, will help minimize those doubts like, again, supporting and guiding and giving the material (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

Public partners also expressed that they are always available to aid CSO organizations in enhancing their business practices and procedures. "We do and have always been available to help them through business modeling, business planning" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and

Recreation). As well, public participants indicated that they provide input on services around AODA or inclusion, if a group is not sure how to proceed (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). In addition, helping the CSOs with the betterment of supplying the services that both public and CSOs are there to supply, which means getting more involved and helping them understand strategically where they want to go (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Essentially, public participants expressed that they "will help them along in any way, shape, and form" (Public3, Manager of Community Development). Public partners also offered their CSO partner access to specialized knowledge and expertise related to governance in times of crises or limited capacity. For example, should an affiliated sport club run into any sort of issue related to club structure or policy, or potential board/staff turnover; the public partner has the knowledge and expertise to assist those CSOs.

> Should they run into an issue and it's happened in the past… I attended a couple of their meetings because I've got a background in community development so like a brand-new chair. How do you chair a meeting, how do you do minutes? We do provide those kinds of supports for them if they ask (Public4, Facility Supervisor).

Relatedly, the public partner also helps their CSO partners to connect with outside support should it be required. "Connecting them with potentially like a sports lawyer if they need to go that far. Like we won't give legal advice. What will say is like, you should probably talk to a lawyer on this" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). This type of support was also confirmed by multiple CSO partners who had taken advantage of governance support from their public partners. In particular, the Executive Director of one community sport club expressed the value in getting this level of support and learning from his public partner. This CSO representative reflected on when he first entered into his role:

> So sometimes we can go to them and say, okay, you know, how do we do this or? and [public partner] is well versed in governance and things like when I got to the AGM and the first two days, it was a complete disaster. I'll tell you, and [public partner] will tell

> you that as well. It's a total mess. And so it was good to learn from [public partner] and I met with [public partner] before the next one. To say okay, this is what we're doing now. Does this make more sense? Is this better and the last one went really well. So, yeah, using them as a resource (CSO7, Executive Director).

Governance support is a main resource that the public partner offers to their CSOs to further aid them in the administration of sport at the community level. However, since CSOs leverage governance support on a regular basis, public participants believe that having additional human resources (i.e. people) versed in and dedicated to goverance would be beneficial. Primarily, increasing their involvement and helping with the betterment of supplying services that both CSOs and the public-sector are their to provide would be ideal to the successful administration of community sport.

4.1.2 *Facilitation of executive, special, general and annual meetings*

To offer the degree of governance support that public partners do, the public representatives offered support to CSOs by facilitating special, board, or annual meetings. Some representatives spend a great deal of time attending such meetings to ensure that questions or concerns regarding governance issues are answered.

> The sport development coordinator will spend a lot of time doing a lot of the day to day work with the sport groups, going to board meetings, helping out with…, answering questions, or any concerns with regards to governance issues with their organization. (Public1, Manager of Sport Development).

Attending and assisting CSOs with their board meetings or AGMs was indicated as a way to gain “a sense of where they're going”. Additionally, CSOs “might reach out to us to ask for help”, and that's “how we get a sense of if it's moving along” (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). As well, attendance is beneficial to public partners to be able to experience the structure of that organization’s meeting and to witness its facilitation. As expressed by one public representative:

> What I've done, especially when it's a new president is actually have a one on one meeting with them to provide the materials on how to run a board effectively, offered to run a board meeting. So that they see what it looks like, let them know … when votes need to happen around the board. What needs to be in their minutes and stuff like that. So sometimes it's very hands on, potentially even demonstrating (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

Although attendance of meetings is important to ensuring sport clubs are on track with their organizations, public partners are not required to attend all CSO board meetings. Public participants expressed that the most important meetings to attend are the ones about how they govern themselves, such as the very first initial board meeting, the AGM, and the final meeting before the AGM (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Moreover, Public representatives conveyed that they did not have the time to be at every meeting given the number of CSOs that they engage with as well, majority of the board meetings are around operational decisions which the public-sector is not involved in.

4.1.3 *Access to Infrastructure/Facilities*

Another resource that the public partner offers to CSOs is that of infrastructure and facilities. Facility access for sport groups to run their programming can include ice, pools, soccer pitches, ball diamonds, fields, courts etc. Additionally, infrastructure is not limited to facility access only and can also include; storage space (i.e. for equipment, trophies, banners etc.), office space, and meeting rooms. The acquisition of this particular resource is critical to sport organizations in the community and for most part it "really is the cause of the relationship" (CSO14, President). Public representatives recognize that the majority of clubs engage in a relationship with their municipality for this reason, "I would say 90% of what they're looking for from us is facility access" (Public3, Manager of Community Development). Moreover, public partners felt that the main reason that most of these organizations are in a long-term partnership with the municipality is because:

> we're a public entity or municipality, we deal with groups that we want to use our facilities, but they run their programs because they can't afford to run an arena or build an arena, so that's why most of them are long term. The town provides facilities, they basically facilitate the use of facilities. (Public5, Director of Community Services).

CSO participants also confirmed that facility access was a critical resource offered by the public-sector partners that determined whether they could even offer their program at all. One CSO representative stated that "If we didn't have the relationship I guess… we would be in some other town I guess or we wouldn't be able to play baseball" (CSO14, President).

Moreover, the CSOs found that being able to access storage space, office space, and meeting room space at no charge was beneficial to their organizations. This helps the CSOs financially which was indicated by a number of CSOs. A CSO representative stated that, "the meeting rooms are available at no charge because the council has deemed that not for profits can use them. So that's a huge help for us, financially (CSO10, Operations Manager). Another representative from a CSO also stated that "when it comes to office space and storage space they're saving us, tens of thousands of dollars (CSO7, Executive Director). In addition, "other facilities that have some storage that community groups just ended up getting because they asked at the right time" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). This indicates that the allocation of infrastructure/facilities does vary between sport user groups.

Interestingly, the variation of allocation between community sport clubs was a source of tension for some CSOs. Specifically, one CSO representative reflected on their organizations ability to utilize community meeting room space for their sport. The CSO conveyed that while the organization makes frequent requests to use that space it is not always approved by their public partner and they often have to find other locations within their community to meet which may not be appropriate for private or confidential discussions (CSO12, Vice President). In addition, this particular CSO representative also reflected on how the community meeting room

space is utilized for other events such as birthday parties or clinics, which negatively impacts their program operations (CSO12, Vice President). Moreover, another CSO representative expressed their difficulty with securing a dedicated dressing room space. This CSO representative expressed that they've been trying to obtain approval for a dedicated dressing that is similar to another sport organization within their building, however, their organization has continuously been denied this request. Although, they are "hoping with the expansion at the facility that there might be some better opportunities (CSO6, President).

Some CSOs noted that they had shared responsibility for upkeep of the facility and are responsible for its facility maintenance, upkeep, upgrades etc. In particular, a CSO representative stated that, "it is a city facility. We don't pay rent, but we are responsible for maintenance, upkeep, upgrades, etc. And all the operating within the building itself" (CSO5, Executive Director).

Public participants also indicated that facility rental discounts are offered to all CSO affiliates. "When you're affiliate, you get a facility rental discount, so we have a fees and charges guide that's approved by city council and if you're an affiliate you get 50% off that rate (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). This financial support helps CSOs access the required facilities and infrastructure to run their operations and programming at a reduced cost. CSOs confirmed that this financial support is critical to their operations. "They give us preferred pricing as a not for profit youth user group so for us to even try to go somewhere else like a private facility wouldn't make sense it would be too expensive" (CSO8, President). Comparably, the level of financial support provided within each municipality does vary. For example, one public representative expressed that ice-based user groups (e.g., hockey, ringette) in their facilities don't receive the same level of subsidy for ice as larger communities within the

surrounding area. The public representative expressed that as a township the CSOs don't receive quite the same subsidy as larger communities (Public4, Facility Supervisor). Furthermore, the public-sector is working with a wide range of CSOs in their community and only have a finite number of facilities, therefore the public sector determines access for CSOs (i.e. which facilities and at what times of day for use). In order to do this, public participants expressed that access to facilities is based on priority, as stated by one public representative:

> We have priority on how we allocate. So, we do kind of city direct programming for youth first, any, like special event agreements come as well. But then there's like affiliate organizations. And then it works down to like, private and commercials. So, there's, that's kind of a benefit, they usually always get information around any public engagements around the policy, policy, that kind of like a direct email on that, just kind of a benefit (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

Similarly, another public representative expressed that the size and need of some of the CSOs also is taken into account during facility scheduling and booking. As a result, some of the larger organizations with greater needs do receive priority for many of the fields (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Moreover, the organization's history of use is taken into account when determining which CSOs are booked at a certain day and time. The public-sector also considers whether the organization is a youth or adult nonprofit sport organization during booking as youth sport organizations do have priority access before adult sport organizations.

4.1.4 *Identifying, supporting, and providing grant opportunities*

The opportunity for CSOs to acquire financial support beyond their membership fees/revenue can have a significant impact on the success of the sport organizations. All municipalities indicated that various grants are available for CSOs that are affilated with them. For example, one public representative stated that:

> We provide a number of grant opportunities as well, so if they're a new club trying to fall under the Not-for-Profit Act, we have a community development fund that could help,

> that they could access and we'll pay all their legal fees to do that (Public3, Manager of Community Development).

In addition, staff support is offered to CSOs during the application process. Specifically, a public representative stated that:

> Obviously, they have support through staff, so if they do have a new idea, or wanting to do something, or apply for community cash grants, they'll reach out to us and so kind of like a sounding board again, kind of a mentor (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

The public partners also concluded that it is often during conversation of an organization's vision or goals that the suggestion of grants is presented. As stated by a public representative:

> The board members were working with them, already as they're talking about what their vision and goals are, it may come up in conversation that every year they're expanding this way or doing this and we need more resources for this and then our staff person will help access the funding for them (Public3, Manager of Community Development).

The CSOs confirmed that being in a relationship with their public partner provided them certain financial benefits through grants and it was certainly cost effective for them to be in a relationship with their local municipality. As stated by one CSO representative:

> There's very good financial reasons to have an affiliation. So those can be sometimes for example, a tiered relationship for certain costs effectiveness and then also, there are a variety of grants that are also available when there's a long standing and successful affiliation relationship (CSO4, President).

Financial resources are critical to the CSOs, as well for some municipalities the public sector also benefits from the opportunity for CSOs to apply for and obtain additional financial support, which is important to the delivery of sport at the community level. Respectively, obtaining grant opportunities aid CSOs in achieving their vision, mission, and goals as well as further help to provide successful sport programming to members of the community. Moreover,

public and CSO partners work together to put forth a strong application to obtain the necessary funding.

4.1.5 *Promotion and advertising of CSO and programming*

Public partners often cited that they will assist the community sport user groups with advertising their programs through the city's social media, websites, and signage. For example, one public representative stated that they offer "discounted rates for our community guide for advertising. It's just twitter and that big front sign that we will do free advertising on for any community events" (Public4, Facility Supervisor). Specifically, public partners will help with the development of CSO advertisements to ensure appropriateness of material and delivery of information to people in the community. The public partners also offered the sport user groups with the opportunity to display their program pamphlets within and throughout city facilities, as well as on various social media and communication platforms. This was also confirmed by the CSO partner, who noted that "there's all sorts of things like if we're running events, they'll put promotions on to the city website …or any of those storyboards where they've got advertising for it" (CSO6, President). Using city channels for the promotion of club programs was viewed as an important support and resource for many clubs who noted that they would not otherwise be able to promote as widely within their communities.

4.1.6 *Volunteer management and training*

Public participants expressed an understanding that CSOs are generally volunteer-led organizations and that this structure can have both positive and negative aspects. According to one public representative, "some operate at different scales and cycles, so you'll get a group that's been around for a long time and fairly well operated and they have some professional staff, however the board may turn over" (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Several public

representatives noted that turnover of key volunteers including board members can require a lot of time and attention from the public staff to assist new board members or CSO staff coming in:

> Typically, when you have a huge board turnover and it's an older board, their bylaws, how new are their bylaws, how relevant are there policies? That's the stuff that takes [our] time because usually that involves a bit of a restructure as well (Public1, Manager of Sport Development).

This highlights the time and commitment that public representatives dedicate to these volunteer-led organizations to ensure that they have all the information they need to successfully manage their operations. Public participants also indicated that training workshops are another resource or in-kind service provided to their sport club affiliates. Particularly, volunteer workshops are offered for free by the public-sector. A public representative expressed that:

> We will kind of do a survey of our affiliates to find the training they're looking for, or we kind of recognize it's going to the groups like, you know, volunteer screening might be important. So, will run workshops with experts, and the organizations can come for free to get that workshop just again, so they become a better governance (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

Additionally, another public representative suggested that they offer training and information sessions to their CSOs at least once a year to review certain policies or new policies as well as changes in legislation (Public4, Facility Supervisor). In addition, this representative further suggested that they also bring in paramedics or the local fire department to offer AED training (Public4, Facility Supervisor).

4.1.7 *Access to other organizational partners*

The notion of structural social capital emerged from participant interviews, indicating that the public partners provided CSOs with access to others through public engagement. Both public and CSO participants expressed that they worked collaboratively with one another and had opportunities to network with other CSO organizations in the community. A CSO representative reflected on how their public partner helps their organization to engage, socialize,

and stay involved with people and other sport clubs in the community. The CSO representative expressed that if there are events that the public partner feels are a good fit, where the organization would have a good opportunity to connect more closely with the community to make them aware of the services they provide or with other clubs, the public partner does reach out and invite the club to participate (CSO4, President). Additionally, another CSO representative expressed that their public partner presents various opportunities to attend events and set up booths to network with other organizations and members in their community (CSO7, Executive Director). Moreover, one municipality holds a President's dinner every year which is an opportunity for CSOs in the community to network. A public representative stated that:

> it's a network, all the President's come together, and we'll have three speakers, usually. And we run a workshop…we'll find a group that's really good at that or just went through a hiccup and got over the hurdle to speak. So, then the organizations are learning from the organizations on how to be successful in fiscal and volunteer screening in policy making for example, and then they'll exchange business cards or give examples. So, a lot of the times if a group is struggling with something and I think somebody's done a really good job on it, I'll reach out to that organization … and so we're actually trying to interconnect the community groups, so they don't have to reinvent the wheel (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

This theme highlights that municipal staff are providing opportunities to CSO organizations to access others who they would normally not know and who can provide the club with additional knowledge or expertise.

4.2 CSO Resources Exchanged with Public Partner

Correspondingly, CSO partners also outlined a variety of resources and services that they exchange with their public partners. The findings revealed that a total of six resources and services were exchanged; sport leadership and engaging sport volunteers, information sharing on sport trends, creating accessibility, creating lifelong participation, economic impact, and

enhancing facility usage and planning. Together, these themes illustrate the myriad of resources that a CSO can and currently do offer a municipal partner.

4.2.1 *Sport leadership and engaging sport volunteers*

Within the public-CSO partnership, all CSO participants recognized that they provide a valuable level of leadership in the delivery of their sport to the community in the form of knowledge and expertise of a particular sport. Specifically, a CSO representative conveyed that he maintains a number of connections with various professional organizations for recreation as well as links to Sport Ontario, and through these connections he is gaining information and knowledge around that [sport]. The CSO representative further explained that because of his knowledge and expertise he is also able to understand information about [sport] and how best to utilize this sport knowledge to maintain a leadership role in [that sport] in the community (CSO1, General Manager). CSO participants confirmed that providing quality programming for members of their community to participate in [sport] is one of the main resources that they provide or exchange with their public-sector partner.

Public participants also echoed this level of sport leadership from their community sport organizations. Particularly a public representative stated that:

> We have a bunch of community volunteers and/or some paid staff, who run that and administer that, execute that, has the expertise in those sports and those sport areas. Who work closely with the PSOs and the NSOs, who really know how to execute the sport development program (Public3, Manager of Community Development).

This was also expressed by another public representative who stated that, “they provide the instruction and we don’t have to worry about it. It’s so much easier!” (Public4, Facility Supervisor). This highlights the importance of sport leadership as a resource to the public sector. Ultimately, the public-sector is benefiting from the community sport organizations knowledge and expertise in their sport, as they work closely with the PSOs and NSOs to be strong leaders in

their sport as well as ensure the delivery of quality programming. In turn, this makes it easier for the public-sector since they are not necessarily the foremost expertise on any of the sports or sport delivery or sport development programming.

4.2.2 *Information sharing on sport trends*

CSOs regularly share information with their public partner such as board minutes, monthly & annual financial reports, list of programs, sport membership numbers and so on. CSOs are responsible for maintaining monthly and annual financial reports, as well as keeping accurate recording of executive, general, or annual meeting minutes. On a monthly basis, CSOs will share this information with public partners to keep them up to date on the organization (e.g. what is happening in the organization in regard to operations or programs). This is recognized as a method of communication between the partners, a way for CSOs to share information or provide a monthly summary of what is occurring within the organization to the public partner. A CSO representative expressed that "it's a lot of information sharing about a whole bunch of different things" (CSO8, President). Further explaining that the public partner takes this information from their community sport groups to make changes over time (CSO8, President).

For the public partner, information sharing gives public representatives a sense of how the sport is doing in the community. Particularly, "from a facility provision standpoint, who's doing what? How full are we?... what is the demand in the community?" (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). As well, this information is beneficial to understand CSOs fixed assets and whether equipment needs to be changed (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Public partners do expect some disclosure of information from their CSOs, particularly around membership numbers as the public sector is investing in these clubs and giving them priority on facility access (Public3, Manager of Community Development). Obtaining this information is

considered valuable to understand the increase or decrease of membership growth of their CSOs to make changes or adjustments to facility access and usage. Furthermore, information sharing is valuable to the public partner to gain an understanding of board decisions since the public-sector is providing tax payer dollars. More importantly, if the community is not happy with a decision then the municipality can review policy and strategy to make adjustments or changes that benefit the community or ensure things are line with what CSOs are actually doing (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

4.2.3 *Creating accessibility*

CSO partners emphasized that they provide accessible recreational, instructional, and competitive programs to residents in their community that the municipality itself would not be able to offer alone. Specifically, a CSO representative stated that "we couldn't exist without the city. And they couldn't offer the programs at the prices we do, without us" (CSO1, General Manager). Similarly, another CSO representative expressed that:

> We have happy people, we're offering programs at a reasonable rate. We're getting lots of people in, we have lots of people who are on financial support that we take in and help with, there's a lot of things that we do. We have a special needs program, we do a whole bunch of different things (CSO5, Executive Director).

Moreover, CSOs confirmed that they make every effort to ensure that they keep their fees at a reasonable rate, "our whole goal is to drive fees down" (CSO11, President) to ensure that members in the community are able to access their services. Likewise, another CSO representative also reflected on the accessibility of their programming, stating that, "we want everybody to play, right. That's not something most communities can boast, that they're minor [sport club] takes care of that on their own" (CSO1, General Manager). Public partners recognize that "the main reason for affiliating was towards what services these groups provide", as the municipality otherwise wouldn't be able to provide these services to the community (Public2,

Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Essentially, CSOs are providing an opportunity for members in the community to participate regardless of their ability or socio-economic status. For the public-sector this is an important resource as they want to eliminate the barrier to participation that members in their community may experience due to programming fees or accessibility concerns (Public3, Manager of Community Development).

4.2.4 Creating lifelong participation

CSO participants expressed that they are creating lifelong participation within their programs and services that they offer to community members. “We want people to be active. You know, at the very base of it. We want people to participate in sports and be active for life” (CSO7, Executive Director). Both public and CSO partners indicated that this was an important resource provided by CSOs. Within their communities, CSOs are encouraging an active lifestyle to their participants for hopefully the rest of their lifetime, which is further recognized by public partners as beneficial to community development. A public representative expressed:

> It's proven, kids in sport that have participated in ... continue to participate in sport through their lifetime, and are involved and continue to be involved, are generally … a bit more community minded and are willing to give back to the community, as well…they're willing to be the future coaches, they're willing to be the future volunteers, within their sport. So those are key pieces, in regard to regenerating the sport on an ongoing basis (Public1, Manager of Sport Development).

This is a critical resource exchanged to public partners by the CSOs. For the CSOs, they hope that the participants in their programs are involved in sport for the rest of their lifetime. For the public partner, this also in turn will hopefully create more community minded members who are willing to continue to give back to the community as the municipality can not offer such services by themselves alone.

4.2.5 *Economic impact*

CSO partners recognized that their municipalities have limited funds to disperse amongst the various sport user groups within their community. This level of funding was particularly important when CSOs expressed the need to expand and build new infrastructure/facilities because of the growth happening in their programming and in the organization. Multiple CSOs expressed that they were a critical resource for their municipality to assist in securing new funding sources to expand on infrastructure or improve the quality of the already existing facilities.

> You know, we have worked with the town in the past when we've done fundraising to improve the quality of the diamonds when money wasn't necessarily available… and we are in that again as the town's looking into expanding and building a large new complex that will have multiple soccer pitches, football fields, and multiple ball diamonds that kind of stuff. So, we're starting to prepare and put money away for fundraising to help kind of donate to the town (CSO14, President).

The CSOs believe that this is a way of partnering with the municipality and assisting in the development of required resources to successfully operate and provide quality program to members of the community. For example, a CSO representative stated that:

> We also give back by… we paid for the building of this portion of the facility. So, we fundraised, minor [sport] alone, $200,000. And we're part or leaders of the capital campaign for this whole building that raised over 2 million (CSO1, General Manager).

In these cases, the CSO offered expertise, volunteer labour, time, and connections to ensure that funding sources were secured.

CSOs also felt that they are an important economic resource for their municipality by hosting special events and tournaments during their sports season. Specifically, those sport clubs of a certain size are able to attract provincial championships in their sport and "that's the piece that helps promote the city as well and the organizations" (CSO6, President). Moreover, "it equally helps to promote the city as a great place to host" (CSO6, President). As well, this

particular CSO representative explained that some of their weekend tournaments bring in a large number of teams and families into the community.

> Because we are able to host in the facilities that we've got through the city, our tournaments are sold out each time and we bring, the first weekend in November, we bring in 86 teams and families. Everything into the city and then the first week in December, we do it again and we have 78 teams that come for that particular tournament. So, we believe we're contributing economically to the city as well, by bringing those people (CSO6, President).

The CSOs use of the facility and the tournaments that are hosted within municipal facilities does have a positive economic impact and benefits the municipality overall.

> And, you know we host three swim meets a year so those people are coming into the town. We could do more of that, I guess there may be at some point in time, but that kind of benefit I think is there (CSO11, President).

Likewise, another CSO representative expressed that their municipality is very keen about hosting such events and recognize the economic spinoff that occurs from them. “They’re really keen about all that because and we recognize how good it is for the sport and also how good it is for the township and the economic spin off and everything… the township is making money” (CSO10, Coordinator of Fundraising and Operations). Similarly, public participants also recognized the impact that this has on tourism to the community. A public representative stated that “because sport to the community, whether it's sport tourism, recreational or competitive, it provides huge value to your community, makes it a great destination to be and economic development ties to that as well” (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Further explaining that “the spill-over to that is really positive for the community” (Public1, Manager of Sport Development).

4.2.6 Enhancing *facility usage and planning*

CSO participants felt that without their services and programs the municipal

facilities and infrastructure may otherwise sit empty and not be used. A CSO participant expressed that "we're providing programs for the city…we're getting lots of people in" (CSO5, Executive Director). Likewise, a public participant stated that "they are the primary users of our facility" (Public4, Facility Supervisor). In addition, the municipality is generating revenue from the CSOs who provide their services and programming in a municipal owned and operated facility. A CSO representative stated that:

> I think we're to a point now where we're reasonably generating, you know, we're taking up a fair bit of [facility] time that otherwise would sit there empty and there making money from right. So, so that part is good. (CSO11, President).

Relatedly, another CSO representative expressed that their organization is the only league that uses a particular facility space (CSO13, Vice President) and because of this there public partner is very accommodating to the organizations needs as well as to making any facility changes to better accommodate the sport programming.

Furthermore, CSOs are increasingly engaging in the development and management of strategic planning, while also communicating these plans with their public partner to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of their organization within the community. Specifically, CSOs who have a strategic plan exchange this resource with their public partner, which in turn helps the municipality during the development of their long-term recreation and leisure business plan for the community. Similarly, public representatives reflected on the importance of CSOs having a strategic plan/direction and sharing this information with them in relation to growth (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). In particular, public representatives highlighted CSOs planning as useful to their understanding of sport facility usage. Interestingly, CSOs who exchange their strategic plan with their public partner helps them to make informed decisions about current and future sport facility usage. With this information, the public partner is able to determine if there

is a sufficient number of sport facilities for CSO programming and operations or if their community is lacking in sport facility infrastructure. As a result, the public partner benefits from this resource in order to plan appropriately and push for the development of new infrastructure if a need is identified (Public5, Director of Community Services). Alternatively, public partners can use CSO planning to change the types of facilities based on how programming is changing or direction of programming and further augmenting facilities to better suit long-term athlete development (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). This illustrates public and CSOs level of collaboration in relation to planning to ensure facility usage long-term.

Table 3. Summary of Resources Exchanged in Public-CSO Partnership

Public Resources Exchanged	CSO Resources Exchanged
Offer governance support Facilitation of executive, special, general, or annual meetings Access to Infrastructure/Facilities Identifying, supporting, and providing grant opportunities Promotion and advertising of CSOs and programming Volunteer management and training Access to other organizational partners	Sport leadership and engaging sport volunteers Information sharing on sport trends Creating accessibility Creating lifelong participation Economic impact (e.g. hosting special events/tournaments, fundraising/donations for sport in municipality) Enhancing facility usage and planning

4.3 Navigating Resource Dependency

This section presents the core themes that represent how Public-CSO partners navigate potential resource dependence and power influence in their relationship: (1) equity in decision making, (2) fostering common vision, (3) offering mutual support, (4) increasing coordination

and efficiency, (5) reduce uncertainty and promoting organizational stability (see Figure 1 for overview of effective practices).

4.3.1 Equity in decision making

Most public-CSO partners felt that their relationship achieves an "ongoing level of success" (CSO1, General Manager) that each, individually, would not be able to achieve on their own. Many CSOs and public participants felt that they were dependent on one another to deliver sport programming to members in the community. A CSO representative expressed that "there's a vested interest in good sports programming from the city, and a vested interest in successful and good facilities from us. And so, there is a partnership there that makes this work." (CSO1, General Manager). Essentailly, public-CSO partners felt that this is a necessary relationship to facilitate and for majority of CSOs in their community, it's "the only partnership we could have to facilitate" (CSO13, Vice President) sport programming. Moreover, from a public perspective, participants recognized that they alone do not have the human resources (i.e., people) to organize and operate a lot of the direct sport programming in the community. As well, pubic partners acknowledged that financially "it wouldn't necessarily be the most affordable" to members in the community and "nor are we the foremost experts on any of those sports" (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). In fact, as participants reflected on the nature of their relationship they believed that typically both public and CSOs maintained similar concerns and needs, which directly impacted how decisions were made in the relationship. According to a CSO representative "it wouldn't be very often, that we wouldn't all be kind of pushing for the same decision to be made to benefit the organizations" (CSO8, President).

Likewise, CSOs believed that their public partner values what the CSO brings to the table and their contribution to the community (CSO5, Executive Director). Additionally, that public

partners “do have a sense of, we’re working for you people like, you are the groups providing this service” (CSO8, President). In addition, public-CSO partners believe there is a good balance in negotiating the allocation of resources and respected one another's autonomy to make decisions. According to a CSO representative,

> I’d say 80% of resources are determined jointly, then 20% of them are at the base of the city. Now, once we have our resources, how we utilize them, the city is very good about how we utilize those resources is up to us. (CSO1, General Manager).

This CSO also expressed that “I think because it’s as structured as it is, we are allowed to make operational choices and policies that supports us being successful” (CSO1, General Manager).

Specifically, public-CSO partners discussed the implementation of a facilities rental policy or facilities allocation policy, which levels the playing field for sport organizations requiring facility access (CSO6, President). A CSO representative expressed that both CSOs and their public partner were highly involved in the creation of such agreements and policies to ensure that all concerns, questions, or challenges toward facility allocation were addressed (CSO6, President). Although, public participants recognized that the resources are theirs and they do have “full control over them” (Public1, Manager of Sport Development), the agreements are in place to determine who has access to what and when (i.e. historical use, participation growth, youth versus adult groups) as well as who is responsible for operation, maintenance, and costs. According to one public representative, allocation policies specific to playing surfaces are based on registration numbers along with the governing body standard of players. Public partners will look at how much of that particular playing surface that they have and how much they want to provide to adult groups versus youth group and versus private or commercial groups (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Public participants also indicated that CSOs are guaranteed

the same days and times for their programming from previous years. As well, in order to be fair, a public representative expressed that:

> What we've tried to do is balance it, instead of providing all the [sport facility] to one organization and other groups having to go outside the city boundaries, we said, we can provide 75% of your needs in our facilities and the other 25% you either have to get creative and do shared [space] or use undesirable time, like morning [sport facility space] or whatever, or go outside the city boundaries. This is all we can provide. To be fair (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

This also illuminates the public partners efforts at maintaining a balance in power by ensuring that the public sector is providing a fair distribution of resources across CSOs as well as ensuring that there is no unfair treatment between community sport user groups and CSOs do not perceive any unfair treatment in comparison to other CSO groups.

Moreover, in terms of monetary resources, public participants indicated that they maintain "very high control in the sense that they're Council approved" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). As well, CSO participants also expressed that they have no say or influence over the city budgets that are set for sports and recreation in the community. However, a public representative did reflect on if there was suddenly a change in variants from council that there would be an outcry from the community and they would be required to still have public engagement and explain why that is happening (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Ultimately, the public representative felt that both CSO and public partners maintain a certain level of control over resources and stated that:

> We are restrained a little bit in knowing that the impact to the community can be high…and when it comes to the non-monetary stuff… they hold a lot more control over that. It's their property…we definitely have ownership over certain pieces, but we recognize that neither one can stand in isolation of the other. I would say we have control, but I would say they have control. (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

Similarly, the majority of CSO participants had minimal concerns over the control of resources. Although, CSOs are "100% dependent" on their municipal partner for resources,

majority of the CSOs believed that having such practices (i.e. facility rental policy, allocation policy, grants/discounts) promotes fairness in decision-making surrounding resource distribution, helps CSOs navigate power and resource flow in their environments, and helps to balance the relationships between CSOs and their public partners as well as between other CSO groups. A CSO representative expressed in regard to control that:

> Not really, only because I understand how full the arenas are. They're very good at making sure that all the needs of the user groups are met first before they make [sport facility space] available for other people. They really do take as much of our needs into consideration before… they start looking at the profit organizations and what not. So, they're good that way. We all want more [sport facility space] but … I don't know. I think they're fair. They don't take away from one group and give it to another just because someone asks for it. What it is that you have, the [sport facility space] that you have is always your [sport facility space] until you give it up (CSO8, President).

In contrast, the public partners felt that "it is difficult to balance everyone's interests" (Public5, Director of Community Services). Similarly, some CSO participants did discuss the challenges with securing access to those critical resources (i.e. facility/infrastructure) and explained that the process does, at times, "require a lot of negotiation" (CSO4, President). For some of these CSO participants, current processes and practices put in place by their public partner to determine resource allocation does create some additional hurdles and challenges for CSOs to overcome when trying to secure resources (CSO12, Vice President). For example, a CSO participant reflected on the frustration they experienced when trying to change their facility rental time for their upcoming sport season as well as highlighted the difficulty when trying to secure a new time for their programming (CSO12, Vice President). This CSO stated that "nobody wants to change… it's hard" (CSO12, Vice President). This showcases that challenges in relation to resource distribution can still emerge even with policies and procedures in place.

Additionally, public participants also expressed that control over resources can shift depending on how strong of a voice a CSO has, how political the CSO is, and how willing a

CSO group is to cooperate with all the CSOs and the public partner (Public4, Facility Supervisor). For example, it was expressed that in some circumstances, CSOs will contact the Mayor of the municipality in order to get what they want in terms of reosurces (playing surfaces, equipment, storage space, etc.) and the end result would be the public-sector partner having to make it happen (Public4, Facility Supervisor). This highlights the shift in power that can occur between public and community sport organizations as well as the power that the CSOs have and further utilize to their advantage to achieve what they want or need.

CSOs and public participants also reflected on both partners ability to be flexible, negotiate, and offer a level of understanding in the relationship. Specifically, a CSO representative felt that "there's a fair give and take, and a fair understanding" (CSO1, General Manager) in the relationship. This CSO representative also stated in relation to decision making that "it's not just carte blanche, black or white. It's understanding the entire thing is a sliding scale of grey and we all have to be able to live with the result" (CSO1, General Manager). As well, another CSO representative stated that:

> You can't continue forward if you, if you refuse to figure out a way to make it work. Like it's just going to shut your program down. It's just not, that's not where you want to go. (CSO10, Hockey Operations).

Likewise a public representative stated that "I think the municipality …understands each other's resources and what CSOs offer and bring to the table" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Primarily, public and CSO partners felt that they "work together to rectify problems, so that we're both happy in general" (CSO14, President). This highlights the importance of creating a good balance in negotiation of resources, creating opportunities to enhance understanding, and ensure decision making power within the public-CSO relationship as well as

with the other community sport groups, as each partner has challenges and limitations surrounding access to those critical resources.

4.3.2 Fostering common vision

The research revealed that the public-CSO relationship fostered a common vision, which helped CSOs and public partners navigate resource dependence and potential power influence in the relationship. Public-CSO partners expressed that they felt they were ultimately working towards similar goals and objectives for the community. As a result, public-CSO partners often asked themselves "how can we work better together to provide service to the residents" (Public4, Facility Supervisor). Essentially, public participants felt that they are "trying to make things better for the clubs because, really, it's about the end user and they're using our facilities more and providing good choices for our community" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Public participants also expressed that their CSO partners are willing to work with them because they know that each other are in it for the best interest of the community (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). In addition, by working together to provide these services to their communities they are creating a healthier, active, and more involved community (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). "Providing a healthy active lifestyle… and you know something for the kids to do, skill development is really, really important" (Public4, Facility Supervisor).

Furthermore, CSOs also expressed that they felt that they shared "similar concerns and objectives" (CSO8, President) with their public partners, as well as a "combined vision" (CSO5, Executive Director) for the community. "We want people to be active. You know, at the very base of it. We want people to participate in sports and be active for life" (CSO7, Executive Director). In contrast, public representatives also expressed that at times they find that their CSO

partners are only looking out for their own organization. However, the public-sector is looking out for the interest of all users and they base their decisions on what is right or best for the community as a whole. As a result, this does create some debate at times because CSOs were perceived as not seeing the whole picture (Public5, Director of Community Services). CSOs also reflected on this notion of looking out for their own organization and at times disagreeing with their public partner. A CSO representative expressed that:

> We butt heads with them. But, again, when I say butting heads, it's often in a constructive way. You know, you get frustrated sometimes even when you're being constructive. You're trying to get your point of view out and sometimes you have to walk away from the table. You go home and go, okay, I get it, and then, you look at it from somebody else's perspective and come back. So, you know, there's lots of discussions (CSO1, General Manager).

Although disagreements do occur within the relationship, public-CSO partners communicate through it and discuss the different elements to come to an understanding and agreement that aligns with the relationships common purpose. Considerably, this highlights the importance of fostering and maintaining a common vision to shift CSO and public partners focus to work together to achieve individual/group objectives and goals. Respectively, for the public-CSO partnership they are able to better navigate resource dependence and further decrease the potential power influence in their relationship because of this common vision.

4.3.3 Offering mutual support

Public-CSO partners also felt that they were offering each other mutual support in order to achieve their goals and objectives. As previously mentioned, public partners noted that they are working towards an engaged, active, and healthier community. According to a public representative, “one of our strategic goals is a healthy and greener community and getting people active is definitely one of our overarching strategic goals. So, they help us 100% on that”

(Public3, Manager of Community Development). Public partners expressed that they felt like they are unable to provide these activities and services on their own.

> I would say the partnerships exist to provide these activities but also just to like to we can't do it alone. I can't do it as a municipality, they can't do it just as a minor sport. How can we work better together to provide service to the residents (Public4, Facility Supervisor).

Likewise, CSOs expressed that their public partner is a great resource and support for their programming and the needs of their programming (CSO13, Vice President). A CSO representative stated that "they've made it clear that they have every intention of helping to support our organization and being successful. Because the more successful the organizations are, the happier the residents of the city are (CSO4, President). Another CSO felt that "there is someone there to fall back on and help to provide guidance, and support, and tools etc. in order for organizations to move forward" (CSO5, Executive Director). CSOs also expressed that through collaboration with their public partner they have also been able to develop stronger relationships with other CSO groups in the community and have also gained support from their CSO partners as well (CSO10, Operations Manager). Additionally, CSOs also felt that they are heard by their public partner when making scheduling requests and that their public partner does their best to take care of all their sport user groups. A CSO representative stated that:

> There's definitely some open dialogue when it comes to scheduling…we basically tell them, what our desires and needs are if you will, and later in the year, if the other user groups want to get access to some of our time they ask us…the town ask us if we're able to provide some of our time to some of the other user groups…the town does their best to take care of other user groups and free some of the other times up. (CSO14, President).

Therefore, aside from being an important resource to CSOs, these findings illuminate the level of support that each partner offers each other. Further highlighting mutual supports influence on the public-CSO partnership. Participants felt that providing mutual support to one

another is ensuring a strong mutual commitment to not only individual but community goals and objectives. Furthermore, participants felt a sense of reassurance and shared responsibility for maintaining the relationship because of mutual support.

4.3.4 Increasing coordination and efficiency

Throughout the interviews, participants discussed how the public-CSO relationship increased coordination and efficiency, not only between the public and CSO partner, but also amongst all of the community sport organizations within the community. For example, public participants felt that through collaboration the amount of time and effort required on their end to potentially find resources or make changes to allocated resources was reduced. A public representative stated that "most of the groups that I find, they're willing to work with each other because they're in the same position, they both want to increase their membership or maintain it, and figure out what works best for everybody" (Public5, Facility Clerk). Another public representative expressed that the CSO groups "will work collaboratively" (Public3, Manager of Community Development). In addition, this public representative further expressed that some of the CSO groups are highly functioning and will coordinated with one another because they have been involved in their organizations for a number of years and so "they know each other, they work together, and get together" to ensure satisfaction of resource distribution and allocation between all sport user groups of a particular playing surface (Public3, Manager of Community Development). A CSO representative stated that "sometimes if there is an issue during the middle of the year and somebody needs to switch they're [sport facility] time and then we talk to each other and then we can switch it" (CSO10, Operations Manager). This showcases the increased coordination among CSOs to work collaboratively in relation to resources.

CSO participants also discussed the benefit of sport user group meetings that are held by their public partner for specific playing surfaces. A CSO representative stated that the "idea of having [sport] users coming together is I think, been a really good thing" (CSO10, Coordinator of Fundraising and Operations). This CSO representative further expressed that other partnerships with CSOs have "evolved because they've been at these [sport] meetings, we recognize their issues… and we develop a great relationship with them, because… they sit at the table with us" (CSO10, Coordinator of Fundraising and Operations).

Moreover, the implementation of the facility rental agreements or allocation policies of resources for CSO groups has certainly reduced the amount of conflict between organizations over resources. Particularly, a CSO representative reflected on a time prior to the development of their community's allocation policy and highlighted the constant fighting that occurred with other associations over resources (CSO6, President). This CSO representative further stressed the negative influence the fighting had on other CSO relationships and their relationship with their public partner "and that's not a good thing" (CSO6, President). In fact, from an operational standpoint, the implementation of the policy has helped to streamline scheduling. Instead of the city continuously getting involved every time a change in scheduled time was needed, the allocation policy set clear expectations that any changes would be negotiated association to association and then communicated to the city (CSO8, President). This lessens the amount of time, energy, and effort required by the public partner to coordinate among the CSOs.

However, public participants emphasized the struggle that they experience when trying to ensure that all of their sport user groups have access to their required resources. A public representative stated that "the struggle we have with any facility, and you go to any municipality anywhere, everyone wants to play Monday through Thursday, from a minor sport perspective"

(Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Another public representative suggested that making changes to resources "can be very easy or very difficult" and if the CSO is "looking out for themselves" or if the changes "don't work for them, then they're not going to do it" (Public5, Facility Administrator). Similarly, a CSO representative reflected on when their public partner would reach out on the behalf of another CSO and stated that "I mean they ask for the other user groups, but they know when they're sending the email it's probably a no" (CSO9, President). This highlights how the public partner, at times, is challenged by the competing interests and needs of their CSO partners. This also showcases how even though the public partner may try to coordinate with other CSOs, these groups are not always willing to be flexible and coordinate changes, which creates levels of tension and frustration on both sides of the partnership and among the other CSO user groups.

While, certain practices and processes implemented into the public-CSO partnership have for the most part increased coordination at the dyadic and network level of public-CSO relationships; the findings above also illustrates the negative impact that can occur to the coordination and efficiency of the public-CSO partnership and also to the whole network.

4.3.5 Reducing uncertainty and promoting organizational stability

The research revealed that participants felt that their public-CSO relationship reduced uncertainty in their environment. For public partners, CSOs are the "primary users" (Public4, Facility Supervisor) of the facilities in their community, which is critical to their business. For CSOs, the relationship with their municipality provided a sense of stability and confidence knowing that they would secure their required resources in their operating environment. This was expressed by a CSO representative who stated that:

> Without it, we wouldn't be able to run, you know, a consistent, organized league. Because the way they run it with the permits and it's legal and it's, you know, we know what we're getting. We never have to worry from week to week (CSO9, President).

Additionally, several participants reflected on the creation and implementation of each municipality's allocation policy and stressed the benefit of having a predictable policy in place for resource access. Specifically, "it does give some stability too of the organization, because we know what the parameters are" (CSO6, President). Moreover, participants expressed that they felt a lot of concern and a lack of support before such policies were developed.

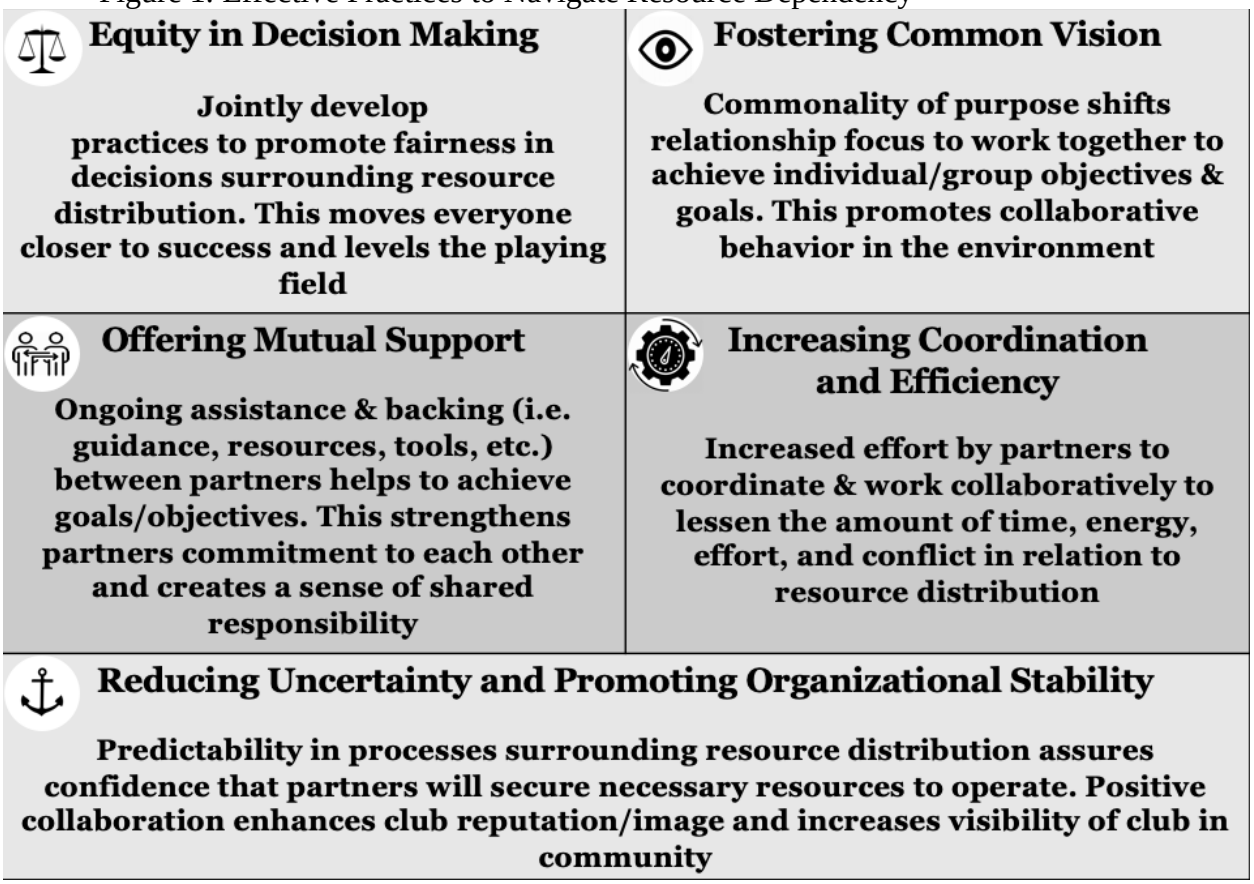
> There was a lot of concern, like we were constantly needing to go get more [sport facility playing space] and more because our numbers were growing and we just are not getting any, any support for that. So, this helped and it put in a fair process. So, we know if our numbers go up, we have the opportunity as the cycle goes through to get additional [sport facility playing space] (CSO6, President).

However, if public partners are unable to provide such resources, it does become increasingly more expensive and difficult for non-profit sport groups to acquire resources. "If they can't accommodate that then we have to go to another source and that's not easy" (CSO10, Coordinator of Fundraising and Operations).

Furthermore, CSO participants also expressed that by establishing a successful relationship with their municipality they are more likely to obtain and retain membership within their community. In particular, a CSO representative discussed the benefit of maintaining a successful relationship with their public partner and suggested that people in the community are more likely to visit or join their club because they recognize their organization as an affiliated partner with the municipality who has built a strong, trustful, and long-term relationship which in turn positively impacts their membership growth (CSO4, President). Considerably, this CSO representative felt that community members are more likely to participate in their programming

because of their ongoing successful relationship with the municipality over an organization that does not maintain a partnership with the public-sector.

Figure 1. Effective Practices to Navigate Resource Dependency



4.4. Partnership Evaluation Practices in Public-CSO Partnership

The findings revealed that evaluation practices differed in each municipality. Respectively, majority of public and CSO participants from each municipality expressed that they do not formally (i.e. surveys, planned or implemented evaluation tools/frameworks) evaluate their public-CSO relationship. Rather participants indicated that they utilize more informal (i.e. email, phone, or in person approaches to provide feedback, discuss issues/concerns, or debrief partner) approaches to evaluation practices. In addition, as public and CSO participants reflected on evaluation practices within their public-CSO relationship; a few participants indicated that they felt their Affiliation Agreements/Allocation Policies and facility

rental policies/agreements were in essence their method of evaluation of the public-CSO relationship. Lastly, some participants also expressed that they do not use any evaluation practices in their relationship. These variations in evaluation practices in public-CSO relationships across the five municipalities will be explored further in the following sections (see Figure 2 for a summary of public-CSO evaluation practices).

4.4.1 Influence of Resource Dependency on Evaluation Practices

CSO-public partnerships were highly shaped by resource dependency since CSOs require specific resources (i.e. infrastructure/facility, financial, etc.) to offer their sport programs and these resources may only be available through the public partner. “Well, because we're dealing with the city like, there’s no choice to it, really. They have the fields” (CSO2, Scheduler). CSOs expressed that public partners were critical to their operations: “I think it's, it's more a matter of, you know, this is the only option that we have if we want to have a minor soccer league in town” (CSO13, Vice President). This CSO representative also expressed that they felt there really is “no point” to evaluation of the relationship (CSO13, Vice President). Similarly, another CSO representative expressed that “for us we’re getting what we need” (CSO9, President).

Likewise, public participants felt that they are unable to offer the activities and services that CSOs provide in their communities on their own and for some public participants evaluation goes back to “both sides need each other. Municipality has the facilities and we want the groups to facilitate and do all that work” (Public5, Director of Community Services). As a result, formalized (i.e. surveys, or planned and implemented evaluation tools) evaluation activities or steps have not been implemented or fully considered at this point in time. Current practices within the public-CSO partnership to ensure a successful ongoing relationship, as well as both

partners perspectives toward implementing more formalized evaluation methods will be discussed further in the following sections.

4.4.2 Public and CSOs Philosophy Toward Evaluation

Building on the previous sub-section, participants discussed in their interviews that evaluation activities have not been fully considered within the public-CSO partnership. In particularly, some public and CSO participants indicated that no "formal" evaluation practices are implemented within the relationship and further expressed that they felt implementing evaluation practices is unnecessary for the relationship. "I guess what I'm saying is at this point, I don't feel I need that. I feel like I get what I need from the city and I don't think about them not meeting my expectations. They do" (CSO8, President). As well, some CSOs felt that because their organization is smaller in size their wants and needs are not as demanding, therefore to implement evaluation tools "would be over kill" and in their case, not necessary to go through a massive document (CSO11, President). Additionally, some participants even conveyed their hesitation and concerns when implementing evaluation tools in practice. Specifically, a CSO representative stated that:

> It's really, really good, I think. And then as the process moves forward… things get lost in translation because it's hard, right? It's raw data that has to be compiled. It takes a talented person to put that together and then the interpretation of that data depends on who's reading it sometimes. And there's also, you know, are you doing that for the sake of doing it? And then are you going to actually do something about it? Or are you just going to, say, hey, I have all this data now. Thanks. And do nothing. And we're still doing the same things the same way. And I find that happens a lot (CSO12, Vice President).

Generally, participants expressed concern with the use of evaluation tools and furthermore, how the information obtained from an evaluation would actually be used (i.e. will findings from evaluation be communicated to all parties involved, will it inform future decision making, will feedback gathered be implemented moving forward etc.). Essentially, the "why are

you doing it?" was critical to participants when considering utilizing an evaluation framework or tool in the relationship and more importantly will it solicit a positive outcome for the relationship (CSO4, President).

Several participants also emphasized that evaluating the relationship is difficult due to unclear expectations. Specifically, some CSO participants expressed a lack of clarity surrounding partner expectations which they felt impacted their ability to evaluate the relationship properly, as well as what key measurement pieces would be important to include in the evaluation tool. Specifically, a CSO representative felt that "I would not know what to evaluate… I wouldn't even know what to measure them against, like what to expect" (CSO4, President).

Moreover, public participants emphasized the difficulty with evaluating the relationship because the CSOs are "so arm's length… and we can't dictate what they do, they're their own entity" (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). This was also reflected by some CSOs who felt that they are "basically an organization running ourselves renting that space" (CSO11, President). Another public representative felt that "every sport is so different and the reason they operate is so different" which makes it difficult to develop one evaluative tool (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). The public representative further stated that "we can't get into the nuances of the organization because we don't operate nor are we ever going to get into that business, because it'd be chaos if we started dictating" (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Primarily, public participants considered their role in the relationship to be more supportive. Specifically, working collaboratively with their CSO user groups in the acquisition of necessary resources that are critical to their operations as an organization as well as providing guidance (i.e. governance, finance, or policy) to their CSO partners and aid in the creation of better tools to help in organizational decision making and allocation of resources.

4.4.3 Evaluation Practices

However, through further discussion and reflection on evaluation practices within their relationship by participants in their interviews, participants in fact highlighted various practices that are characteristics of evaluation methods. Specifcially, a few participants identified their affiliation, allocation, or facility rental policies as their method for evaluation and termination of their relationship. Additionally, some participants also identified various elements in the public-CSO relationship that they practice on a more "informal basis". In particular, that of *process evaluation* which is an ongoing evaluation of results within the partnership; *outcome evaluation* considers the extent to which the partnership achieved its long-term objectives and *summative evaluation is* the showcasing of partnership results; lastly *formative evaluation* to examine the immediate feedback provided during the partnership (cf. Parent & Harvey, 2009). These practices will be explored further in the following sub-sections.

4.4.3.1 Affiliation, allocation, and facility rental policies

The affiliation and allocation agreements involved a number of criteria (e.g., must be a non-profit, operate under the authority of a volunteer board of directors, must service their community residents, etc.) and responsibilities (e.g., provide programs and services to community residents, no barriers to participation; work collaboratively with public partner; maintain monthly and annual financial reports, utilize effective volunteer management; utilize so many facility operating hours per year, focus on fundamentals of sport, etc.) that community sport organization must meet in order to be and maintain affiliation with their public partner.

The participants in these municipalities suggested that these policies were implemented to ensure that all parties involved had a common understanding of responsibilities and services. In addition, these municipalities do have in place renewals of their agreements. Upon renewal of

the agreements, it was expressed that partners meet to discuss and go through the requirements or expectations of the relationship. As well, it is at this time that partners identify action items. In this process, partners review the relationship and identify items or areas that require improvements in the relationship. In addition, CSOs can also address action items that would help to move their board and organization forward. Moreover, if there is something that partners do not agree with, partners are able to negotiate and work together to make modifications or improvements. It is also important to note that renewal of agreements do vary. For example, participants expressed that renewal could take place every year (e.g. if they are new/emerging organization) or after five years (e.g. long-standing history) depending on their relationship with the public-sector (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Participants further expressed that these agreements/policies did need to be reviewed, changed and improved upon, as they are not perfect and there are some notifiable gaps (i.e. implementation of true measurement pieces) based on the change in sport, delivery of sport, and evolving community environments (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). A public participant expressed that they do review their agreements and allocation policies every five years, however, when discussing the affiliation agreements this public representative also stated that the agreement:

> Gives an idea of where municipal staff would like the groups to go from a relationship side and also with the groups would like to see. But understanding it's very fluid and can change and it's not set in stone. Because nothing in the community development world is set in stone. So, I think it's not perfect. And I would, I would personally as a staff like to see that reviewed more on how to be more beneficial to safe and more beneficial to the organization itself. I think it's a document, it's a good first step, but I think there's room for improvement with it (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

The other municipalities utilize their facility allocation policies for infrastructure use and revisit these policies to make adjustments as required.

In particular, one municipality was in the process of moving towards developing a new recreation framework to better align the mission, vision, and values of their relationships with the CSOs.

> We have allocation policies which we're going to check out… We don't like it, we're trying to change it. It doesn't serve us well right now, which is why we want to get this Rec framework before Council before we change that policy (Public3, Manager of Community Development).

However, these public participants did feel that the relationship is more of "an ongoing reflection on how things are going and we tend to touch base with each other but there's no formal evaluation process" (Public4, Facility Supervisor). Similarly, a CSO representative felt that generally things have been done "a little bit more informally… we do provide feedback almost on a regular basis anyway, if something's not going well and then I have a conversation with whomever" (CSO7, Executive Director). Moreover, all municipalities provide opportunities to bring sport user groups together or meet with CSOs independently (i.e. face to face meeting) to discuss the allocation of facilities and gain a greater understanding of needs and wants of their sport user groups. Furthermore, CSOs also felt that the affiliation agreements, allocation policies, and facility rental policies/agreements were their method of evaluation for the relationship. A CSO representative stated that "we do that when we go through the Affiliation agreement. We go through it every year" and "if there's any questions or concerns" generally they are addressed at that time (CSO5, Executive Director). However, CSOs also expressed that there are always things to be improved upon in the agreement, which will be explored further in the following sections.

4.4.3.2 Process Evaluation

Participants felt that the relationship is "a constant re-evaluation" (Public1, Manager of Sport Development) and through ongoing methods of communication they are able to kind of

adjust the relationship according to gaps, issues, or concerns brought up by their CSO partner (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). A public representative expressed that if he noticed something that was not working in the relationship or a process that could be improved on, he would reach out to the CSOs and say "hey, I think we need to look at this" in order to re-evaluate if what they are currently doing is working (Public5, Facility Clerk). CSOs also echoed this notion of ongoing reflection in the relationship. A CSO representative expressed that if they do bring something that isn't working properly to the attention of their public partner, they are seeing changes within a couple of weeks (CSO8, President). Moreover, another CSO representative stated that:

> I think we're pretty good at that, you know, having, whether it's an email back and forth or quick conversation, just to say…the city sport coordinator has been great with that and say, look, I'm going to give you an update are you available or that sort of thing. So, yeah, I think it's, and I guess part of that is always an ongoing evaluation because will tell her like, this doesn't really work for us or she'll say, well, we can't really do that because you're and… Maybe we are asking too much sometimes, you know, we only think about ourselves and you know, we're not going to think about everyone else. It's not our job too. But they do. So, I get it (CSO7, Executive Director).

Accordingly, participants felt that improvements or changes in the relationship are made through ongoing reflection and re-evaluation of the public-CSO partnership. This continuous reflection and evaluation of the partnership has allowed public and CSO partners to make necessary adjustments and address any issues or concerns as soon as possible within the relationship to ensure an ongoing successful relationship.

4.4.3.3 Outcome/Summative Evaluation

As previously mentioned, public and CSO partners do sit down to renew their affiliation agreements or allocation policies. At the time of renewal, public and CSO partners have the opportunity to discuss specific "action items" or outline a "work plan" for long-term objectives, whether that be long-term objectives of the CSO that the public partner can offer support with or

relationship objectives (i.e. things to improve on in the relationship). A public representative stated that; “we don’t necessarily set that for them, but will help them try to achieve that long-term goal” (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation). Similarly, CSOs also felt that the renewal or review of their affiliation agreements/allocation policies is an opportunity for them to discuss whether the partnership achieved its purpose for that year and perhaps review long-term goals. Furthermore, it is important to the public partners that they do not invade on their CSO partners business but provide a sense of guidance and recommendations if needed. Through affiliation, public partners help CSOs to move beyond solely focusing on day to day operations and continue to work towards those long-term objectives.

The findings also revealed that public and CSO partners make time to showcase the results of their partnership. CSO participants expressed that they do make a point to review annually the “good and bad” (CSO1, General Manager) of the relationship throughout their sport season. This is an opportunity for partners to reflect on outlined objectives and goals made prior to the start of their season as well as review if goals or objectives were in fact achieved. For example, a CSO representative reflected on a meeting the organization had with their public partner to discuss staffing issues and unused booked facility time at the end of their sport season. The CSO representative stated that due to unaware staffing issues the organization had a large amount of booked facility time or extra sport facility time that was not utilized by their participants. As well, since the organization booked the time but did not use it, the public-sector was not able to re-permit the sport facility space to someone else. This CSO representative also reflected on the amount of money wasted by their organization as well as the impact this had on other sport organizations and community members looking to use the space. As a result of this

discussion between the CSO and the public partner, a new process was created and implemented to avoid this situation from happening again. The CSO stated that:

> we created a new process to say okay…because it's a 30-day return policy for fields, at 35 days, we look at it, and say are we going to use it? Yes or no? So now we have time to either we need to go to the teams to ask them or we just have that extra couple of days to figure it out and give it back to the city. At least 30 days prior, so we don't get charged for it. And hopefully they can, you know, reuse it or re-permit it (CSO7, Executive Director).

This showcases that public and CSO partners are allocating the necessary time to discuss the successes and failures of the partnership. This was highlighted by participants as a necessary practice that affords public and CSO partners the opportunity to compare the outcomes/results of the partnership to the stated objectives made prior to a particular sports season in order to make policy or process changes within the public-CSO partnership.

4.4.3.4 Formative Evaluation

Both public and CSO participants expressed that they often provide informal ongoing feedback within the relationship. Participants felt that immediate feedback was the most beneficial method to utilize to help improve and refine their relationship, as well as help to maintain that ongoing level of success. Informally, public participants felt that they continuously reach out to their CSO partners and provide opportunity to receive feedback from them and further examine that feedback to make adjustments with the relationship, as well as modifications in policies or procedures. A public representative stated that:

> Well, I think what we do is we just kind of ask them, kind of like how are we doing, like, what do you need from us, right? To be successful? and they'll find that information. I think we do that through the engagement to try and develop new policies and stuff. And when I'm at meetings, that's another opportunity. So, I think we've been providing opportunities to get feedback (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

Additionally, another public representative expressed that he will reach out to the CSOs to gain input on current policies and policy proposals. The public representative stated that he asks the

sport user groups, “is there anything that you like or dislike… suggestions and we take their feedback into consideration and even when the policy is created we go back and revisit because things aren’t working out for them (Public5, Facility Clerk).

Similarly, several CSO participants expressed that they felt that feedback worked best in the relationship to rectify problems and ensure that both partners are satisfied. A CSO representative stated that:

> If we’re doing something or some of our team has done stuff, the town, will have no problem letting us know what’s happening…and likewise, if we’re not happy with something that is going on or something that was done we will bring it up or ask something, and we work together to rectify problems so that we’re both happy in general (CSO14, President).

CSO participants felt that they are providing feedback on “almost a regular basis” and if something is not going well then, they feel comfortable and are able to follow up with their public partner and have the conversation (CSO7, Executive Director). Furthermore, participants highlighted ongoing feedback within the partnership as an essential practice to ensure a successful relationship between them.

4.4.4 Public and CSO Critique of Evaluation Practices

At this time, participant responses in relation to evaluation practices varied across municipalities. Specifcially, participants discussed; not having formal evaluation practices in place or being used at this time; that public and CSO partners are using evaluation practices however it is more informal; the use of affiliation, allocation, and facility rental policies/ agreements as well as the renewal of these agreements are in essence their current method of evaluation. In particular a public representative expressed that:

> We have stuff in the agreement that says we’ll give them three months to rectify that issue and just different things. But there’s some fundamental things that would end the relationsip. So, it is our evaluation. And when we sit down to renew it, we ask; did you

> increase your youth? Did you get a full board? Like, did you do these things? Yeah, so… it is… it's their report card in a sense (Public2, Coordinator Sport and Recreation).

However, public participants did acknowledge that there are gaps in their current agreements and policies due to changes of sport and the delivery of sport, thus current practices need to be reviewed and improved on. Specifically, a public representative stated that, "we need to bring that up to speed and re-evaluate what we're doing to help" (Public1, Manager of Sport Development). Similarly, another public partner expressed that their current allocation process does not serve the partnership well and they are in the process of developing specific criteria in a new recreation framework to better evaluate their partnerships (Public3, Manager of Community Development). The public representative felt that:

> Once we make those changes to it… right now it's so ambiguous and you can interpret it in so many different ways, so we're playing with it, but once we get the framework nailed and then the procedures for allocation nailed, then they'll be much easier. Much, much, easier (Public3, Manager of Community Development).

Although formalized evaluation methods are not necessarily implemented in the public-CSO partnership nor have participants given much consideration into evaluation practices, participants recognized the potential value of moving away from less informal evaluation methods toward more formal evaluation methods. At this time, participants provided their thoughts on evaluation activities, as well as potential steps and important elements to be considered if an evaluation tool was developed to assess their particular public-CSO relationship. A CSO representative felt that evaluation could be done a little bit more formally. Particularly, this CSO suggested that "there's all kinds of tools that you could use do it. Like a 360 review or something like that around…or even just a survey or something" (CSO11, President). Similarly, a public participant felt that "any feedback is good feedback, as long as you're asking relevant

questions" (Public5, Director of Community Services). In addition, a CSO representative stated that:

> I think the useful steps would be how do you quantify the pieces, right? How would you build targeted goals? Like what? Why quantify it? If you're not going to try and better it? What does bettering it achieve you? Or what's achieving who? You have to both agree that there's something to achieve for the better (CSO1, General Manager).

Moreover, several participants discussed incorporating more scheduled face to face meetings within the relationship, whether it's once or twice a year to sit down with their partner and go through the signed agreements. A CSO representative stated that:

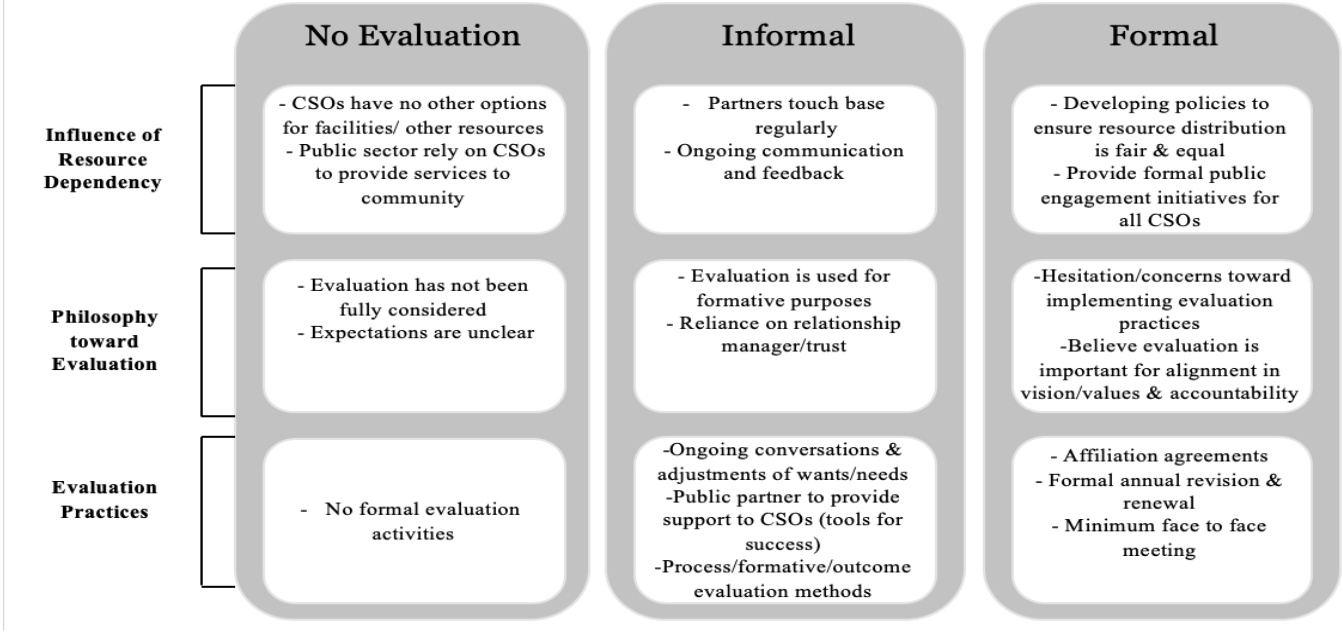
> Have those meetings, right? or those scheduled meetings. So, whether it's once or twice a year to go through the affiliation agreement and see if there is anything there that's not being fulfilled by one party or it could be both parties. Like just evaluating on what's working well and what isn't working. As well, are there any possible solutions to that in there. You know, that could be a face to face meeting or maybe it's just a document that you fill out and divide it up into certain areas within the agreement. And just ask for general feedback. But I think that would be good start to implement (CSO7, Executive Director).

Furthermore, CSO participants reflected on looking at evaluation from a service level. A CSO representative felt the use of a survey to solicit feedback on the relationship could be beneficial. Upon reflection, this CSO representative expressed that she has actually never thought to reach out and discuss with her public partner about the relationship, stating that "they probably have no idea how I feel about them … which I'm kind of curious actually now" (CSO11, President). Additionally, another CSO representative felt that incorporating criteria to evaluate the relationship is important because "if that relationship wasn't good, that would be stressful" (CSO8, President). Similarly, a CSO suggested that incorporating measurement criteria that addresses "how responsive is or are the people that we're dealing with? How long do we wait for a response? If an issue comes up, how long does it take for it to be resolved?" would be

useful (CSO6, President). As well, working collaboratively to identify aspects that the affiliate group can help the city move forward on (CSO6, President).

Likewise, a public representative also felt that gaining feedback on their method of communication and the challenges that CSOs may be experiencing would be beneficial information to obtain from their CSO partners. “I think one question, is our form of communication working? What challenges do they experience elsewhere?” (Public5, Facility Clerk). Particularly, this public representative felt that gaining insight into the CSO perspective would be helpful to improve the public-CSO relationship. Moreover, some CSOs expressed that there hasn’t been much discussion surrounding how public and CSOs are going to work together, which they would like to have an understanding of that. Specifically, how they would “build in what those objectives are and how you’re going to fulfill those objectives” (CSO7, Executive Director). Public participants also echoed the notion of having or adding true measurement pieces to their current agreements in order to gain a real idea of whether goals and objectives of their partner are being met (Public1, Manager of Sport Development).

Figure 2. Summary of Public-CSO Evaluation Practices



5 Discussion

The growth and complexity of IORs in practice and academia continues to be an important topic for managing sport organizations (Babiak et al., 2018). However, research on this phenomenon is still rather young and further exploration is necessary for the development of this field (Babiak et al., 2018). To further examine the phenomenon of sport-based IORs, the current study was undertaken to understand the role of local municipalities as a key partner and mechanism for the delivery of sport and recreation at the community level. Specifically, the study sought to gain a greater understanding of the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnership, while also understanding how resources influence evaluation practices in this IOR relationship. As outlined in the literature review chapter, CSOs inability to access resources can lead to increasing dependence on external providers such as the local municipality, further for those who control those critical resources issues of power and dependence become an increasingly more salient feature for these organizations (Davis & Cobb, 2010; Hillman et al., 2009; Sortiriadou & Wicker, 2013). Thus, it was also necessary to gain further understanding of the dimension of partnership evaluation at the community level in light of possible resource dependencies that shape the nature of public-CSO relations.

To gain a greater understanding of partnership evaluation, as well as insight into public-CSO partnerships (a sub-area of broader interorganizational relationships), the qualitative study followed a two-fold purpose: (1) understand the nature of resource exchange and potential dependency in CSO-public partnerships, and (2) explore how resources influence partnership evaluation practices in CSO-public partnerships. The examination of public-CSO partnerships offers new insights into relationship processes at the community sport level. This chapter

provides a link between the findings of the study and the literature on sport-based IORs, as well as resource dependency.

5.1 Understanding Resource Exchange & Dependency in Public-Nonprofit IORs

In a global environment characterized by resource scarcity and uncertainty, partnerships have long been advocated as a strategy that benefits all parties involved (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Kanter 1994). RDT approaches have received considerable attention in research and repeatedly cited as a condition in the development of IORs (Babiak, 2007; Oliver, 1990; Wicker et al., 2013). Numerous scholars have highlighted the notion of resource scarcity as a major factor in the decision for most organizations to partner and further generate those necessary resources that they are unable to generate when operating independently (Babiak, 2007; Oliver, 1990).

5.1.1 Control and constraint of resources

The theory of resource dependency has two tenets. The first tenet suggests that (1) organizations depend, and are constrained by, other organizations that control critical resources. In this way, RDT offers an insightful lens for understanding how public and CSO partners in particular navigate power and resource flow in order to reduce uncertainty and dependence in their operating environment (Davis & Cobb, 2010; Hillman et al., 2009). Specifically, relationships often form because there are no alternatives to acquire necessary resources (Murray, Kotabe, & Nan Zhou, 2005). The findings from this research confirm such a response as CSO participants highlighted their partnership with the public-sector as the only available option or partnership that they could facilitate to obtain their desired resources, further identifying the public-sector as critical to accessing resources to successfully run their programs and operations.

Indeed, the findings further illustrated that public-CSO partnerships enable CSOs to acquire many desired resources (e.g., governance support, access to infrastructure/facilities, identifying and supporting grant opportunities, access to other organizational partners etc.) which are often difficult to attain through other partnerships (Jones et al., 2017). Although, like CSOs, the public-sector participants also recognized that they were able to acquire important resources such as sport leadership and engaging sport volunteers, affordable and accessible sport programs for residents, economic impact via tourism, and others from their partnerships with CSOs that otherwise they may not be able to obtain in their communities on their own. This is rather insightful to our understanding on public-CSO partnerships as it sheds light on the benefits that the public-sector gains from a partnership with nonprofit community sport organizations as well as the public-sectors similar reliance on resources from their CSO partners. This is in contrast to previous public-CSO partnership research, which has often positioned nonprofit sport partnerships with the public-sector as strategically useful to acquire resources and maximize efficiencies (Legg et al., 2018).

In addition, while achieving absolute equality is extremely difficult, particularly when the exchange of resources and benefits is involved, it is still essential in partnership work to consider the relative balance of power within a relationship (Misener & Doherty, 2013). Vos and Scheerder (2014) further identified equality as a key issue within cooperation which assumes power is positioned in relation to expertise, knowledge, and contribution rather than power being derived from function or role in a hierarchy. Specifically, the findings from this study suggest that the approach to the provision of resources and benefits exchanged between CSOs and the public sector represent more of a cumulative or "package" approach to resource exchange which extends the literature beyond a "this for that" conceptualization of resource exchange. This

holistic understanding of resource exchange between public-CSO partnerships helps us view resource dependency in a new light, away from just one resource being exchanged for another, to a whole systems view that recognizes the value and dependence that can occur from the total package of resources being exchanged. In this way, the findings illustrate how cross-sector partnership can be beneficial given that collaboration provides each partner with a combination of access to information, expertise, knowledge, material resources, and offer a combination of services, promotions, and collective training sessions (Babiak & Willem, 2016; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Jones et al., 2017; Vos & Scheerder, 2014). Ultimately, acquiring these resources added operational, functional, and strategic value to the organizations (Babiak, 2007).

Murray and colleagues (2005) also highlight the benefit of partners to help not only manage uncertainty, but also help in the provision of complementary resources, which can further influence organizational performance. For example, research has shown that sport organizations have limited financial resources (e.g., Wicker & Breuer, 2010). As well, over the past years in many countries such as Canada, the public sector's available financial resources have decreased. Specifically, the public sector has been faced with budget concerns and decreasing public subsidies (e.g., Doherty & Murray, 2007; Hall et al., 2003; Imagine Canada, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2010). The findings from this research revealed that the public partner is in fact limited in the amount of discretionary funds available to help their CSO partners and may have limited flexibility related to funding sport and recreation. Yet, the findings also illuminated to CSO partners aiding and supporting their public partner in obtaining additional financial resources via economic impact through tourism or through fundraising/donations efforts for sport in their municipality. Notably, through working with CSOs, public sector partners can secure new funding sources to expand on infrastructure or improve the quality of already existing

infrastructure/facilities. This showcases the dependency on resources occurring between both partners in the relationship, which further illustrates a vested interest from both parties to ensure a successful ongoing partnership. Furthermore, since both organizations are unable to produce the quality and quantity of resources on their own, their dependence on each other remains high (Oliver, 1990; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Wicker & Breuer, 2010).

5.1.2 Influence of power and dependence

Considerably, as sport organizations continue to rely on others for the acquisition of resources, their control over resources is further reduced, and as a result their very survival and success becomes contingent on their ability to engage and establish IORs (O'Brien & Evans, 2017). However, IORs have been known to be problematic, as issues of power and control over resources becomes increasingly more prominent in these types of relationship. Respectively, a number of research studies have suggested that power imbalances can fuel conflict in cross-sector partnerships that involve community sport organizations (Babiak & Thibault; 2009; Frisby et al., 2004; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Jones et al., 2017; Misener & Doherty, 2013; 2014; Thibault & Harvey, 1997).

With regard to power in the public-CSO partnership, the majority of participants felt that both partners maintain a certain level of control over resources that they retain. Notably, both types of partners in this study recognize that the public-sector maintains greater control over specific resources (i.e. infrastructure/facilities, grants/discounts, allocation of facility infrastructure), although there seemed to be minimal concerns over the control of resources as neither partner can operate in isolation of the other and ultimately the partnership is working towards a similar mission of community sport development. Naturally, organizations can find themselves in positions of interdependence with others in their environment (Pfeffer & Salancik,

1978). According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), “interdependence exists whenever one actor does not entirely control all of the conditions necessary for the achievement of an action, or for obtaining the outcome desired from the action” (p. 41). In addition, an organizations dependence on another organization remains on the mix of resources that each organization brings to the relationship, how badly these resources are needed by each organization, and whether such resources can be acquired outside the relationship (O’Brien & Evans, 2017). In this view, it can be argued that the interdependence between public and CSO partners is strong; since neither the public-sector or CSOs are in total control, both partners are receiving a “cumulative or package” of valuable resources from each other that are necessary to achieve a similar mission of community sport development, and the ability for public or CSO to acquire these resources outside their public-CSO partnership or from another relationship is unlikely. Thus, as both partners acquire valuable resources and are not utilizing control over any desired resources, any possible imbalance or influence of power and control over resources is decreased.

Alternatively, Nienhuser (2008) suggests that when resource dependence is present but there is no perceived control by either partner then there may be symmetric dependence between the organizations involved. Symmetric dependence further implies a balanced power relationship (Armstrong-Doherty, 1996). Therefore, in this particular context, public-CSO partnerships in this study reveal a relatively balanced power relationship at the dyadic level, where both parties felt that they receive valuable resources from the partnership and each partner maintained a certain level of control over resources that they retain. Ultimately, since neither partner felt that the other partner was utilizing their control over resources, this could further suggest a symmetric dependence between these public-CSO partners (Armstrong-Doherty, 1996; Filo et al., 2015).

It is also possible that the public-sector is retaining strategic control in the relationship since they possess the more critical or necessary resources (i.e., access to infrastructure/facility, grant opportunities, promotion and advertising of CSO and program, volunteer management and training, and access to other organizational partners) for CSOs to operate and run their programming (Yan & Gray, 1994; 2001); however, the findings illustrate that, in these particular public-CSO partnerships, public partners do not hinder their partner's autonomy as a result of their resource dependence as much as they potentially could (Horch, 1994). Additionally, the public-sector may also be exerting a relatively low level of coercive power (i.e., the exertion of power by one organization over another organization and further forcing the less powerful organization to adhere to requests) upon CSOs who rely on their resources (Vos, Breesch, Kesenne, Hoecke, Vanreusel, & Scheerder, 2011) because they consider the acquired resources from their CSO partner as valuable. In this aspect, even though the public partner may be in a position of power, they are unlikely to exert such power in order to leave the distribution of power intact (Gulati & Sytch, 2007). This is in contrast to previous research that has suggested the public partners may negotiate from a position of power since they control critical resources required by nonprofit organizations (Jones et al., 2017; 2018).

Indeed, there is a need for CSOs to secure resources to help stabilize the conditions in their environment (Jones et al., 2017). Although the public sector also cannot achieve their service mandate to offer physical activity and sport in their community without the help of their CSO partner, therefore, it is essential that the public-sector work closely with their CSO partners to provide the necessary support and facilities in order to ensure physical activity and sport in their community (Hunter & CPR task group, 2013; Jones et al., 2017). This highlights the partnership's joint dependence as both partners are collaborating to reduce their uncertainty in the

environment as well as enhance their own organizational performance (Gulati & Sytch, 2007). Similarly, the findings here can also confirm previous research that suggests collaborative partnerships can be mutually dependent due to the pooling or equal amount of resources brought to the decision-making process (Kernaghan, 1993). From this perspective, the notion of mutual or joint dependence is insightful to our understanding of resource dependency as CSOs are often more reliant on their partners for resources (e.g., Babiak, 2007; Cousens et al., 2006; Frisby et al., 2004; Jones, et al., 2017; 2018; Misener & Doherty; 2012; Thibault et al, 1999; Wicker et al., 2013), but in this case, the CSOs are in fact providing meaningful resources to their public partner.

5.1.3 Shifts in uncertainty and its influence

The theory of resource dependency does not suggest that the environment and dependency on critical resources directly influences organizational behavior of those key actors involved. In fact, resources only account for a small portion of total resource costs and needs in an organization, but if a resource is considered to be critical to an actor and then is missing this has further impact and could potentially endanger the organizations ability to function (Nienhuser, 2008). Therefore, power is considered to be a function of social relations and not an attribute of one actor or another (Armstrong-Doherty, 1996).

"Dynamic environments such as the current environment in which sport operates, brings about shifts in the relative position of actors and their power relationships" (Wolfe, Meenaghan, & O'Sullivan, 1997, p. 53). Indeed, sport organizations can collaborate and compete at the same time (Babiak &Thibault, 2009; Garcia-Canal, Valdez-Llaneza, & Arinio, 2003; Vos & Scheerder, 2014). The findings of this research revealed that shifts in power influence can occur in this particular cross-sector partnership. For instance, the findings suggest that issues and

challenges do emerge throughout the public-CSO partnership as well as with other CSOs in the community who require similar resources for their operations.

In this study, it was revealed that CSOs do not always understand the reasons behind their public partners resource decisions. For the public-sector, an essential part of their role in the community is to keep in mind the varying community interests and further balance those interests when making decisions in their community (Leone et al., 2015). According to public participants, CSOs can be entitled or self-interested, at times, in relation to resource decisions. As well, CSOs struggle to see the whole picture and often are only concerned for their own organization. These issues of self-interest (Babiak & Thibault, 2009) create additional tensions and challenges in the public partners efforts to coordinate multiple CSO partners. As a result, public partners often find themselves increasing their coordination efforts through discussion and negotiation.

Moreover, since organizations do not operate autonomously from one another, especially within an unstable and uncertain operating environment (Hillman et al., 2009), it is not surprising that additional challenges and uncertainties can arise. In this particular case, community sport organizations are in fact interacting with other community sport organizations who share similar resources in their community and those additional relationships have influence on all organizations involved (i.e. the network) (Jones et al., 2017; 2018). Specifically, the findings highlighted the shifts in power and control that can occur at the dyadic level (i.e., public-CSO partnership) and network level (i.e. public and all CSOs residing within the same community). The public partner is challenged by the competing interests and needs of their CSO partners, which further creates additional tensions and frustrations on both sides of the partnership and among the other CSO user groups during the allocation process. Scholarly research has identified

similar complexities and difficulties with managing multiple partnerships (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Garcia-Canal et al., 2003). As well, some CSOs lack flexibility (i.e., declining other CSOs requests to coordinate a day and time schedule change in relation to specific playing surfaces) in the resource allocation process. Similarly, researchers who have explored within-sector alliances have highlighted the competitive and collaborative nature of these relationships. Further identifying the tensions that are often created due to the dual pressures that these organizations experience when contending for similar resources (e.g., Austin, 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Kanter, 1994).

In this context, the use of RDT aids our understanding into the actions of sport managers and administrations. The findings reveal an increase in CSOs competitive nature when trying to acquire those necessary resources that are already scarce in their operating environment. According to Nienhuser (2008), uncertainty on its own is not a problem, however, when there is both uncertainty and dependence, the organization may be forced to act and take the necessary measures to reduce their uncertainty. Sport managers and administrators are in fact acting to maintain control over their vital resources as many of these CSOs are competing over similar fixed commodities such as, fields, pools, facilities, and equipment (Jones et al., 2017; Pfeffer, 1987). Certainly, in some cases, CSOs are maintaining their control over specific resources (i.e., facility/infrastructure) that are not owned by them and further exerting their power and control over those organizations in need of their similar resources (Babiak & Willem, 2016; Jones et al., 2017; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Wicker et al., 2013).

5.1.4 Managing uncertainty and dependence

The second tenet of RDT (2) is that organizations attempt to manage uncertainty in their environment to increase their performance (Murray et al., 2005). Sotiriadou (2009) stresses that

"the concept of resource dependence does not mean that sport organizations are totally at the mercy of their environment. Rather, 'it's that they must develop strategies for managing both resource dependence and environmental uncertainty" (p. 854). According to Huxham and Macdonald (1992), competition among organizations can be a healthy condition as it forces organizations to focus their resources and energies to improve relationship functioning and strategic decision making. Moreover, research has highlighted cooperation among organizations as a useful strategy to handle competition in an environment (Vos & Scheerder, 2014). The findings here confirm the importance of effective practices to reduce competition within the environment as well as cooperation between each other to decrease power imbalances. It is clear that both partners do make an effort to work collaboratively with one another to navigate issues and power in their relationship. The findings revealed that ensuring equity in decision-making, fostering a common vision, offering mutual support, increasing coordination and efficiency, and reducing uncertainty and promoting organizational stability helped public and CSO partners to navigate resource uncertainty and dependency in their environment.

Specifically, public and CSO participants highlighted the importance of ensuring continuous understanding within their public-CSO partnership as well as with the other community sport groups, as each partner has challenges and limitations surrounding access to those critical resources. Notably, participants expressed equity in decision making over resource distribution and allocation, which helped to reduce any imbalance in power or control over resources. In addition, participants revealed that their partnership maintains a relative balance in negotiation over resources and partners respected one another's autonomy to make decisions. Previous research has alluded to equity and participation in decision making. Particularly, Casey (2008) suggests that partnership management and direction must promote equity and

participation in decision making, while further suggesting that these are important factors that contribute to successful partnerships. In addition, equity has been considered important in the development and maintenance of relationships (Casey, 2008; Ouchi, 1980). Arguably, equity rather than equality should be a focus in partnership working (Paterson, 1998). Within the public-CSO partnership, it can be concluded that each partner believes their partner is fulfilling their side of the arrangement and that their relationship is productive, equitable, and worthwhile due to the degree of equity present (Van De Ven & Walker, 1984).

Indeed, fostering a common vision and offering continuous mutual support to each other positively influenced the public-CSO partnership. Previous research has highlighted the importance of strong value alignment as a contribution to the effectiveness of PPPs (Cousens et al., 2006; Harris & Houlihan, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2013) as well as drawn attention to the importance of similar values and common grounds (Parent & Harvey, 2009; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Vos & Scheerder, 2014) and PPPs central commitment to shared goals and mutual dedication (Misener & Misener, 2017). While, participants expressed that they maintained their own objectives within the relationship (Huxham & Vangen, 1996), they did emphasize the importance of fostering and maintaining common vision as well as mutual support to the effectiveness of their relationship. Respectively, fostering and maintaining a common vision throughout the public-CSO partnership helped in navigating resource dependence and potential power influence as partners are more willing to collaborate with one another because they share a "combined vision" or objective of community sport development.

In addition, Becker and Patterson (2005) argued that partnership with the public-sector is formed to improve community life through the provision of social services and/or public facilities. Likewise, Thibault and colleagues (1999) also emphasized the public-sectors

commitment to fulfill their community's sport and leisure needs with quality programs and services. The findings from this study showcase a similar commitment from community sport organizations as well, which helps this partnership achieve ongoing success. Since public-CSO partnerships are servicing a similar membership base (i.e. community members), both public and CSO partners recognize the importance of providing mutual support to fulfill that mission as well as to ensure successful and quality programs to their residence. Clearly, public and CSO partners recognize that they do maintain a shared goal or mutual dedication that helps them to achieve similar outcomes. Considerably, mutual support offers both partners a sense of reassurance in their commitment to the relationship and helps public-CSO partners navigate resource dependence as well as reduces the potential influence of power. However, similar to Legg and colleagues (2018), I would also argue that more focus should be placed on this beyond a simple recognition as it instills a stronger commitment to ensure an effective relationship which moves the relationship beyond a signed contractual agreement.

Moreover, the findings from this study suggest that there was increased coordination and efficiency present within the public-CSO partnership as well as amongst other CSO groups who share similar resources (i.e. playing surfaces) in the community. For example, participants expressed that CSOs will work collaboratively with each other to ensure satisfaction of resource distribution and allocation which, in turn, reduces the amount of time, effort, and energy required by the public partner to fairly and equitable distribute resources. In addition, the public partner will make every effort to connect with other CSOs about requests to changes (i.e., facility rental times) in resource allocation. This is often done because the public partner has access to the other organizational partners within their community and has developed these relationships. These findings are in contrast to previous youth sport research that highlights organizations as

independently functioning with little strategic coordination (Jones et al., 2017; 2018; Legg et al., 2018). In this case, community sport organizations were aware of the other sport organizations within their environment and their similar resource wants and needs. As previously mentioned, throughout the interview process public and CSO participants acknowledged and discussed not only the dyadic relationship between CSO and public partner, but also the relationships with other CSOs (i.e. network of relationships). Essentially, it was difficult for participants to separate the effects of their particular public-CSO relationship from the other community sport organizations and their activities (Babiak, 2009).

The findings further support previous literature that suggests that IORs at the community level increase organizational visibility (Thibault & Harvey, 1997) and stabilize their resource environments through the exchange of complementary resources (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2007; Cousens et al., 2006; Frisby et al., 2004; Guo & Acar, 2005; Jones et al., 2017; 2018; Misener & Doherty; 2012; Thibault et al, 1999; Wicker et al., 2013). For example, CSOs uncertainty over not maintaining membership numbers or not acquiring new members (i.e., growth in participation) was reduced as a result of their relationship with the public sector. This supports similar findings by Thibault and Harvey (1997) who suggest IORs at the community level can help CSOs increase their organizational visibility which, in turn, can lead to increased membership numbers as well as increased resources from the government. Furthermore, the relationship provided both partners a sense of stability and confidence in knowing that they would secure those necessary resources from each other.

In particular, the implementation and use of predictable agreements and resource allocation policies contributes to the ongoing effectiveness of the public-CSO partnership. The implementation of formalized methods (i.e. affiliation agreements, allocation policies, facility

rental agreements) into the public-CSO partnership was highlighted by participants as useful and beneficial management practices to help instill balance in the relationship. As well, these practices further helped to; increase coordination and efficiency, ensure involvement and equity in decision making, foster a common vision, maintain mutual support, and reduce uncertainty and increase stability in the partnership. Notably, incorporating such formalized practices helped the public-sector partner better allocate resources as well as manage and support their CSO affiliates, while the CSOs expressed that such practices aided CSOs in navigating and negotiating resources between other CSO organizations competing for similar resources which further reduced uncertainty in their operating environment. Additionally, such practices also helped CSOs navigate possible power influence in their environments by providing a balance in the relationship between CSOs and their public partners as well as between other CSO groups. Prior research has identified the benefits of creating well developed formal control mechanisms to address problems that arise when managing multiple complex partnerships (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Garcia-Canal et al., 2003). Although, challenges and tensions are sometimes evident at the dyadic and network level within public-CSO relationships, it could be concluded that the implementation of these effective management practices (i.e., equity in decision making, fostering a common vision, offering mutual support, and increasing coordination and efficiency; reducing uncertainty and promoting organizational stability) are contributing factors to the ongoing level of success occurring in the public-CSO relationship.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the high levels of interdependence between these partners as a useful strategy to manage dependencies. Interestingly, a few scholars have examined the concept of interdependence (e.g., Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005; Gulati & Sytch, 2007; O'Brien & Evans, 2017). These scholars explored the concept of interdependence as a

combination of both power imbalance and mutual dependence, which is rather insightful to this study. Casciaro and Piskorski (2005) found that power imbalances prevented mergers and acquisitions, while mutual dependence promoted them. Similarly, Gulati and Sytch (2007) argue that "increased quality of interaction between jointly dependent partners would enhance the relationships' value-generating potential, subsequently driving both actor's performance in it" (p. 38). By drawing on the concept of embeddedness, Gulati and Sytch (2007) found that mutual dependence was associated with heighten levels of performance, which further concludes that better performance in exchange relationships is more likely when there are higher levels of joint dependence (Gulati & Stych, 2007). Clearly, the public-CSO partnership increased levels of mutual or joint dependence has aided these organizations in establishing an embedded relationship, which positively influences their organizational performance and their ongoing success (Ozen, Uysal, Cakar, 2016).

Moreover, O'Brien and Evans (2017) explored power imbalance and mutual dependence in NGO partnerships. Similar to the public-CSO partnership, the authors found instances where power imbalances were raised, however, these imbalances were often dismissed or considered as acceptable costs to achieve their aim and promotion of the greater good of the community and its members. Notably, the authors found that developing mutual dependence within a relationship is a useful strategy to manage dependencies. Likewise, public and CSO partners recognize the challenges and power imbalances that can occur within their relationship, however, because of their mutual dependence on one another, these partners are more likely to not dwell on power imbalance (O'Brien & Evans, 2017) or interpret ambiguous behavior in a negative light (Gulati & Sytch, 2007; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). Thus, it is possible that power imbalances are

not completely detrimental to public-CSO relationships and as a result of strong interdependence between partners an ongoing level of success is achieved.

5.2 The influence of mutual dependence on evaluation practices

Traditionally, evaluation has been described as a technical and rational tool that managers can use to gather information in order to make programmatic decisions (Carman, 2011). However, it is clear that evaluation practices and assessment are often overlooked in practice at the community sport level (Alexander et al., 2008; Babiak, 2003; Babiak & Willem, 2016; Brinkerhoff, 2002). Nonetheless, the current study does offer some insight into the potential reasons behind why consideration of evaluation activities and assessment, specifically at the community sport level is limited.

The findings of this research confirm previous scholarly research of resource necessity (i.e. utility maximization) as a primary reason for collaboration in public-CSO partnership (Legg et al., 2018). For CSOs, a partnership with the public-sector seems to be the only partnership that they could facilitate since they do not own facility infrastructure (Wicker et al., 2013). It is well known that nonprofit and voluntary sport clubs are increasingly challenged in their operating environment and existence as they struggle to obtain much needed resources (Balduck, Lucidarme, Marlier, & Willem, 2015; Wicker & Breuer, 2011; 2012). Similarly, public participants believed their CSO affiliates to be critical partners in their mission to offer sport and recreational activities/services to members in their community. Both actors believed that they could not operate in isolation of the other. Respectively, the findings allude to a link between the access to critical resources and evaluation activities within this particular IOR type.

In this case, some CSO-public partnerships were highly shaped by resource dependency and it is possible, that a lack of formal evaluation activities within public-CSO partnership can be

attributed to the acquisition of much needed resources by both actors as well as the strong interdependence within the relationship. As previously mentioned, since both the public-sector and the CSOs are unable to produce the quality and quantity of resources on their own, their dependence on each other remains high (Oliver, 1990; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thibault & Harvey, 1997; Wicker & Breuer, 2010). In this view, the findings illustrate how some participants seemed uninterested in implementing evaluation practices due to getting what they need from each other (i.e., the relationship) and expectations being met (i.e., resources). As well, the findings revealed a relatively balanced power relationship in relation to resource dependence. Specifically, both partners felt that they receive valuable resources from the partnership and each partner maintained a certain level of control over resources that they retain. In this view, since CSOs and public partners secured their desired resources, their uncertainty is decreased and the need for evaluation is lessened (Carman, 2011). Therefore, the findings from this study confirm that both partners are driven by their desire to secure and retain resources (Gazley & Brudney, 2007).

Moreover, the cumulative package of various resources could also potentially be an indication to why evaluation has not been fully considered in this particular IOR. Considerably, the various number of resources that is being exchanged within this partnership adds operational, functional, and strategic value to both sectors and neither partner is simply relying on one particular resource to achieve their operational goals. In this context, even when a specific resource was considered low at a given time, other resource desires are still present and being fulfilled within the partnership. As a result, continual value and dependence of the partnership remains present, as both sectors offer support in other aspects in relation to resource needs.

It is also important to consider power imbalances in relation to mutual dependence and its impact on evaluation practices. For example, a study conducted by Casey (2008) found that power imbalances could have been potentially deemphasized or hidden within NGO partnerships due to the partners mutual dependence, but in actuality they could be relatively widespread. This is rather insightful to our understanding of evaluation at the community sport level, as it could be argued that because of mutual dependence in the public-CSO partnership, any power imbalances are often not being considered to be detrimental to the relationship and therefore the need for evaluation is decreased further.

In addition, this study found significant similarities between CSOs and public partners, particularly when it comes to similar missions or objectives (Gazley & Brudney, 2007). Specifically, there seems to be a connection between the partners similar objectives and the provision of meaningful resources to one another to achieve their mutual objective of community sport development. Certainly, there is a mutual benefit for both public and CSO to partner, and it could be argued that collectively these partners gain more from their collaborative relationship than from operating in silo or from trying to obtain resources from alternative relationships that don't share similar values or common grounds.

Alternatively, if neither partner was satisfied with resource allocation and distribution as well as experiencing increased difficulty when trying to secure their desired resources, or if power imbalances were negatively impacting the overall performance or outcomes of the relationship then it is possible that a need for evaluation would be greater. In general, both partners seemed to acknowledge the advantages of their partnership more (Gazley & Brudney, 2007) than the challenges or power imbalances. Therefore, in this particular context, one could argue that evaluation in the public-CSO partnership is dependent on resource considerations as

well as the partnership ability to jointly achieve the objective of community sport development (Casey, 2008).

5.2.1 Public and CSO partners confirm complexity of evaluation

Similar to previous research findings, participants acknowledged the difficulty with evaluating the effectiveness of their partnership (Babiak, 2003). Specifically, the findings highlight the concern surrounding formal evaluation practices (i.e. how will information be utilized and the impact of evaluation results moving forward). In addition, public participants emphasized that because they are fulfilling more of a supportive role with their CSO affiliates it is difficult to develop a single evaluative tool. Moreover, several CSO participants expressed that the lack of clarity in relation to partner expectations in the partnership limited their ability to properly develop and utilize an evaluation framework or tool. Likewise, both participants expressed concern over determining the key measurement pieces that would be most important to include in the evaluation tool. Particularly, for some CSO participants, implementing formal evaluation practices for their partnership was considered unnecessary all together. However, this could be attributed to their size (i.e. smaller organizational size), their need for critical resources, the amount of time and effort required toward evaluation practices, as well as the concern over implementation of evaluative results (Parent & Harvey, 2009).

In addition, Babiak (2003) suggests that evaluating the effectiveness of IORs is difficult due to frequently unforeseen or unintended outcomes to emerge throughout the partnership interaction. Interestingly, the public-sector reflected on a typical day to day working with numerous sport clubs and the difficultly managing “little fires versus big fires” that emerge on a regular basis when working with sport groups, which highlights the level of focus dedicated to managing day to day operations. Comparably, evaluation is not necessarily considered in the

public-CSO partnership and overlooked due to managing daily unforeseen or unintended outcomes within partnership interaction. While, what these partners are doing is certainly valuable, this also illustrates its complexity. Alternatively, the findings also illustrated how resource limitations to evaluation impacted evaluation practices. Particularly, participants identified the difficulty with evaluationg as well as indentified their concerns towards implementing evaluation practices (i.e., how will information be used) and uncertainty towards how best to evaluate the relationship. In this view, the findings of this study support previous scholarly literature on overlooked evaluation practices and resource limitations related to evaluation, for example; the absence of objective metrics, lack of evaluation skills, and inadequate time available to devote to assessment which contributes to a lack of evaluation activities in public-CSO partnership (Babiak & Willem, 2016; Giunta & Thomas, 2013; Parent & Harvey, 2009). Furthermore, a lack of evaluation could also be due to communities ever-changing environments, as it adds to the complexity of developing an implementation model that can be consistently utilized (Vail, 2007).

5.2.2 Public-CSO partners shifting their perspectives toward evaluation

Although participants did not recognize or even realize that they were conducting evaluation activities, the findings revealed that various evaluation methods (i.e. *process, outcome/summative, and formative evaluation*) (Parent & Harvey, 2009) are being utilized within the public-CSO partnership on a more informal basis. These informal practices are utilized throughout the duration of the partnership, which as previously mentioned is identified in current research as necessary practices to ensure partnership success and ongoing achievement of partnership goals (Parent & Harvey, 2009). However, as discussion with participants progressed

and as participants reflected on the nature of their public-CSO relationship there was strong recognition that partnership evaluation should evolve into more formal methods.

Furthermore, participants believed that their formal agreements and policies in the relationship are presently their method of evaluation. However, participants recognize that their current practices are in need of improvement. In particular for the public partner, these formal processes are their method of termination should the relationship be deemed unsuccessful. Specifically, if CSOs are not meeting the necessary criteria indicated in these agreements then termination of the relationship is possible. Although, actual termination could potentially be hindered due to the high levels of interdependence present within these public-CSO partnership (Casey, 2008). Nonetheless, the use of these agreements and policies have been identified as effective practices to the public-CSO partnership which is in contrast to previous scholarly research that has found a lack of management plans and criteria incorporated into partnership agreements to determine unsuccessful partnerships (Frisby et al., 2004). In addition, some participants highlighted their desire to improve or implement more specific evaluation pieces such as clear measurable expectations to ensure that both partners wants and needs are being met in the relationship. Essentially, while evaluation and assessment have not been fully considered on either side, both public and CSO participants illuminated to its value and importance within the success of their on-going relationship (Frisby et al., 2004; Pope & Lewis, 2008; Provan & Milward, 2001).

6 Conclusion and Future Directions

6.1 Concluding Summary

The present study contributes to the body of knowledge and practice of sport-based IORs at the community level as well as the influence of resource dependency on public-CSO relationships and their evaluation practices. The research extends scholarly literature on public-CSO partnerships within a Canadian context to inform our understanding on this under-researched IOR type. The use of resource dependency theory as the guiding lens for this study was in fact valuable to gain an understanding of how these partners navigate power and resource flow in order to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence (Hillman et al., 2009). In addition, evidence from this research adds to existing literature by providing insight into the influence of resource dependency on evaluation practices to expand our knowledge on evaluation and assessment at the community sport level. Moreover, evidence from this research further identifies gaps for the CSOs and their public-sector partners.

Notably, this research offers new insights and understanding into the nature of resource exchange in the public-CSO partnership. Particularly, the findings suggest that the approach to the provision of resources and benefits exchanged between CSOs and the public sector represent more of a cumulative or "package" approach to resource exchange which extends the literature beyond a "this for that" conceptualization of resource exchange. This holistic understanding of resource exchange shifts our focus away from one resource being exchanged for another, to a whole systems view that recognizes the value and dependence that can occur from the total package of resources being exchanged. Additionally, the findings from this research helps us understand power influence and dependence at the community sport level. With regard to power in the public-CSO partnership, the findings suggest that both partners maintain a certain level of

control over resources that they retain, although greater control over specific resources (i.e. infrastructure/facilities, grants/discounts, allocation of facility infrastructure) resides with the public-sector partner. However, there is minimal concerns over the public-sectors control of resources as it is believed that neither partner can operate in isolation of the other and that the partnership is working towards a similar mission of community sport development. The findings also allude to high levels of interdependence within the public-CSO partnership which could be due to neither partner maintaining complete control over the conditions and resources in their environment as well as partners providing a "package" of necessary resources that neither actor can acquire outside their relationship. Moreover, it is believed that current practices (i.e., (1) equity in decision making, (2) foster common vision, (3) offer mutual support, (4) increase coordination and efficiency, (5) reduce uncertainty and promote organizational stability) and formal agreements/policies helped CSOs navigate power and resource flow in their environments, which ultimately increased collaboration in not only the public-CSO relationships, but also between all the other CSO groups.

While evaluation for the public-CSO partnerships have not been fully considered on either side, both CSO and public participants believed that evaluation is important. Currently, various practices that are characteristics of evaluation methods are being utilized, even though participants felt that no "formal" evaluation practices are implemented within the relationship. Furthermore, there was a strong recognition by participants that evaluation should be considered more fully and current practices should evolve into more formalized tools. However, there was also still a level of uncertainty expressed by some participants regarding development and implementation of evaluation tools on both sides. Conclusively, CSOs and public partners were overall satisfied with the relationship but recognized that there are opportunities for

improvement. Implementing more formalized evaluation practices with clear measurable expectations could ensure that both partners wants and needs are being met in the relationship.

"The complexity and nuanced nature of work with collaborations, however, makes empirical study in this arena challenging" (Giunta & Thomas, 2013, p. 611). As well, identifying and assessing the diverse and multiple interests of partnership relationships does present difficulties during empirical examination (Babiak, 2009). In this particular case, understanding public-CSO partnership interaction in relation to resource dependence and evaluation, in fact, presented certain difficulties. Throughout the interview phase of this research process it seemed that some CSO participants were reluctant to discuss their relationship with the public sector. As result, responses to a few interview questions were rather short and direct, even in spite of further probing efforts. It is possible that participants could have been uncomfortable or fearful to address issues or other aspects of the relationship dynamics with their public counterpart. Additionally, participants struggled to respond to questions surrounding evaluation, which could be due to the complex nature of evaluation and partnership working (Alexander et al., 2008). Thus, potentially adopting different methodological approaches or utilizing multiple approaches to partnership research as well as more time spent in the research field could prove to be more beneficial to our understanding of evaluation and this particular IOR partnership. The following sections will explore the implications and recommendations of this research to practice as well as directions for future exploration in the sport-based IOR research field in order to gain a greater understanding of the complex and nuanced nature of this particular IOR partnership.

6.2 Implications and Recommendations for Practice and Research

As I reflect on this research process and the path towards the completion of this study, I think back to one of my very first research methodology courses and our discussion on research

that both impacts the profession and advances the field (Weese, 1995). From the beginning, I resonated with Weese (1995) who argues for the consideration of both theory and practice as well as the importance to challenge and concern ourselves with not only the theoretical aspects of sport management but its application to the people in leadership positions in the field. As Weese suggests, "they are inseparable" (1995, p. 243). For this reason, it was my focus and hope to not only contribute to academia but also to the sport management practitioner. The following section will explore the implications and recommendations for both practitioners and future research in the field.

6.2.1 Implications for Practice and Recommendations

This section presents implications and recommendations on successful public-CSO partnership practices and future considerations for public and CSO partners. The implementation of formalized practices that establish the boundaries and expectations of resource exchange within the public-CSO relationship are particularly salient to the success of these relationships (i.e. Affiliation Agreements, Allocation Policies, Facility Request forms). The development and use of these specific formal practices were identified by participants as helpful; to clearly articulate expectations, reporting channels, outline the exchange of resources, roles, and responsibilities of each partner, as well as establish a fair and equitable system for resource allocation. Although the degree of formalization such as the number of agreements or policies/procedures in place and formal meetings in the public-CSO relationship did vary between municipalities, each municipality did maintain some method of formal practice within their public-CSO relationship which they found beneficial.

In light of this finding, practitioners within the public sector should consider further developing these allocation agreements or policies with their CSO counterparts. Respectively,

when considering implementing such practices within the public-CSO partnership it is important that the public-sector ensures the active involvement of their CSO user groups in the development process. This is considered ideal as it presents an opportunity for all CSO groups to identify any concerns or challenges with the formalized processes as well as establish the rules and responsibilities of allocation. From an operational standpoint, public-sector practitioners that develop and implement such policies and practices could see an improvement in collaboration with their CSO partners and increase coordination of effort between CSO groups as well as reduced conflict or tensions between clubs over access to critical resources. Specifically, evidence from this research highlighted the importance of such practices to help CSOs navigate power and resource flow in their environments while also reducing uncertainty. Moreover, the strength of the public-CSO relationship could be improved with increased stability and increased sense of support that CSOs experience from the creation of these policies by their public partner. However, it is essential that clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities are well-established within these agreements and further communicated to their CSO partner.

As participants reflected on their public-CSO relationship, several recognized that there are aspects within the relationship that require improvement. Specifically, there was a strong recognition among public partners that their methods of evaluation, how they support their CSO partner, how they communicate with the CSOs, and the service agreements/allocation policies are all aspects in the relationship that should be reviewed more regularly. As previously discussed, participants felt that their service agreements and allocation policies were their primary (or only) method of evaluating the relationship. However, public partners recognized that these policies could be improved upon. In particular, public participants identified areas that need further consideration (i.e. how they evaluate and how they support their CSO partner, as

well as the level of support they provide). Additionally, public partners felt that reviewing and improving the effectiveness of their agreements and policies would be beneficial to ensuring effective collaboration with their CSO partners.

In addition, developing a stronger connection with the provincial sport organizations (PSOs) could also help to improve public and CSO relationships at the local level. Public participants believe that currently there is a disconnect or gap between municipal recreation and the provincial governing bodies. Thus, public sport and recreation practitioners should consider strengthening their connection with the PSOs which would in turn help the administration of sport at the local level. Specifically, the public-sector maintains a strong and effective relationship with their CSOs which provides them with a greater understanding of CSOs struggles. While, the PSOs have developed sound policies, procedures, and educational materials for their local clubs; the public-sector recognizes that there is limited engagement between CSOs and the PSOs and this in turn, directly impacts the administration of sport at the community level. This was identified by a few public participants. Moreover, municipal recreation departments have only been able to develop strategies and different ways to help support their CSO partners. However, some CSOs are struggling with pieces of current public policies due to different timelines, deadlines, or rules set in place by the sport governing bodies. Ultimately, if public practitioners strengthen their connection with sport governing bodies this could also improve current processes, policies, and procedures developed at the municipal recreation level. Respectively, challenges and tensions with formalized processes implemented by the municipal recreation as well as those around changes to rules and regulations by the PSOs could be lessened.

CSO participants also reflected on similar aspects of public-CSO partnership improvements in their interviews. Specifically, CSOs felt that more efficient and improved processes when it comes to facility rentals is needed. As well, CSO participants emphasized continued improvement on communication and understanding in the public-CSO relationship is needed. In particular, CSO participants stressed that communication from their public partner should be more proactive. As well, public partners should also shift their practices away from "verbal promises", for example agreeing to meet CSO wants or needs but failing to follow through on such verbal agreements. Additionally, CSOs conveyed that it would be beneficial if communication was consistent and streamlined between their public partner and those public employees who operate facility infrastructure. A lack of consistent communication creates roadblocks for CSOs when providing quality programming and operations to their participants. CSOs also expressed that they would like to see improvements in the clarification of expectations within affiliation agreements and policies. Particularly, some CSOs felt unclear about their roles, responsibilities, and expectations in the relationship. Having clear expectations outlined whether in training modules/ onboarding package for new volunteers, included in current policies and procedures, or through the creation of a one-page documentation would be beneficial.

Furthermore, evaluation work is challenging, especially within interorganizational relationships (Giunta & Thomas, 2013). Resource limitations are present within community sport IORs and as a result this does present challenges to implementing and incorporating evaluation methods. It could also be beneficial to incorporate basic training among partnership members on evaluation concepts. Incorporating basic evaluation training could provide practitioners with the knowledge and skill to better prepare and plan for the future. This also further present a

collective approach to evaluation for both public and CSO practitioners. Furthermore, as practitioners are often challenged with prioritizing day to day operations, perhaps it may be beneficial for public-CSO partners to consider the formation of an evaluation committee that oversees evaluation objectives and activities. As previously mentioned, communities are ever-changing environments and each community will differ based on citizen wants and needs, thus evaluation practices should also be a reflection of each community's goals and objectives for community sport development.

6.2.2 Directions for Future Research

The findings of this research revealed that participants are generally satisfied with their public-CSO partnership. Most participants emphasized that they work well together and they both fulfill and meet their commitments to the relationship. All participants felt that both partners are putting in the necessary effort to maintain a strong relationship despite there being some aspects within the relationship that need improvement. However, there are numerous opportunities for future research in public-nonprofit community sport relationships. In this section, I hope to shed light on some of the potential areas in community sport relationships that I feel sport management scholars could benefit from exploring further.

Research has suggested "that the power to sustain a successful sport system lies within the cooperation and relationships of governments, sporting organizations, sport managers, sport management academia and significant others" (Sotiriadou, 2009, p. 855). The original aspiration of the study was to develop an evaluation tool that is applicable to cross-sector relationships (i.e. public-nonprofit sport) and to sport practitioners at the community sport level, yet, at this time, it was not possible to achieve such intent. With that being said, this research does offer insight into potential future research considerations.

Shaw and Allen (2006) conducted research *with* rather than *on* participants involved in their study to understand partnership dynamics. Future research could benefit from the later approach to work *with* public and CSO participants to develop a context specific evaluation tool. Future sport management research and scholars should consider this approach, especially when frameworks are under examination. Additionally, Giunta and Thomas (2013) argue for the use of multiple approaches to collaborative research. In particular, the authors identify the benefit of utilizing an in-depth case studies approach to partnership evaluation which add nuances and lessens that can be tested or refined in future studies. The authors also identify Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a suitable approach to partnership evaluation because it incorporates the perspectives of the diverse partners. As well, those actors affected by the particular issue in the community are incorporated as "key players in the design and implementation of research and evaluation" (p. 612).

Specifically, adopting the methodology of Participatory Action Research (PAR) could be insightful to research on evaluation practices. In contrast to the basic interpretive qualitative approach utilized in the current study, PAR requires the active involvement of the community which include the beneficiaries of services, sport service providers, policy makers, and researchers (Frisby, Crawford, & Dorer, 1997). Drawing from Frisby and colleagues' (1997) study, PAR is able to challenge sport management researchers and act as full collaborators with those individuals under study to further transform: (1) how knowledge in the field is constructed, (2) how relationships with participants are formed, and (3) how research does or does not benefit those involved in the research. Adopting a PAR approach particularly to sport at the community level could provide valuable insights into organizational processes as well as the potential to uncover or create new organizational processes. Moreover, PAR is concerned with equalizing

power relations with the researcher and those being researched as well as forming participative partnerships that change power structures to develop trust, build a supportive network, and learn about the participants situations to make radical change. Although, the adoption of PAR does require a significant amount of time in the research setting in order to establish relationships and truly know the community, this methodological approach could be more beneficial to the development and implemention of evaluation practices, particularly, because the researcher is embedding themselves in the setting for a longer period of time and further developing trust to break down power structures. However, full collaboration and the reduction of power is not always possible with the use of PAR, yet it does aim to develop nonhierarchical relationships (Frisby et al., 1997). Therefore, it is possible that more time spent in the research setting and establishing stronger relationships with participants could contribute to the development of an evaluation tool that is beneficial to public and CSO practitioners.

Moreover, additional research at the network level should be considered. Although Jones and colleagues (2017) found limited connectivity between youth sport organizations at the network level, the current study found an increased coordination of effort between the public-sector and their various CSO partners. Future research would benefit from understanding the collaborative activity at the network level to gain insight into their structures, coordination, and management practices. As well, this could also shed additional light on the negotiation of power at the network level, which could further increase our understanding of successful or unsuccessful activities or processes used at the network level (Babiak et al., 2018). Furthermore, future research on public-nonprofit sport-based partnerships can benefit from further examination on DiMaggio and Powell (1983) three categories of power (i.e. coercive, mimetic,

normative) which stems from resource dependence to advance our understanding of power or pressure in sport-based IORs.

It is also important to note that the location of three out of the five municipalities are relatively close in proximity to each other. As a result of their relational closeness, similar findings in regard to process, agreements, policies, and procedures utilized in the public-CSO partnership were revealed during analysis. The other two municipalities (i.e. one urban and one rural community) were in other geographic locations within Southwestern Ontario which revealed different findings in regard to processes, agreements, policies, and procedures. This potentially can raise some issues in relation to the generalizability, thus it is not possible to conclude that the findings in this study are generalizable across Southwestern Ontario.

Future research may benefit from selecting one municipal community and exploring the public-sector partner relationship with all CSOs residing within that specific community. Furthermore, utilizing a qualitative approach to gain a greater understanding of public-nonprofit community sport relationships was beneficial. However, adopting a mixed methods approach could prove to be more insightful to gaining an understanding of the effectiveness of the public-CSO partnership as well as contribute greater insight into examining evaluation practices.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Evaluation Models

Figure 1. Causal Chain for Relationship outcomes

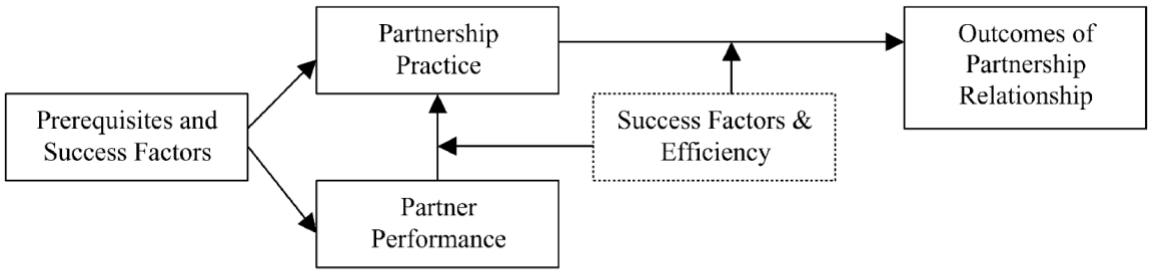

Fig. 2. Causal chain for relationship outcomes.

Figure 2. Summary of Propsed Assessment Framework

Table 1

Summary of proposed assessment targets and methods

Category/targets	Methodology
I. Presence of prerequisites and success factors	Partner interview
A. Pre-requisites and facilitative factors	Partner survey
• Perceptions of partners' tolerance for sharing power	
• Partners' willingness to adapt to meet partnership's needs	
• Perception of receptivity to new solutions to improve the partnership, its value, and day-to-day performance	
• Speed and flexibility in addressing the need for corrective action	
• Accommodation of special requests among the partners	
• Responsiveness of partners to unforeseen situations	
• Existence of partnership champions	
• Existence of champions within each partner organization and within the partnership as a whole	
• Focus of champion's advocacy (internal to a partner organization, within the partnership, externally)	
B. Success factors from the literature	
• Trust	Partner interview
• Character-based: perceptions of integrity, honesty, moral character, reliability, confidentiality as appropriate, etc.	Partner survey
• Competence-based: perceptions of competence in prescribed/assumed skill areas, business sense, common sense, judgment, knowledge, interpersonal skills, understanding of partnership, etc.	
• Confidence: standard operating procedures, contractual agreements and their degree of formality	
• Senior management support	
• Direct participation	
• Provision of resources and support to organization members participating in the partnership	
• Ability to meet performance expectations	
• External constraints	
• Partner capacity	
• Clear goals	Partner survey
• Consistent identification of partnership goals and mission	
• Regular partner meetings to review, revise, and assess progress in meeting identified goals	
• Shared common vision for the partnership	
• Mutually determined and agreed partnership goals	
• Partner compatibility	Partner interview
• Knowledge and understanding of partners' mission, operations, and constraints	Partner survey
• Previous conflict or confrontations among partners	
• Compatible operating cultures (e.g. operating philosophies, management styles, teamwork)	Process observation and assessment
	Partner survey
• Compatible constituencies	Partner survey
• Compatible core values	
• Mechanisms to address incompatibilities	
• Conflict	
• Degree	
• Frequency	
• Extent of conflict avoidance within partnership	
• Presence/absence of one or more dominating partners	
II Degree of partnership	Process observation and assessment Partner identification and assessment of indicators
A. Mutuality	
• Mutuality and equality	Partner interview
• Equality in decision making	Partner survey

(*continued on next page*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Category/targets	Methodology
• Democratic procedures • Satisfaction that all views are considered • Joint determination of program activities and procedures	
• Process for determining division of labor and risk/reward balance	Partner interview
• Resource exchange • Relative balance • Nature of resources exchanged	Process observation and assessment Partner survey
• Reciprocal accountability • Regular reporting among partners • Access to performance information • Financial controls balanced with administrative imposition • Joint design of evaluations/assessments	Partner survey
• Transparency • Established channels for continuous dialogue and information sharing • Timely response to information requests • Sharing of relevant information beyond specified agreements/requirements • Partner representation and participation in partnership activities • Participation in planning and review meetings • Program activities • Partner satisfaction with opportunity to participate	Partner survey
• Rules governing who can represent the partnership, within what limits	Partner interview
• Mutual respect • Consideration of partners and convenience in the planning of meetings and other organizational requirements • Recognition of indispensability of each partner, including unique strengths • Shared understanding of respective partner drivers • Even benefits • Perception of fairness • Satisfaction with benefit distribution • Satisfaction with the criteria for benefit distribution	Partner survey
B. Organization identity	
• Determining partner organization identities • Mission • Major strengths and weaknesses • Primary constituents • Underlying values • Organization culture • Methods for assessing mission attainment and maintenance of all of the above	Partner interview
• Organization identity within the partnership • Perception of threats or compromises of organization identity within the partnership • Nature of organization adaptations/adjustments in order to effectively promote and participate in the partnership • Perception of partners adjustments in response to expressed concern about organization identity • Extent to which organization has changed as a result of partnership participation and quality of that change	
• Influence of partnership work on partner organizations' service quality and responsiveness to core constituencies • Influence on and use of core constituencies • Perceptions regarding the extent of mutual adaptation • Perceptions of overall impact of partnership work on organization identity	Partner survey
III. Outcomes of the partnership relationship	
1. Value-added	Partner interview
• Qualitative synergistic outcomes of program	Partner survey
• Quantitative synergistic outcomes of program	Process observation and assessment

(*continued on next page*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Category/targets	Methodology
• Linkages with other programs and actors • Enhanced capacity and influence of individual partners • Other multiplier effects	
2. Partners meet own objectives • Satisfaction with progress in meeting identified drivers • Qualitative and quantitative evidence of meeting drivers • Enhanced performance in pursuing own mission • Enhanced performance in satisfying constituencies	Partner interview Partner survey
3. Partnership identity • Partnership organization culture • Values	Process observation and assessment.
• Partnership mission, comparative advantages, value-added	Partner interview
• Name recognition (e.g. stakeholder feedback, publicity, logo, web page) • Partnership constituencies	Process observation and assessment.
IV. Partner performance A. Partners and partner roles enacted as prescribed or adapted for strategic reasons	Review of project proposal Partner interview Partner survey
B. Partner assessment and satisfaction with their partners' performance • Compliance with expected and agreed roles	Process observation and assessment Partner interview Partner survey
• Satisfaction of partners with each other's performance	Partner interview
• Partner performance beyond the call of duty (i.e. extra-role behavior)	Partner survey
V. Efficiency and strategy • Identification of critical factors influencing partnership's success • Extent to which these are continuously monitored • Extent to which these are strategically managed	Partner interview

Figure 3. Parent and Harvey (2009) Partnership Management Model

Table 1. Parent and Harvey (2009) model overview.

Antecedents	Management	Evaluation
Project purpose/goal	Attributes of the partnership • Commitment • Coordination • Trust • Organizational identity • Organizational learning • Mutuality • Synergy • Staffing	Type of evaluation • Process • Impact • Outcome • Formative • Summative
Environment (facilitator or barrier)	Communication • Quality • Information sharing • Participation	Determination of success/effectiveness • Partner satisfaction • Project/programme outcome(s)
Nature of the partners • Partner motives • Partner complementarity and fit	Decision-making • Structure • Conflict resolution • Power balance • Leadership	
Partnership planning • Type of partnership • Governance		

Appendix B – Community Sport Organizations Recruitment Letter

Dear Community Sport Organization,

My name is Ashley Hutchinson and I am a master's student working under the supervision of Dr. Katie Misener in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I am contacting you as you are the President of your organization according to your organization's website.

I am conducting a study that aims to explore and understand partnership practices and evaluation strategies between public recreation service departments and community sport organizations in four mid-size municipalities in Ontario. I would like to recruit the individual(s) responsible for the communication and management of your organization's partners to take part in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The study involves in-person or phone interviews with the Department of Recreation Services from the five mid-size communities and three community sport organizations from each municipality, who represent different sports and sizes of organizations. Interviews will average approximately 60 minutes in length and will take place at a time that is convenient for you. I would like to hear about your organization's relationship with the municipal representative from the Department of Recreation Services to gain a greater understanding of partnership practices and key features of evaluation strategies.

The study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. The study is also being closely monitored by my supervisor, Dr Katie Misener and committee member, Dr Laura Wood throughout the research process.

Please read the attached information letter to provide your organization with more details about what is involved in participation. If you have any questions, require additional information, or are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca or my faculty supervisor Dr. Katie Misener at k.misener@uwaterloo.ca.

Sincerely,

Researcher:
Ashley Hutchinson, BHK
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Katie Misener, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
k.misener@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix C – Public Recruitment Letter

Dear Department of Recreation Services,

My name is Ashley Hutchinson and I am a master's student working under the supervision of Dr. Katie Misener in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I am contacting you as you are the **Director of Community Sport Relations/similar position** within the Department of Recreation Services according to your municipal website.

I am conducting a study that aims to explore and understand partnership practices and evaluation strategies between public recreation service departments and community sport organizations in four mid-size municipalities in Ontario. I would like to recruit the individual(s) responsible for the communication and management of partnership with community sport organizations to take part in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The study involves in-person or phone interviews with the Department of Recreation Services from the five mid-size communities and three community sport organizations from each municipality, who represent different sports and sizes of organizations. Interviews will average approximately 60 minutes in length and will take place at a time that is convenient for you. I would like to hear about your organization's relationship with the local community sport organizations to gain a greater understanding of partnership practices and key features of evaluation strategies.

The study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. The study is also being closely monitored by my supervisor, Dr Katie Misener and committee member, Dr Laura Wood throughout the research process.

Please read the attached information letter to provide your organization with more details about what is involved in participation. If you have any questions, require additional information, or are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca or my faculty supervisor Dr. Katie Misener at k.misener@uwaterloo.ca.

Sincerely,

Researcher:
Ashley Hutchinson, BHK
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr Katie Misener, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
k.misener@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix D – Information Letter

Department Letterhead
University of Waterloo

Principal Investigator: Ashley Hutchinson (MA Candidate)
Dept. of Rec. & Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1
Email: aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca

Dear **Community Sport Organization/Department of Recreation Services**,

Title of the study: Partnership Evaluation Practices in Public-Nonprofit Community Sport Relationships: Understanding Resource Dependency

This letter is an invitation to participate in a research study about partnership evaluation practices in public recreation service departments and nonprofit community sport organization relationships. This study is being undertaken as part of my Master's Thesis in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, under the direct supervision of Dr. Katie Misener. This letter contains information about the nature of the study and outline's your rights, and potential risks, as well as benefits as a participant in the study. If you have any additional questions, require further clarification or information on this study, please do not hesitate to ask myself or supervisor prior to consenting to participate in the study. You will be provided with a copy of the information and consent form for your records should you choose to participate.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand partnership practices and the key features of evaluation strategies between public-nonprofit community sport organizations. I am interested to hear your perspective about your relationship with the **Department of Recreation Services/local community sport organizations** to gain a greater understanding of partnership practices and evaluation strategies. Knowledge and information generated from this study may help to inform evaluation tools, and provide practitioners the knowledge, skill, and competency to efficiently and effectively evaluate their partnerships to determine successful collaboration. The publication of this thesis will present the findings of this study that will be further shared with sport managers and communities directly involved in the study, other sport managers and communities, as well as to the broader research community.

Participation in the study will consist of an in-person or phone interview that will last on average approximately 60 minutes in length, in which you will be asked to respond to a series of questions relating to the research study. For example, some interview questions will be; Can you tell me about your partnership with the **local Department of Recreation Services/local community sport organizations**? What is the main reason or purpose for having this partnership? How would you describe the partnership? Who typically determines the flow of resources? Finally, in terms of your partnership, do you or have you ever formally evaluated your partnership?

Participants involved in the study will maintain a degree of familiarity and have expert knowledge of their **departments/organization's** relationship with the **community sport organization/municipality** to accurately and comprehensively report on them to take part in this study. This will include individuals from four mid-size municipalities who hold a position within the Department of Recreation Services and are responsible for managing facility distribution, providing support, collaborating on community or sport events, and managing communication with community sport organizations. As well as, four individuals from community sport organizations (from each municipality) representing different sports and sizes from each municipality will be selected.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you wish, you can decline to answer any question(s) or decide to end the interview at any time by communicating this to the researcher. You may withdraw your consent to participate and have your data destroyed by contacting me prior to data analysis in May 2019. It will not be possible to withdraw your participation during data analysis as interviews will be transcribed and the researcher will not be able to identify individual responses.

Your participation will be considered confidential. Your name will not appear in any paper or publication resulting from this study. Identifying information will be removed from the data is collected and stored separately for a period of three months.

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded for the collection of information and transcribed for analysis. Collected data will be securely stored on a password protected computer and in a locked office for a minimum of one year. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

You will not receive remuneration for your participation in this study. There are no personal benefits as a result of participating in this study, however your responses will be valuable in my understanding of public-nonprofit community sport relationships. As well, the findings of the study may prove valuable to sport practitioners and organizations at the community sport level.

Raw data will be used to analyze and write up the findings in article form for submission and possible publication to academic journals. With your permission, anonymous quotations may be used in the publication of my thesis and individual papers. Results may also be presented at conferences to the broader research community. Should any participant request the results of this study, the researcher will request their email address to provide a brief summary of the findings as a way to provide feedback upon completion of the study. All email addresses will be retained during the duration of the study.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40681). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Ashley Hutchinson by email at

aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Katie Misener by email k.misener@uwaterloo.ca.

Thank you for your consideration and in advance for your involvement in this study. I looked forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Researcher:
Ashley Hutchinson, BHK
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Katie Misener, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
k.misener@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix E – Consent Form

Consent Form

Researcher:
Ashley Hutchinson, BHK
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr Katie Misener, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo
k.misener@uwaterloo.ca

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

Study Title: Partnership Evaluation Practices in Public-Nonprofit Community Sport Relationships: Understanding Resource Dependency

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Ashley Hutchinson, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo and Dr. Katie Misener, PhD, Supervisor, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study without penalty by advising the researchers of this decision.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40681). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext.36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact Ashley Hutchinson at aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca

☐ I agree to my interview being audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

☐ I give permission for the use of anonymous quotations in any publication that comes from this research.

☐ I agree of my own free will to participate in the study.

_____
Participant Name (Print)

_____
Signature of Participant

_____
Date

_____
Researchers Signature

Appendix F – Interview Guide for Community Sport Organizations Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing and taking the time to participate in this interview. As outlined in the information letter and informed consent form, the responses from this interview will only be used for research purposes and is to help me gain a greater understanding of your organizations relationship with the Department of Recreation Services in your municipality. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete, but before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

What is your role with the organization?

Intro to Partnerships:

1. Can you tell me about your partnership with the local Department of Recreation Services (municipality)?
    a. Who is your main contact within the department? (person/role)?
    b. How often do you interact with this partner?
    c. Can you briefly describe how this partnership was created?

Purpose of Partnership

1. From your organization's perspective, what is the main reason or purpose for having this partnership?
    a. How does your organization benefit/what outcomes do you receive?
    b. Are there resources that you provide to or exchange with the municipality?

Management

1. What does it take to manage the partnership? (i.e. how are decisions made/negotiated, roles attributed).

2. How would you describe the partnership you have with the municipality? (e.g., is there give-and-take? balance? Trust? Consistency/involvement?)

Resource Dependence

1. Who typically determines the flow of resources? How does resource flow impact your operations, organizational goals and objectives?

2. Do you feel you are dependent on these resources in order to successfully achieve your mission?

3. How much control do you have over the resources that flow back and forth in this partnership? Do you have any concerns about control of resources? If so, why? How do you navigate these concerns with your partner?

Evaluation

I'm going to switch gears and talk about partnership evaluation for a few minutes.

1. In terms of your partnership with the municipality, do you or have you ever formally discussed an objective of the partnership or did it just evolve naturally?
    a. If have identified objective, what is it?
    b. If not, when you reflect on the partnership, do you feel it has achieved the partnership goals/objectives?

2. Do you formally evaluate your partnerships?
    a. [If YES]
        i. What does that entail?
        ii. What is the process for evaluation? (short and long term?)
        iii. How do you determine if your objectives or partnership outcomes have been met?
        iv. What happens in the partnership if objectives are not achieved?
    b. [IF NO]
        i. What does an effective partnership look like? (how do you determine if your objectives for the partnership are met?)
        ii. How would you go about evaluating the partnership/what steps would you take/would be useful?
        iii. What happens if the partnership is no longer beneficial?

3. What have been the challenges with partnering with the municipality?

4. Is there ongoing feedback within the partnership? Why or why not? Can you provide some examples?

5. Are you satisfied with the partnership? What would you improve about the relationship between your organization and the city?

6. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a failed partnership with the municipality? Why did it fail?

That's the end of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to add?

[thank you and conclusion, re-iterate confidentiality]

Appendix G – Department of Recreation Services Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing and taking the time to participate in this interview. As outlined in the information letter and informed consent form, the responses from this interview will only be used for research purposes and is to help me gain a greater understanding of your organizations relationship with the Department of Recreation Services in your municipality. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete, but before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

What is your role with the organization?

Intro to Partnerships:

1. Can you tell me about the various partnerships you have with local sport clubs?
    a. Probe for: which clubs/sports?
    b. Who is your main contact for each of the clubs (person/role)?
    c. How often do you interact with these partners?
    d. Can you briefly describe how these partnerships were created?

Purpose of Partnerships

1. From the municipality's perspective, what is the main reason or purpose for having these partnerships?
    a. How does the municipality benefit / what outcomes do you receive?
    b. Are there resources that you provide to or exchange with the CSOs?

Management

3. What does it take to manage the partnership? (i.e. how are decisions made/negotiated, roles attributed).

4. How would you describe the various partnerships you have with CSOs? (e.g., is there give-and-take? balance? Trust? Consistency/involvement?)

Resource Dependence

4. Who typically determines the flow of resources? How does resource flow impact your operations, organizational goals and objectives?

5. Do you feel you are dependent on these resources in order to successfully achieve your mission?

6. How much control do you have over the resources that flow back and forth in this partnership? Do you have any concerns about control of resources? If so, why? How do you navigate these concerns with your partner?

Evaluation

I'm going to switch gears and talk about partnership evaluation for a few minutes.

1. In terms of your sport club partnerships, do you or have you ever formally discussed an objective of the partnership or did it just evolve naturally?
    a. If have identified objective, what is it?
    b. If not, when you reflect on the partnership, do you feel it has achieved the partnership goals/objectives?

2. Do you formally evaluate your partnerships?
    a. [If YES]
        i. What does that entail?
        ii. What is the process for evaluation? (short and long term?)
        iii. How do you determine if your objectives or partnership outcomes have been met?
        iv. What happens in the partnership if objectives are not achieved?
    b. [IF NO]
        i. What does an effective partnership look like? (how do you determine if your objectives for the partnership are met?)
        ii. How would you go about evaluating the partnership/what steps would you take/would be useful?
        iii. What happens if the partnership is no longer beneficial?

3. What have been the challenges of the various CSO partnerships you manage?

4. Is there ongoing feedback within the partnership? Why or why not? Can you provide some examples?

5. Are you satisfied with the partnership? What would you improve about the relationship?

6. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a failed partnership with a sport club? Why did it fail?

That's the end of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to add?

[thank you and conclusion, re-iterate confidentiality]

Appendix H – Feedback Letter

Department Letter Head
University of Waterloo

Date

Dear **(Insert Name of Participant),**

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled Partnership Evaluation Practices in Public-Nonprofit Community Sport Relationships: Understanding Resource Dependency. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to explore and understand partnership practices and the key features of evaluation strategies between public-nonprofitcommunity sport organizations.

The data collected during interviews will contribute to a greater understanding of partnership practices and evaluation strategies. Knowledge and information generated from this study may help to inform evaluation tools, and provide practitioners the knowledge, skill, and competency to efficiently and effectively evaluate their partnerships to determine successful collaboration.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40681). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact Ashley Hutchinson at aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca or Faculty Supervisor Dr. Katie Misener at k.misener@uwaterloo.ca.

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analysed for this study, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by December 2019, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me or faculty supervisor by email as noted above.

Ashley Hutchinson

University of Waterloo
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

aahutchinson@uwaterloo.ca