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EXPLORING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN A SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT  
AND PEACE SETTING

By  
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B.S. Slippery Rock University, 2010  
M.S. University of Louisville, 2011

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
College of Education and Human Development  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development

Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Human Resource Education  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, KY

May 2015

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A Dissertation Approved on  
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DEDICATION

For Trudy and Ridley

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere appreciation for my committee members: Dr. Mary Hums, for your genuine support, friendship, and guidance; Dr. Meg Hancock, for your understanding and willingness to always listen, and for inspiring me to think at a deeper level about my research; Dr. Marion Hambrick, for your willingness to collaborate and mentor me in the research process; and Dr. Brad Shuck, for your enthusiasm and insightful feedback. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to serve on my committee and truly look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with each of you for many years to come.

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I also want to thank the 17 executive directors who volunteered to participate in this study. This study would not be possible without your willingness to share your lived experiences in fulfilling your respective missions. You are an inspiration for all of us.

ABSTRACT

EXPLORING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN A SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT  
AND PEACE SETTING

Per G. Svensson

April 3, 2015

Recent Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) scholarship has noted the need for exploring organizational aspects in order to advance SDP theory and practice. One particular unexplored aspect of SDP is organizational capacity. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore elements of organizational capacity in SDP organizations operating programming in urban settings outside the top three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago) of the United States. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Executive Directors of 17 nonprofit organizations. This qualitative inquiry was guided by Hall et al.'s (2003) three-dimensional framework on organizational capacity. Those three dimensions are: human resources capacity, financial resources capacity, and structural capacity. Findings from this study further our understanding of nonprofit capacity since there is a consensus among scholars that elements within each capacity dimension are context specific.

Several elements emerged with each capacity dimension; (a) human resources capacity (board involvement, board recruitment, board retention, paid staff, finding roles, shared values and engagement, staff recruitment, staff retention, staff training, volunteer



dependence, volunteer recruitment); (b) financial capacity (financial management, fundraising, financial campaigns, grant funding, special events, other revenue sources, expenses); and (c) structural capacity (partnership management, mutually beneficial relationships, memorandums of understanding, , partnership formation, organizational flexibility, internal structures, organizational culture, access to facilities, internal systems and procedures, strategic planning, plan implementation, and evaluation). Findings also indicated perceived connections between the capacity dimensions.

Overall, this study contributes to Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) call for an empirical and theoretical discussion on the nature of capacity in SDP. Findings in this study extend our understanding of organizational capacity among nonprofit sport organizations and highlight the lived experiences of SDP leaders within existing complex environments. The aim of this research was not only to identify elements of capacity within SDP, but also to explore how SDP organizations are trying to address existing capacity challenges. This study's findings provide a foundation for future research on the nature of organizational capacity in SDP. Developing a better understanding of capacity in SDP is imperative for designing more effective capacity-building initiatives that help increase the ability of these organizations to fulfill their respective missions.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The words “Sport for Development and Peace” (SDP) have become buzz words during recent years to describe an increasingly diverse range of organizations using sport as a tool to promote social change (Coakley, 2011). The United Nations has unequivocally embraced sport as a viable tool among its members in development and peace-building efforts during the past decade. For example, 2005 was proclaimed the International Year of Sport and Physical Education and included a plethora of SDP initiatives (Beutler, 2006). More recently, the United Nations declared April 6th as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace through the adoption of Resolution 67/296 (United Nations, 2013).

While these policymakers are guided by evangelical assumptions regarding the potential role of sport for promoting social change, critical scholars have noted sport is neither inherently positive nor negative (Coalter, 2010; Sugden, 2010). Instead, whether these programs result in positive or negative outcomes depends on if the implementing organizations have sufficient structures and processes to fulfill their missions (Schulenkorf, Sugden, & Burdsey, 2014). Recent SDP scholarship has begun to note the need to explore organizational aspects to advance the use of sport to promote social change in theory and practice. One particular unexplored aspect is organizational capacity. Examining organizational capacity is important for developing a better understanding of

the complex realities of SDP agencies in fulfilling their missions. Identifying critical capacity strengths and weaknesses as well as how managers of SDP organizations work within these constraints is crucial for understanding how to minimize potential negative outcomes for these types of programs. Conceptualizing organizational capacity within a SDP setting is also crucial for funders and other supporting agencies in order to help them improve their capacity-building programs targeting SDP organizations. This can help SDP organizations better achieve their mandates by improving how they mobilize their resources and organizational assets. Up until now, no prior studies in SDP have explicitly explored organizational capacity. Therefore, the current study is one of the first to examine organizational capacity through the lived experiences of SDP practitioners.

### **Organizational Capacity**

Misener and Doherty's (2013) definition of organizational capacity among nonprofit sport organizations as "the ability of an organization to harness its internal and external resources to achieve its goals" (p.136) guided the current study. Scholarship on organizational capacity suggests nonprofit and voluntary organizations are unable to adopt new practices or implement change unless they have sufficient structures and processes for doing so (See Barman & MacIndoe, 2012; Cassidy, Levinton, & Hunter 2006; Eisinger, 2002; Scuh & Leviton, 2006). As Hall, McKeown, and Roberts (2001, p. 4) noted, "the capacity of an organization to work toward a particular objective depends on the capital it is able to deploy." Thus, the capacity of an SDP organization refers to its ability (or inability) to leverage existing resources in order to fulfill its organizational goals.

Hall et al. (2003) developed a three-dimensional framework based on their

research on the Canadian nonprofit and voluntary sector. Those three dimensions are: human resources capacity, financial resources capacity, and structural capacity. Structural capacity consists of three sub-dimensions: relationships and networks capacity, infrastructure and process capacity, and planning and development capacity. While different terminology may have been used, other frameworks on nonprofit organizational capacity are typically characterized by similar dimensions related to: (a) human resources, (b) financial management, (c) external relationships, (d) internal structures and processes, and (e) planning and organizational development (Christensen & Gazley, 2008; Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000; Germann & Wilson, 2004; Hall et al., 2003; Minzner, Klerman, Markovitz, & Fink, 2014; Schuh & Leviton, 2006).

Studies on organizational capacity in sport management have predominantly been guided by Hall et al.'s (2003) framework (See Balduck, Lucidarme, Marlier, & Willem, in press; Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013b; 2014; Wicker, Breuer, Lamprecht, & Fischer, 2014). In their exploratory study of a multidimensional framework of organizational capacity in community sport clubs, Doherty et al. (2014) suggested:

capacity is the ability of an organization to draw on various assets and resources to achieve its mandate and objectives. It is important to understand the nature of those resources so that capacity may be accurately assessed, and capacity building efforts may be effectively focused (p. 125).

The aforementioned conceptualization of organizational capacity within a nonprofit sport club setting highlights the practical importance of developing a better understanding of capacity within a specific organizational context. Considering the multi-



dimensional nature of organizational capacity (Christensen & Gazley, 2008), Hall et al.'s (2003) conceptualization of capacity was also used as the foundation for the current study as the dimensions of human, financial, and structural capacities align with characteristics of SDP organizations. Similar to Hall et al.'s (2003) findings with Canadian nonprofit and voluntary organizations, volunteers and internal staff play integral roles within SDP programs (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010, 2012; Theeboom, De Knop & Wylleman, 2008), while financial capacity often remains a considerable challenge (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Kidd, 2008). Consequently, financial constraints have limited the development of adequate internal structures and processes within SDP organizations for achieving their missions (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sanders, Phillips, & Vanreusel, 2014).

**Human capacity.** The ability of an organization to mobilize and deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and volunteers) is an integral part of the capacity of a nonprofit organization (Hall et al., 2003), and is critical for the remaining aspects of organizational capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). Despite the volunteer-driven nature of the nonprofit sector, most organizations lack appropriate volunteer management practices (De Knop, Hoecke, & De Bosscher, 2004; Fredericksen & London, 2000; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Scholars suggest this results from the general scarcity of resources among charitable organizations. Among smaller nonprofit organizations, the lack of structured volunteer management practices can also be the result of the commitment of its founders toward their targeted cause(s) rather than development of proper organizational practices and structures.

Specific human resources capacity challenges vary considerably among

nonprofits, indicating the importance of understanding local contexts (Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013b). For example, some nonprofit sport organizations rely on a few highly engaged volunteers while other organizations may have a large pool of volunteers with lower levels of engagement. Previous nonprofit research has focused on several aspects of human resources capacity. The competence of internal stakeholders is an important aspect of this capacity considering the increasingly complex political, social, and environmental contexts of today's nonprofits (Gibbs, Napp, Jolly, Westover, & Uhl 2002; Sobeck, 2008; Yung et al., 2008). Lack of financial and evaluation knowledge and skills also continue to be reported as common capacity challenges among North American nonprofit organizations (Gibbs et al., 2002; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Yung et al., 2008). There is some evidence indicating capacity-building programs can help increase the competencies of internal stakeholders and improve human capital (Sobeck, 2008). The effectiveness of capacity-building programs, however, largely depends on a contextualized understanding of organizational capacity. A general 'one size fits all' capacity-building program is unlikely to address the needs of nonprofit organizations within specific settings such as SDP where realities may be noticeably different than for organizations operating within other settings such as political advocacy.

Volunteer recruitment and retention are also common challenges among both sport and non-sport nonprofits (Wicker et al., 2014; Yung et al., 2008). While previous scholarship indicates volunteer management practices are influenced by several organizational factors including size, external support, financial capacity, and values and beliefs of organizational leaders (Akingbola, 2013; Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Guo et al., 2011; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013), these findings may not

necessarily be generalizable across organizational settings. From a functional perspective, volunteer recruitment and retention are associated with the perceived match between volunteer experiences and an individual's personal motives (Clary et al., 1998). It is important to note volunteers involved in similar roles may have considerably different motives (Wilson, 2012). Research in SDP indicates volunteers are motivated by a multitude of factors including values, social, understanding, career, and self-enhancement (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2013; Welty Peachey, Lyras, Cohan, Bruening, & Cunningham, 2014). Why do these various motives matter for managers of SDP organizations? For one, recognizing varying motives is important for appealing to different target groups of volunteers. In addition, volunteer motives also appear to influence how volunteers respond to organizational problems (Garner & Garner, 2011). Additional research is needed within this domain before any conclusions may be drawn. However, understanding the motives of an organization's volunteers can help managers potentially mitigate the impact of future organizational challenges and problems.

The roles of volunteers within nonprofits also appear to be associated with perceived organizational problems. Wicker and Breuer (2014) found fewer perceived organizational problems among German community sport clubs relying primarily on secondary volunteers – individuals contributing by volunteering for a few hours here and there without holding a central board or staff member role – rather than those relying primarily on core volunteers. Moreover, the stages of the volunteering process also influence volunteer recruitment and retention efforts as the roles, perceptions, emotions, and relationships among volunteers tend to change over the course of the volunteer

process (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). Therefore, SDP managers should seek feedback from volunteers throughout the volunteer process to develop a better understanding of their experiences and ultimately strengthen the support mechanisms for volunteers.

Managers of SDP organizations can strategically improve their volunteer retention by implementing volunteer training and support programs (Cuskelly et al., 2006). It is also important for these managers to develop a better understanding of their current volunteers as previous research indicates a significant association between commitment and both volunteer retention and performance (Engelberg, Skinner, & Stakus, 2011; Esteve, Di Lorenzo, Inglés, & Puig 2011; Hoye, 2007). Volunteer performance and retention improves with increased commitment to the organization and their volunteer role(s). Yet unreasonable tasks are directly associated with decreased future volunteer intentions (van Schie, Güntert, & Wehner, 2014). Nonprofit literature also highlights the potential conflict among paid staff and volunteers due to disagreements over organizational identity (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011), lack of communication, different perceptions of meaningful roles, ambiguity about goals and objectives, and organizational values and attitudes toward volunteers (Garner & Garner, 2011; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Netting, Nelson, Borders, & Huber, 2004; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). This conflict is understandable as engaged volunteers often develop a vested interest in a nonprofit as their time commitment increases while paid staff may consider themselves responsible for all business decisions given their background and current responsibilities. In a nonprofit setting, however, organizations are often unable to function without the support of both

core and secondary volunteers. It is important, therefore, for SDP managers to learn how to facilitate this relationship by balancing the interests of these two stakeholder groups. One tactic for mitigating this intra-organizational conflict is to include volunteers in organizational decision-making processes (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Previous research on nonprofit organizations highlights the importance of developing a better understanding of human resource capacity (Ridder & McCandless, 2010) while considering the unique characteristics of nonprofits (Beck, Lengnick-Hall, & Lengnick-Hall, 2008; O'Regan & Oster, 2005). Scholarship on nonprofit sport organizations indicates strategic human resources management practices are relatively rare (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). Some researchers posit that human resources capacity influences financial capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009), while others suggest human resources capacity is also influenced by an organization's financial capacity (Akingbola, 2013; Coates, Wicker Feiler, & Breuer, 2014). These findings highlight the importance of understanding capacity through a multidimensional framework.

**Financial capacity.** Financial resources capacity, the second main dimension of Hall et al.'s (2003) capacity framework, refers to a nonprofit's ability to obtain and expend financial capital for sustainability (Bowman, 2011; Hall et al., 2003). Adequate financial resources serve as a crucial factor associated with several other aspects of organizational capacity including volunteer recruitment and retention (Akingbola, 2013; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). Financial capacity remains limited among many nonprofit organizations, however (Bowman, 2011; Fredericksen & London, 2000; Yung et al., 2008). Yet, these financial constraints appear to be

contextualized within the nonprofit sport sphere. Wicker and Breuer (2014), for example, found financial capacity to be one of the greatest organizational challenges besides volunteer recruitment and retention among German community sport organizations. In contrast, Misener and Doherty (2009) and Sharpe (2006) did not find financial capacity to be an immediate concern among Canadian community sport organizations as these groups had relatively stable revenue sources. These discrepancies between countries could be the result of different levels of public subsidy for nonprofit community sport organizations in Germany and Canada.

Previous research indicates primary revenue sources of nonprofits include public, private, and government funding (Kearns, Bell, Deem, & McShane, 2014; Wicker et al., 2014). Dependence on these revenue sources varies among nonprofit organizations (Wicker & Breuer, 2011), although membership fees have emerged as the most common revenue source among community sport clubs (Wicker, Breuer, & Hennigs, 2012). This is not surprising given the member-driven nature of community sport organizations. At the same time, in their examination of a large sample of German sport clubs, Coates et al. (2014) found those relying on external sponsorship funding (i.e., corporate funding) were significantly more likely to report more frequent financial and volunteer problems. In contrast, they found that those relying on external revenue from public subsidies noted increased volunteer problems, yet did not report any increased financial problems.

A large body of nonprofit management literature suggests the importance of revenue diversification for increased financial stability (See Carroll & Stater, 2009; Chang & Tuckman, 1996; Froelich, 1999; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Hager, 2001; Jegers, 1997; Kingma, 1993; Tuckman & Chang, 1991). Organizational overreliance on donative

revenues (i.e., individual contributions) remains associated with increased financial vulnerability. Yet, others have found significant associations between increased financial capacity and revenue concentration (Chikoto & Neely, 2014). Concentrating on a limited number of revenue sources may serve as a viable short-term tactic while managers increase the organization's capacity to manage a diverse portfolio of revenue sources. A shortcoming of previous scholarship on revenue diversification/concentration in nonprofit settings, however, is the simple assumption that different types of revenues (e.g., individual contributions vs. grants) are an accurate measure of revenue diversification. Previous research has failed to consider diversification within a specific type of revenue source. For example, an SDP organization could diversify its grant revenues by targeting local, national, and international grants from a broad range of grant agencies. This approach could arguably serve as an alternative approach for strengthening the organization's financial stability.

A growing number of studies have also examined financial vulnerability among nonprofit organizations (Bowman, 2011; Carroll & Stater, 2009; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Hodge & Piccolo, 2005), predominantly based on Tuckman and Chang's (1991) model of financial vulnerability (Carroll & Stater, 2009; Cordery, Sim, & Baskerville, 2013; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000). The primary types of revenue sources for nonprofit sport organizations appear to be associated with financial volatility, although additional research is needed to assess potential implications of such findings (Wicker et al., 2014). Some authors, however, have proposed alternative models for assessing financial vulnerability over time (Bowman, 2011). Research on financial vulnerability of nonprofit sport organizations remains scarce (Cordery et al., 2013), but those studies indicate the

importance of considering multiple models and conceptualizations of financial vulnerability when evaluating financial aspects of nonprofit organizations (Greenlee & Trussel, 2000).

While many non-membership nonprofits continue to lack diverse revenue streams (Carroll & Stater, 2009), Wicker et al. (2012) found high levels of revenue diversification among German community sport clubs. Although some scholars have found revenue concentration to be associated with increased financial capacity among non-sport organizations (Chikoto & Neely, 2014), no such evidence has emerged within the sport management literature. At the same time, it is worth noting that revenue diversification might be effective in reducing organization-specific financial volatility, yet is far from the solution to systematic financial volatility from the broader environmental factors nonprofit sport managers encounter (Wicker, Longley, & Breuer, 2015). Previous studies have examined diversification among types of revenue sources, yet as previously mentioned, research on the influence of diversification within a particular type of revenue source (e.g., local, regional, and national government grants) remains limited.

Recent findings suggest nonprofit sport clubs are becoming increasingly commercialized (Wicker et al., 2012), which some people may find concerning given the typical charitable nature of these organizations. Increased commercialization of nonprofit revenue sources, however, does not appear to significantly influence the mission or program delivery of nonprofits (Guo, 2006; Hughes & Luksetich, 2004). Therefore, some scholars suggest nonprofits might favor these types of revenue streams for increasing their organizational legitimacy (Froelich, 1999). At the same time, commercialization negatively influences donations received by German sport clubs (Feiler, Wicker, &



Breuer, 2014). Whether this is an appropriate strategy for SDP agencies remains questionable given the concerns about neoliberalism in international development efforts. These decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis given the complex realities and contextual differences among SDP agencies and their areas of operation. It is important to remember that Coates et al. (2014) found German sport clubs relying on external revenues from sponsorships were significantly more likely to report increased financial and volunteer problems. Hence, SDP leaders need to recognize the influence of potential revenue sources on not only their financial capacity, but also their human resources capacity.

Nonetheless, there is also a growing body of literature on the interaction among different types of revenue sources and whether an increase in one type results in a significant increase (crowding-in effect) or significant decrease (crowding-out effect) of another revenue source (Guo, 2006; Kim & Van Ryzin, 2014; Tinkelman & Neely, 2011; Wicker, Vos, Scheerder, & Breuer, 2013). Overall, the results of these studies indicated significant interactions among revenue sources (Guo, 2006; Kim & Van Ryzin, 2014), although the effects varied considerably based on types of nonprofits (Tinkelman & Neely, 2011). The interactions among revenue sources remain unknown within the SDP setting.

**Structural capacity.** Structural capacity refers to the “processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, and support structures within an organization that help it to function” (Hall et al., 2003, p. 37). This capacity dimension consists of three sub-dimensions: (a) relationship and network capacity, (b) infrastructure and process capacity, and (c) planning and development capacity. The ability to build and maintain

relationships with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., funders, members, volunteers, media, equipment providers, facility providers) is considered an organization's relationship and network capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Lack of resources can drive the formation of organizational relationships (Wicker et al., 2013), yet these partnerships can also unintentionally result in increased capacity constraints (Gazley & Abner, 2014). An increase in inter-organizational relationships requires additional time by staff (paid and/or volunteer-based) to manage and meet the various needs of such external stakeholders. One common type of external partnerships among SDP organizations is relationships with funding agencies. Funding partnerships appear to influence several aspects of nonprofit organizations including human resource management, strategy development, and evaluation practices (Carman, 2009; Gibbs et al., 2002; Stone, Bigelow, & Crittenden, 1999; Thomson, 2010). While funding agencies help provide financial capital, nonprofits struggle to comply with the increasing amount of reporting requirements associated with each funding source requirement (Thomson, 2010; Carman, 2007, 2009). Despite the perceived benefits of external evaluation practices, most nonprofits have limited evaluation capacity and continue to rely mostly on internal assessments (Carman, 2007; Gibbs et al., 2002).

In SDP, funding agencies often control local programs due to unequal power structures in funding partnerships (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a). Yet, as a whole, SDP continues to be characterized by limited collaboration among organizations with similar goals (Coakley, 2011; Lindsey, 2013, Lindsey & Banda, 2010). Many of these organizations engage in partnerships with other groups including government agencies, sport organizations, and other development

organizations (Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010). Sustainable partnerships involving nonprofit sport organizations are characterized by a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, trust, a shared vision, proactive problem-solving, mission alignment, two-way communication, appropriate and balanced decision-making structures, and multiples types of evaluation (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2012, 2013; Parent & Harvey, 2009).

Interestingly, relationship and network capacity is perceived as one of the strongest assets for many nonprofit sport organizations (De Knop et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). External partnerships have been associated with increased acquisition of resources (Esteve et al., 2011). At the same time, development and management of a multitude of partnerships is also associated with increased time commitment for managers (Misener & Doherty, 2009), and increased need for different types of knowledge and skills for addressing the respective partner's needs (Babiak & Thibault, 2009). This further supports the importance of understanding capacity through the lens of a multidimensional framework. Previous research on multiple cross-sector partnerships indicates the most common challenges relate to structure (governance, roles, responsibilities, and complexity of partnership) and strategy (balance between competition and collaboration and changing missions and organizational goals (Babiak & Thibault, 2009).

The organizational structures and systems (i.e., organizational policies, internal operational documents, internal communication, organizational culture) needed for implementing day-to-day operations are conceptualized as an organization's infrastructure and process capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Written policies and procedures

have emerged as important for the day-to-day operations of nonprofits (Hall et al., 2003). Unfortunately, many nonprofit and voluntary organizations lack formal policies, procedures, and structures (Gibbs et al., 2002; Thomson, 2010). Access and knowledge of informational technology systems and software have also emerged as important aspects of the infrastructure capacity of nonprofit organizations, directly influencing several organizational practices (Gibbs et al., 2002; Thomson, 2010).

Organizational culture and shared beliefs in organizational practices constitute additional integral aspects of the infrastructure and process capacity of nonprofits (Gibbs et al., 2002; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Thomson, 2010). An organizational culture serves as the framework guiding internal stakeholders in day-to-day operations (Chen et al., 2013). Previous research on nonprofit sport organizations indicates many have relatively strong organizational cultures and internal communication systems (De Knop et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Prior research on community sport organizations also highlights the importance for managers to critically reflect on intended and unintended meanings of observable artifacts within a nonprofit organization as these objects constitutes important aspects of an organizational culture (Mills & Hoeber, 2013).

Given the nature of nonprofits, the mission statement is also considered one of the most influential organizational aspects (McHatton, Bradshaw, Gallagher, & Reeves, 2011; Studer & van Schnurbein, 2013), and can impact organizational practices and values (McDonald, 2007). SDP managers, thus, need to carefully review their organizational mission and how it influences organizational practices. Thus, the underlying values and organizational mission are important aspects of the infrastructure and process capacity (Akingbola, 2013; Kaplan, 2001). Unfortunately, many

organizations continue to have ambiguous mission statements and some still lack any type of formal mission statements (Fredericksen & London, 2000; McHatton et al., 2011). McHatton et al. (2011) argued organizations could develop more specific mission statements through strategic planning. This leads us to consider the final sub-dimension of structural capacity in Hall et al.'s (2003) capacity framework – planning and development capacity.

The ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, evaluation practices and process, and research for organizational development constitutes an organization's planning and development capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Strategic planning and management can arguably help guide a nonprofit fulfill its mission and promote continuous organizational development (Bryson, 2010; Kaplan, 2001; McHatton et al., 2011). While previous research suggests a lack of strategic planning among many nonprofits (Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000), Bryson (2010) noted nonprofit managers are increasingly adopting strategic management practices. Ferkins et al. (2009) successfully facilitated development of a formal strategic plan for an Australian nonprofit sport organization and found board and staff members valued the plan's role as a framework for guiding the organization. Nonetheless, Misener and Doherty (2009) found a lack of clear purpose and strategic planning in their study of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization. Additional research is needed to advance our understanding of the planning and development capacity of nonprofit sport organizations.

The extent to which nonprofit managers are able to engage in monitoring and evaluation practices is often referred to as an organization's evaluation capacity. Gibbs et al. (2002) proposed a three-stage model of evaluation capacity among nonprofits

consisting of (a) compliance (with funder requirements), (b) investment (of internal resources), and (c) advancement (active involvement of internal and external stakeholders in evaluation efforts). While nonprofit managers generally engage in some evaluation practices such as performance reviews and funding requirement reports (Carman, 2007), most do not utilize scientifically validated tools for their assessments (Thomson, 2010). The majority of nonprofits engage in evaluation practices primarily to fulfill the requirement(s) of their funding partners. Few nonprofit leaders have proactively embraced monitoring and evaluation by actively engaging internal and external stakeholders for generating more rigorous assessments of the impact of their program(s). Evaluation practices and processes also appear to be influenced by several organizational factors including size, age, targeted social issues, access to resources, and integration of evaluation practices in the culture of the organization (Carman, 2009; LeRoux & Wright, 2010; Levermore, 2011). While some nonprofits report strong evaluation capacity, many continue to struggle with implementation due to lack of knowledge, resources, and appropriate internal structures (Carman & Fredericks, 2010).

Monitoring and evaluation remains one of the most significant challenges facing many SDP organizations (Coalter, 2010; Kidd, 2008, 2011; Levermore, 2008b, 2011). Some researchers suggest few agencies have the ability or resources for adopting appropriate evaluation practices (Donnelly et al., 2011). Others have raised concerns about the influence of funding agencies on evaluation practices (Kay, 2012), and have called for greater inclusion of local voices in impact assessments (Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Nicholls et al., 2011).

**Summary.** Capacity is considered as the ability of a nonprofit organization to

harness internal and external resources to work toward achieving a particular goal. Given the complex realities of the nonprofit sector, Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework of nonprofit organizational capacity served as the guiding framework for the current study. Based on a large-scale national study of the nonprofit and voluntary sector in Canada, Hall et al. proposed three main dimensions of capacity: human resources, financial, and structural capacities. The latter consists of three sub-dimensions related to external relationships, internal structures and processes, and planning and organizational development. Nonprofit scholarship indicates the integral role of volunteers, yet common challenges related to volunteer recruitment, retention, and engagement. These can be improved by recognizing that volunteers may have different motives for similar tasks and their motives and experiences are likely to change over time.

Financial capacity also remains a noticeable challenge for many nonprofits although managers can improve their organization's financial stability by understanding the influence of diversification across and within revenue sources as well as how a particular type of revenue might result in an increase or decrease of another revenue source. External partnerships of a nonprofit organization are often driven by a need for additional resources, yet an increase in the number and involvement of external stakeholders requires additional staff and volunteer engagement that has the potential to increase organizational challenges unless carefully implemented. Sustainable nonprofit partnerships are characterized by a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, two-way communication, mission alignment, and collaborative problem solving. Internally, proper policies, processes, and structures remain limited among nonprofits. The mission statement serves an integral role for guiding the practices of a nonprofit, yet the majority

of nonprofits continue to have ambiguous mission statements. Moreover, few nonprofit leaders recognize the importance of evaluating how programs and practices align with their organizational mission. In terms of organizational development, the evaluation capacity of nonprofit agencies is largely limited to complying with external reporting requirements, rather than embracing monitoring and evaluation for increased organizational development. Challenges associated with these types of evaluation practices are also prevalent within the SDP setting. This segment of the nonprofit sector includes a broad range of organizations aiming to promote social change through the use of sport.

### **Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)**

SDP broadly refers to organizations using sport as a tool for promoting positive social change within low-, middle-, and high-income countries (Coalter, 2010; Kidd, 2008, 2011; Hartmann, 2003; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij, 2009). While some of these programs have existed for several decades (Coalter, 2010; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Kay, 2012), the adoption of United Nations Resolution 58/5 declaring 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education ignited a rapid growth in modern SDP (Beutler, 2006; Burnett, 2009). More recently, the United Nations designated April 6<sup>th</sup> as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. These events have resulted in growing SDP policy development despite limited empirical evidence on how sport might contribute to development outcomes (Beacom, 2007; Coalter, 2010, 2013; Hayhurst, 2009; Spaaij, 2009).

SDP involves a broad range of stakeholders including grassroots organizations, international nonprofits, governments, sport federations, educational institutions and the



private sector (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b, 2011c; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sugden, 2010). The grassroots organizations and international nonprofits responsible for implementing SDP programs range across a spectrum of sport-based (e.g., Football 4 Peace) and non-sport organizations (e.g., UNICEF) (Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011b; Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Tiessen, 2011). Previous research suggests stakeholders continue to depict sport as an inherently positive tool for an array of development outcomes without considerations of broader political, social, and economical contexts (Giulianotti, 2011c; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Subsequently, SDP policies and programs are often based on assumptions of the inherent pro-social benefits of sport participation (Coakley, 2011). Sport itself, however, is neither inherently good nor bad (Hartmann, 2003; Hums & Wolff, 2014; Kidd, 2008; Sugden, 2010). While sport can be used as a tool for positive outcomes, sport has also historically been associated with discrimination, nationalism, violence, and hegemonic actions of colonization (Donnelly et al., 2011; Gasser & Levinsen, 2004). This highlights the importance for SDP managers to critically reflect on their chosen sport(s) and programs and their own underlying assumptions within their areas of operation. Empirical evidence of SDP success remains scarce considering the challenges in isolating sport from other components of development programs (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013; Donnelly et al., 2011). In other words, although there are several empirical assessments of SDP programs, scholars have struggled to identify the extent to which any observed differences were specifically influenced by the sport component of these programs. This has resulted in lack of acceptance of SDP within broader development approaches (Levermore, 2008b).

Critical scholars argue for more realistic expectations given that even well

structured programs may not result in positive outcomes for all participants considering the influence of environmental factors (e.g., political, social, economical) (Coalter, 2010; Hartmann, 2003; Spaaij, 2009, 2013). While evidence exists of indigenous SDP initiatives within low- and middle-income countries (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey & Grattan, 2011), SDP remains largely associated with top-down, donor-focused approaches driven by actors from the Global North (Donnelly, 2008; Giulianotti, 2011b; Kidd, 2008). Critical scholars have therefore raised concerns about hegemonic development approaches and have associated current SDP practices with neocolonialism, cultural imperialism, neoliberalism, and postcolonialism (Burnett, 2009, in press; Darnell, 2007; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; Donnelly, 2008; Tiessen, 2011). Moreover, many policies and programs are characterized by a functional neoliberal approach focused on individual development rather than the underlying structures of social injustice (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2010). These approaches are often idealistic attempts to solve complex social issues using rather simplistic, short-term, sport-based solutions (Coalter, 2010; Sugden, 2010).

**Organizational Capacity in SDP.** Overall, previous research on SDP organizations indicates a considerable number of organizational challenges and limited organizational capacity (Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008b, 2011; Sanders et al., 2014). Although a theoretical framework on organizational capacity has not guided prior studies on SDP, scholars have indirectly argued for the importance of various dimensions of organizational capacity (e.g., more sophisticated and mutually-beneficial partnerships) for increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes (Schulenkorf, 2012; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012; Schulenkorf & Sugden, 2011; Sugden, 2010). Scholars also note the

importance of instructors and volunteers serving as change agents within these programs (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010, 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2014; Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014; Theeboom et al., 2008). Yet, volunteers have expressed concerns with the lack of volunteer training and preparation by SDP organizations (Manley, Morgan, & Atkinson, in press). Financial sustainability also remains a concern among SDP organizations implementing programs in local communities (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012), as funding relationships are often characterized by conflicts of interest and unequal power relations (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey & Banda, 2011; Straume & Hasselgård, 2014).

Previous research also sheds light on practical concerns regarding the structural capacity of SDP organizations for achieving their missions (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sanders et al., 2014). Studies indicate well-structured SDP programs are critically grounded, locally planned, and integrated in more holistic approaches (Coalter, 2010; Darnell & Black, 2011; Donnelly et al., 2011; Giulianotti, 2011a, 2011b; Kay, 2012; Kidd, 2011; Levermore, 2008b). These types of approaches enable local actors to collectively engage in promoting social and structural change (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013). Practical evidence of these types of programs, however, remains scarce as most organizations continue to be associated with dominant, top-down approaches with little or no consideration for local agency. Furthermore, no prior studies have explored the complex realities of SDP organizations using a multidimensional framework of organizational capacity.

**Summary of SDP.** SDP organizations utilize sport as a tool in efforts to facilitate positive social change within communities worldwide. The United Nations and other

high-level decision-makers have begun to support SDP at the policy level. These initiatives, however, are increasingly critiqued for their idealistic assumptions and lack of consideration for local agency. Critical scholars have raised concerns regarding the hegemony associated with actors from the Global North developing and implementing SDP programs within the Global South. Whether or not these sport-based programs result in positive outcomes largely depends on the structures and processes by which a given organization implements its program(s), as sport is neither inherently positive nor negative. Empirical evidence of SDP programs is difficult to interpret due to the challenges in isolating any observed changes from sport compared to non-sport components of these types of programs. Nevertheless, previous scholarship indicates considerable organizational challenges and limited organizational capacity among many SDP organizations. Unequal power relations associated with funding partnerships are prevalent within the SDP setting given the historic Global North-Global South relationship. Although rare in practice, well-structured SDP programs are critically grounded, embrace local agency, and are integrated in more holistic development approaches.

### **Significance of Study**

SDP has experienced rapid growth during the beginning of the 21st Century (Coakley, 2011). Today, numerous stakeholders ranging from grassroots practitioners to high-level decision-makers operate under the SDP umbrella (Coalter, 2013). Developing a better understanding of the organizational capacity realities of SDP practitioners will help scholars and practitioners better understand critical elements of the respective capacity dimensions within an SDP context. Although previous scholarship indicates the

outcomes of these sport-based programs are positive or negative based on how these programs are implemented, few researchers have critically reflected on the structures and processes of the organizations implementing SDP programs (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). Therefore, findings from this study contribute to this crucial, yet noticeably scarce, body of literature. A better understanding of critical elements of organizational capacity in SDP is imperative for increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes of these types of programs. At the same time, a better understanding of the elements of capacity is at least as important for minimizing potential unintended negative outcomes in SDP.

Findings from this study will also contribute to the emerging body of literature regarding organizational approaches in SDP. Previous research indicates the importance of critically grounded and community-driven approaches supporting local agency for sustainable SDP initiatives. Scholars have suggested, however, that SDP programs are overwhelmingly implemented by organizations characterized by top-down, donor-driven approaches with little or no consideration for local stakeholders. Findings will also have practical implications for the participating organizations. An external assessment of their organizational approach can help leaders of an SDP organization identify opportunities for organizational change in efforts to improve the organization's ability to achieve its mission.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore critical elements of organizational capacity in SDP organizations based in urban settings in the United States, excluding the top three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). This population was chosen given the lack of attention given to them in sport and nonprofit management

literature and the lack of exploratory research on organizational capacity in a SDP setting.

### **Research Questions**

The following five research questions addressed the study's purpose:

RQ1: What critical elements exist within the human resources capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ2: What critical elements exist within the financial capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ3: What critical elements exist within the structural capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ4: How do the three dimensions of organizational capacity relate to each other in the context of the SDP organizations?

RQ5: How do participating SDP organizations address challenges within the human resources, financial and structural capacities?

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

It is important to note that “[t]here are no perfect research designs. There are always trade-offs” (Patton, 1990, p. 162). The findings of this study are limited to the parameters of Hall et al.’s (2003) three-dimensional conceptual framework of organizational capacity. Specifically, the findings are limited to the researcher’s interpretations of data within human resources capacity, financial resources capacity, and structural capacity. Future studies should explore SDP organizations through the lens of alternative capacity frameworks. This also sheds light on the limitations of the researcher and the interpretive theoretical framework guiding this inquiry (Crotty, 1998). As noted by Charmaz (2006), interpretive theory is focused on understanding rather than

explaining the studied phenomena. Furthermore, researchers guided by a social constructivist approach assume multiple and complex realities (Charmaz, 2006; Patton, 2002). Therefore, the findings of this qualitative inquiry represent the researcher's understanding and reconstruction of the lived experiences of staff members within the SDP organizations under study. Even though several tactics such as coding by multiple researchers and consultations with participants can help the researcher to better represent and interpret their lived experiences, the quality of information obtained is largely dependent on the researcher (Patton, 2002). Moreover, it is important to recognize that under a social constructivist approach, the role of the researcher cannot be fully minimized as his or her own experiences, expectations, and values influence decisions throughout the research process (Charmaz, 2006).

As a result of the chosen methodology and interpretive theoretical framework, findings from this study cannot be generalized to other organizations or settings. Although findings in this study may suggest what might be found in future studies on other SDP organizations, the behavior and characteristics of the SDP organizations and interviewees in the current sample may not necessarily reflect the realities of other SDP organizations and/or practitioners. The current study is also limited by the study sample. Despite using a criterion sampling technique, the chosen organizations may only have provided access to certain individuals within their organization.

There are also several delimitations associated with the current study. The purpose of this study was to explore critical elements of organizational capacity in SDP organizations based in urban settings in the United States, excluding the top three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). This population was chosen

given the lack of attention given to them in sport and nonprofit management literature and the lack of exploratory research on organizational capacity in a SDP setting.

However, many other types of SDP organizations were excluded from this study as it was not feasible to cover the broad range of stakeholders and programs operating under the SDP umbrella. For example, the current study did not consider indigenous SDP organizations within the Global South (e.g., Lindsey and Grattan, 2012; Lindsey, 2013), or SDP agencies from high-income countries that are operating their programming in low-income countries (e.g., MacIntosh & Spence, 2012).

Although many SDP organizations operating programming in low- and middle-income countries are based in Canada (e.g., Darnell, 2007; MacIntosh & Spence, 2012) or Europe (e.g., Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Sugden, 2008, 2010), the researcher chose to focus only on SDP organizations headquartered in the United States in the current study. This decision was made since it was considered too problematic to study organizations from multiple countries within the time frame of this project given differences in environmental factors (political, social, and economical) faced by nonprofit organizations in different countries.

### **Definitions**

**Nonprofit Organization** – A charitable organization focused on “[f]ulfilling mission, rather

than profitability or shareholder wealth” (McDonald, 2007, p. 258).

**Organizational Capacity** – is defined as “the ability of an organization to harness its internal and external resources to achieve its goals” (Misener & Doherty, 2013, p.136).

**Human Resources Capacity** – “the ability to deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff



and volunteers) within the organization, and the competencies, knowledge, attitudes, motivation, and behaviours of these people” (Hall et al., 2003, p. 37).

**Financial Resources Capacity** – “the ability to develop and deploy financial capital (i.e., the revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities of the organization)” (Hall et al., 2003, p. 37).

**Structural Capacity** – refers to the “processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, and support structures within an organization that help it to function” (Hall et al., 2003, p. 37).

**Relationship and Network Capacity** – “refer to connections with, for example, funders, partners, government, media, and the public” (Doherty et al., 2014, p. 127).

**Infrastructure and Process Capacity** – refers to “the ability of an organization to deploy or rely on organizational elements related to day-to-day operations (e.g., databases, manuals, policies, procedures, information technology, culture)” (Misener & Doherty, 2009, p. 463).

**Planning and Development Capacity** – refers to the ability of an organization to develop and employ strategic and programmatic plans (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009).

**Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)** –is defined as the use of sport in “diverse social, cultural, economic and political contexts yet with an overarching aim of facilitating social change” (Kay & Spaaij, 2002, p. 78).

**Global North** – Refers to high-income countries, which are primarily located within the Northern hemisphere. Several of these states have a history as colonizing nations.

**Global South** – Refers to low- and middle-income countries, which are primarily located

within the Southern hemisphere. Many of these states have a history of being colonized.

**Hegemony** - “the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group” (Merriam-Webster, n.d., par. 2)

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizations of organizational capacity in nonprofit management literature are reviewed in this chapter followed by more detailed discussions of prominent nonprofit research within each of the dimensions of Hall et al.'s (2003) multi-dimensional framework of organizational capacity: (a) human resources capacity, (b) financial resources capacity, and (c) structural capacity. This discussion includes sport management and nonprofit management literature. The historical development of SDP will then be reviewed followed by a comprehensive review of literature addressing the use of sport as a vehicle to promote social change from a policy level to the implementation of these programs at the grassroots level. This sub-section will include a thorough review of the growing critical body of literature within the SDP umbrella and the need for more realistic expectations. This chapter will conclude with a review of organizational capacity in the extant SDP literature.

While capacity remains an abstract term within previous nonprofit literature, it is important to define nonprofit organizational capacity (hereafter referred to as 'organizational capacity') within the context of the current study. Cassidy et al. (2006) conceptualized organizational capacity as "the adequacy of inputs (knowledge, financial resources, trained personnel, well-managed strategic partnerships, etc.) necessary to carry out a program and achieve desired outcomes" (p. 149). Barman and MacIndoe (2012)

defined organizational capacity as “the internal ability of organizations to enact a specific task” (p. 72), and “an organization’s ability to implement a specific policy or procedure” (p.74). Similarly, Scuh and Leviton (2006) operationalized organizational capacity as “the ability to successfully implement and complete a new project or to expand an existing one successfully” (p. 172). Eisinger (2002), on the other hand, defined capacity as “a set of attributes that help or enable an organization to fulfill its missions” (p. 117). These definitions imply organizations are unable to adopt new practices or implement change unless they have sufficient structures and processes for doing so (Barman & MacIndoe, 2012). As Hall et al. (2001, p. 387) noted, “the capacity of an organization to work toward a particular objective depends on the capital it is able to deploy.” At the same time, it is also important to recognize that the perceived capacity of nonprofit organizations also depends on their organizational ambition (Balduck et al., in press). In other words, two seemingly identical SDP organizations may have noticeably different ambitions, or intentions, regarding organizational growth, which subsequently requires different levels of organizational capacity.

According to Beck et al. (2008), it is also imperative to be cognizant of the fundamental differences between for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations. Corporations focus on profits and interests of shareholders while nonprofits are largely driven by their missions. O’Regan and Oster (2005) made similar arguments in their assessment of nonprofit boards. Beck et al. (2008) suggested the application of for-profit theories to solve issues in a nonprofit context could result in either positive insight or unintended negative consequences. Some scholars raise concerns about the application of human resource management concepts to management of non-paid volunteers due to the

noticeable differences among these populations (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Previous research indicates nonprofit organizations have several unique characteristics compared to the private sector including the importance of the underlying values of the organization (i.e., mission) (Beck et al., 2008; O'Regan & Oster, 2005). Therefore, the focus of this study and the literature review in this chapter is specifically on nonprofit organizational capacity.

Organizational capacity takes on varying characteristics when examining nonprofit organizations. Christensen and Gazley (2008) suggested, “much of the difficulty in defining organisational capacity rests in its multiple qualities, as both an input and a throughput, a resource and a process” (p. 266). For example, Sowa, Selden, and Sandfort (2004) conceptualized nonprofit capacity as a construct consisting of management structures and processes with quantitative (written mission statement) and qualitative characteristics (the influence of the written mission on the organization). Bryan (2011) put forth similar arguments in her exploratory study of dimensions of organizational capacity of nonprofits focused on social service delivery in the United States.

Hall et al. (2003) developed a three-dimensional framework based on their research on the Canadian nonprofit and voluntary sector. Based on a national study, Hall et al. proposed an organizational capacity framework consisting of three dimensions: human resources capacity, financial resources capacity, and structural capacity. The latter consists of three sub-dimensions: relationships and networks capacity, infrastructure and process capacity, and planning and development capacity (See Table 2.1).

Guided by Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework, Misener and Doherty

(2013) conceptualized organizational capacity among nonprofit sport clubs as “the ability of an organization to harness its internal and external resources to achieve its goals” (p.136). While different terminology may have been used, other frameworks on nonprofit organizational capacity are typically characterized by similar dimensions related to: (a) human resources, (b) financial management, (c) external relationships, (d) internal structures and processes, and (e) planning and organizational development (Christensen & Gazley, 2008; Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000; Germann & Wilson, 2004; Hall et al., 2003; Minzner et al., 2014; Schuh & Leviton, 2006).

**Table 2.1**

*Dimensions of Organizational Capacity*

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1. Human Resources Capacity
  2. Financial Resources Capacity
  3. Structural Resources Capacity
    - 3.1 Relationship and Network Capacity
    - 3.2 Infrastructure and Process Capacity
    - 3.3 Planning and Development Capacity
- 

Considering the multi-dimensional nature of organizational capacity (Christensen & Gazley, 2008), studies on organizational capacity in sport management have predominantly been guided by Hall et al.’s (2003) framework (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013b, 2014; Wicker et al., 2014). In their exploratory study of a multidimensional framework of organizational in community sport clubs, Doherty et al. (2014) suggested:

capacity is the ability of an organization to draw on various assets and resources

to achieve its mandate and objectives. It is important to understand the nature of those resources so that capacity may be accurately assessed, and capacity building efforts may be effectively focused (p. 125).

Hall et al.'s (2003) conceptualization of capacity was also used as the foundation for the current study as the dimensions of human, financial, and structural capacities align with characteristics of SDP organizations. Similar to Hall et al.'s (2003) findings with Canadian nonprofit and voluntary organizations, volunteers and internal staff have imperative roles within SDP programs (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010, 2012; Theeboom, De Knop & Wylleman., 2008), while financial capacity remains a considerable challenge (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Kidd, 2008). Consequently, financial constraints have limited the development of adequate internal structures and processes within SDP organizations for achieving their missions (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sanders et al., 2014).

### **Dimensions of Capacity in Nonprofit Literature**

Overall, the use of multidimensional frameworks of organizational capacity remains scarce within broader nonprofit literature—perhaps due to the complex nature associated with such frameworks and research approaches (Christensen & Gazley, 2008; Sowa et al., 2004). There are, however, large bodies of previous literature on single dimensions of capacity within nonprofit organizations. Scholars have noted the importance of considering cross-disciplinary research when examining capacity since the concept has largely been developed independently within different lines of research (Christensen & Gazley, 2008). Therefore, previous nonprofit literature is presented in this section utilizing the dimensions of Hall et al.'s (2003) capacity framework: (a) human

resources capacity, (b) financial resources capacity, and (c) structural capacity.

**Human resources capacity.** The ability of an organization to mobilize and deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and volunteers) is an integral part of the capacity of a nonprofit organization (Hall et al., 2003). Previous research indicates human resources capacity is relatively more important than other capacity dimensions as it influences both financial and structural capacities (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Fredericksen and London (2000) found a heavy dependence on volunteer staff in their study of organizational capacity among community-based development organizations, although many lacked appropriate volunteer management practices. Board members are also integral volunteer assets within the nonprofit setting as they are generally expected not only to bring their expertise, but also commit financial capital toward the organization (O'Regan & Oster, 2005). In addition, human resources are important for several aspects of nonprofit performance. For example, leadership and staff emerged as one of four primary factors influencing organizational evaluation capacity in Gibbs, Napp, Jolly, Westover, and Uhl (2002)'s investigation of 61 community-based health organizations across the United States. Research on nonprofit sport organizations, however, indicates considerable human resource capacity challenges.

In their quantitative study of 1,657 Flemish community sport clubs, De Knop, Hoecke, and De Bosscher (2004) found lack of sufficient human resource management practices among many organizations. For example, more than half of the organizations did not involve board members in training. Similarly, in her case study of a Canadian community sport organization, Sharpe (2006) found human resources capacity to be identified as the most critical aspect of capacity, yet, the largest challenge for the



organization. Findings suggested managing volunteers, primarily secondary volunteers—individuals periodically involved with volunteer tasks such as helping out in the concession stand or score keeping—was reported as a major challenge for the organization. Volunteer executive committee members often lacked the knowledge and skills needed to successfully operate within a complex and political external environment. Hence, the organization did not have the sufficient capacity to meet external demands. Wicker and Breuer (2011) also found considerable human resource challenges in their longitudinal study of a national sample of German community sport clubs. In contrast to Sharpe (2006), however, recruitment and retention of primary volunteers—individuals serving as coaches or board members—rather than secondary volunteers emerged as the largest challenge in Wicker and Breuer’s (2011) study. These findings indicate the importance of exploring capacity in different contexts and warrant further examination of nonprofit literature on human resources capacity.

***Knowledge, skills, and attitudes of volunteers.*** The knowledge and skills of internal stakeholders is an important aspect of the human resource capacity of a nonprofit organization. From their focus groups with executive representatives of 51 Canadian community sport clubs in Ontario, Doherty et al. (2014) found knowledge and skills of volunteers to be perceived as important aspects associated with achievement of goals and objectives. Nonprofit scholars have also noted competence in evaluation is increasingly important among nonprofits (Gibbs et al., 2002; Sobeck, 2008; Yung et al., 2008). In their investigation of capacity needs of 659 health service nonprofits in Ohio, Yung et al. (2008) found lack of grant writing knowledge and skills among their staff members to be one of the primary capacity needs, but also noticed concerns about limited budgeting

skills. Others have found that nonprofit leaders express the importance of data management and analysis skills among internal stakeholders for increasing their evaluation capacity (Gibbs et al., 2002). Evidence of an impact assessment of a five-year capacity-building program among 125 nonprofits in Detroit revealed a significant increase in grant writing knowledge among participating stakeholders (Sobeck, 2008). These results provide some evidence on the potential benefits for nonprofit leaders investing in capacity-building assistance for increasing their human resource capacity. The findings indicate nonprofit organizations may advance the knowledge and skills of their current internal staff members through capacity-building programs.

In a nonprofit sport context, Balduck, Van Rossem, and Buelens (2010) explored the perceived competencies of volunteer board members within 23 European sport clubs. Findings indicated cognitive competencies alone (e.g., financial, strategic, technical skills) are insufficient for people to be perceived as outstanding performing board members. Emotional intelligence competencies and social intelligence competencies are also crucial characteristics of outstanding board members. These findings highlight the importance for leaders of nonprofit organizations to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of board members when recruiting and evaluating board members. In their exploratory study of the organizational capacity of a Canadian community sport organization, Misener and Doherty (2009) found staff members perceived group dynamics, mutual values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills as strengths of their human resource capacity. At the same time, however, the organization's financial capacity was perceived to be limited due to lack of financial knowledge among volunteers. While their findings indicated knowledge and skills among volunteers was perceived as an

organizational strength, recruitment and retention of volunteers remained their greatest challenges.

***Volunteer recruitment and retention.*** Volunteer recruitment and retention has also emerged as another prominent capacity need among non-membership based nonprofits (Yung et al., 2008). In their review of previous literature on volunteerism, Studer and von Schnurbein (2013) found volunteer management practices were influenced by several organizational factors including organizational size (larger nonprofits tend to have more formal structures) and level of support from funding agencies. Similar findings were reported in a study of 229 nonprofit organizations in the United States (Guo, Brown, Ashcraft, Yoshioka, & Dong, 2011). Akingbola (2013) also posited that nonprofit human resource practices are influenced by several contextual factors including the organization's financial capacity and the values and beliefs of the nonprofit leaders. Garner and Garner (2011) found value-driven motives to be positively associated with volunteer retention among volunteers with three nonprofits in California while career-driven motives were negatively associated with volunteer retention. Moreover, the authors found likelihood to donate to the organization to be positively associated with volunteer retention. Furthermore, previous research in a sport context indicates positive associations between affective commitment and volunteer retention (Engelberg et al., 2011; Hoye, 2007). In other words, increased emotional attachment to an organization results in lower turnover rate among volunteers. In their quantitative assessment of 441 volunteers in Swiss nonprofit sport organizations, Schlesinger, Egli, and Nagel (2013) also found a significant association between perceived volunteer job satisfaction and volunteer retention. Volunteers with higher levels of satisfaction with

their volunteer experience were less likely to leave an organization. Furthermore, recent nonprofit management literature indicates significant association between relational volunteer job design, organizational commitment, and commitment to beneficiaries based on a quantitative assessment of volunteers of an international aid and development nonprofit (Alfes, Shantz, & Saksida, in press). This highlights the importance for nonprofit leaders to identify and emphasize the relational nature of volunteer positions as individuals appear more likely to continue to volunteer or volunteer more hours when they connect with others and are able to see the influence of their work. At the same, van Shie et al. (2014) found unreasonable tasks to have a significantly negatively influence on future volunteer intentions among Red Cross volunteers. This brings attention to the importance for nonprofits leaders to critically reflect on task allocation between volunteer and paid staff. For example, decisions regarding financial aspects, conflicts, or other sensitive topics ought to be the responsibility of paid staff rather than volunteers.

Extensive use of planning, training and support practices were significantly related to reduced perceived volunteer retention problems among 375 Australian sport clubs (Cuskelly et al., 2006). These findings indicate the importance of building strong planning and development capacity to strengthen the human resource capacity of an organization. In a SDP context, Sugden (2010) reported Football 4 Peace held bi-annual volunteer training sessions with their coaches in Great Britain and Israel to ensure they were thoroughly prepared for implementing their program in areas of Israel with a long history of conflict. Similarly, Doherty et al. (2014) found executive representatives of community sport clubs highlighted the perceived importance of providing adequate support and development opportunities for increased volunteer retention.

Volunteer engagement and type of volunteer roles should also be considered for increasing volunteer recruitment and retention within nonprofit sport organizations. Building on their previous findings, Wicker and Breuer (2014) examined the influence of different types of organizational resources on organizational problems. Their earlier research indicated nonprofit sport clubs experience organizational problems in several different areas including volunteer recruitment and retention and financial resource capacity. The results of the study indicated fewer perceived organizational problems among German community sport clubs relying primarily on secondary volunteers—individuals contributing by volunteering for a few hours here and there without holding a central board or staff member role—than those relying primarily on core volunteers. Volunteer recruitment and retention also emerged as the most common organizational problem in a recent examination on the influence of organizational size using two large national samples of German and Swiss nonprofit sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2014).

*Volunteer motives.* Research on determinants of volunteerism has relied on a broad range of theoretical approaches including functional theory. According to functional theory, an individual's decision to volunteer involves a process whereby volunteer opportunities are evaluated compared to one's personal motives. In their seminal article on volunteer motives, Clary et al. (1998) suggested "acts of volunteerism that appear to be quite similar on the surface may reflect markedly different underlying motivational processes" (p.1517). Thus, assessing motives is imperative for improved volunteer recruitment and retention. Clary et al. (1998) suggested six types of functional motives for volunteerism: values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. Guided by functional theory, Welty Peachey et al. (2014) examined the

motives and factors associated with retention of volunteers of the 2011 World Scholar-Athlete Games held in Hartford, Connecticut. Their findings indicated SDP volunteers were motivated by values, social, understanding, career, and self-enhancement factors. The authors suggested “by emphasizing how the volunteer experience will satisfy these multiple motives, more than simply focusing on the values and mission of the organization, SDP organizations may gain more and better quality volunteers who can be retained as these motives are satisfied” (p. 15). In addition, Welty Peachey et al. (2013) explored the initiation motives of SDP volunteers in five chapter locations of the Street Soccer USA program. Their findings indicated more than three-quarters of volunteers were initially motivated by love of sport and personal values. Thus, sport appears to serve as a ‘hook’ for volunteers similar to reasons for engagement among participants (See Hartmann, 2003). Furthermore, more than half of the volunteers also reported enhancement and social motives for their involvement with the SDP program (Welty Peachey et al., 2013). Similarly, Gasser and Levinsen (2004) found volunteers involved with a SDP program in the Balkan region were primarily motivated by a strong interest in the sport and opportunities to engage in social interactions with others. It is important to recognize that the mere presence of personal values such as empathy does not necessarily result in volunteering unless these values lead to a sense of obligation for taking action (Wilson, 2012). Yet Filo, Funk, and Jordan (2014) found volunteers involved with the Back on My Feet running-based program for homeless people in the United States to be primarily motivated by: learning, helping, activity, philanthropy, obligation, and esteem. Hence, these types of personal values have emerged in studies of SDP volunteers across different geographical contexts.

Findings of other studies highlight the influence of volunteer motives on how volunteer respond to dissatisfaction in their volunteer roles. In their investigation of how 383 volunteers in California responded to organizational problems, Garner and Garner (2011) found those driven by career or self-protective motives responded to dissatisfaction through voicing their frustration or ending their volunteer involvement. In contrast, the authors found those driven by motives to develop a better understanding were more likely to respond to dissatisfaction by engaging in problem-solving discussions. While some people may volunteer for altruistic reasons, others volunteer only if it is in their best interest to do so (Wilson, 2012). Although Wilson's (2012) review of recent volunteerism research provides valuable insight into individual and organizational factors associated with volunteering, it is important to recognize an open bias toward quantitative research. The author highlighted gaps in the volunteerism research and the need for more ethnographic studies to develop a greater detailed understanding, yet he did not review existing qualitative studies.

While previous research highlights the multitude of underlying motives of volunteerism (Clary et al., 1998), it is also important to recognize volunteering is a multi-step process associated with considerable changes in volunteer roles, emotions, attitudes, perceptions, and relationships with other stakeholders within an organization (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). These findings indicate the importance for nonprofit leaders to develop a better understanding of the stages their volunteers experience as well as strategies for supporting people in the respective stages of their volunteer process. In their longitudinal study of volunteers with a program helping underprivileged youth, Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) found volunteers often had unrealistic expectations about

their impact, which resulted in feelings of realism and cynicism over time. In their study of nonprofit sport organizations, Cuskelly et al. (2006) also found the influence of volunteer management practices on volunteer retention problems to vary significantly depending on the level of volunteering highlighting potential difference related to the volunteer process.

***Role of nonprofit boards.*** The role of nonprofit boards is considerably different than boards in a corporate setting due to the focus on promoting the mission of the organization rather than reporting to shareholders (O'Regan & Oster, 2005). Interestingly, an extensive review of literature suggests the presence of board members from the corporate sector is not associated with increased strategic planning among nonprofits (Stone et al., 1999), although strategic planning has been associated with positive change among boards of nonprofit sport organizations (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009). Ferkins et al. (2009) facilitated the development of a formal strategic plan within a nonprofit sport organization in New Zealand. Board members suggested the development of the strategic plan resulted in a positive and significant change for the board of directors as it helped the organization better review and monitor its internal priorities and progress toward goal achievement. Strategically focused boards appeared to have the strongest association with organizational performance as well as positive associations with increased financial performance and resources (Brown, 2005). Brown also found the ability of board members to cultivate strong interpersonal relationships was positively associated with board performance. While these findings indicate the potential benefits for nonprofit organizations in allocating time to build effective boards of directors, it is also important to recognize the relatively small effect size on perceived organizational



performance beyond organizational size and age. Hodge and Piccolo (2005), however, found no significant association between board involvement and financial vulnerability among 42 human service organizations in the United States. In a large scale study of the impact of boards within 1,000 randomly selected nonprofit sport clubs in Spain, Esteve et al. (2011) found a significant association between dedication of board members and financial resources obtained from stakeholders. At the same time, no significant relationship was found between levels of education of the board members and their capacity to raise financial resources. In addition, no significant relationship was found between dedication of board members or education of board members and non-financial resources obtained from stakeholders.

In their exploratory study of seven Australian community sport organizations, Hoye and Cuskelly (2003a) found executive directors identified four elements perceived to be associated with effective board performance: (a) control of information accessible by the board, (b) responsibility for board performance, (c) board leadership, and (d) level of trust between the board and the executives. Based on the findings of their exploratory study of board-executive relationships within community sport organizations, Hoye and Cuskelly (2003b) examined patterns of board power in these relationships and found board-executive relationships may be more complex than previously thought. Boards identified as ineffective by a panel of experts were found as more likely to be perceived as powerless, chair led, or fragmented compared to the pattern of board power of effective boards.

Previous research has also found a strong positive association between affective commitment—a volunteer’s emotional attachment to an organization—and perceived board

member performance (Hoye, 2007). Interestingly, in his quantitative study of 159 board members of nonprofit horse racing clubs in rural Australia, Hoye discovered more than three-quarters of the participants reported being involved in more ways beyond their role as a board member. These findings highlight the importance for leaders of nonprofit sport organizations to facilitate increased organizational engagement of board members to foster higher levels of affective commitment. In addition, O'Regan and Oster (2005) found no significant differences in board performance of men or women. In fact, women were found to spend more time on board activities than their male counterparts. These findings raise concerns of why women are underrepresented on boards as no significant differences were found between men and women in board performance. Moreover, Fredericksen and London (2000) found minorities to be proportionally underrepresented on boards of directors in their study of community-based development organizations. These findings raise questions on the potential influence of organizational factors influencing volunteering.

***Organizational factors influencing volunteering.*** Although institutional factors have been mentioned in previous studies to various extents, they have not been explicitly studied using a separate level of analysis in volunteer research (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). Prior conclusions in volunteerism research may be misleading since some studies have attributed macro-level effects (i.e., organizational) to the micro-level (i.e., individual). In other words, researchers have arguably misinterpreted some aspects of volunteerism by solely focusing on individual factors when differences in volunteer recruitment and engagement may have been largely influenced by organizational factors. It is imperative to develop an understanding of the context of an institution since

volunteering usually takes place within an organizational context. In their systematic review of previous literature on volunteerism, Studer and von Schnurbein (2013) identified three sets of organizational factors affecting volunteer recruitment: (a) volunteer management practices, (b) organizational values and attitudes toward volunteers, and (c) the influence of organizational factors on limiting volunteer coordination capacity. Previous research on volunteer management practices indicates a multitude of factors appear to be associated with volunteer satisfaction including the screening process used to match volunteers to appropriate assignments, training and professional development opportunities, and volunteer recognition (Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013). Similarly, recent studies on the volunteer experience highlight the potential negative influence of limited organizational resources on volunteer satisfaction and the importance for nonprofits to provide social recognition of volunteers, training and professional development opportunities, as well as sufficient supervision and guidance (Wilson, 2012). Welty Peachey et al., (2014), however, found volunteers at a multi-national SDP event wanted to continue their involvement despite frustration with organizational constraints.

In addition to individual factors, Wicker and Hallmann (2013) suggested aspects of an organization's capacity also influence volunteer engagement—the extent of involvement in non-compensated organizational activities—in a sport setting. The number of volunteers and number of paid staff can influence a person's decision of whether or not to volunteer in terms of his/her perceived contribution while financial capacity may influence volunteers since lack of financial resources can directly influence the work volunteers will be responsible for. In addition, existing organizational

partnerships may also influence volunteering since larger networks with diverse stakeholders could result in more complex volunteer roles. As previously mentioned, Sharpe (2006) found volunteers within a Canadian community sport organization lacked the necessary knowledge and skills for operating within a complex political context. Wicker and Hallmann (2013) also argued recruitment and retention of volunteers is influenced by internal processes and procedures (i.e., written volunteer job descriptions or training manuals) and planning and development capacity (i.e., strategic volunteer management plan).

The context in which nonprofit organizations operate also appears to be associated with the influence of human resource management practices on perceived volunteer retention problems (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Previous research on organizational differences among nonprofit sport organizations is limited, but Wicker and Breuer (2013b) explored similarities and differences in organizational capacity between sport clubs providing disability sport programs and sport clubs without such programs. The results of their study indicated clubs offering disability sport had a significantly higher number of female members than clubs that did not offer disability sport and a significantly higher proportion of members over 60 years of age. In terms of human resource capacity, no significant differences were found for voluntary engagement, paid staff, or social events, but clubs offering disability sport had a significantly lower amount of secondary volunteers, which is concerning considering the potential relationship between secondary volunteers and reduced organizational problems (Wicker & Breuer, 2014). These results, however, should be interpreted with caution since most sport organizations offering disability sport programs were larger than those that did not offer

them. Therefore, the differences between organizations may be related to organizational size rather than disability sport programs. Larger organizations are often associated with growing number of paid and volunteer staff. Therefore, another area of human resource capacity to consider is the relationship and potential conflict between paid staff and volunteer staff within nonprofit organizations.

***Paid staff-volunteer discrepancies.*** Previous research predominantly suggests paid staff members and volunteers have considerably different characteristics (Garner & Garner, 2011; Netting, Nelson, Borders, & Huber, 2004; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). As a result, the paid staff-volunteer relationship can result in intra-organizational conflict due to several factors including disagreements over organizational identity (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011), lack of communication, different perceptions of meaningful roles, ambiguity about goals and objectives, and organizational values and attitudes toward volunteers (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). In other words, conflict is often prevalent within nonprofit organizations as a result of disagreements between paid staff and volunteers over organizational practices and priorities (Chen, Lune, & Queen, 2013). The level of interchangeability of paid staff and volunteers doing similar tasks is influenced by organizational demand and the available volunteer supply (Handy, Mook, & Quarter, 2008). Previous research indicates including volunteers in organizational decision-making processes can be an important strategy for managing the paid staff-volunteer relationship and mitigating intra-organizational conflict (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Overall, it is important to note the number of volunteers and number of paid staff can influence a person's decision of whether or not to volunteer in terms of his/her perceived contribution and the value incongruence between volunteers

and paid staff (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). The paid staff-volunteer relationship is one of several important aspects of volunteer management.

*Summary of human resources capacity literature.* The ability of an organization to mobilize and deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and volunteers) is an integral part of the capacity a nonprofit organization (Hall et al., 2003), and is critical for the remaining aspects of organizational capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). Despite the volunteer-driven nature of the nonprofit sector, most organizations lack appropriate volunteer management practices (De Knop et al., 2004; Fredericksen & London, 2000; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Yet, specific human resource capacity challenges vary considerably among nonprofits, indicating the importance of understanding local contexts (Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013b). Previous nonprofit research has focused on several aspects of human resources capacity. The competence of internal stakeholders is an important aspect of this capacity considering the increasingly complex political, social, and environmental contexts of today's nonprofits (Gibbs et al., 2002; Sobeck, 2008; Yung et al., 2008). Lack of financial and evaluation knowledge and skills continue to be reported as common capacity challenges (Gibbs et al., 2002; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Yung et al., 2008), yet some evidence indicates capacity-building programs can help increase these competencies of internal stakeholders (Sobeck, 2008).

Volunteer recruitment and retention are also common challenges among both sport and non-sport nonprofits (Yung et al., 2008; Wicker et al., 2014). Previous scholarship indicates volunteer management practices are influenced by several organizational factors including size, external support, financial capacity, and values and

beliefs of organizational leaders (Akingbola, 2013; Cuskelly et al., 2006; Guo et al., 2011; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). From a functional perspective, volunteer recruitment and retention are associated with the perceived match between volunteer experiences and an individual's personal motives (Clary et al., 1998). It is important to note volunteers involved in similar roles may have considerably different motives for their involvement (Wilson, 2012). Research in SDP indicates volunteers are motivated by a multitude of factors including values, social, understanding, career, and self-enhancement (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013, 2014). Interestingly, volunteer motives appear to influence how volunteers respond to organizational problems (Garner & Garner, 2011). Additional research is needed within this domain before any conclusions may be drawn. The roles of volunteers within nonprofits also appear to be associated with perceived organizational problems. Wicker and Breuer (2014) found fewer perceived organizational problems among German community sport clubs relying primarily on secondary volunteers. Moreover, the stages of the volunteering process also influence volunteer recruitment and retention efforts as the roles, perceptions, emotions, and relationships among volunteers changed over the course of their volunteer process (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). Volunteer retention is positively associated with training, planning, and support practices by nonprofit organizations (Cuskelly et al., 2006). It is also important to develop a better understanding of volunteers as previous research indicates a significant association between commitment and both volunteer retention and performance (Engelberg et al., 2011; Esteve et al., 2011; Hoye, 2007). Nonprofit literature also highlights the potential conflict among paid staff and volunteers due to disagreements over organizational identity (Kreutzer & Jäger,

2011), lack of communication, different perceptions of meaningful roles, ambiguity about goals and objectives, and organizational values and attitudes toward volunteers (Garner & Garner, 2011; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Netting, Nelson, Borders, & Huber, 2004; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). One tactic for mitigating this intra-organizational conflict is to include volunteers in organizational decision-making processes (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Overall, human resource management practices remain scarce among nonprofit sport organizations (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). Previous research on nonprofit organizations highlights the importance of developing a better understanding of human resource capacity (Ridder & McCandless, 2010), considering the unique characteristics of nonprofits (Beck et al., 2008; O'Regan & Oster, 2005). While human resources capacity is posited to influence the financial capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009), others suggest human resources capacity is also influenced by an organization's financial capacity (Akingbola, 2013; Coates et al., 2014). These findings highlight the importance of understanding capacity through a multidimensional framework.

**Financial resources capacity.** Hall et al. (2003) suggested financial capacity refers to a nonprofit's ability to sustain and expend financial capital. Similarly, Bowman (2011) suggests financial capacity refers to the "resources that give an organization the wherewithal to seize opportunities and react to unexpected threats" (p.38). Previous research indicates limited financial capacity often exists in nonprofits due to poor financial knowledge among board and staff members, lack of a formal budget, and concerns about available financial resources (Fredericksen & London, 2000; Yung et al., 2008). Lack of adequate financial resources can also have a negative influence on an



organization's volunteer capacity (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013), while lack of adequate volunteer capacity can negatively influence an organization's financial capacity (Misener & Doherty, 2009). Moreover, findings from a recent study of Germany sport clubs revealed that organizations relying on external revenues from sponsorships were significantly more likely to report increased financial and volunteer problems (Coates et al., 2014). Cordery and Baskerville (2013) assessed capacity dimensions of nonprofit golf and football clubs in New Zealand as a follow-up study to their previous assessment of financial vulnerability (Cordery et al., 2013). Their results indicated golf clubs characterized by lack of financial capacity also reported inefficient boards and low volunteer engagement among their members while football clubs with limited financial capacity, on the other hand, lacked access to sport facilities, business plans, and low volunteer engagement among members. These findings highlight the complexities of organizational capacity and realities of nonprofit sport organizations.

Wicker and Breuer (2014) found financial capacity to be one of the greatest organizational problems besides volunteer recruitment and retention among German community sport organizations. These concerns were not as evident, however, among Swiss community sport organizations (Wicker et al., 2014). Sharpe (2006), however, found financial capacity was not considered a significant issue in her case study of a Canadian community sport organization. Similarly, Misener and Doherty (2009) found members of another Canadian community sport club did not view financial capacity as a crucial aspect for mission fulfillment. These findings indicate the importance of developing a better understanding of nonprofit financial revenue sources, financial vulnerability, and expenses.

**Revenue sources.** Based on a review of literature, Kearns et al. (2014) identified nine primary types of funding for nonprofit organizations: (a) individual donations, (b) corporate funding, (c) foundation funding, (d) revenue from special events, (e) service fees, (f) government grants, (g) United Way, (h) commercial ventures, and (i) membership dues. Similar types of revenue sources are found among nonprofit community sport organizations (Wicker et al., 2015). Specifically, in their longitudinal study of revenue volatility among German nonprofit sport organizations, Wicker et al. (2015) identified seven primary revenue sources: (a) membership dues, (b) public subsidies, (c) revenues from club-related activities, (d) individual donations, (e) commercial, (f) sponsorships, and (g) others. The dependence on these revenue sources varies among sport organizations (Wicker & Breuer, 2011), although membership fees and other revenue streams have emerged as the most common types of revenue sources among sport clubs (Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2012). Some scholars suggest financial volatility among nonprofits is associated with an organization's primary types of revenue sources (Wicker et al., 2013). Moreover, a large body of literature suggests the importance of revenue diversification (e.g., Carroll & Stater, 2009; Chang & Tuckman, 1996; Froelich, 1999; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Hager, 2001; Jegers, 1997; Kingma, 1993; Tuckman & Chang, 1991). In their longitudinal financial analyses of United States' federal tax returns from over approximately 300,000 nonprofits during 1990-2003, Carroll and Stater (2009) found revenue diversification was associated with reduced revenue volatility. However, most nonprofits lack revenue diversification (Carroll & Stater, 2009).

While nonprofit organizations are dependent on their external environment, these

findings suggested managers could influence their financial volatility based on diversification of revenue sources. The aforementioned financial analysis indicated organizations primarily relying on donative revenues sources (i.e., individual contributions) were more likely to be considered financially vulnerable (i.e., increased revenue volatility), as will be discussed in the next section. Whereas scholars predominantly suggest the importance of revenue diversification for increased organizational growth (e.g., Carroll & Stater, 2009), others have found significant associations between increased financial capacity and revenue concentration—relying on only one or a few revenue sources (Chikoto & Neely, 2014). It is important to note the latter study found revenue concentration appears to be more effective for financial growth when deployed as a one-time strategy as increased revenue concentration over time was found to be negatively associated with financial resources. Most studies examining the influence of revenue diversification, however, remain limited as they have generally only examined diversification in terms of different revenue types (i.e., all private revenues could be from one generous donor) rather than diversification within revenue type (e.g., relying on a multitude of short-term, intermediate, and long-term grants from several different levels of government to mitigate financial risks).

Sport management scholars have also noted community sport clubs tend to rely on a greater number of revenue sources, yet are often more financially vulnerable compared to ordinary nonprofit organizations (Wicker et al., 2013). While this finding appears to counter arguments for revenue diversification, an alternative explanation might be lack of diversification of funding streams within their primary types of revenues rather than diversification of revenue types. In other words, one organization focused on grant

funding might solely rely on one or two grants while another organization actively seeks out multiple local, regional, and national grants. The latter would clearly have greater diversification of revenue streams, although both organizations would be classified as relying on only one revenue source. Findings from a recent investigation of German and Swiss sport clubs also suggested organizational size does not necessarily reduce financial challenges as an increase in total revenues was also significantly associated with increased organizational financial problems (Wicker et al., 2014). In other words, although an increased number of members results in increased revenues, it is accompanied by increased expenses as well.

In addition, revenue diversification among nonprofit sport organizations appears to be associated with their mission statements. Wicker, Feiler, and Breuer (2013) found revenue diversification was positively associated with missions focused on historical aspects (Tradition, Youth, Elite Sport, Companionship, Non-Sport), yet negatively associated with more contemporary missions (Leisure, Health, Quality, Commercial). Moreover, revenue diversification varied depending on type of sport provided. Interestingly, their results also indicated increased total revenues per member was associated with increased revenue concentration. Similar to findings by Wicker et al., (2014), organizational size (members, sports) only appears to have positive effects until reaching a saturation point – thus there is no ideal organizational size. Their findings highlight the importance of contextualization in understanding capacity of nonprofit sport organizations.

Also, while previous research indicates considerable differences between the for-profit and nonprofit sectors (Beck et al., 2008; O'Regan & Oster, 2005), increased

reliance on private (commercial) revenue sources does not appear to significantly influence the mission or program delivery of nonprofits (Guo, 2006; Hughes & Luksetich, 2004), although it has been negatively associated with received donations among German sport clubs (Feiler et al., 2014). Thus, commercialization might lead to increased organizational self-sufficiency among nonprofits, without significant changes in an organization's ability to fulfill its mission (Guo, 2006) or program spending patterns (Hughes & Luksetich, 2004). Some scholars argue commercial revenue sources may also provide increased organizational legitimacy for nonprofit organizations (Froelich, 1999).

A considerable amount of research on revenue sources among nonprofits has focused on the interaction among different types of revenue sources and whether an increase in one type results in a significant increase (crowding-in effect) or decrease (crowding-out effect) of another revenue source (Guo, 2006; Kim & Van Ryzin, 2014; Tinkelman & Neely, 2011; Wicker et al., 2015). Previous research indicates the crowding-in effect has been identified as the most frequently mentioned criteria by nonprofit leaders when evaluating funding sources (Kearns et al., 2014). In their experimental study of the impact of government funding on donations to nonprofit art organizations, Kim and Van Ryzin (2014) found the presence of government funding (regardless of amount) influenced participants' perceived willingness to donate. The crowding-out effect of government funding on individual donations was larger among people without prior involvement with an art organization. While these findings indicate the importance for nonprofit leaders to be aware of the interaction among revenue sources, it is worth noting the findings were based on a simulated setting rather than actual donor behavior. While government funding may have a crowding-out effect among

arts organizations, Tinkelman and Neely (2011) found large discrepancies in this revenue interaction depending on the type of nonprofit organization ranging from moderate crowding-out effects among civil rights and disease-focused organizations to moderate crowding-in effects among nonprofits focused on health and medical research for the same revenue type.

In their analysis of revenue interaction among European nonprofit sport clubs, Wicker et al. (2012) found sport clubs are becoming increasingly commercialized and many have diversified revenue streams. A crowding-in effect was found in regards to donations, which resulted in increased revenues from sport supply while revenues from subsidies (i.e., public funding) had a crowding-in effect on donations and economic activities. In contrast, revenues from economic activities had a crowding-out effect on revenues from other supply revenues (e.g., admission fees or self-operated restaurant in sport facility). It is worth noting significant differences in primary types of revenues based on the type of nonprofit organization (Carman, 2007). For example, in her mixed-methods study of community-based nonprofits in New York, Carman found nonprofits focused on community development were more likely to receive private funding while social service organizations were more likely to receive funding from the United Way. Others have found revenue diversification to be associated with increased strategic decision-making (LeRoux & Wright, 2010), although these associations were relatively small compared to non-financial factors related to governance and evaluation practices.

***Financial vulnerability.*** Several studies have also examined financial vulnerability among nonprofit organizations since these organizations are providing services below cost and largely rely on fundraising for their existence and survival

(Bowman, 2011; Carroll & Stater, 2009; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Hodge & Piccolo, 2005). These studies have predominantly relied on Tuckman and Chang's (1991) model of financial vulnerability (Carroll & Stater, 2009; Cordery et al., 2013; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000), while some have proposed alternative models for assessing financial vulnerability (Bowman, 2011). Different schools of thought exist on how to define financial vulnerability as some researchers have developed models based on changes in program expenses (Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Tuckman & Chang, 1991) while others have proposed models based on changes in net assets (Trussel, 2002).

Most longitudinal financial analyses of nonprofit organizations have used the National Center on Charitable Statistics' database for the fiscal years of 1982-1995 (Greenlee & Trussel, 2000), 1998-2003 (Bowman, 2011; Calabrese, 2012), and 1991-2003 (Carroll & Stater, 2009). While several scholars have examined aspects of financial capacity among nonprofit organizations (e.g., Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Tuckman & Chang, 1991), few have included a time scale for short-term and long-term effects of financial vulnerability (Bowman, 2011). Bowman suggested the importance of considering both an organization's ability to react to unexpected short-term and long-term financial threats as well as an organization's short-term and long-term financial sustainability. In addition, research on financial vulnerability of nonprofit sport organizations remains scarce. Cordery et al. (2013) applied three models to examine determinants of financial vulnerability among golf and football organizations in New Zealand. While their findings indicated predictor variables from previous nonprofit literature may not be applicable in a sport context, it is important to note the for-profit model of financial vulnerability may have been the best fit in this study since nonprofit

sport organizations in New Zealand receive no public support. Thus, these nonprofit organizations operate more as for-profit entities than typical community sport organizations in Europe or North America. Developing a better understanding of financial vulnerability of community sport clubs is imperative, as these volunteer-driven organizations must be properly managed for long-term sustainability.

Overall, the results of previous research on financial aspects of nonprofit organizations indicate financial struggles and limited financial capacity persist for many nonprofits. In his examination of the financial health of 46,492 nonprofit organizations, Bowman (2011) found the majority to lack long-term financial sustainability. In another longitudinal assessment of financial data for 58,180 nonprofit organizations, Calabrese (2012) found evidence of low-levels of annual accumulation of unrestricted net assets and suggested nonprofits are accumulating assets for reducing their financial vulnerability. However, no claims can be made regarding their financial decisions based on his study as he did not collect any such data from nonprofit organizations. Revenue diversification, however, has been associated with increased financial stability, although monetary financial gains incrementally decrease as revenue diversification increases (Carroll & Stater, 2009). Moreover, it is important to recognize considerable differences based on field of activity of the nonprofit organizations as large-scale financial studies have found noticeable differences between different types of nonprofits such as social service agencies compared to arts and cultural nonprofits (Bowman, 2011; Calabrese, 2012; Carroll & Stater, 2009; Tinkelman & Neely, 2011).

Findings of previous research also highlight the importance of considering multiple models and conceptualizations of financial vulnerability when evaluating



financial aspects of nonprofit organizations (Greenlee & Trussel, 2000). Those familiar with the nonprofit sector recognize a discrepancy between financial performance measures used by scholars and those used by practitioners. Therefore, Ritchie and Kolodinsky (2003) examined and cross-validated 16 financial performance measures with university foundations and nonprofit hospitals. The results of their study indicated six ratios in three categories that were empirically validated through cross-sectional and longitudinal data. The robust performance measures including: (a) Fundraising Efficiency (total revenue divided by fundraising expenses and direct public support divided by total fundraising expenses), (b) Fiscal Performance (total revenue divided by total organizational expenses and total contributions divided by total organizational expenses), and (c) Public Support (direct public support divided by total assets and total contributions divided by total revenue). While these measures may not necessarily be generalizable to other types of nonprofits, they provide empirically validated financial performance measures that may be applied as one of several means of assessment of other nonprofit organizations.

*Expenses.* Few studies appear to have considered expenses of nonprofit organizations (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). In their longitudinal study of a large national sample of German sport clubs, Wicker and Breuer found large expenses to include personnel, insurance and taxes, and other fees including federation membership fees, event costs, and debt payments. Interestingly, personnel expenses increased 24.7% from 2005 to 2007 while expenses for insurance and taxes increased 25.3% during the same time. Overall, financial capacity was considered a challenge for organizations, yet less concerning than their human resources capacity. These findings indicate the importance

for leaders of nonprofit sport organizations to understand the diverse range of not only income sources, but also organizational expenses. In another study on community sport clubs, Doherty et al. (2014) found club presidents highlighted the perceived importance of not only stable revenues but also stable expenses for increased financial capacity and long-term sustainability.

A recent large-scale study on German and Swiss nonprofit sport organization indicated increased organizational size was also associated with increased expenses and thus did not reduce the organization's financial challenges (Wicker et al., 2014). These findings are further supported by Calabrese's (2013) discovery of the lack of influence of organizational size as a predictor of operating reserves among nonprofit organizations. He found that regardless of size, a considerable number of nonprofits maintain few if any operating reserves for unforeseen financial challenges. A likely explanation for the lack of operating reserves is the growing emphasis by nonprofit funding agencies (i.e., foundations) and charitable watchdog entities (e.g., Charity Navigator) on overhead financial ratios. Although these initiatives were developed to ensure charitable donations are utilized for their intended purposes, the heavy reliance on financial ratios in nonprofit evaluations has provoked underinvestment in sufficient organizational infrastructure for long-term sustainability (Lecy & Searing, in press). A detailed financial analysis of three categories of nonprofits in the United States indicated administrative expenses have fallen from 19.3% to 15.3% while fundraising expenses have increased from 1.8% to 3.0% from 1985 to 2007. The clear downward trend has continued over time. The average overhead ratio was minimal for organizations with less than \$100,000 in annual budgets while nonprofits appear to begin to invest noticeably more in infrastructure and

organizational capacity when their annual budgets range from \$100,000 - \$550,000. At that point, the overhead ratio steadily declines as nonprofits annual revenues increases. A more detailed analysis further revealed administrative expenses are increasingly allocated toward executive compensation rather than staff costs. In addition, Feiler et al. (2014) found a significant positive effect of clubs with expenses for non-sport events on the amount of donations received among organizations in their study of a national sample of Germany sport clubs. This suggests organizing these types of events could help increase the overall revenue generation. These findings highlight the importance of adequate expenditure of financial capital for increased capacity and long-term sustainability of nonprofit organizations.

***Summary of financial resources capacity literature.*** Financial resources capacity refers to a nonprofit's ability to obtain and expend financial capital for sustainability (Bowman, 2011; Hall et al., 2003). Adequate financial resources serve as a crucial factor associated with several other aspects of organizational capacity including volunteer recruitment and retention (Akingbola, 2013; Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). Financial capacity remains limited among many nonprofit organizations (Bowman, 2011; Fredericksen & London, 2000; Yung et al., 2008), yet these constraints appear to be contextualized within the nonprofit sport sphere. Wicker and Breuer (2014), for example, found financial capacity to be one of the largest organizational challenges besides volunteer recruitment and retention among German community sport organizations. In contrast, Misener and Doherty (2009) and Sharpe (2006) did not find financial capacity to be an immediate concern among Canadian community sport organizations as they had relatively stable revenue sources.

Previous research indicates primary revenue sources of nonprofits include public, private, and government funding (Kearns et al., 2014; Wicker et al., 2014). The dependence on these revenue sources varies among nonprofit organizations (Wicker & Breuer, 2011), although membership fees have emerged as the most common types of revenue source among community sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2012). The primary type of revenue sources of nonprofit sport organizations appears to be associated with financial volatility, although additional research is needed to assess potential implications of such findings (Wicker et al., 2014). A large body of nonprofit management literature suggests the importance of revenue diversification for increased financial stability (Carroll & Stater, 2009; Chang & Tuckman, 1996; Froelich, 1999; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Hager, 2001; Jegers, 1997; Kingma, 1993; Tuckman & Chang, 1991), as overreliance on donative revenues (i.e., individual contributions) remains associated with increased financial vulnerability. Yet, others have found significant associations between increased financial capacity and revenue concentration (Chikoto & Neely, 2014). A growing number of studies have also examined financial vulnerability among nonprofit organizations (Bowman, 2011; Carroll & Stater, 2009; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000; Hodge & Piccolo, 2005), predominantly based on Tuckman and Chang's (1991) model of financial vulnerability (Carroll & Stater, 2009; Cordery et al., 2013; Greenlee & Trussel, 2000). However, some authors have proposed alternative models for assessing financial vulnerability over time (Bowman, 2011). Research on financial vulnerability of nonprofit sport organizations, however, remains scarce (Cordery et al., 2013), but indicates the importance of considering multiple models and conceptualizations of financial vulnerability when evaluating financial aspect of nonprofit organizations (Greenlee &

Trussel, 2000).

While many non-membership based nonprofits continue to lack diversity among their revenue streams (Carroll & Stater, 2009), Wicker et al. (2012) found high levels of revenue diversification among German community sport clubs. Although some scholars have found revenue concentration to be associated with increased financial capacity among non-sport organizations (Chikoto & Neely, 2014), no such evidence has emerged within sport management literature. At the same time, it is worth noting revenue diversification might be effective in reducing organizational-specific financial volatility, yet far from the solution to systematic financial volatility from broader environmental factors of a nonprofit sport organization (Wicker et al., in press). Previous studies have examined diversification between types of revenue sources, yet research on the influence of diversification within a particular type of revenue source (e.g., local, regional, and national government grants) remains scarce.

Recent findings suggest nonprofit sport clubs are becoming increasingly commercialized (Wicker et al., 2012). Increased commercialization of nonprofit revenue sources, however, does not appear to significantly influence the mission or program delivery of nonprofits (Guo, 2006; Hughes & Luksetich, 2004), although it is negatively associated with amount of received donations among sport clubs (Feiler et al., 2014). Therefore, some scholars suggest these types of revenue streams might be favored by nonprofits for increasing their organizational legitimacy (Froelich, 1999). There is also a growing body of literature on the interaction among different types of revenue sources and whether an increase in one type results in a significant increase (crowding-in effect) or decrease (crowding-out effect) of another revenue source (Guo, 2006; Kim & Van

Ryzin, 2014; Tinkelman & Neely, 2011; Wicker et al., 2013). Overall, the results of these studies indicated significant interactions among revenue sources (Guo, 2006; Kim & Van Ryzin, 2014), although the effects varied considerably based on types of nonprofits (Tinkelman & Neely, 2011).

**Structural resources capacity.** Structural capacity refers to the “processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, and support structures within an organization that help it to function” (Hall et al., 2003, p. 37). As previously mentioned, structural capacity consists of three sub-dimensions: (a) relationship and network capacity, (b) infrastructure and process capacity, and (c) planning and development capacity. First, the ability and process of developing and cultivating relationships with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., funders, members, volunteers, and other organizations) is considered an organization’s relationship and network capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2013). Second, infrastructure and process capacity refers to organizational structures and systems such as organizational policies, internal operational documents, and internal resources for implementing day-to-day operations. Examples include internal communication systems and organizational culture (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003). Last, planning and development capacity refers to the ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, evaluation practices and process, and research for organizational development (Hall et al., 2003). Each of the three sub-dimensions of structural capacity is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

***Relationship and network capacity.*** The ability and process of developing and managing relationships with external stakeholders is considered an organization’s relationship and network capacity (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003). Misener and

Doherty (2009) found relationship and network capacity along with human resources capacity were perceived as relatively more important than the other capacity dimensions in their case study of a Canadian sport club. Recent findings indicate resource scarcity might be a determinant of partnership formation by nonprofit sport organizations.

*Funding partnerships.* Requirements by external funding partners appear to influence many aspects of nonprofit organizations including human resource management, strategy development, and evaluation practices (Carman, 2009; Gibbs et al., 2002; Marshall & Suárez, 2014; Stone et al., 1999; Thomson, 2010). Akingbola (2013) argued external demands from funding agencies might influence the human resource practices of nonprofit organizations. Moreover, Akingbola suggested nonprofits relying on multiple external funding agencies might adopt a variety of practices to comply with those agencies' requirements, which often results in practices unaligned with organizational values and overall strategy. In terms of evaluation practices, findings of a mixed-methods study on evaluation practice requirements of nonprofit funding agencies suggest a significant association between both federal and United Way funding and compliance with funder's monitoring and evaluation requirements (Carman, 2009). While funding requirements can drive change in the nonprofit setting, these funding agencies need to provide adequate support for beneficiaries to increase their organizational capacity and ensure they are able to meet or exceed the minimum requirements (Carman, 2007, 2009; Thomson, 2010). Empirical evidence indicates many nonprofits report struggles with financial reporting requirements including a lack of understanding exactly what they are expected to report and how such information should be submitted (Carman, 2007). Furthermore, considerable discrepancies have emerged in

evaluation requirements and support between different funding agencies (Carman, 2009).

Funding partnerships in SDP remain largely characterized by unequal power structures and conflicting interests (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey & Banda, 2010). Similarly, Doherty et al. (2014) found community sport clubs reported frustration with unbalanced funding partnerships.

Giulianotti (2011a), however, found several SDP practitioners argued they would not shift away from their core values for funding, although these answers may be characterized by social desirability bias. Some staff members also contested funding partnerships had facilitated new opportunities for partnerships with other well-recognized organizations (crowding-in effect). At the same time, partnerships with funding agencies were also reported as problematic by others due to incongruent goals and values between the organizations. In their qualitative case studies of SDP initiatives in Zambia, Lindsey and Banda (2010) discovered a broad range of partnerships for various purposes with different structures and balances of power. Partnerships between local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international funding agencies provided much funding for operations of these programs, but several of these international partnerships also assisted with volunteer and staff recruitment.

*External stakeholders.* Although SDP continues to be characterized by limited collaborations among organizations with similar goals (Coakley, 2011; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010), previous research indicates existing partnerships involved a broad range of external stakeholders including government agencies, sport organizations, and other local organizations for program sustainability (Giulianotti, 2011a). Sugden (2010) reported the development and cultivation of numerous partnerships have been



imperative for the sustainability of the Football 4 Peace program in Israel. These relationships include local community partnerships with towns willing to embrace the program and institutional partners such as the German Sport University, the Football Association (FA), the British Council, the Israeli Sports Authority, the London Marathon, and the University of Brighton for leveraging resources for the planning and program implementation. Overall, mutually beneficial partnerships have helped connect local community programs with broader policy-level efforts for promoting change on a broader scale (Sugden, 2010).

Research on external partnerships within a nonprofit sport setting is limited, but Parent and Harvey (2009) conceptualized a model for managing partnerships between sport and community-based organizations based on an extensive review of previous literature. Their model consists of three dimensions: (a) partnership antecedents, (b) partnership management, and (c) partnership evaluation. Based on their review of literature, Parent and Harvey (2009) suggested a shared mission and vision should be developed from common interests among partners. Roles and responsibilities should also be clarified from the onset of partnership to mitigate future conflicts. In addition, all partners need to be equally committed toward achieving the shared goals and objectives of the partnership, which can help form a partnership identity. While trusting relationships are crucial, it is important to recognize they take time to develop between partners. Successful partnerships also tap into the unique skills and knowledge of each partner in a collaborative process. Another imperative aspect of a successful partnership is the presence of responsive, authentic, and clear two-way communication. Appropriate decision-making structures should promote capacity building and need to have processes

in place for conflict resolution, leadership, and balance of power. Partners also need to utilize multiple types of evaluation to monitor their partnership and identify ways to increase their relationship capacity although evaluation of partnerships often is overlooked (Parent & Harvey, 2009).

Interestingly, findings of a large-scale study of 1,000 randomly selected Spanish sport organizations indicated strong relationships with external stakeholders were significantly associated with acquisition of both financial and non-financial resources (Esteve et al., 2011). These findings highlight the potential importance of stakeholder management for increasing organizational capacity. De Knop et al. (2004) also found Flemish and Dutch sport clubs to have relatively strong public relations and communication with external stakeholders. While these findings indicate a strong relationship and network capacity, their study did not provide any details on the types of organizational partnerships nor existing challenges. For example, Gazley and Abner (2014) found the benefits yielded from participation in a national in-kind partnership were sometimes outweighed by increased capacity constraints driven by nonprofits' participation in the donation partnership program. The results of Wicker and Breuer's (2013b) study indicated clubs offering disability sport had significantly more relationships in terms of network and relationship capacity compared to clubs not offering these activities. However, the results should be interpreted with caution since organizations categorized as disability sport clubs were often the largest nonprofit organizations in the sample providing multiple sport programs. Nonetheless, Misener and Doherty (2009) found similar evidence on the perceived strength of the relationship and network capacity in their case study of a Canadian community sport organization. The

local sport club had relationships with diverse stakeholders including media, funding agencies, researchers, equipment suppliers, facility providers, and other community sport organizations although time commitment emerged as the main challenge for managing these relationships.

Misener and Doherty (2012) found community sport clubs to be involved with an average of six inter-organizational partnerships. Partnerships with private entities were reportedly used for resource acquisition (i.e., equipment or monetary funds). Partnerships with other nonprofit entities were utilized for strengthening connections within the broader sport system as well as for funding opportunities. Many clubs also had partnerships with provincial or national sport organizations, which helped those clubs gain access to existing infrastructure. Partnerships with public organizations were also leveraged for access to facilities. These findings highlight multiple cross-sector partnerships. Babiak and Thibault (2009) found two major challenges associated with multiple cross-sector partnerships related to: (a) structure (governance, roles, responsibilities, and complexity of partnership), and (b) strategy (balance between competition and collaboration and changing missions and organizational goals). Nonprofit managers raised concerns about unclear roles and responsibilities mainly due to lack of efficiency in the partnerships. Nonprofit partners also raised concerns about the increased competition for resources due to the expanding number of partnerships. For local staff members, the complex and different partner structures and forms were demanding, as they required different types of knowledge and skill sets for addressing the respective partner's needs. Sharpe (2006) found similar challenges in her study of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization. Thus, the magnitude and quality of an

organization's network can influence volunteers since a larger network may involve more complex tasks for volunteers in terms of collaborating with many different stakeholders and could thus discourage potential volunteers (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013).

Babiak and Thibault (2009) also found a discrepancy in the perceived nature of corporate-nonprofit partnerships as the corporate partners often viewed partnerships as charitable or philanthropic endeavors while the nonprofit organization believed the corporate partners had a more strategic role. The formation and extent of sharing resources through private-nonprofit partnerships varies from context to context. Therefore, Austin (2000) noted three types of partnerships: (a) philanthropic-charitable donation of private organization to nonprofit entity, (b) transactional-explicit exchange of resources for specific projects, and (c) integrative-joint venture partnerships between organizations for program implementation. Evidently, the stakeholders in Babiak and Thibault's (2009) study had different beliefs about the intended type of private-nonprofit partnership in their context. Hence, managers of organizations engaging in multiple cross-sector partnerships need to develop a detailed understanding of the potential structural and strategic challenges of these partnerships from the onset. As Misener and Doherty (2012) noted "keeping a balance of partners across sectors is one means by which they can avoid pressure from a single partner, meet their needs and continue to connect the community through sport" (p. 253).

Although Babiak and Thibault (2009) provided valuable insight into partnerships within nonprofit sport, their focus was not specifically on SDP. Hayhurst and Frisby (2010), however, explored perceptions of staff members in Swiss and Canadian SDP organizations on inter-organizational partnerships with high performance sport agencies.

Findings revealed several challenges for engaging in organizational partnerships. Three major tensions reported by both organizations were: (a) competing values regarding program delivery and fear of the SDP organization being seen as a stepping-stone to high performance sport partners, (b) difficulties for SDP organizations to operate independently, and (c) power imbalance between the SDP organization and the high performance sport partner. Overall, there was also a lack of common understanding of the partnership due to insufficient communication between the organizations.

Lindsey and Banda (2010), on the other hand, explored the nature of organizational partnerships involving SDP organizations in Zambia since prior research in SDP had primarily focused on agencies and individuals from the Global North. Similar to Hayhurst and Frisby (2010), the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with staff members and analyzed organizational documents. The most common types of partnerships identified were informal relationships with non-sport organizations (e.g., a SDP organization collaborating with a health organization in delivering their program or services). Interestingly, these often began as one-way capacity building partnerships but evolved over time to become more reciprocal and mutually beneficial. For example, an established health-based organization initially provided training for a newly developed SDP agency; however, over time the relationship evolved into a more mutually beneficial partnership for advancing the work of both parties. Partnerships between SDP organizations however, were rare.

In addition, SDP organizations lacked strategic partnerships addressing broader policy-level change related to their organizational missions. The large number of organizational stakeholders also appeared to have resulted in a lack of effective

partnerships among Zambian SDP organizations. There were no formal partnerships for promoting co-ordination of practice and policy within the local SDP sector. The dependency on international resources for funding appeared to have hindered development of local partnerships due to a sense of competition over resources among the local organizations.

Guided by Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), Wicker, Vos, Scheerder, and Breuer (2013) recently examined if nonprofit sport organizations with large organizational problems such as insufficient resources were more likely to have partnerships with external stakeholders for overcoming their organizational challenges. Findings indicated lack of resources may be a determinant for the formation of organizational relationships, although some noticeable differences were found between German and Flemish organizations. While Wicker et al. (2013) examined the formation of inter-organizational relationships, Misener and Doherty (2013) explored the processes of such relationships involving community sport organizations. Findings from interviews with executive directors of 20 organizations indicated frequent and open communication, pro-active problem solving, and a personal connection as characteristics of successful partnerships. The quality of a relationship was characterized by level of engagement, balance, consistency, and trust between the partners. The organizational staff responsible for managing the partnership was characterized by their role related to the partnership, their specific skills and knowledge, and their personal connection. Interpersonal, conceptual, and technical competencies were necessary for managing the partnership. Participants reported inter-organizational relationships positively influenced their organizations' ability to fulfill their missions through improved program/service quality,

operations, or increased community presence. These findings highlight the importance for leaders of community nonprofit sport organizations to be aware of the three critical aspects of the relationship processes: (a) relationship quality, (b) organizational staff responsible for managing the partnership, and (c) knowledge needed for managing the partnership.

At the same time, it is also important to note an unintended consequence of cross-sector partnerships in SDP. While scholars and funders are increasingly asking for more detailed evaluation practices, many programs are implemented in communities alongside several other development programs (Donnelly, Atkinson, Boyle, & Szto, 2011). Thus, isolating any potential change from these sport-based programs becomes immensely difficult when sport-based programs are implemented concurrently with several non-sport programs. In other words, it is increasingly challenging to accurately assess the sole contribution of sport within broader development efforts as these programs often integrate sport and non-sport components. However, Levermore (2011) found some SDP organizations are not engaging in external evaluation efforts due to financial constraints. These findings raise concerns as organizations considered to be in the advancement stage of evaluation capacity are not only actively engaged in monitoring and evaluation practices with internal stakeholders, but also actively involve their external stakeholders in comprehensive evaluation efforts (Gibbs, et al., 2002). Unfortunately, empirical evidence indicates the majority of evaluation practices among nonprofits are conducted internally with minimal external support. In her study of large community-based nonprofits in New York, Carman (2007) found approximately three out of four organizations across all types of nonprofits relied on evaluation practices conducted by

internal staff.

*Summary of relationship and network capacity literature.* In summary, the ability to build and maintain relationships with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., funders, members, volunteers, media, equipment providers, facility providers) is considered an organization's relationship and network capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Lack of resources can be a determinant for the formation of organizational relationships (Wicker et al., 2013), yet these partnerships can also unintentionally result in increased capacity constraints (Gazley & Abner, 2014). Funding partnerships appear to influence several aspects of nonprofit organizations including human resource management, strategy development, and evaluation practices (Carman, 2009; Gibbs et al., 2002; Stone et al., 1999; Thomson, 2010). Despite the perceived benefits of external evaluation practices, most nonprofits have limited evaluation capacity and continue to rely mostly on internal assessments (Carman, 2007; Gibbs et al., 2002). While funding agencies help provide financial capital, nonprofits struggle to comply with the increasing amount of reporting requirements associated with each funding source requirements (Thomson, 2010; Carman, 2007, 2009).

In SDP, funding agencies often control local programs due to unequal power structures in funding partnerships (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a). At the same time, Lindsey and Banda (2010) noted a broad range of partnership structures and balances of power in their examination of SDP in Zambia. Evidently, contextualization remains crucial in understanding organizational capacity within SDP. For example, Burnett (2009) noted how the Youth Development Through Football program was developed by an international organization building local



capacity for program implementation through strategic partnerships. Yet, as a whole, SDP continues to be characterized by limited collaboration among organizations with similar goals (Coakley, 2011; Lindsey, 2013, Lindsey & Banda, 2010). However, many of these organizations engage in partnerships with other types of organizations including government agencies, sport organizations, and other development organizations (Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010). Sustainable partnerships involving nonprofit sport organizations are characterized by a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, trust, a shared vision, proactive problem-solving, mission alignment, two-way communication, appropriate and balanced decision-making structures, and multiples types of evaluation (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2012, 2013; Parent & Harvey, 2009).

Evidence from a large-scale study in southern Europe suggests external relationships are also associated with increased acquisition of financial and non-financial resources among nonprofit sport organizations (Esteve et al., 2011). Interestingly, relationship and network capacity is perceived as one of the strongest assets among many nonprofit sport organizations (De Knop et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). At the same time, development and management of a multitude of partnerships requires increased time commitment for an organization (Misener & Doherty, 2009), and increased need for different types of knowledge and skills for addressing the respective partner's needs (Babiak & Thibault, 2009). This further supports the importance of understanding capacity through the lens of a multidimensional framework. Previous research on multiple cross-sector partnerships indicates the most common challenges are related to structure (governance, roles, responsibilities, and complexity of

partnership) and strategy (balance between competition and collaboration and changing missions and organizational goals (Babiak & Thibault, 2009).

***Infrastructure and process capacity.*** The internal structure for implementing organizational activities is another important aspect of organizational capacity. Infrastructure and process capacity refers to organizational structures and systems such as organizational policies, internal operational documents, and internal resources for implementing day-to-day operations (Hall et al., 2003). Organizational culture and internal communication systems are examples of these organizational aspects (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003).

***Internal structures.*** In a longitudinal study of 110 nonprofits in Detroit, Thomson (2010) found access to information and sufficient informational technology systems were influential factors of whether organizations engaged in outcome measurement, supporting the argument for organizational capacity influencing adoption of an outcome measurement approach (Barman & MacIndoe, 2012). Similarly, Gibbs et al. (2002) found availability of evaluation tools and processes as one of the primary factors influencing nonprofit evaluation capacity. Thomson (2010) also found internal policies and procedures influenced the adoption of outcome measurements. Formal written policies and procedures, however, appear to be limited among small nonprofit organizations. In their examination of organizational capacity among community-based development organizations, Fredericksen and London (2000) discovered more than half of their sample did not have written policies and procedures. This is concerning as written job descriptions and work manuals can be beneficial in making volunteers feel more comfortable with their roles and tasks on a day-to-day basis, subsequently increasing an

organization's human resource capacity (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). In focus groups with presidents of 51 community sport clubs, Doherty et al. (2014) found many participants discussed the importance of written policies and procedures as well as having clearly defined roles and responsibilities for internal stakeholders.

Preskill and Boyle (2008) argued sustainable evaluation practices among nonprofits are associated with several internal factors including the extent of support for evaluation and learning by leadership, organizational culture promoting new ideas and questioning organizational processes, necessary internal structures and processes for evaluation practices, and sufficient channels for communication of evaluation practices. Similarly, Gibbs et al. (2002) found internal support to be associated with nonprofits engaged in extensive evaluation practices and processes. These findings indicate the importance of establishing a culture of shared values and common goals for increased organizational capacity.

In a nonprofit sport setting, De Knop et al. (2004) found strong organizational cultures among nonprofit sport clubs in the Belgium and the Netherlands. Most organizations also appeared to have good internal communication systems in place. Similarly, Misener and Doherty (2009) found frequent and open communication among board and staff members to be perceived as the strongest aspect of infrastructure and process capacity in their case study of a Canadian community sport organization. At the same time, however, it is important to note several challenges in the internal structures of nonprofit sport organizations including lack of sufficient access to sport facilities (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011) and too much focus on daily operations rather than focusing on the bigger picture of the organization

were found to be the most prominent internal challenges (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty 2009). It is important to recognize the organizations in these studies were community sport clubs operating multiple sport programs. Thus, access to facilities is imperative for these organizations.

*Organizational mission and culture.* In addition to infrastructure such as access to informational technology, scholars have argued the organizational mission and underlying values of a nonprofit organization along with the values and beliefs of nonprofit leaders are the foundation for nonprofit strategy development (Akingbola, 2013; Kaplan, 2001). The values and beliefs of nonprofit leaders also influence how these strategies transform into organizational practices. Thus, internal processes and procedures play an important role in a nonprofit organization's functions and overall capacity. However, in their case study of the volunteer process with an Israeli nonprofit, Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) found few volunteers were aware of the organization's mission or values. This is problematic as previous research suggests the mission is the most influential aspect of nonprofit organizations (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Despite the reported importance of mission statements for nonprofit organizations, numerous organizations continue to lack a formal purpose statement (Fredericksen & London, 2000). In their investigation of nonprofit boards, O'Regan and Oster (2005) found more than 90% of the participating board members reported mission fulfillment was their primary motive for serving on the board of directors. While mission statements should indicate the unique purpose of a nonprofit organization, previous research indicates broad and vague statements among nonprofit mission statements (McHatton, Bradshaw, Gallagher, & Reeves, 2011). The lack of specific details suggests some

nonprofits may have failed to realize they cannot solve all social issues on their own (Kaplan, 2001). However, mission statements can always be revised to better reflect the purpose of an organization. In their case study of the Council for Exceptional Children, McHatton et al. (2011) reported how the organization revised its mission statement to better reflect its perceived values and goals through a strategic planning session based on inputs from key internal stakeholders. In their exploratory study of how leaders of nonprofit organizations in Pittsburgh evaluated funding sources, Kearns et al. (2014) found the most common evaluation criteria were related to the mission of the organization. For example, frequently mentioned evaluation criteria included alignment of a given funding source with the mission of the nonprofit organization.

Mission statements are also important for facilitating innovation within nonprofit organizations. McDonald (2007) found clear and motivating mission statements helped guide nonprofit hospitals in developing innovative ideas for organizational development. Furthermore, formal mission statements embracing the role of innovation promoted an organizational culture of acceptance and shared values of new ideas. Interestingly, the findings of Jaskyte's (2010) exploratory study on correlates of organizational culture indicated nonprofit leaders might instill or reinforce organizational culture values including innovation by adopting transformational leadership strategies. Considering an organizational culture provides an institutional framework with strategies for internal stakeholders to take action (Chen et al., 2013), nonprofit leaders need to develop an understanding of how to create and reinforce organizational culture values. As Jaskyte and Dressler (2005, p. 37) noted, "while achieving cultural change can be a very difficult task, with a proper diagnosis of the current organizational culture, appropriate use of

culture change tools, and careful management of change efforts, organizational innovativeness can be developed.” Similarly, integration of the importance of evaluation practices in the organizational culture was identified as a key factor in actual outcome measurement efforts of nonprofit organizations (Thomson, 2010).

Mills and Hoeber (2013) critically explored organizational culture in a nonprofit sport setting through interviewing 15 members of a figure skating club on their perceptions regarding artifacts within the club facilities. Their findings from the photo-elicited interviews suggested various artifacts such the skating facility, award recognitions, and a wall of fame of previous skaters helped create the organization’s culture. The influence of these artifacts varied from common understandings of the role and value of the facility to discrepant views on the functions of locker rooms within the clubs. Their findings raise awareness of the importance for managers to critically reflect on intended and unintended meanings of artifacts within a nonprofit organization as internal stakeholders may have different interpretations and experiences.

Also within a nonprofit sport setting, Maxwell and Taylor (2010) highlighted how an Australian community sport club successfully developed a more inclusive organizational culture through fostering social capital. Their findings indicated how a nonprofit sport organization can transform its organizational culture and adopt inclusive organizational management practices and policies. The organization developed trust and relationships between the organization and people of the local Muslim community following the addition of two Muslim women on the Board of Directors. Internal collaboration and sharing of resources led to greater levels of involvement within the organization. This included improved inclusive organizational practices promoting

greater interaction and cooperation between Muslim and non-Muslim members. Other changes included girls-only practices, development and promotion of female leaders, as well as female coaches for the girls' teams. Other inclusive practices included the introduction of foods from different cultures and appreciation of different holidays and traditions (See Maxwell, Foley, Taylor, & Burton, 2013 for a more detailed discussion on specific practices for facilitating social inclusion). Over time, the organization developed strong partnerships with a number of local agencies from different sectors, which helped increase its organizational capacity. For example, the club grew from four volunteers in 2004 to over 70 volunteers in 2009 by developing a culture of shared values of inclusiveness and community involvement.

In their study of Commonwealth Games Canada's International Development Through Sport program, MacIntosh and Spence (2012) found the prevalence of both congruent and incongruent values among organizational stakeholders. Overall, a total of 12 themes emerged: six values were considered to be instrumental (describing processes): Caring, Connectedness, Community Driven, Resourcefulness, Education, and Utility of Sport; while another six values were categorized as terminal (describing outcomes): Development, Personal Growth, Cultural Awareness, Justice, Knowledge Exchange, and Legacy. Their findings highlight the importance for leaders to develop a better understanding of perceived organizational values and espoused values to better manage their SDP programs and instill a strong and coherent organizational culture. In their qualitative study of two SDP programs in South Africa, Sanders et al. (2014) found a high prevalence of conflict among internal stakeholders due to different values and priorities which consequently had resulted in high turnover rates among volunteers.

Organizational values are also crucial for the formation of relationships with external stakeholders (Misener & Doherty, 2009), and strategy implementation (Stone et al., 1999).

*Summary of infrastructure and process capacity literature.* The organizational structures and systems (i.e., organizational policies, internal operational documents, internal communication, organizational culture) needed for implementing day-to-day operations are conceptualized as an organization's infrastructure and process capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Access and knowledge of informational technology systems and software have emerged as important aspects of the infrastructure capacity of nonprofit organizations, directly influencing several organizational practices (Gibbs et al., 2002; Thomson, 2010). Written policies and procedures have also emerged as important for the day-to-day operations of nonprofits (Hall et al., 2003). Unfortunately, many nonprofit and voluntary organizations lack formal policies and procedures (Gibbs et al., 2002; Thomson, 2010).

Organizational culture and shared beliefs in organizational practices constitute additional integral aspects of infrastructure and process capacity of nonprofits (Gibbs et al., 2002; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Thomson, 2010). An organizational culture serves as the framework guiding internal stakeholders in day-to-day operations (Chen et al., 2013). Previous research on nonprofit sport organizations indicates relatively strong organizational cultures and internal communication systems (De Knop et al., 2004; Misener & Doherty, 2009). At the same time, several challenges including access to facilities and too much focus on daily operations have emerged among nonprofit sport organizations (Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013b).



Given the nature of nonprofits, the mission statement is also considered to be one of the most influential organizational aspects (McHatton et al., 2011; Studer & van Schnurbein, 2013), and can influence organizational practices and values (McDonald, 2007). Previous scholarship on community sport organizations also highlights the importance for managers to critically reflect on intended and unintended meanings of artifacts within a nonprofit organization as these can subsequently alter its culture. Thus, the underlying values and organizational mission are important aspects of the infrastructure and process capacity (Akingbola, 2013; Kaplan, 2001). Unfortunately, many organizations continue to have an ambiguous mission statement or even lack any type of formal mission statements (Fredericksen & London, 2000; McHatton et al., 2011). Despite these often broad and ambiguous statements among nonprofits, McHatton et al. (2011) argued organizations could develop more specific mission statements through strategic planning.

***Planning and development capacity.*** The ability of a nonprofit to engage in strategic planning for organizational development refers to an organization's planning and development capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Specifically, this refers to the ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, evaluation practices and processes, and research for organizational learning (Hall et al., 2003). Previous research on nonprofit sport clubs indicates awareness of the importance of planning and development, yet a lack of formal strategic plans (Misener & Doherty, 2009).

***Strategic planning and management.*** According to Bryson (2010, p.255), "strategic management may be viewed as the appropriate and reasonable integration of strategic planning and implementation across an organization in an ongoing way to

enhance the fulfillment of mission, meeting of mandates, continuous learning, and sustained creation of public value.” In addition, nonprofit managers need to realize strategy entails decisions about not only what an organizations decides to do, but also what an organization decides to refrain from doing (Kaplan, 2001). In one of the earlier studies on organizational capacity among community-based nonprofits, Fredericksen and London (2000) found less than 30% had a strategic plan in place although many expressed a desire to develop a plan, but reported a lack of sufficient resources to engage in strategic planning. Similar to Fredericksen and London (2000), Eisinger (2002) found few small nonprofits in Detroit had ever engaged in strategic planning. Others, however, suggested strategic planning was increasingly adopted and used by nonprofit organizations (Bryson, 2010). However, in their case study of the organizational capacity of a Canadian sport club, Misener and Doherty (2009) found a lack of clear purpose and strategic financial planning for long-term sustainability. Doherty et al. (2014) found senior representatives of sport clubs noted the importance of a formal vision and strategic plan, yet many voiced challenges in the actual implementation process of strategic plans. Similarly, Wicker and Breuer (2013a) noted that while strategy development can help reduce organizational problems, simply having a strategy does not necessarily guarantee any such outcomes unless it is associated with subsequent policies for strategy implementation. While previous research has focused on the prevalence of strategic planning, few studies have explored the actual strategy formulation process (Stone et al., 1999). Bryson (2010), considered by many as the leading expert in nonprofit strategic management, suggested the mere presence of strategic planning does not necessarily guarantee any potential organizational benefits. Nevertheless, there is an increasing body

of evidence on numerous potential benefits associated with strategic planning including: (a) promotion of strategic thinking within the organization, (b) improved decision-making, (c) increased organizational effectiveness, (d) improved collaboration and collective impact, (e) increased organizational legitimacy, and (f) direct benefits for stakeholders involved including a sense of purpose and increased competency (Bryson, 2010).

Interestingly, in their qualitative study of seven nonprofit sport organizations in Australia, Hoye and Cuskelly (2003) found executive directors were primarily responsible for strategic developments despite the Australian Sports Commission recommending strategic planning to be conducted by an independent board rather than internal staff. Development of strategic plans, however, has been associated with positive change in nonprofit sport organizations. Ferkins, Shilbury, and McDonald (2009) facilitated the development of a formal strategic plan in a nonprofit sport organization with several perceived positive outcomes. Board members suggested the development of a strategic plan was a positive and significant change for the board of directors. The CEO reported having a framework (the strategic plan) helped the organization to better review and monitor its internal priorities and progress toward achieving organizational goals. The majority of participants also suggested the development of a strategic plan helped promote shared leadership between the CEO and the Board although some had concerns about their respective roles or lack thereof. The CEO suggested he learned providing the Board with detailed information and questions resulted in detailed responses and recommendations for improved organizational effectiveness. Assessing the effectiveness of an organization requires on-going monitoring and evaluation practices. The extent to

which nonprofit managers engage in these practices is influenced by organizational evaluation capacity.

*Evaluation capacity.* Gibbs et al. (2002) proposed a three-stage model of evaluation capacity consisting of compliance (only evaluating because of funder), investment (commit resources guided by strong leadership to engage in evaluation), and advancement (actively engaging not only internal, but also external stakeholders in comprehensive evaluation efforts). In their study of evaluation capacity among health-focused nonprofit organizations in the United States, Gibbs et al. (2002) found evaluation requirements by funding agencies to be a primary factor influencing nonprofit evaluation capacity. Expectations by funding agencies were perceived to set the standards for monitoring and evaluation practices. Their findings indicated some nonprofit organizations were concerned of potentially losing funding support if they were unable to show positive outcomes. Similarly, in their recent examination of monitoring and evaluation dynamics among local and international nonprofits operating in Cambodia, Marshall and Suárez (2014) found dependence on international funding agencies was positively associated with increased evaluation practices.

In their development of a multidimensional model of evaluation capacity building, Preskill and Boyle (2008, p. 44) stated, “sustainable evaluation practice also requires the development of systems, processes, policies, and plans that help embed evaluation work into the way the organization accomplishes its mission and strategic goals.” According to their conceptualization of evaluation capacity, the transfer of knowledge from rhetoric to reality in terms of evaluation practices is influenced by organizational learning capacity (e.g., leadership support for new and creative ideas). Thus, nonprofit leaders need to be

aware of the multitude of factors that may influence their ability to learn and implement evaluation practices for increasing their organizational capacity.

In their study of evaluation capacity among 340 randomly selected nonprofits in New York, Carman and Fredericks (2010) identified three types of nonprofits. The first group was characterized by moderate to high-levels of satisfaction with their evaluation capacity and reported few problems in implementing evaluation programs. On the other hand, the second group included organizations that had internal evaluation structures, but struggled with the implementation due to lack of knowledge or sufficient resources. Substantial internal and external issues characterized the final type of organizations, which lacked evaluation capacity. These challenges included lack of knowledge, resources, and lack of support from stakeholders. The findings of this study highlighted the considerable differences in evaluation capacity of nonprofit organizations. Thus, nonprofit managers need to be aware of the different aspects of evaluation capacity (Nielsen, Lemire, & Skov, 2011). It is important for these leaders to assess their organizations' strengths and weaknesses to increase their evaluation capacity for financial sustainability and increased organizational capacity.

*Evaluation practices.* In her mixed-method study of evaluation practices among nonprofits in New York, Carman (2007) found monitoring activities (e.g., site visits and performance review) and reporting activities (e.g., preparing reports for board, funding requirements, annual reports) to be the most common types of evaluation practices. Furthermore, the results indicated more than two-thirds of organizations in the study regularly assessed whether goals and objectives were met, established performance targets, and engaged in formal strategic planning (Carman, 2007). However, others have

found most nonprofits do not use scientifically validated tools when examining if they achieve their intended goals (Thomson, 2010). In addition, few organizations engage in evaluation measurement (e.g., formal program evaluations, use of performance measurement system, and use of program logic models) and only three percent of participating organizations reported using a balanced scorecard approach (Thomson, 2010).

In his qualitative study of how leaders of 152 international nonprofits defined effectiveness, Mitchell (2013) found the use of a logic model approach to be more common among leaders focused on outcome accountability rather than overhead minimization. In a SDP context, Kidd (2011) argued “[t]hose that explicitly follow an evidence-based logic model of development or social reconciliation and social cohesion, with appropriate community engagement, monitoring and evaluation, constitute a tiny fraction of programmes overall” (p.604). However, Lindsey and Grattan (2012) suggested the call for use of logic models might not necessarily be appropriate in SDP practice considering the broad range of desired outcomes and varying perspectives among stakeholders. While many leaders discussed ongoing monitoring and evaluation of short-term programmatic goals, few discussed evaluation of long-term goals or mission fulfillment. Moreover, Carman (2009) discovered only those nonprofits receiving funding from the U.S. federal government or the United Way are engaged in considerable evaluation measurement practices. While only used by a small fraction of nonprofit leaders (Thomson, 2010), the development and adoption of the balanced scorecard approach can help nonprofit leaders develop a better understanding of an organization’s goals and objectives among internal stakeholders, which ultimately increases a

nonprofit's ability to fulfill its mission (Kaplan, 2001).

Despite the common push among funding agencies to require grassroots development organizations to provide comprehensive evidence and measurement from the on-set of a program until post-program impact, Ebrahim and Rangan (2010) argued most nonprofits engaged in efforts to facilitate social change will not be able to utilize traditional performance measures due to the complexity of their work and environments. Therefore, the Harvard scholars called for greater contextualization in evaluation efforts. In proposing a contingency framework for improved evaluation and measurement, Ebrahim and Rangan (2010) suggested the importance of differentiating among types of impact measures depending on the nature of the organization.

Thomson (2010) found nonprofits with budgets of more than \$500,000 and at least 11 staff members frequently used evaluation practices. While the results indicate some promising practices in terms of monitoring and reporting with larger organizations, supporters of nonprofits should be concerned about the reliability of their measures as several staff members admitted making up some of their evaluation numbers (Carman, 2007). While type of funding source exerts some influence on nonprofits' evaluation practices, empirical evidence also suggests organizational size, age, and type have a considerable influence on evaluation practices among nonprofits (Carman, 2009). Others have suggested actual outcome measurement among nonprofits depends on several organizational factors including: (a) access to resources, (b) access to information and IT systems, (c) internal requirements such as policies and procedures, (d) external stakeholders, and (e) integration of evaluation practices in the culture of the organization (Thomson, 2010). Nonprofits that have adopted evaluation practices are also associated

with increased strategic decision-making (LeRoux & Wright, 2010).

At the same time, it is important to recognize noticeable differences between local and international nonprofit agencies in terms of monitoring and evaluation efforts. For example, a recent study of 152 organizations operating in Cambodia suggested international agencies were more likely to have an annual budget, conduct external audits, examine secondary data, and have a formal evaluation model in place (Marshall & Suárez, 2014). No differences emerged, however, in terms of data collection activities between the two groups of nonprofits. Local agencies were also more likely to have a needs assessment model. Marshall and Suárez (2014) also found a significant positive association between professional development and the organizations' monitoring and evaluation practices.

As previously noted, SDP organizations are increasingly asked by scholars and international funders for more sophisticated monitoring and evaluation of their programs, yet often lack sufficient evaluation practices (Levermore, 2008b). Unfortunately, few of these organizations currently have the ability and resources for adopting appropriate evaluation practices and processes (Donnelly et al., 2011). Kidd (2011, p. 605) argued if SDP "is to grow and succeed, its advocates and practitioners need to distance themselves from the 'messianic claims' of the international documents and M&E by photo op and to develop rigorous, community-appropriate measures to evaluate what is actually being conducted on the ground."

In his examination of evaluation practices in SDP, Levermore (2011) found organizations mostly relied on a positivistic logical framework although some organizations also used participatory methods of assessment. While critical scholars have



raised awareness of the importance of participatory methods to learn experiences of local actors (Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Nicholls, Giles, & Sethna, 2011), Levermore (2011) also notes even participatory research methods are associated with top-down control by the researchers.

Overall, Levermore (2011) suggested evaluation practices can require a considerable amount of resources, especially among smaller organizations. An inclusive evaluation approach from the onset of the program, however, has helped Football 4 Peace grow through local ownership and inclusive decision-making (Sugden, 2010). Nonetheless, the lack of organizational capacity of many SDP programs raises concerns of whether capacity can be increased over time. Thus, it is important to consider previous literature on nonprofit capacity building.

*Nonprofit capacity building.* Often-cited nonprofit strategic planning expert, Bryson (2010), suggested “strategic planning also should focus on the work of figuring out how to build organizational capacity for, and delivery of, success over time” (p. 266). Thus, capacity building is another crucial aspect of planning and development capacity (Nielsen et al., 2011). In her investigation of the return on investment of a five-year capacity-building program among 125 small, volunteer-driven nonprofits, Sobeck (2008) found a capacity-building program in Detroit resulted in significant increases in planning, grant writing, and use of evaluation strategies. These results indicate the potential increase in organizational capacity among grassroots nonprofit organizations from a capacity-building program. At the same time, it is imperative to recognize the growing discrepancies in conceptualizations of evaluation capacity that consequently results in diverse capacity-building programs (Nielsen et al., 2011).

Although it is important for managers to conduct self-assessments for increasing their organizations' capacity, nonprofits may have limited resources to allocate toward capacity-building initiatives (Yung et al., 2008). Therefore, García-Iriarte, Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler, & Luna (2011) explored an evaluation capacity building program involving training of only one staff member to serve as a catalyst-for-change within an organization. The authors identified a key leader within the organization holding a position to facilitate change in evaluation knowledge and practices at both the individual and organizational level. The training was based on collaborative learning whereby the trainers and the staff members engaged in an evaluation process together. The staff member selected for the training displayed noticeable improvements and sought out more ownership in the capacity-building process over time. She developed a role as a catalyst-for-change within the organization—educating staff members and advocating for the role of evaluation within the organization as she increased her own awareness, knowledge and skills through the training process. Over time, the staff member was able to get organizational members to buy into evaluation practices and develop ownership of their roles within the nonprofit.

As a result of the catalyst-for-change program, the organization's managers developed data-driven goals, applied for additional funding, and started to engage in internal processes to increase their evaluation capacity. These findings indicate the potential effectiveness of engaging in a collaborative outcome evaluation process for evaluation capacity building. At the same time, these findings need to be carefully interpreted within the internal and external environments of the individual staff member and the nonprofit organization. This study did not discuss broader structural factors

influencing their evaluation practices (García-Iriarte et al., 2011).

Although a large body of research indicates a consensus on the importance of capacity-building programs for nonprofits (García-Iriarte et al., 2011; Nielsen et al., 2011; Sobeck, 2008), quality evidence of its effectiveness among nonprofits remains scarce. Minzner et al. (2014), however, recently aimed to address this gap in literature by conducting a random assignment evaluation of capacity-building programs. Their study focused specifically on applicants for the Compassion Capital Fund Demonstration Program—designed to build capacity in several organizational aspects. The results of their experimental study of 454 randomly assigned nonprofits indicated significantly higher levels of capacity in all five areas (organizational development, program development, revenue development, leadership development, community engagement) among the training group organizations at the conclusion of the 15-month program.

Participating organizations reported an increased use of strategic plans and improved recruitment and retention of volunteers. In addition, managers in the training group organizations were more likely to develop written funding plans and diversification of revenue sources. In terms of leadership development, more directors and board members completed training sessions following the capacity-building program. Furthermore, the results of the study indicated a significant increase in community partnerships among participating organizations. The findings of this study provide strong evidence of the positive influence of capacity-building programs on nonprofit organizations.

In their qualitative case studies of SDP in Zambia, Lindsey and Banda (2010) discovered a broad range of partnerships for various purposes. While there was a lack of

inter-organizational partnerships between SDP organizations, a few examples emerged of SDP agencies collaborating for capacity building in areas such as volunteer training. Interestingly, one larger SDP organization noted its motives for providing capacity-building support for smaller organizations:

“We had the privilege to be [one of the first] NGOs in this sector. And we understood that with that privilege there comes a responsibility of bringing up other smaller organisations or even bigger organisations elsewhere but they don’t operate here and they don’t have the skills and the know how of how certain sectors operate. We had to make sure that we interact with them and bring them up” (As cited in Lindsey & Banda, 2010, p. 98).

Given the limited resources and small nature of many SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008), it is important to understand that prior research provides evidence that even among small nonprofits with scarce resources, it is possible to systematically improve organizational effectiveness and increase organizational capacity (Grabowski, Neher, Crim, & Mathiassen, in press).

*Summary planning and development capacity literature.* In summary, the ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, develop evaluation practices and process, and research methods for organizational development is considered an organization’s planning and development capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Strategic planning and management can arguably help guide a nonprofit fulfill its mission and promote continuous organizational development (Bryson, 2010; Kaplan, 2001; McHatton et al., 2011). While previous research suggests a lack of strategic planning among many nonprofits (Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000), Bryson (2010) noted

nonprofit managers are increasingly adopting strategic management practices. Ferkins et al. (2009) successfully facilitated development of a formal strategic plan for an Australian nonprofit sport organization and found board and staff members valued its role as a framework for guiding the organization. Nonetheless, Misener and Doherty (2009) found a lack of clear purpose and strategic planning in their study of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization. Additional research is needed to advance our understanding of the planning and development capacity of nonprofit sport organizations. Yet, these findings highlight the importance of contextualization in developing a better understanding of organizational capacity among nonprofit organizations.

Gibbs et al. (2002) proposed a three-stage model of evaluation capacity consisting of compliance (with funder requirements), investment (of internal resources), and advancement (active involvement of internal and external stakeholders in evaluation efforts). While nonprofit managers generally engage in some evaluation practices such as performance review and funding requirement reports (Carman, 2007), most do not utilize scientifically validated tools for their assessments (Thomson, 2010). Thus, many nonprofits remain somewhere within between the compliance and investment stages of evaluation capacity (Gibbs et al., 2002). Evaluation practices and processes appear to be influenced by several organizational factors including size, age, targeted social issues, access to resources, and integration of evaluation practices in the culture of the organization (Carman, 2009; LeRoux & Wright, 2010; Levermore, 2011). While some nonprofits report strong evaluation capacity, many continue to struggle with implementation due to lack of knowledge, resources, and appropriate internal structures (Carman & Fredericks, 2010).

Monitoring and evaluation remains one of the largest challenges of many SDP organizations (Coalter, 2010; Kidd, 2008, 2011; Levermore, 2008b, 2011). Some suggest few of these agencies have the ability or resources for adopting appropriate evaluation practices (Donnelly et al., 2011). Others have raised concerns about the influence of funding agencies on evaluation practices (Kay, 2012), and have called for greater inclusion of local voices in impact assessments (Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Nicholls et al., 2011). Similarly, Gibbs et al. (2002) found funding requirements to be perceived as an influential factor on the evaluation practices of community-based nonprofit health organizations.

These findings indicate limited structural capacity among many nonprofits and previous research indicate the importance of nonprofit capacity-building (García-Iriarte et al., 2011); Nielsen et al., 2011; Sobeck, 2008). A recent experimental study of capacity-building programs revealed increased ability within several aspects of organizational capacity including funding, volunteer recruitment and retention, strategic planning, and partnership development (Minzner et al., 2014). Although collaboration remains scarce in SDP (Lindsey, 2013), Lindsey and Banda (2010) found some evidence of larger SDP organizations assisting smaller agencies with capacity building.

### **Sport for Development and Peace**

SDP has become a popular phrase during recent years used to describe a broad range of programs using sport to promote positive social change in communities around the world (Coakley, 2011). According to Burnett (2009), SDP “is a contested social construct which encapsulates a wide range of movement phenomena and activities that present various degrees of institutionalization, reflecting unique individualized and

cultural meanings as it finds expression in diverse social contexts” (p.1193). Similarly, Kay and Spaaij (2012) suggested SDP refers to a broad range of programs using sport as a tool to promote positive social change. Kidd (2008) noted, the use of sport as a vehicle for promoting social change in disadvantaged communities is not limited to low- and middle-income countries (Global South), as similar programs are also found in high-income countries (Global North). Thus, sport is increasingly used as a tool to promote both domestic and international development (Hartmann, 2003; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij, 2009). SDP involves a broad range of stakeholders including grassroots organizations, international nonprofits, governments, sport federations, educational institutions and the private sector (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b, 2011c; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sugden, 2010). The current study is primarily focused on the nonprofits responsible for implementing SDP programs in local communities. These organizations range from sport-specific organizations (e.g., Magic Bus, Football 4 Peace) using sport-based curriculums integrating a variety of educational and other non-sport activities to non-sport agencies such as SOS Children’s Villages or UNICEF, using sport as tool in their broader development efforts (Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011b; Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Tiessen, 2011).

**SDP history.** While SDP received increased attention following the adoption of United Nations Resolution 58/5 and proclamation of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (Burnett, 2009), several organizations were using sport as a vehicle to promote social change long before the recent acceptance of sport for development by governments and inter-governmental organizations (Coalter, 2010; Kay, 2012). Others have noted evidence of sport in international development efforts since as

early as the 1960s (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Nonetheless, the rapid growth and more sophisticated use of sport as a tool to promote positive social change is a relatively recent development. The formal recognition of SDP by the United Nations and other high-level decision-makers during the beginning of the 21st century was largely due to lobbying efforts by former high-profile athletes such as former Norwegian Olympic speed skater Johan-Olav Koss, founder of Right to Play (Coalter, 2010). More recently, members of the United Nations General Assembly declared April 6th the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (United Nations, 2013). Some suggest the United Nations embracing sport as tool for development and peace resulted in a global “sportification of social investment” (Burnett, 2009, p. 1193). This has resulted in evangelical claims of the power of sport as an inherently positive tool for solving a broad range of complex social issues (Coalter, 2010; Donnelly et al., 2011).

**SDP policies.** As a result of the increased popularity of SDP, a growing number of policy documents have emerged during the beginning of the 21st century, despite a lack of empirical evidence on how sport is associated with development outcomes (Coalter, 2010, 2013). Policies in the United Kingdom, Netherlands, and France provide examples of governments placing strong emphasis on sport as a tool for social integration (Spaij, 2009). Guided by postcolonial theory, Hayhurst (2009) conducted a content analysis of six well-recognized SDP policy documents published by the United Nations and the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group from 2003 to 2008. Overall, the author noted ambitious goals in SDP policy, yet the policy documents lacked details regarding the implementation and achievement of these development goals. In addition, she noted a lack of recognition of the power imbalance in SDP as many



organizations primarily framed their policies in terms of actors in the ‘Global North’ using SDP in the ‘Global South’. Several policy documents (e.g., Strategy for Norway’s Culture and Sports Co-operation with Countries in the South) have emerged from a human and cultural rights perspective with an emphasis on SDP. Others (e.g., New Labour Government Policy in England) frame sport as a fundamental positive tool for addressing issues such as social exclusion. Coalter (2010), however, suggested these documents tend to combine exaggerated benefits of sport as well as more realistic expectations as a result of SDP organizations’ reliance on funding from non-sport agencies.

Overall, the “evangelical policy rhetoric” (Coalter, 2010 p. 295) of SDP is largely associated with neo-liberal and hegemonic western discourses (Hayhurst, 2009). International and national policy documents often frame sport as a legitimate tool for achieving various development outcomes (Beacom, 2007), despite limited empirical evidence (Coalter, 2010, 2013). These policies are often associated with three underlying assumptions: (a) the “fertilizer effect” – participants experience development outcomes simply by participating in sport, (b) the “car wash effect” - sport can help remove negative traits and behaviors among participants, and (c) the “guardian angel effect” - sport will guide participants in directions which will result in successful career development and civic engagement (Coakley, 2011, p. 308). SDP policymakers and advocates continue to have a poor understanding and relatively naïve conceptual foundation of development approaches and the potential role of sport within development agendas (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). According to Giulianotti (2011c), international sport governing bodies and the United Nations continue to portray sport as inherently

positive without understanding the importance of situating sport within broader contexts and noting historical evidence of negative outcomes of sport-related events.

**Realistic role of sport in international development.** It is important to recognize sport in and of itself is neither inherently good nor bad: how it is used determines whether outcomes are positive or negative (Coakley, 2011; Hums & Wolff, 2014; Kidd, 2008; Sugden, 2010). For example, although there are examples of achieving human rights through sport, sport is also associated with violations of human rights (Donnelly, 2008). While SDP often focus on promoting inclusion, sport has historically been used as a means of social control (Donnelly et al., 2011). As Gasser and Levinsen (2004) noted, sport might contribute to either bringing people together or promoting conflict depending on the context. Donnelly (2008) also recognized sport at times may have positive outcomes, yet remains associated with negative outcomes as “sport may be used to promote ideological conformity, nationalism, militarism and inequitable attitudes about gender, race and disability” (p.382). Thus, the power of sport may not necessarily be a prosocial force (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). For example, Chawansky (in press) shared her own experience in being sexually harassed while attending a SDP workshop on empowerment of girls through sport. Her work brings attention to the importance of recognizing that SDP work will not necessarily change broader community issues. Managers of SDP organizations, however, can begin to create more realistic expectations by questioning their own assumptions. Moreover, SDP leaders should also implement proper training of volunteers and paid staff to minimize discrepancies between expectations among prospective volunteers and their lived realities. Unfortunately, Manley et al. (in press) found SDP volunteers to express a lack of understanding of their

intended roles and what to expect from their volunteer experiences.

Kidd (2008) argued the use of SDP has largely been characterized by idealism of solving complex social issues (Coalter, 2010; Sugden, 2010). The ‘movement’ is characterized by a lack of collaboration and a top-down, donor-focus approach (Kidd, 2008). Nonetheless, low- and middle-income countries such as Ghana are also increasingly advocating for the role of SDP (Kidd, 2011). Thus, it is important to recognize the existence of indigenous SDP initiatives (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). The majority of SDP organizations, however, remain largely driven by international donors from high-income countries (Kidd, 2008). The latter raises concern about whether the application of beliefs and values of the ‘Global North’ in the ‘Global South’ can be seen as enforcing cultural imperialism and Western values and ideals (Sugden, 2008). Similarly, as reported by Kay and Spaaij (2012), most SDP programs focused on individual development appear to reinforce Northern or Western cultural values rather than local cultural values. Perhaps sport needs to be understood as one of many potential tools in more holistic approaches to development and peace building (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Based on his study of the role of football in the reintegration process of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone, Dyck (2011) reported sport only played a supplementary role to a multitude of rehabilitation programs. Similarly, based on his mixed-methods inquiry of a sport-based employment training program in Brazil, Spaaij (2013) noted the importance of developing more realistic expectations of SDP programs as they are situated within broader structural processes such as educational systems and occupational opportunities in local communities.

SDP discourses continue to largely be characterized by a functionalist

development perspective, yet critical research is emerging and has highlighted sport is neither inherently positive nor negative (Coakley, 2011; Darnell & Black, 2011; Hartmann, 2003). While sport realistically might only make a relatively small contribution, it does not mean these programs cannot make a difference (Jarvie, 2011). It is more realistic to expect well-structured SDP programs may result in positive outcomes for some participants or programs under certain circumstances (Coalter, 2010; Hartmann, 2003). Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) suggested whether or not SDP programs result in positive or negative outcomes depends on the non-sport components of the program and the integration of these programs in more holistic development approaches rather than focusing primarily on the sport component. Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) suggested pedagogical strategies must be analyzed to find the most appropriate approach in order to maximize the likelihood of positive outcomes. The latter argument supports the findings of Theeboom et al.'s (2008) study of a Flemish SDP program, indicating the perceived importance of instructors for achievement of positive outcomes.

**Critical perspectives on the use of sport for social change.** SDP includes a broad range of stakeholders, yet programs in the Global South are often driven by funding agencies from the Global North (Coakley, 2011; Hayhurst, 2009, 2013; Straume & Hasselgård, 2014), highlighting the increased functional neoliberalism in development as Western corporations are increasingly engaging in development programs (Darnell, 2007; Burnett, 2009, in press; Kay, 2012; Hayhurst, 2009, 2013). Levermore (2008a) also noted many SDP programs are operated through partnerships whereby multi-national corporations or international sport federations fund non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing these initiatives in local communities. Coakley (2011) suggested

many of these programs are characterized by neoliberal approaches targeting individual development rather than addressing the underlying causes of social injustice. In her content analysis of online materials, Tiessen (2011) found SDP organizations to be largely characterized with neoliberal discourses as many highlighted the role of sport as a positive tool for development, yet few recognized or considered broader development goals.

Donnelly (2008) suggested SDP remains strongly associated with neocolonialism where organizations from mostly high-income countries provide ‘aid’ in low- and middle-income countries or communities. He also noted “a clear need for regulation, a need for more locally defined programmes, for more accountability and evaluation, and for greater efforts to establish sustainability with a clear exit strategy” (p. 386). Others have raised concerns of the increased amount of public and private funding allocated toward SDP without critical reflections on how sport is related to development outcomes (Coakley, 2011), and the appropriateness of certain sports for development purposes (Rookwood & Palmer, 2011). For example, soccer is widely used in SDP considering its relatively low cost, yet the sport is associated with invasive aspects that may (unintentionally) reinforce conflict and violent behavior (Rookwood & Palmer).

Darnell (2007) critically examined SDP through volunteers with Right to Play, as this organization involved interactions between actors from the Global North and South. Based on his findings, Darnell (2007) began to question whether the Northern volunteers or the local actors of the Global South are the true beneficiaries of Right to Play’s current programming structure as volunteers largely talked about how it felt good to help others. As he notes, “implications of this irony bring the mission of development through sport

into question” (p. 573). While this study provides a few thought provoking quotes from volunteers, these should be interpreted with caution, as details on the number of mentions of themes and sub-themes were absent.

Darnell (2011), however, conducted interviews with 27 former participants in an SDP internship program operated by Commonwealth Games Canada. Findings suggested initial motives of volunteers were largely associated with positive personal experiences with sport. Several interns, however, experienced cultural differences regarding the structure and societal role of sport. Nonetheless, participants expressed some evidence of critical awareness of hegemonic issues associated with traditional international development efforts. Several participants noted sport is neither inherently positive nor negative. In another prominent finding, participants reported the internship experience had a larger impact on them than the local community. All interns expressed a lack of accomplishment of the level of change they had sought to facilitate. This brings attention to who the true beneficiaries of these programs are (Darnell, 2007). Finally, the internship experience was largely reported to create a sense of guilt and privilege among participants related to both their own expectations and the realization of inequitable opportunities and resources. Yet, the interns did not express evidence of critical reflection on the design or structure of the internship program itself. Practical implications from this research relate the importance for the CGC and other sponsors of SDP partnerships to strengthen their pre-internship training programs and clearly emphasize the focus on partnership and support of local agency. Findings also suggested lack of opportunities at home for alumni of the intern program to build on their experiences and remain involved in SDP. The organization could also explicitly facilitate critical reflection among

participants throughout the process on their role as international volunteers in development programs.

Guided by an interpretative approach, Lindsey and Grattan (2012) challenged the assumption of Western, international organizations unequivocally driving the SDP agenda in the 'Global South' by highlighting two indigenous SDP organizations in Zambia. Similarly, Nicholls et al., (2011) suggested knowledge by grassroots practitioners is often dismissed in the debate regarding evidence of the use of SDP. However, Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) offered a rejoinder to arguments put forth by Lindsey and Grattan (2012) and suggested these local actors are still embedded in a broader global political development agenda—predominantly characterized by hegemonic relations producing neoliberalism and post-colonialism. Conversely, Levermore and Beacom (2012) argued both Lindsey and Grattan (2011) and Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) made important contributions by challenging and broadening the understanding of SDP by considering more diverse perspectives. Similar to Levermore and Beacom (2012), Schulenkorf et al. (2014) recognized the value in arguments for the importance of considering local agency (Lindsay & Grattan, 2012), as well as the importance of considering such voices within broader hegemonic development policies (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012).

Schulenkorf et al. (2014) explored local perceptions of 13 Football for Peace projects through a qualitative inquiry in Israel. This study helps contribute to the lack of local voices in the academic SDP literature (Nicholls et al., 2011). The authors conducted 30 in-depth interviews and two focus groups with a total of 24 participants with local stakeholders to develop a better understanding of the experiences of local stakeholders in

SDP. Findings highlighted varying experiences and the complex realities of an SDP program and the broader environment in which it was operated.

Straume and Hasselgård (2014) continued the debate on the influence of local actors with broader power structures in SDP (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). The authors contributed to this discussion based on a case study of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports' (NIF) relationship with the Zimbabwe Sport and Recreation Commission on the influence of policy discourses on trusteeship. Their analysis indicated an unequal power relationship as NIF initiated policy development and set the standards for defining sport and SDP. Furthermore, their analyses provided evidence of how NIF simplified the complex social realities in Zimbabwe to enable itself to implement its programs within the Global South, which ultimately reproduced the modernization model of development whereby the Norwegian agency was presumed to be superior in expertise and its own development stage. Changes to its SDP policy discourses did not appear to have much effect on the relationship as NIF still retained the power to make the final decisions.

While several scholars have suggested practitioners in SDP often have idealistic beliefs about sport as a tool for development (e.g., Darnell, 2007), Giulianotti (2011a) found many practitioners he interviewed had reflected considerably on critiques of using sport as a tool for promoting social change. Overall, practitioners appeared to reject external criticism from critical scholars of SDP, but embraced internal criticism from local stakeholders on how to improve their programming. Most practitioners indicated a willingness to consider alternative practices in development and implementation of their SDP programs. As noted by Burnett (in press), "If neoliberal deliverables dictate success



[in SDP], broader effects or ‘unintended’ consequences might be overlooked and minimise the potential responsiveness of a donor to accommodate local agency or deliver on, or manage, local expectations” (p.3). Guided by Mintzberg’s (2006) development approaches (top-down, inside-out, and outside-in development), Burnett (2009) examined four SDP programs in South Africa and found them to be characterized by top-down or outside-in approaches. Assumptions by stakeholders from high-income countries operating in low- and middle-income countries can often result in unintended consequences or outcomes (Donnelly et al., 2011). For example, SDP programs designed within the Global North are often built on volunteerism, yet practitioners implementing these programs within the Global South often discover people help out expecting to be paid or receive other benefits and tend to quit when they realize there are no such benefits (Guest, 2009; Hasselgård & Straume, 2015). Therefore, it is important to carefully consider organizational approaches to SDP.

According to Burnett (2009), the inside-out approach is characterized by detailed consultation with local communities throughout the planning and implementation process of the program. However, such local consultations require considerable time commitments and detailed understanding of local communities (Donnelly et al., 2011). Football 4 Peace, for example, recently decided to transition toward a new model of full local ownership beginning in 2014 following considerable consultation with local stakeholders and a critical assessment of its program model (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). While critical research approaches to SDP deconstruct practices and structures, they often do not provide practical recommendations for adapting these practices and facilitating changed practices for advancing SDP (Donnelly et al., 2011). Nonetheless, several

practitioners have voiced the perceived importance of local ownership in planning SDP programs (Giulianotti, 2011a; Schulenkorf, 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2014).

**SDP theory.** Some SDP scholars suggest the importance of outside influence during the initial period of a program, but call for increased local ownership over time (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012; Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Based on their involvement with the Open Fun Football Schools—a program started in the Balkan region in 1998 to promote social change through soccer—Gasser and Levinsen (2004) argued the long-term sustainability of the program depends on the ability of the organization to gradually replace international funding with a local funding model. Partnerships with local sport clubs and municipalities for infrastructure and resources has helped promote local ownership and ensured that the Open Fun Football Schools are largely driven by local interests rather than external charity motives. Kidd (2011) also contended that while bottom-up, community-centered programs are ideal, most SDP programs continue to be dominated by external donors with little consideration of local voices or needs. Based on a review of existing literature and his prior research in SDP, Schulenkorf (2012) argued for the importance of change agents—outside experts—to provide necessary support and facilitate local capacity building and ownership for sustainable development. The importance of change agents within SDP programs in divided communities was further echoed by Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) based on their experiences with programs in Brazil, Israel, and Sri Lanka, yet they noted programs in non-conflict settings were largely operated by local change agents. However, “a change agent cannot serve as a dictating force but should instead be a supportive facilitator of bottom-up community projects” (Schulenkorf, 2010, p. 126). Schulenkorf

(2010) explored the roles and responsibilities of change agents in an SDP project in Sri Lanka by interviewing both volunteers and community members. Findings indicated these internal stakeholders perceived they had nine important roles: (a) promote community participation, (b) facilitate social interactions, (c) facilitate building trust, (d) serving as a leader, (e) serve as a role model of social responsibility, (f) develop resources, (g) develop innovative approaches for bringing divided communities together, (h) provide financial support, and (i) serve as a long-term planner.

Others have focused on organizational approaches to SDP. Giulianotti (2011b) proposed three types of SDP approaches: (a) technical, (b) dialogical, and (c) critical. The technical approach is characterized by a positivistic philosophy and hierarchical managerial framework. These organizations are also driven by donor regulations. The dialogical approach is guided by an interpretative philosophy and these organizations engage in multiple methods of evaluation practices. While he suggests most SDP organizations predominantly use the technical or dialogical approach, Giulianotti (2011b) notes evidence of the critical approach among some smaller community-based organizations that began using SDP following requests by local communities. Others have noted similar approaches to SDP including Hartmann and Kwauk's (2011) conceptualization of a dominant approach based on the beliefs of the power and positive nature of sport. This approach is focused on socializing participants into expected behavior rather than addressing the underlying social issue. The latter requires a more critically-grounded intervention approach focused on reflecting on the wider social context and taking action to address the underlying social issues to transform society. For example, Coakley (2011) asserted there is a need for research on sport programs where

youth learn about factors negatively influencing their lives and how they receive guidance in making informed decisions for collectively confronting and changing those factors.

Scholars have also argued for critical approaches rooted in a more holistic philosophy. According to Giulianotti (2011b), critical models are characterized by recognizing sport as one aspect of more holistic development approaches. Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) also noted the importance of adopting a critically-grounded approach:

in which actors would be empowered to participate critically in the transformation of not only their own experiences in society but also of the world itself through a collective resistance against the hegemonic structures and relations of inequality that get reproduced through sport (p.293).

This supports Spaaij and Jeanes' (2013) argument for adoption of Freire's (1973) pedagogy framework for more critical, reflective SDP approaches focused on addressing underlying causes of social injustice. This approach requires instructors to foster dialogue and poses problems for instructors and students to solve collectively rather than instructors lecturing participants through one-way communication. Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) argued that SDP programs need to shift toward engaging local stakeholders in critically reflecting on underlying structural causes of social issues and taking transformative action.

Inclusive decision-making and mutually beneficial partnerships are needed for developing meaningful SDP program outcomes (Burnett, in press; Kidd, 2011; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). In addition, Kay (2012) suggested the need for bilateral accountability by promoting involvement of local people in decision-making about

monitoring and evaluation efforts in SDP, with a central focus on local learning rather than external accountability. Similarly, Kidd (2011) noted the importance of developing monitoring and evaluation efforts appropriate for local contexts rather than standardized across SDP. Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) also highlighted the importance for sport managers to define development in their own context and then develop specific programs and initiatives to achieve those goals. Schulenkorf's (2012) three-part Sport for Development (S4D) framework consists of (a) sport management practices, (b) the short-term social outcomes of participation, and (c) the leverage of short-term social outcomes into sustained long-term community empowerment. The first stage refers to the planning and preparation of SDP programs. This stage is characterized by involvement of both local communities and external change agents engaged in strategic planning. The second stage refers to the potential social outcomes from the social experiences of program participants. Last, Schulenkorf (2012) posited these short-term outcomes might develop into long-term sustainable impacts.

**SDP impact assessments.** Sport is associated with a plethora of positive and negative outcomes. Thus, the way sport is organized and used as a tool for promoting development is crucial for intended and unintended outcomes of these types of initiatives (Darnell & Black, 2011). In one of the few meta-analyses of SDP programs, Kaufman, Spencer, and Ross (2013) examined the impact of sport-based HIV prevention programs. Overall, the authors noted some promising short-term effects, yet these were typically found in less rigorous studies. Many of these studies were limited in that they only considered knowledge and stigma rather than behavioral change. In a mixed-methods investigation of a Dutch SDP program aimed at youth development and career

preparation, Spaaij (2009) suggested the potential for some positive outcomes under particular circumstances since the impact of the program varied considerably among participants.

In another impact assessment, Spaaij (2012) collected quantitative data for 129 participants in Vencer (A Ganar)—a sport-based vocational training program in Rio de Janeiro. The author also conducted in-depth interviews with former participants ( $n = 53$ ) and program stakeholders ( $n = 36$ ). The results of the study indicated the Vencer program staff employed Freire's (1973) critical pedagogy strategies for promoting civic engagement among the participants and fostered development of social relationships in the broader social context of the program. These findings showcase the potential outcomes of well-structured SDP programs.

Considering the overall lack of empirical evidence on the use of SDP (Coalter, 2010, 2013), however, there is a growing body of literature calling for more sophisticated monitoring and evaluation practices (Levermore, 2008a). Unfortunately, few organizations implementing SDP programs appear to have the capacity to engage in the necessary evaluation practices and processes (Donnelly et al., 2011). One on-going problem in evaluation of SDP programs is that many initiatives are implemented in communities alongside several other 'aid' or 'development' programs. Thus, isolating any potential change from these sport-based programs becomes immensely difficult (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013). SDP organizations are also influenced directly and indirectly by broader economical, political, and social forces (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012).

Coalter (2013) argued for the importance of examining the processes, experiences and relationships of sport programs and how they relate to development outcomes rather

than simply examining the pre/post results of a program as a whole. He noted the issues of solely focusing on quantitative outcomes since there is a "paradoxical danger of well-meaning projects being based on negative stereotypes of all young people from particular areas" (p.7). He also suggested the importance of understanding local contexts. Based on interviews with 37 participants of SDP programs in England, Coalter (2013) noted the importance of developing more structured and targeted programs to provide sufficient opportunities for social relationships to develop among participants as these are conduits for any behavioral change to occur over time.

Burnett (in press) recently conducted one of the most comprehensive impact assessments of SDP programs in her study of a running-based SDP program in South Africa. She conducted a baseline study at 15 schools through 33 interviews, 35 focus groups with a total of 75 teachers and 176 participants, and quantitative surveys completed by 159 teachers and 309 participants. Qualitative data were also collected through on-site observations and document analyses. Discrepancies emerged in the perceived effects of the program among teachers and participants, highlighting some unintended negative outcomes. While the program in focus was situated within local schools, the program did little to address the power imbalance as ownership remained exclusionary and was characterized by a neoliberal focus on performance outcomes. The programs lacked opportunities for local ownership and innovation. There was also little change in power relations within the local contexts such as between participants affiliated with gangs and other learners. Moreover, the author did not find any substantive evidence for transfer of life-skills beyond the program participation. Overall, the findings of this comprehensive assessment of a program in South Africa highlight a multitude of intended

and unintended outcomes in SDP. These findings are further supported by additional recent SDP research (Burnett, 2014; Hasselgård & Straume, 2015; Schulenkorf et al., 2014).

In another analysis of the baseline study of a running-based program in South Africa, Burnett (2014) discovered the complex social realities of SDP participants. Sport was not necessarily a priority as participants and their families were focused on whether they would have food to eat at home. Several participants had reportedly fainted during program participation due to hunger. Burnett (2014) also found some parents reportedly took their children's program apparel or medals and sold them for financial capital. Their findings also indicated a high prevalence of domestic and street violence within the local communities where the SDP program operated. Limited parental support, violence, and absenteeism were prevalent across all 15 program sites studied. Burnett found the program directly impacted not only participants (improved physical and psychological health), but also school administrators (improved community image), and parents (sense of pride in child's participation and accomplishments), which support the potential ripple effect in SDP (Sugden, 2010). Nonetheless, this study also highlighted unintended outcomes such as some parents selling their child's material benefits for financial gains.

Burnett's (2014; in press) contribution to the literature is imperative considering the lack of research on local 'voices' of stakeholders in SDP since international funders often fails to consider local voices and experiences in their evaluation efforts. Similarly, Kay (2012) purports monitoring and evaluation procedures in SDP remain mostly influenced by funding requirements, emphasizing external accountability while limiting local internal program learning needs. In addition, SDP organizations often intend for



individual participants to become change agents within their communities, yet do little, if anything, to address the broader structural inequalities that caused marginalization to begin with (Chawanski, in press; Hayhurst, 2013; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013). Thus, we need to recognize SDP programs may unintentionally further the marginalization of participants by failing to recognize broader social structures underlying the targeted social issues (Hayhurst, 2013). In their argument for the importance of understanding local contexts in SDP, Levermore and Beacom (2012) highlighted how geographical regions are differ considerably at the political, cultural, and economic levels.

**Organizational capacity in SDP.** As noted by Kidd (2008), some non-governmental organizations involved in SDP appear to be more concerned about competition for fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and other resources rather than supporting the implementation of sport and physical activity programs on a large-scale through governments and public school systems. Similarly, Sanders et al. (2014) noted many SDP organizations remain focused on competing not only for funding, but also in direct service delivery for resource dependency. Overall, it is important to recognize noticeable differences in organizational capacity among SDP organizations (Coalter, 2010). Sugden (2010) argued “[t]he nature of the structure, organization, management, and delivery of activities” (p. 269) is strongly associated with outcomes of SDP programs. Similar arguments were echoed in a recent critical assessment of the Football 4 Peace program (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). Others have suggested SDP staff members need to be properly trained in both management and social work considering the nature of SDP programs (Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). Levermore (2008) posited monitoring and evaluation practices need to be appropriate for local contexts and involve inclusive

decision-making. Considering the considerable constraints of many SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008), scholars have also noted the importance of strategic planning and critical approaches in SDP for increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes (Schulenkorf, 2012). Organizational capacity provides a useful framework for assessing the ability of these organizations to achieve their missions. Hall et al. (2003) noted three broad dimensions of organizational capacity of nonprofits: human resources capacity, financial resources capacity, and structural capacity.

*Human resources capacity.* The award-winning Open Fun Football Schools has largely been successful due to the training and experience of its volunteers to maintain successful programs. All coaches are required to participate in volunteer training to learn the underlying framework of the program (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004). Volunteer coaches were primarily motivated by the sport and opportunities to engage in social interactions with others. However, in other contexts, conflicts among internal stakeholders have emerged as a considerable organizational challenge. Sanders et al. (2014) found reports of conflict among many teachers and coaches within a South African SDP program due to values incongruence. This conflict resulted in a high rate of turnover among coaches, which is problematic for long-term sustainability of the programs. Similarly, findings from Manley et al.'s (in press) qualitative inquiry of the experiences of four SDP volunteers indicated noticeable lack of preparation and lack training for establishing realistic expectations about their volunteer roles within SDP programs. This in turn was found to negatively influence their volunteer experiences, as they did not align with their initial expectations.

In terms of stakeholder communication, Giulianotti (2011a) found SDP

practitioners reported a stronger emphasis on the sport activities for recruiting participants in local communities rather than any mentions of development or peace building in his qualitative study of SDP programs across geo-political contexts. Several organizations view sport as a ‘hook’ to attract young people to the program, while the core of the program has little to do with sport (Hartmann, 2003). Based on their qualitative study of the Football 4 Peace (F4P) program in Israel, Schulenkorf and Sugden (2011) argued sport leaders play a crucial role in whether SDP programs result in positive social outcomes and acknowledge the importance of local context—supporting local ownership and involvement in organizational programming and decision-making. The authors defined five main themes from their observational research and focus groups on the volunteers’ experience in the F4P program: (a) local coaches need to receive adequate training prior to start of program; (b) role models are crucial, especially during non-sport activities; (c) the local community needs to become engaged and buy into program; (d) the importance of identifying context-specific structure and programming; and (e) the need for strategic planning of program growth.

***Financial resources capacity.*** Previous research on the ability to sustain and expend financial capital in SDP organizations remains scarce. Lindsey and Grattan (2012) found SDP actors in Zambia reported uncertain financial capacity, especially in light of the global economic crisis. Others have noted many SDP organizations receive funding from international funding agencies such as governments, corporations, and sport governing bodies (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Hayhurst, 2013; Levermore, 2008a). For example, Mathare Youth Soccer Association (MYSA)—a well-recognized SDP program in Kenya—works with nine development agencies, nine

private corporations, nine sport organizations, and 12 government organizations. Similarly, Lindsey and Banda (2010) found SDP programs in Zambia were largely funded by agencies from the Global North (e.g., UK Sport, Commonwealth Games Canada, and the Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sports [NIF]). Similarly, Gasser and Levinsen (2004) reported that UEFA, Nordic governments, and inter-governmental organizations funded the Open Fun Football Schools. Despite these funding streams, Kidd (2008) argued many SDP organizations continue to have limited financial capacity. Beyond financial constraints, Lindsey and Grattan (2012) also found several organizational stakeholders reported lack of adequate structure for implementing SDP programs.

*Structural resources capacity.* The power imbalance among stakeholders (i.e., funding agencies and local stakeholders) often remains unchallenged in SDP (Burnett, in press), and is associated with top-down approaches (Burnett, 2009). Although the extent may vary between contexts, power relations in SDP remain largely unequal with international stakeholders driving much of the agenda (Levermore & Beacom, 2012). For example, funding agencies have been found to drive monitoring and evaluation practices of implementing nonprofits (Cameron, 2013). Although some agencies reportedly have taken measures to address the unequal power relations within SDP, recent scholarship suggests such development equality remains largely absent within the SDP sphere (Cameron, 2013; Straume & Hasselgård, 2014).

As Hayhurst (2009) suggested, local voices need to be given greater attention in order to address the unequal power structures in SDP. Beacom (2007) argued for more critical reflection by sport managers on the underlying reasons for engaging in

international development and suggests greater transparency and open communications are crucial for mutually beneficial donor-recipient partnerships. Therefore, Giulianotti (2011c) called for the importance of more sophisticated partnerships across SDP.

It is also worth noting the importance of recognizing the complexity of many social issues and the diverse range of factors influencing the success of a program in local communities. In some instances, however, SDP practitioners often fail to recognize the broader social context in which their program operates. Burnett (2009) suggested it is difficult to create sustainable change without addressing the underlying structures and causes of social issues. Based on their own experience in studying programs in Brazil, Israel, and Sri Lanka, Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) argued the development of safe spaces (physical, psychological/affective, sociocultural, and political) plays an integral role in the capacity of SDP programs and events to result in positive change. Practically, these programs need to be structured to allow participants to accept differences in opinions and experiences while collaboratively learning through safe risk-taking to stimulate critical thought and creativity.

As noted by Sugden (2008), “complex political and social problems are usually unresponsive to simplistic solutions” (p. 414). Nonetheless, some practitioners have noted the importance of locating themselves within broader development and peace-building efforts (Giulianotti, 2011a). In contrast, Darnell (2007) found volunteers with Right to Play did not always consider broader social, political, and economical contexts. Similarly, Beacom (2007) noted external donor agencies may potentially reinforce social inequalities despite the best of intentions if the funding is based on lack of understanding of local contexts. Giulianotti (2011b), however, suggested grassroots organizations within

the realms of SDP are increasingly engaging with a diverse set of partners and several networks for knowledge sharing such as streetfootballworld have emerged during the last decade.

Some examples of efforts to mobilize resources through partnerships involving a multitude of stakeholders, such as the Kicking AIDS Out network, do exist. Many SDP organizations, however, largely lacks sophisticated partnerships for advancing its organizational capacity (Kidd, 2008). In their qualitative study of collaboration processes among SDP agencies in Zambia, Lindsey (2013) and Lindsey and Grattan (2012) found strong competition for resources and duplication of services inhibited collaboration and pooling of resources. Strong concerns emerged among interviewees regarding whether these organizations had the capacity needed for effective collaboration as coordination of shared resources requires greater collaboration than joint provision of a training or local program. Others have also noted the lack of collaboration among SDP organizations sharing similar goals (Coakley, 2011; Giulianotti, 2011a). Interestingly, one participant reported concerns over the lack of focus on local ownership and a bottom-up approach among some of the most publicized SDP organizations and said she was “scared that the reputation of these big organizations will spill over onto the others that are trying to do honest and sustainable work in this field” (as quoted in Giulianotti, 2011a, p. 67).

Overall, Darnell and Black (2011) along with Levermore (2008b) argued for the importance of SDP to become integrated within broader international development agendas and studies. However, Kay (2012) suggested SDP stakeholders have done little to learn from more established development experts and agencies. As noted by Coalter (2010), this might be the result of “over-inflated and imprecise claims, lack of systematic

monitoring and evaluation, lack of robust evidence of poorly defined (but always ambitious) outcomes – that partially explain the relative isolation [of SDP] from mainstream development efforts” (p.308). Coalter (2010) also suggested the limited acceptability of SDP within broader development efforts may be due to the relatively naïve and uniformed approaches of SDP organizations. This supports Levermore’s (2008a) view that lack of integration of SDP into broader international development efforts is largely because the international development community associates sport with negative characteristics such as social exclusion and corruption. In addition, Levermore (2011) suggested the lack of robust evaluation of these programs might also have inhibited integration in broader international development efforts. Findings of Giulianotti’s (2011a) study of practitioners revealed staff members overwhelmingly reported partnerships with other SDP agencies and integration with broader international development efforts were limited and seldom a priority.

In their qualitative study of two SDP organizations in South Africa, Sanders et al. (2014) found both organizations faced numerous organizational challenges. Both Grassroots Soccer and the Extra-Mural Education Project perceived challenges in working with the local government, yet continued to pursue such partnerships with the beliefs that the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. While partnerships with governments can result in increased funding, participants believed they could also result in increased conflict and bureaucracy. Many of the coaches within both organizations also reported a perceived lack of logistical support from the SDP organization.

Nonetheless, many stakeholders interviewed reported the perceived importance of partnerships in SDP for sharing knowledge and information, which was believed to

prompt innovation and program development within organizations (Lindsey, 2013).

However, limited evidence was reported of such actual practices in these communities indicating a discrepancy between rhetoric and reality. Common issues raised in regards to the partnership structure within the SDP relationships in the Caribbean included funding, reporting, and program delivery support structures (Cameron, 2013).

Partnerships in SDP should include a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and require clear, frequent, and authentic communication between partners while adding value to each organization, trust, and long-term sustainability (Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sanders et al., 2014). Cameron (2013) found practitioners within SDP programs in Trinidad and Tobago identified 16 factors as essential aspects of SDP partnerships: adaptability, affinity (i.e., level of shared values and motivation), benefit, clarity (i.e., understanding of objectives and capabilities), communication, delivery, dependence, equality, evaluation, honesty, learning, reciprocity, respect, time, transparency, and structure.

Lindsey (2013), however, argued for the importance of the local context and suggested there are no best types or structures of partnerships, rather any of them may be appropriate in light of necessary local contexts and structures within SDP. Similarly, Hasselgård and Straume (2015) argued local stakeholders in Zimbabwe adapt and contextualize SDP discourses within their communities. These program adaptations were driven by contextual challenges such as access to transportation and volunteerism (or lack thereof). These local program modifications, however, complicated the use of standardized reporting forms requested by NIF. As a result, in light of the distinct cultural differences between Norway and Zimbabwe, some local stakeholders questioned the



appropriateness of the Norwegian program model.

**Summary of SDP literature.** SDP broadly refers to organizations using sport as a tool for promoting positive social change within low-, middle-, and high-income countries (Coalter, 2010; Kidd, 2008, 2011; Hartmann, 2003; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij, 2009). While some of these programs have existed for several decades (Coalter, 2010, Kay, 2012; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011), the adoption of United Nations Resolution 58/5 declaring 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education ignited a rapid growth in modern SDP programs (Beutler, 2006; Burnett, 2009). These events have resulted in growing SDP policy development despite limited empirical evidence on how sport might contribute to development outcomes (Beacom, 2007; Coalter, 2010, 2013; Hayhurst, 2009; Spaaij, 2009). Previous research suggests stakeholders continue to depict sport as an inherently positive tool for an array of development outcomes without considerations of broader political, social, and economical contexts (Giulianotti, 2011c; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Subsequently, SDP policies and programs are often based on assumptions of the inherent prosocial benefits of sport participation (Coakley, 2011). Sport itself, however, is neither inherently good nor bad (Hartmann, 2003; Hums & Wolff, 2014; Kidd, 2008; Sugden, 2010). While sport can be used as tool for positive outcomes, sport has also historically been associated with discrimination, nationalism, violence, and hegemonic actions of colonization (Donnelly et al., 2011; Gasser & Levinsen, 2004). Empirical evidence of SDP remains scarce considering the challenges in isolating sport from other components of development programs (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013; Donnelly et al., 2011). This has also resulted in lack of acceptance of SDP within broader development approaches (Levermore, 2008b).

Critical scholars argue for more realistic expectations as even well structured programs may not result in positive outcomes for all participants considering the influence of environmental factors (Coalter, 2010; Hartmann, 2003; Spaaij, 2009, 2013). While evidence exists of indigenous SDP initiatives within low- and middle-income countries (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey & Grattan, 2011), SDP remains largely associated with top-down, donor-focused approaches driven by external actors (Donnelly, 2008; Giulianotti, 2011b; Kidd, 2008). Critical scholars have therefore raised concerns about the hegemonic development approaches and have associated current SDP practices with neocolonialism, cultural imperialism, neoliberalism, and postcolonialism (Burnett, 2009, in press; Darnell, 2007; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; Donnelly, 2008; Tiessen, 2011). Moreover, many policies and programs are characterized by a functional neoliberal approach focused on individual development rather than the underlying structures of social injustice (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2010). These approaches are often idealistic attempts to solve complex social issues using rather simplistic sport-based solutions (Coalter, 2010; Sugden, 2010).

SDP involves a broad range of stakeholders including grassroots organizations, international nonprofits, governments, sport federations, educational institutions and the private sector (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b, 2011c; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sugden, 2010). The grassroots organizations and international nonprofits responsible for implementing SDP programs range across a spectrum including sport-based (e.g., Football 4 Peace) and non-sport organizations (e.g., UNICEF) (Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011b; Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Tiessen, 2011). Overall, previous research indicates a considerable number of organizational challenges

and limited organizational capacity (Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008b, 2011; Sanders et al., 2014). Although a theoretical framework on organizational capacity has not guided prior studies on SDP, scholars have indirectly argued for the importance of various dimensions of organizational capacity (e.g., more sophisticated and mutually-beneficial partnerships) for increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes (Schulenkorf, 2012; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012; Schulenkorf & Sugden, 2011; Sugden, 2010). Scholars also note the importance of instructors and volunteers serving as change agents within these programs (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010, 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2014; Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014; Theeboom et al., 2008). Financial sustainability also remains a concern among SDP organizations implementing programs in local communities (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012), as funding relationships are often characterized by conflicts of interest and unequal power relations (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey & Banda, 2011; Straume & Hasselgård, 2014). Previous research also sheds light on practical concerns regarding the structural capacity of SDP organizations for achieving their missions (Coalter, 2010; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sanders et al., 2014).

Studies indicate well-structured SDP programs are critically grounded, locally planned, and integrated in more holistic approaches (Coalter, 2010; Darnell & Black, 2011; Donnelly et al., 2011; Giulianotti, 2011a, 2011b; Kay, 2012; Kidd, 2011; Levermore, 2008b). These types of approaches enable local actors to collectively engage in promoting social and structural change (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013). Practical evidence of these types of programs, however, remains scarce as most organizations continue to be associated with dominant, top-down approaches with little or

no consideration for local agency. Furthermore, no prior studies have explored the complex realities of SDP organizations using a multidimensional framework of organizational capacity.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

Capacity is considered as the ability of a nonprofit organization to harness internal and external resources to work toward achieving a particular goal. Given the complex realities of the nonprofit sector, Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework of nonprofit organizational capacity served as the guiding framework for the current study. Based on a large-scale national study of the nonprofit and voluntary sector in Canada, Hall et al. proposed three main dimensions of capacity: human resources, financial, and structural capacities. The latter consists of three sub-dimensions related to external relationships, internal structures and processes, and planning and organizational development.

In terms of human resources capacity, nonprofit scholarship indicates the integral role of volunteers, yet common challenges related to volunteer recruitment, retention, and engagement. These can be improved by recognizing that volunteers may have different motives for similar tasks and their motives and experiences are likely to change over time. Financial capacity also remains a noticeable challenge for many nonprofits although managers can improve their organization's financial stability by understanding the influence of diversification across and within revenue sources as well as how a particular type of revenue might result in an increase or decrease of another revenue source.

Literature related to structural capacity suggests external partnerships of a nonprofit organization are often driven by a need for additional resources, yet an increase

in the number and involvement of external stakeholders requires additional staff and volunteer engagement that has the potential to increase organizational challenges unless carefully implemented. Sustainable nonprofit partnerships are characterized by a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, two-way communication, mission alignment, and collaborative problem solving. Internally, proper policies, processes, and structures remain limited among nonprofits. The mission statement serves an integral role for guiding the practices of a nonprofit, yet the majority of nonprofits continue to have ambiguous mission statements. Moreover, few nonprofit leaders recognize the importance of evaluating how programs and practices align with their organizational mission. In terms of organizational development, the evaluation capacity of nonprofit agencies is largely limited to complying with external reporting requirement, rather than embracing monitoring and evaluation for increased organizational development. Challenges associated with these types of evaluation practices are also prevalent within the SDP setting. This segment of the nonprofit sector includes a broad range of organizations aiming to promote social change through the use of sport.

SDP organizations utilize sport as a tool in efforts to facilitate positive social change within communities worldwide. The United Nations and other high-level decision-makers have begun to support SDP at the policy level. These initiatives, however, are increasingly critiqued for their idealistic assumptions and lack of consideration for local agency. Critical scholars have raised concerns regarding the hegemony associated with actors from the Global North developing and implementing SDP programs within the Global South. Whether or not these sport-based programs result in positive outcomes largely depends on the structures and processes by which a given

organization is implementing its program(s) as sport is neither inherently positive nor negative. Empirical evidence of SDP programs is difficult to interpret due to the challenges in isolating any observed change from sport compared to non-sport components of these types of programs. Nevertheless, previous scholarship indicates considerable organizational challenges and limited organizational capacity among many SDP organizations. Unequal power relations associated with funding partnerships are prevalent within the SDP setting given the historic Global North-Global South relationship. Although rare in practice, well-structured SDP programs are critically grounded, embrace local agency, and are integrated in more holistic development approaches.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore critical elements of organizational capacity in SDP organizations based in urban settings in the United States, excluding the top three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). This population was chosen given the lack of attention given to them in sport and nonprofit management literature and the lack of exploratory research on organizational capacity in a SDP setting.

#### **Research Questions**

The following five research questions addressed the purpose:

RQ1: What critical elements exist within the human resources capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ2: What critical elements exist within the financial capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ3: What critical elements exist within the structural capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ4: How do the three dimensions of organizational capacity relate to each other in the context of the SDP organizations?

RQ5: How do participating SDP organizations address challenges within the human resources, financial and structural capacities?

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative research design was used for the current study. This approach was chosen over a quantitative design given the existing knowledge gap in prior literature on understanding organizational capacity in an SDP setting. According to Creswell (2007), a qualitative research design is appropriate when one needs to develop a detailed and complex understanding of a given research problem. Qualitative inquiries are also valuable tools for scholars conducting research on relatively unknown phenomena and processes in organizations (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The use of a qualitative approach in the current study also helped the researchers explore the issue of organizational capacity in a naturalistic setting where the participants (SDP staff members) live their experiences. Although some prior studies have explored organizational capacity in other nonprofit settings, these findings are not necessarily generalizable to an SDP setting given that “human actions are significantly influenced by the setting in which they occur” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 57). Therefore, it is important to explore the complex realities of SDP staff members for developing a detailed understanding of organizational capacity within this domain. The use of a qualitative research design is essential for the researcher to explore not only what the critical elements of capacity are within a SDP setting, but *how* managers of these organizations are addressing challenges and operating within these complex realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A qualitative inquiry was deemed well-suited given the focus of the current study on “*how* social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8, italics used in original text).

Before discussing the specific research methodology and data collection methods, it is imperative to further discuss the philosophical foundations behind the chosen



research design. The current study was guided by Crotty's (1998) four elements of qualitative research: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Typically, epistemology refers to the relationship between the researcher and the phenomena being studied and how knowledge is created, while ontology is considered to refer to the nature of reality or the degree to which the researcher considers reality to be predetermined (Creswell, 2007; Hays & Singh, 2011). Crotty (1998), however, argued, ontological and epistemological issues often emerge together.

A constructivist epistemological perspective guided the study whereby the researcher sought to understand how people engaged in SDP construct their meanings (Crotty, 1998). This perspective situates the researcher as a facilitator for understanding and reconstructing the multiple shared meanings of people rather than discovering an objective truth or reality (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In contrast to an objective epistemology, knowledge within social constructivism is considered shaped by contextual factors and thus truth is merely a matter of consensus among a group of constructors (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, this perspective is associated with what Patton (2002) terms ontological relativity, a belief in knowledge as relative to time and place. Thus, there is no absolute reality, instead people may construct multiple realities. According to social constructivism, individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences in the world in which they live (Creswell, 2007). Given the assumption of multiple realities, a social constructivist seeks to explore the complexity of views of people rather than narrowing down their meanings (Creswell).

According to Crotty (1998), a theoretical framework is the researcher's philosophical way of a looking at the world and making sense of it. This framework

subsequently informs the research methodology. Following the constructivist epistemological foundation, the researcher adopted an interpretivist theoretical framework (Crotty, 1998). Interpretive theory promotes understanding rather than explanation of the studied phenomena (Charmaz, 2006). This requires the researcher to recognize multiple and emerging realities as well as assumes social life is an on-going process. Therefore, it is imperative to rely as much as possible on the participants' own views and words used to describe a given situation (Creswell, 2007). Consequently, symbolic interactionism serves as a valuable framework given knowledge is seen to be created from the interactions between individuals and their environments (Hays & Singh, 2011; Patton, 2002).

According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism is characterized by three basic premises. First, people act toward things on the basis of the meanings such things have for them. Second, these meanings are derived from social interaction with others. Last, the meaning of such things are continuously modified through an interpretative process. Since this framework is dependent on the interpretation of the researcher, it is crucial to carefully listen to participants and also recognize the researcher's own backgrounds and experiences influence their interpretations (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). In contrast to postpositivism, social constructivism generate and inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning through the research process (Charmaz, 2006).

A social constructive grounded theory approach was therefore adopted as the methodology for the current study (Charmaz, 2006; Crotty, 1998). Whereas phenomenology is associated with describing an experience of multiple individuals, grounded theory moves beyond description toward generating an abstract theoretical

understanding of a given process or situation (Creswell, 2007). Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally developed grounded theory as a qualitative approach for studying sociology. Over time, however, scholars have disagreed over the level of structure and core aspects underpinning this methodology. Today scholars rely on either the systematic approach of Strauss & Corbin (1998) or Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory. While Strauss & Corbin (1998) emphasized studying a single process or core category, Charmaz (2006) argued for the importance to emphasize multiple realities and the complex realities of the ever-changing world in which people live and work. Moreover, researchers adopting the constructivist grounded theory approach also assume the role of the researcher cannot be fully minimized as the researcher actively makes decisions throughout the research process. Therefore, researcher reflectivity emerges as a critical part in this interpretive approach. A constructivist researcher needs to become self-aware and constantly reflect on the nature of their research questions and whether interview questions are appropriate for specific participants as well as the broader grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

### **Sample**

An initial sample list of 67 organizations was identified from a review of the membership directory of Up2Us—a national coalition for sport-based youth development organizations in the United States. Selected organizations had to meet the following criteria: (1) be a registered 501 (c) 3 nonprofit charitable organization based in the United States (2) the organization had existed for a minimum of two years as of fall 2014; (3) the organization's mission clearly focused on SDP (i.e., promoting social change) rather than sport development; and (4) the organization conducts programming in urban

settings outside of the top three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). For the purpose of this study, an urban setting was considered any city with minimum population of 500,000.

A random number generator was then utilized to identify five tiers of organizations. This enabled the researcher to better manage the data collection process by contacting one tier at a time. A final sample of 17 organizations based in North America focused on carrying out SDP programming in urban settings were identified as the case of interest for the current qualitative inquiry (Table 3.1). According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), a case is a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context such as an event, a role, or an organization. Sample organizations were selected using a stratified random sampling strategy within the initial list of sample organizations (Patton, 2002). Executive directors were selected as the representative from each case organization in an attempt to identify participants who could provide information-rich cases and help in answering the study's research questions about all dimensions of organizational capacity.

First, the researcher contacted each organization within the top tier via email and provided them a letter of information regarding the study at hand and whether the executive director of the prospective organization was interested in voluntarily participating in the proposed study. Second, the researcher sent a follow-up email two weeks after the initial invitation was sent. At this time, the second tier of randomly selected organizations within the sample was also contacted. Third, representatives from each organization were informed that the obtained information would be utilized in future research publications. Last, the researcher began to contact organizations in the third tier of randomly selected organizations during the initial data collection until data saturation

was reached. The researcher contacted a total of 37 organizations, received some type of response from a total of 23 organizations, and completed interviews with directors from 17 of these organizations. At this point, data saturation was reached.

**Table 3.1**  
*Overview of Participants and Sample Organizations*

<u>Interviewee</u>	<u>Geographical Location</u>	<u>Organizational Age</u>	<u>Staff Size</u>	<u>Board Size</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
James	Southeast	4	8	10	\$100,000 - \$249,999
Stephanie	Northwest	6	1	6	N/A
Jessica	Southeast	10	N/A	N/A	< \$100,000
Andrew	Northeast	20	18	15	1,500,000+
Josh	Northwest	3	4	8	\$100,000 - \$249,999
Isabella	Northeast	13	8	16	\$750,000 - \$1,000,000
William	Northeast	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Samuel	Northeast	4	1	6	< \$100,000
Alexander	Southwest	16	9	16	\$500,000 - \$749,999
Anthony	Midwest	7	5	10	\$250,000 - \$499,999
Christian	Southwest	8	1	11	\$100,000 - \$249,999
Matthew	Southwest	4	3	5	< \$100,000
Michelle	Midwest	4	2	8	\$100,000 - \$249,999
Landon	Southwest	9	4	8	\$250,000 - \$499,999
Jennifer	Southeast	25	3	12	\$250,000 - \$499,999
Daniel	Northwest	2	2	8	< \$100,000
Adam	Northeast	4	2	7	\$500,000 - \$749,999

*Note: These figures are estimated based on a review of Form 990 and the respective organization websites.*

### **Data Collection**

In-depth interviews and document analysis were chosen as the two primary data collections for the purpose of this study. Document analysis was used to examine organizational discourses and espoused organizational values in extant texts such as an organizational website or annual report. The use of documents as a source of data in qualitative research dates back as early as scholars of the Chicago School of Sociology during the early 1900s (Prior, 2008). In contrast to quantitative content analysis, which

tends to be focused on numerical relationships, qualitative document analysis is focused on understanding underlying contexts and meanings (Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese, & Schneider, 2008; Altheide & Schneider, 2013). The latter is associated with ethnographic inquiry as a qualitative document analyst is continuously in asking questions about organization and potential implications of content while immersed in extant texts (Altheide et al., 2008). Organizational documents are important to consider as they reflect shared definitions/beliefs regarding a particular topic. The document analysis enabled the researcher to ask specific follow-up questions regarding the nature of each participating SDP organization.

The emphasis in qualitative document analysis lies on developing an understanding of “the processes through which texts depict ‘reality’ than with whether such texts contain true or false statements” (Silverman, 2003, p. 348). Qualitative document analysts are therefore focused on exploring how a given phenomena are represented in written texts (Krippendorff, 2013). Charmaz (2006) suggested analyses of extant texts constitute a valuable supplemental role to data collected through in-depth interviews. At the same time, she argued for the importance of situating extant texts within their context. Therefore, the researcher recorded detailed information during this analysis about the times, actors, and issues involved in the creation of such documents. As noted by Prior (2008), understanding the bigger picture of how words relate to each other and are implemented in extant texts is integral in document analysis rather than narrowly focusing on the mere presence of individual words. The researcher analyzed the organizational website and the most recent annual report (if available) for each participating SDP organization. The use of document analysis along with in-depth

interviews helped increase the trustworthiness of the study through triangulation across data collection methods. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Developing an understanding of how these organizational documents are put into action within a given SDP organization, however, cannot be determined through a content analysis (Prior, 2008). This is one of the reasons why multiple forms of data collection was utilized. Interviews with staff members of the chosen SDP organizations helped the researcher develop a better understanding of the lived experiences and complex realities of organizational capacity in SDP settings. These interviews were conducted via Skype.

Qualitative sample sizes tend to be relatively small compared to quantitative samples given that a concept need emerge only once to be part of the data analysis and in-depth interviews tend to generate rich information compared to a survey instrument (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). Data saturation—the point in the qualitative process when no need data is emerging—was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has become an integral part of qualitative inquiry. Mason (2010) analyzed sample size and saturation in over 500 doctoral dissertations and suggested somewhat limited understanding of these qualitative principles among doctoral students as the majority of studies contained sample sizes of exactly 20, 30, or 40 participants.

Using interview data from a qualitative study on women in two West African countries, Guest, Bunche, and Johnson (2006) demonstrated saturation of their entire codebook after only 12 interviews and saturation of meta-level themes after as few as six interviews. Francis et al. (2010) demonstrated study-wide data saturation was achieved after 17 interviews in a theory-driven interview study guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Bowen (2008), on the other hand, used an initial sample of 26 interviews and

eventually conducted interviews with 34 participants along with document analysis before reaching saturation. Ritchie et al. (2003) suggested no more than 50 interviews as a general rule of thumb for qualitative inquiry involving in-depth interviews. According to Starks and Trinidad (2007) it is impossible to determine the exact sample size for saturating a given theory, although the author suggested grounded theory studies generally include interview samples between 10 – 60 individuals.

Giving a specific number of interviews needed for saturation is inappropriate as data saturation is influenced by many additional factors including the participants' knowledge of the given topic, the length and depth of each interview, the quality of the data, the heterogeneity of the chosen sample, number of selection criteria, budget and available resources, and the complexity of the research question(s) to be addressed (Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006; Mason, 1996; Morse, 2000; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Ritchie et al., 2003). Therefore, Bowen (2008) concluded the most important thing regarding saturation in constructivist inquiry is that any claims regarding data saturation are supported with clear evidence and rationale for how the researcher determined saturation was achieved.

One technique used by scholars engaged in qualitative inquiry in determining the number of interviews to conduct is to identify an initial sample size followed by additional interviews until no additional concepts or themes emerge (Mason, 1996). Francis et al. (2010) further argued both the initial sample size as well as how many additional interviews are to be conducted without new themes emerging should be decided a priori. The authors referred to the latter as the stopping criterion (Francis et al.). Based on the saturation studies mentioned above, an initial analysis sample of 12



interviews was chosen for this study. After 12 interviews, the researcher continued to conduct additional interviews until three consecutive interviews had been conducted without any new themes emerging. In this study, saturation was achieved according to these criteria following interviews with directors from 17 SDP organizations. Data was collected from October 2014 – January 2015.

The researcher recognizes the quality of information obtained from a semi-structured interview is largely dependent on the interviewer (Patton, 2002). Therefore, Gillham's (2000) seven interview probe recommendations were utilized during the data collection process: clarification, appreciation and understanding, justification, relevance, giving an example, extending the narrative, and accuracy. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) for a pilot interview with a participant meeting the criteria of the current study. The pilot participant was chosen from an international nonprofit organization headquartered in North America, yet operating grassroots SDP programs in low- and middle-income countries. The pilot interview helped the researcher refine the research questions before collecting data from participants in the current study. Following each completed interview, the researcher reviewed individual field notes and discussed emerging concepts with a peer scholar, which helped in developing follow-up questions for subsequent interviews and for the data analysis process (Patton, 2002). The researcher created a research grid to provide an overview of how each interview question related to the five primary research questions (Appendix B).

### **Data Analysis**

Coding helps the researcher define what is happening in the data and what it

means (Charmaz, 2006). For the data analysis of the current research project, the researchers adopted a two-person independent coding procedure (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2013). The author recognized the words chosen to describe their interpretation of the data can never be truly objective (Miles et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the researcher utilized an on-going comparative analysis of codes to codes and codes to data as recommended by Charmaz (2006) for strengthening the quality of the research. The researcher along with a peer scholar also independently read all the transcripts to develop a better understanding of data before developing any initial codes. Following the initial read-through, the two coders independently developed their own code lists through first-cycle or initial coding of the interview transcripts.

Next, the coders met face-to-face to compare the initial codes and discuss their respective thought processes behind the chosen codes. The two coders independently developed initial code lists by naming each segment of data. The types of coding techniques used during the first-cycle coding process included holistic and descriptive coding. This coding technique helped the researchers begin the coding process by summarizing core topics discussed in the data. Saldaña (2013) suggested descriptive codes could help researchers build the foundation for second-cycle coding and further analysis of the data. In this sense, the descriptive coding further helped assist the researchers in developing an initial categorization of the data. In Vivo coding—using the participants’ words to name the segment of data—was also be used at times to maintain the participant’s meanings.

Simultaneous coding—applying two or more codes to the same segment of data—was also utilized when the researcher or peer coder considered the data to contain

multiple meanings (Saldaña, 2013). As noted by Saldaña, overuse of simultaneous coding suggests a sense of indecisiveness. However, when used occasionally along with several other initial coding techniques, simultaneous coding can help shed light on complex realities in data. This coding technique was considered beneficial in the context of the current study as the purpose involved analyzing critical strengths and weaknesses of a multidimensional construct—organizational capacity. Second-cycle coding included the use of descriptive coding within the initial holistic codes. Another type of coding used during the second-cycle coding was sub-coding. This technique is useful for developing detail within a more holistic primary code (Saldaña, 2013). The use of sub-codes helped the researchers expand the analysis of a given topic. According to Saldaña (2013), there is no right or wrong direction in whether scholars begin or end with more focused coding.

The researcher also used analytical and methodological memos to further support the data analysis process along with the coding procedure. As noted by Charmaz (2006), the use of memos provides the researcher(s) with a record of the inquiry and the analytic progress. Moreover, reviewing written memos can also help scholars identify potential gaps in the research and data analysis process (Charmaz, 2006). These memos created a foundation for writing the discussion sections since they provided a record of the thought process and reasoning behind the researcher's interpretations. As noted by Miles et al., (2014), analytical memos are useful for developing a record of the researcher(s) reflections and cognitive processes regarding the data. The aforementioned memos also helped the researcher reflect on his own backgrounds and assumptions and how they may have influenced the research. This is crucial as the influence of a researcher's personal experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and values is unavoidable in qualitative research (Miles et

al., 2014).

### **Researcher Reflexivity**

Researcher reflexivity is another imperative aspect of the qualitative research process as researchers need to constantly not only reflect on the nature of interview and research questions, but also become self-aware about how and why they are gathering data (Charmaz, 2006). Hays and Singh (2011) suggested the use of peer debriefings as a valuable strategy for incorporating reflexivity into the research process. For the current study, the researcher utilized two sport management scholars with extensive knowledge of SDP literature for ongoing peer debriefings throughout the research process. This helped the researcher discuss emerging themes and reflect on interpretations of the collected data.

### **Quality of Findings**

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), quality criteria in qualitative research need to be guided by the underlying ontological and epistemological framework of the chosen paradigm. The authors noted three different criteria for assessing the quality or adequacy of constructivist research: (a) the parallel or trustworthiness criteria, (b) the nature of the hermeneutic process itself, and (c) the authenticity criteria. More recently, Lincoln and Guba (2000) further advocated for trustworthiness and authenticity as the primary criteria for judging the quality of constructivist inquiries.

**Trustworthiness.** Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed trustworthiness criteria adopted for constructivist inquiry. These included: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Their criteria were chosen for the current study, as Guba and Lincoln specifically adapted them for use in constructivist inquiries. The four

aspects of trustworthiness or the parallel criteria are discussed in more detail below along with specific strategies to be used in the current study.

**Verification (credibility).** The researcher sought to adopt several strategies for increasing the verification or credibility of the data analysis in the current study. For social constructivists, credibility refers to the “isomorphism between constructed realities of respondents and the reconstructions attributed to them” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Common strategies used by scholars employing a constructivist quality approach include prolonged engagement in phenomena under study, peer debriefing, member checks, and researcher reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln).

Triangulation across multiple sources of data as well as across researchers is another important strategy often used for establishing verification in qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2002). Interpretations and findings in the current study were triangulated across researchers by utilizing peer debriefings throughout the analytical process. Member checks are also often used for increasing the verification of the qualitative data analysis and serve to help assess the congruence between the researcher’s interpretation of the meaning of the data with the participants’ lived experiences (Creswell, 2007; Hays & Singh, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). However, the researcher decided against using member checks due to the time constraints of participants. Moreover, member checks were deemed inappropriate since the main purpose of this study was to examine critical elements of capacity. As a result, interviewees were unlikely to be in a position to properly examine the emergent capacity elements across various geographical locations and organizations.

The researcher also attempted to follow Hays and Singh’s (2011)

recommendations in the analysis of the participants' responses and how their voices were portrayed. First, the actual words spoken and transcribed were assessed for accuracy. Second, the researcher considered the completeness of their responses by reflecting on whether the participant seemed comfortable to speak about a particular topic or experience as well as if the participant was provided adequate time to discuss such experiences. Last, the researcher made note of any noticeable emotions during the interviews, as emotional content is an important aspect to consider in portrayal of the voice of participants in qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2011). In addition, the voices of the participants are explicitly included in the findings and discussion section (Chapter IV) of this paper through direct quotations to provide support for the researcher's interpretations of the data.

**Dependability and confirmability.** The extent to which data are stable over time is referred to as dependability within constructive inquiry while confirmability is focused on assuring researcher interpretations and salient constructs are embedded in the given context and data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Given the inherent methodological changes over time in constructive research, this requires constructivists to adequately describe and document the emerging nature of the constructive inquiry process and decisions made by the inquirer(s) (Guba & Lincoln). This allows the reader to develop their own understanding of the given context and how the researcher(s) interpreted the data. Creswell (2007) suggested there are several strategies for promoting dependability in qualitative research such as verbatim transcription, detailed field notes, qualitative data recording, and inter-coder agreement. All four of these were used in the current study to enhance the quality of the research. First, detailed field notes were written by the

researcher during the interviews to serve as back-up data recording. The field notes taken during the interviews also assisted the researcher in the analysis of the data as they included notes of any ideas or thoughts prompted by the interviewees' responses during the data collection process. Second, each interview was recorded using both a digital audio recorder and recording software on an iPhone. The researcher used two sources for audio recording to ensure proper data recording even in the event of any technical difficulties. The audio file with the best sound quality was then be submitted to a third-party transcription service for transcription. Third, the recorded data were transcribed verbatim to ensure the participants' words and meanings were maintained for the data analysis process. This strategy helped the researcher maintain any pauses or changes in thought by the interviewees during the data collection. Maintaining their verbatim responses helped the researcher in trying to develop an understanding of the participants' meanings. Last, the researcher utilizing a peer scholar as a second coder which allowed for establishment of inter-coder agreement in the data analysis process.

The researcher also utilized several strategies recommended by Miles et al. (2014) for proactively addressing issues of quality and trustworthiness in the qualitative data analysis process. A somewhat basic, yet crucial aspect of the research process was to ensure the research questions were clearly articulated and that the chosen research design for the current study was appropriate for the research questions. Discussing and collaboratively formulating the research questions accomplished this goal. In addition, the interview protocol used for the semi-structured interviews was derived from previous literature and the researcher's own experiences and expertise within the topic related to the research questions. Furthermore, the research questions guided the researcher

throughout data analysis process. The ongoing review of the research questions helped remind the researcher of the purpose of the current project and promoted a more focused data analysis. The purpose of the study and the guiding research questions facilitated the coding process as the data were analyzed in attempts to understand the issues of interest (i.e., trying to answer the research questions).

Another strategy used for increasing the trustworthiness of the current study was the use of multiple researchers during the data analysis process. Specifically, the primary researcher and a peer scholar participated in coding and analyzing the data. As part of this process, the co-researchers independently coded the data. Since the researchers independently analyzed the data, face-to-face meetings were used to discuss the analytical experience and share the thought process behind the individual analyses. These meetings helped develop inter-coder agreement as any discrepancies were discussed until the researchers reach a full agreement. The researcher did not quantify the inter-coder agreement checks by utilizing measures such as Cohen's alpha for computing an inter-rater reliability coefficient as such quantification was deemed inappropriate in the context of the current study. Instead, the co-researchers made ongoing efforts to maintain frequent and open communication regarding their individual analyses as well as their thought processes or reasoning behind the codes and interpretations. This approach helped keep the researchers grounded in the data and promoted the importance of considering alternative perspectives in the analytical process.

Miles et al. (2014) also encourage researchers to ensure data are collected across a full range of settings and participants in relation to the guiding research questions. This is an important strategy of consideration in qualitative research. Unfortunately, the



researcher was unable to capture perceptions regarding organizational capacity from people across the respective organizations. In light of time constraints among both the researcher and participating organizations, the current study was limited to interviews with only the executive directors of the chosen sample SDP organizations. In light of the time and funding limitations of this study, the executive directors were chosen as they were perceived to have the best understanding across different aspects of organizational capacity.

**Transferability.** Within a constructivist perspective, transferability refers to the extent to which the researcher(s) provide comprehensive description in support of emerging concepts and theoretical findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The predominant technique utilized for increasing the transferability within this paradigm is ‘thick’ or rich description of the time, place, and context of relevant information. Therefore, rich description was utilized to provide substantial descriptions of the data situate the data within its given context(s) (Creswell, 2007; Miles et al., 2014). This strategy helps increase the trustworthiness of the current research and allows for the reader to come to their own conclusions regarding the data (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). The detailed description of data is useful for providing the reader with a realistic and truthful account of perceived critical strengths and weaknesses. A detailed description of the inquiry process also supports Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) second quality criteria as it provides the reader with a detailed overview and explanation of chosen methods and the on-going relationship between the researcher and a given research context and subjects.

**Authenticity.** The first criteria was named the *parallel* criteria since it consists of four sub-dimensions closely resembling traditional quantitative quality assessments

(internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity). Such quality criteria, however, are considered insufficient as the sole criteria for evaluating the quality for constructive or interpretive paradigms due to their roots in the positivist/post-positivist paradigm (Morrow, 2005). Even Guba and Lincoln (1989) themselves noted that the parallel criteria are still associated with positivistic assumptions even with their attempted adjustments for a more constructivist paradigm. Moreover, Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest their second criteria (the hermeneutic process itself) are limited by its implicit nature. Therefore, the authors developed the authenticity criteria rooted in the assumptions of constructivism. Whereas the trustworthiness criteria discussed above is largely concerned with methodological elements, the authenticity criteria was developed for judging the quality of the processes and outcomes of interpretative/constructivist inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The authenticity criteria includes assessments of (1) fairness, (2) knowledge sharing within the constructive process (educative and ontological authenticity), and (3) the extent to which participating stakeholders are empowered to take action (catalytic and tactical authenticity).

Fairness within this context is focused on ensuring all stakeholder perspectives and experiences are portrayed in the written report of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In the current study, the researcher aimed to establish this balance and accurate portrayal of the voices of participants through the discussion and findings section. As previously mentioned, the researcher therefore followed Hays and Singh's (2011) recommendations in the analysis of the participants' responses and how their voices are portrayed. Collection of data across a range of settings and participants was another strategy that helped the researcher increase this fairness (Miles et al., 2014). The

researcher also engaged in ongoing dialogue with participants throughout the inquiry process to ensure the interpretations of emerging concepts and themes accurately portrayed their own experiences and perspectives (Charmaz, 2006).

In this regard, educative and ontological authenticity emphasizes the extent of knowledge sharing within the constructive process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This entails the need for assessing whether the inquiry has prompted an increased level in the awareness of a given phenomena among participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Ideally, specific techniques for determining this criterion include testimonies of selected participants related to their appreciation and understanding of dimensions of capacity as well as the extent to which participants understand and recognize different constructions by other organizational stakeholders (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). However, due the time constraints among many participants, the researcher unfortunately did not utilize any specific technique for assessing the educative and ontological authenticity in this study.

Catalytic and tactical authenticity, on the other hand, refers to “the ability of a given inquiry to prompt, first, action on part of research participants, and second, then involvement of the researcher/evaluator in training participants in specific forms of social and political action if participants desire such training” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 181). The primary techniques to be used in the current study for assessing this criterion was to evaluate how the inquiry process appeared to have influenced their understanding of organizational capacity and how this knowledge may influence their organizational practices (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

Despite the ambitious claims regarding the role of sport for promoting social change among many SDP policymakers and practitioners, critical scholars have noted sport is neither inherently positive nor negative (Coalter, 2010; Sugden, 2010). Instead, whether SDP programs result in positive or negative outcomes depends on if the implementing organizations have sufficient structures and processes to fulfill their missions (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). Recent SDP scholarship has begun to note the need to explore organizational aspects to advance the use of sport to promote social change in theory and practice. One particular unexplored aspect is organizational capacity—the ability to fulfill a mission—in SDP. Although similar dimensions of capacity are found across existing theoretical frameworks on organizational capacity, the specific elements within each dimension are context-specific (Christensen & Gazley, 2008; Doherty et al., 2014; Eisinger, 2002; Frederickson & London, 2000; Germann & Wilson, 2004). Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore critical elements of organizational capacity in SDP organizations based in urban settings in the United States, excluding the top three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). The following five research questions were developed to help address the study's purpose:

RQ1: What critical elements exist within the human resources capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ2: What critical elements exist within the financial capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ3: What critical elements exist within the structural capacity of the SDP organizations?

RQ4: How do the three dimensions of organizational capacity relate to each other in the context of the SDP organizations?

RQ5: How do participating SDP organizations address challenges within the human resources, financial and structural capacities?

Seventeen executive directors from organizations meeting the sampling criterion participated in semi-structured interviews for this study. Each interview addressed their (a) organizational approach and program model(s), (b) perceived human resources capacity, (c) perceived financial capacity, (d) perceived structural capacity, and (e) strategies used to operate within their given capacity challenges. The following sections will discuss organizational demographics and emergent themes from the five research questions. Capacity elements emerging from the first three research questions are summarized in Table 4.1.

### **Organizational Demographics**

The age of participating organizations ranged from two to 25 years with an average of approximately eight years. Based on a review of organizational websites and the most recent Form-990 financial documents, the number of paid office staff ranged from 0 – 18 with an average of roughly five staff members. The number of board members ranged from five to 16 with an average of roughly 10 members. This figure did not include advisory board members, as the inquiry was limited to number of voting

**Table 4.1**

*Summary of Emergent Capacity Elements*

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1. Human Resources Capacity

- Board involvement
- Board recruitment
- Board retention
- Paid staff
- Finding roles
- Shared values and engagement
- Staff recruitment
- Staff retention
- Staff training
- Volunteer dependence
- Volunteer recruitment

2. Financial Resources Capacity

- Financial management
- Fundraising
- Financial campaigns
- Grant funding
- Special events
- Other revenue sources
- Expenses

3. Structural Resources Capacity

3.1 Relationship and Network Capacity

- Mutually beneficial relationships
- Memorandums of understanding
- Partnership management
- Partnership formation
- Organizational flexibility

3.2 Infrastructure and Process Capacity

- Internal structure
- Organizational culture
- Access to facilities
- Internal systems and procedures

3.3 Planning and Development Capacity

- Strategic planning
  - Plan implementation
  - Evaluation
-

board members. The geographical location of participating organizations was fairly spread out across the Northeast ( $n = 5$ ), Southwest ( $n = 4$ ), Northwest ( $n = 3$ ), Southeast ( $n = 3$ ), and the Midwest ( $n = 2$ ) parts of the United States. The annual budget was estimated based on the most recent Form-990 financial statements or annual reports (if available). The most recent annual budget ranged from less than \$100,000 to more than \$1,500,000. The majority of participating organizations had an annual budget of less than \$500,000.

**RQ1: What critical elements exist within the human resources capacity of the SDP organizations?**

The ability of an organization to mobilize and deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and volunteers) is an integral part of the capacity of a nonprofit organization (Hall et al., 2003), and is perceived as critical for the remaining aspects of organizational capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). In this study, 11 elements emerged that reportedly influenced organizational personnel's ability to achieve their goal(s): board involvement, board recruitment, board retention, paid staff, finding roles, shared values and engagement, staff recruitment, staff retention, staff training, volunteer dependence, and volunteer recruitment (Table 4.2).

**Board involvement.** Fifteen of the executive directors interviewed in this study discussed the perceived importance of board involvement in regards to their human resources capacity. Although board members are often not directly involved in day-to-day programming activities of a nonprofit organization, the people recruited for these positions were considered to hold crucial positions for serving as ambassadors and advocates for the nonprofit.

**Table 4.2***Summary of Human Resources Capacity Findings*

<u>Capacity Element</u>	<u>Sample Quote</u>
Board involvement	I have probably an average three board members a day that are in programming with the kids. They're picking kids up. They're playing squash. They're in with academics. They're super connected with the day to day...yeah I've never seen that before. (Michelle)
Board recruitment	We had a really tough time in the beginning having people who volunteered and wanted to be on our board just because they wanted to be with [our local celebrity founder]. They wanted to be around her and they wanted to just be a part of what she was a part of, but they didn't really have the passion for what we were doing. (Jessica)
Board retention	You have to work to get them, to keep them, to engage them, and to help them grow and develop and feel like they're contributing and learning and achieving, and it's very hard, the bigger you get. (Andrew)
Paid staff	I have to say it's our staff, it's our full time paid stuff. They're the heart of the program. They're the ones who dedicate enormous talent, energy, commitment to ensuring that the programs ... That they're running well, that they're also done in a very intentional way. (Isabella)
Finding roles	The way I approach it is, instead of trying to fit people into a box, I try to learn who the person is that's interested in volunteering; what their gifts are, what they're interested in, what they think they can help us with. Then, help them create a job description for themselves. (Josh)
Shared values and engagement	We depend on volunteers to carry [our fundraising] events out effectively because we're not a large nonprofit organization in terms of our budget, so we depend on people who really resonate with the mission. (James)
Staff recruitment	[Great leaders] surround themselves with people who are better than they are. That's my goal. I don't want people around me who will agree with me all the time. (Samuel)
Staff retention	I think one big challenge in a small organization for human resources is trying to retain valuable staff, because it's difficult to create opportunities for growth within a smaller organization. (Alexander)
Staff training	The key thing I think that we could employ is better training. I mean, that's the challenging part because we only have limited resources and we only do so much with what we have. (Jennifer)
Volunteer dependence	There is no way I can do this by myself. We have about close to 60 kids in the program, and a lot of these kids need individual attention. By having a lot of volunteers that can work with kids individually, it makes it easier for us to do what we need to do to be more effective. (William)
Volunteer recruitment	I think it's a challenge with volunteer management in terms of the investment that we need to put in to recruit qualified volunteers, because you just get a whole range of people that want to help out, it's a challenge, but for us right now, it's worth it. (Alexander)



For example, many participants echoed what Isabella described when discussing her perceptions of the involvement of her board:

I think we have a great board. They've been very engaged, they've been extremely generous financially. They've been somewhat generous with their time, certainly with board related matters, not so much with programs. That's not really what I ask of them. They are really great advocates for the organization and we're currently working hard to increase support from individual donors, major gifts, and the board has been really great about participating in supporting that effort.

The perceived passion and involvement of board members is important as prior research has reported a positive association between a board member's emotional attachment to an organization and their perceived performance (Hoye, 2007). Therefore, SDP practitioners ought to develop a better understanding of their board members' reasons for involvement in order to identify ways to strengthen their affective commitment to the organization. The importance of board involvement was further supported by discussions of the value of board members facilitating relationships with high-profile decision-makers within the local corporate sector. Many directors interviewed in this study highlighted the imperative nature of these contributions for improved financial support and organizational governance. This extends nonprofit research on the imperative role of board members for providing financial support for organizations (O'Regan & Oster, 2005). As Alexander suggested:

They're not doing the work, but they are contributing in the fact that they're champions for the organization. Their role is really to be involved in the overall governance of the organization and to be champions within their networks to try

to help us identify donors, additional development opportunities, partners that we should be working with. A lot of them actually come from big corporations here in [our city] that also give us grant funding. It's their connections are really important and basically be an advocate or a champion for [our organization].

SDP leaders should attempt to carve out time for one-on-one meetings with their board members for identifying their areas of interests since increased dedication among board members is positively associated with amount of financial resources obtained (Esteve et al., 2011). The tenure of board members also varied considerably among the organizations in this study. This might not be surprising given the differences in organizational age. Also, some organizations had no or few paid staff members compared to larger nonprofits with decades of experience and multi-million dollar budgets. However, as Anthony shared, some directors and their board members did not have much, if any, experience in a nonprofit board-executive director relationship:

When I started here in 2011, I didn't have any experience like that. A lot of the people on the board, this is their first time being on the board, the first board they've been on. I don't have a whole lot to compare it to and I don't think anyone else does either. They participate financially and with time and their expertise. I feel pretty lucky that we have an engaged board. There are certainly probably other boards out there that are not that engaged or that don't participate or that they just make financial contributions. Ours do more than that.

Similar to Anthony's experience, several other directors also expressed an appreciation for the involvement of their board members in not only supporting the governance of the organization, but also taking the time to volunteer with their various

programs, getting involved in grassroots activities, and spending time with youth participants. For example, Michelle described how she perceived her board as:

super passionate, super driven. An example is I have probably an average three board members a day that are in programming with the kids. They're picking kids up. They're playing squash. They're in with academics. They're super connected with the day to day...yeah I've never seen that before.

Jessica also noted how her small-sized board of directors of four members were actively involved in not only providing governance oversight, but also in operating the organization given the voluntary nature of their organization. Even Jessica herself served as the executive director on a volunteer-basis. Despite the noticeably small number of board members and lack of paid staff, she expressed a strong belief in the diverse areas of expertise and skills provided by her current board members for the basic needs of operating a voluntary sport-based youth development organization:

It's a small board. We're actually trying to transition and bring on some new board members, but we have the essentials. We have a CPA, we have an attorney. We have someone who has a really strong background in philanthropy, corporate giving, and then we have someone who is connected to sports. That's what rounds out our board, 4 people right now. We have a lot of the major bases covered that we need to operate.

The perceived strong knowledge, skills, and expertise among board members was also echoed by other directors as well as an important element for overall goal achievement. This supports Doherty et al.'s (2014) findings of the central role of volunteer knowledge and skills among membership-based sport clubs in Canada. Many participants in this

study also expressed the importance of board involvement beyond financial support.

For example, in speaking about his own experience in working with a board of directors for several years on the West Coast, Landon spoke about how they “use a network of all the big individuals...not only for fundraising, but for everything else, mentoring, tutoring, job placement, college interviews. We use all the big squash rich networks for our benefit.” In other words, these types of organizations were actively working on leveraging their board and board members’ relationships for a lot more than simply financial capital, further supporting the importance of board involvement as an element within the human resources capacity dimensions of these SDP organizations. Similar to Hoye’s (2007) finding that three-quarters of board members among Australian sport clubs were involved in more ways beyond their board representation duties, findings in this study highlighted the perceived active involvement of many SDP board members beyond traditional board responsibilities. However, this is in contrast to prior nonprofit literature on the role of board members in U.S. nonprofits for providing governance oversight and financial capital (O’Regan & Oster, 2005). This could potentially be relatively more important in a domestic SDP context given small size of many of these nonprofit entities or due to a potential commitment to the chosen sport of a SDP entity, yet future research is warranted before making any specific assumptions or recommendations.

Previous research on the capacity of community-based development organizations has also highlighted a noticeable underrepresentation of minorities among board members (Fredericksen & London, 2000). Findings from this study highlight similar issues in an SDP context. This was especially true for SDP entities associated with sports

such as squash and lacrosse. Michelle, one of the few women directors of urban squash-based educational programs, highlighted the potential concerns of lack of minorities within the current squash community. As she noted:

Our board is all Caucasian, mostly all men. When I came on like okay. We for certainly need more women. We need people of color. We need young people. We need people that aren't just wealthy squash players, [I am] challenging them and they've all been like, "Wow you're right, good, I never thought of that." They're really open and they trust me which is great.

Despite the underrepresentation of minorities on some of the boards, directors reportedly perceived openness for change among most board members. Stephanie expressed similar satisfaction when discussing her satisfaction with board involvement from her experience in leading a skateboard-based organization, "our board is awesome. Everyone like I said either skates or has some intimate connection with skateboarding through their kids or whatever. They're super jazzed. I know all of them personally. I'm just really impressed." In discussing the extent of board involvement within her organization, she went on to share several examples of how board members were engaged in all aspects of running the organization and its programs:

We're heavily dependent on [our Treasurer] right now to do all of our payroll and all our accounting and legal documents. Our Board Chair is doing a really great job of coming out to the programs and helping and volunteering. Another board member just finished our media kit. Another board member is working on doing our retreat for us. Another board member is helping me with all of our HR documents because she has a background in Human Resources and she's helping

me creating an onboard packet and all of our training and basically a checklist of everything a staff member needs to have to be able to truly be onboard.

I am floored, our board's killing it.

At the same time, a few participants expressed the need for board development in order to improve the engagement of board members in organizational matters.

Participants discussed the need for a board to be more supportive of the staff and organizational activities. Daniel, for example, described that while most of his board members were very willing to help and get involved, “there’s definitely a few people who don't really contribute very much.” SDP leaders experiencing lack of board involvement should ensure they (a) emphasize shared board leadership, (b), cultivate individual relationships with board members to increase level of trust between the board and the director, and (c) provide the board with greater amounts of information about day-to-day activities (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003).

The lack of board involvement reported in this study was largely attributed to the fact that the board members were all high-level professionals within the corporate sector and subsequently had limited time to dedicate to the organization. For example, Alexander described how “the challenge really is, how do you focus the time that they do have for [our organization] into the activities that are going to have the biggest return on investment?” Similarly, William suggested how he perceived that the board could be more involved in his organization’s financial development efforts. At the same time, a few participants discussed how they perceived a strong interest among their board members to get involved and help, yet a lack of understanding of how specifically to assist the staff and the organization. For example, Samuel noted:

We have really good people on our board and there's really good people surrounding us. They want to help. They don't know how to help. So creating that definable definition, that this is how you can help. This is what I need you to do. It takes time. It's like you're investing, whether it's a good stock to invest in, whether it's a good person to invest in because we're investing our time and our energy and our passion.

Others noted board members actively suggested new ideas and approaches for the executive director and the staff to implement for programmatic or managerial changes. Although these participants did not necessarily express a lack of board involvement, they did express their own concerns for lack of understanding by board members of the organizational resources needed for implementing such ideas. Several executive directors discussed how board members may put forth ideas for new innovative ways to either raise funds or bring people together, yet they were perceived to lack an understanding of their existing organizational capacity and the demand such new initiatives would put on the executive director and their staff. For example, several participants shared the views expressed by Christian:

[The board] believe in what I do, they all believe in the organization...what they're not great at is understanding the capacity at which we operate. We sort of say, hey, we should do this event because it will be fun and maybe raise some money. Well, I'm looking at it from, okay, how much more is this going to take and put on my plate? Sometimes [our] board members struggle with that because they want to be invested, but they want it to be their idea and their say versus taking something that we're already doing and putting it on their plates.

This raises questions regarding the board-executive director relationship. In some organizations, the relationships were reported as strong and supportive. For example, Landon stated:

I'm happy with that and I have fertile ground to put ideas forward, so I'm very satisfied with that. For example, I came to my board last week with the idea of going international and exploring some ideas and board said, "Love the idea, go explore." I mean everything that I did bring on them they allowed me to continue to think about.

A few other directors, however, shared a mix of positive and negative experiences in terms of their relationship with the board. For example, while Jennifer expressed a positive trajectory in terms of the relationship with the board, she also acknowledged that at times she perceived a lack of trust and subsequent micromanagement by the board members:

You know, they're more active than they've been in the past. You know, their commitment both in their financial gifts and their involvement has been steadily improving over the years. I think the only challenge ... the only challenge I feel like we have sometimes is ... yeah, just a tad bit on the micromanagement side, and maybe not trusting us entirely. But then, at the same time they may feel like well, why aren't they doing this, why aren't they doing that and it just means that we have to have better communication.

Similarly, Josh, who founded his organization's board at one point in time, also discussed how the involvement of board members took some time to develop. Some of the initial board members may have had a desire to help the nonprofit, yet did not realize



it required actual work to provide guidance and support for the executive director and the organization. As noted by Josh, “those people have stepped off the board, and now we have some amazing people that are stepping onto the board that do have different life skills and passions, and want to support us.” Others also reported a lack of interaction between board members and paid staff members within the nonprofit organization. For example, when asked about the board-staff relationship, Isabella suggested, “there isn't a lot of interaction between the two bodies.” This is concerning as the amount of accessible information and the level of trust between board-staff are crucial components for effective board performance (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a).

Matthew, on the other hand, expressed an ever more challenging experience in terms of board involvement and his relationship with the organization's board of directors. While some of the previous examples noted how it has taken several executive directors time to strengthen their board-staff relationship, Matthew shared a different experience. As he noted, the board of directors was initially important to him since it largely consisted of his own friends and colleagues he had developed strong relationships with over time. Initially, the group worked well together and was involved in the organization's first fundraising event, yet the experience of trying to further increase their involvement led to a critical turning point. Matthew stated:

the board became a huge challenge for me instead of an asset. It became a very cancerous dynamic.... Ever since then, I haven't really engaged with the board in a really significant meaning way. The board takes a lot of attention by me to try to engage them and to get them motivated.. I think at this point of my cycle, I put in effort, it went wrong, I backed off. Now, I'm cultivating our relationships with

[other] people. I think I'm going to be bringing them into my board in the future, probably next year.

As noted in the selected sample quotes above, board involvement emerged as an integral element of the human resources capacity dimensions in the context of domestic SDP organizations within the sample of this study. The perceived importance of board involvement in regards to the human resources capacity of SDP nonprofits does not appear in prior research on capacity of community sport clubs (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013, 2014). Although a board of directors serves important roles for any type of nonprofit, these findings suggest board involvement may be of particular importance for goal achievement in an SDP context. This could be due to the reported poor structures and lack of resources among many SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008; Sanders et al., 2014). Also, in contrast to community sport clubs, SDP entities are not membership-based and may therefore rely more on their board of directors. At the same time, it is important to note that organizations relying primary on core volunteers have reported greater organizational problems than those relying on a broader number of secondary volunteers—individuals volunteering a few hours at a time (Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Therefore, SDP leaders need to diligently balance their dependence on board members and general volunteers to minimize potential organizational problems. Developing board involvement requires SDP leaders to identify and recruit highly qualified and dedicated individuals to serve on their boards of directors. Thus, another critical element of human resources capacity that emerged in this study was board recruitment.

**Board recruitment.** Ten participants discussed aspects of board recruitment as an important element of their human resources capacity. These directors generally discussed the importance for identifying appropriate roles and mutually beneficial relationships between a potential board member and the organization. In Alexander's experience, this also includes an organizational responsibility in both identifying and educating potential board members of their specific role(s) within the board of directors:

we try to position them and get them to understand their role, their role is really to be involved in the overall governance of the organization and to be champions within their networks to try to help us identify donors, additional development opportunities, partners that we should be working with.

Yet, most participants discussing board recruitment noted the many challenges in cultivating relationships with highly qualified individuals to serve on a board of directors, especially for a small grassroots organization. For example, even Andrew, the director of one of the larger organizations of this study, explicitly stated the challenges in recruiting highly qualified board members:

It's hard. It's relationship building, and you're always trying to cultivate [potential] board members. We [now] do a very good job. We've gotten ourselves to the next level of organizational development. It does not mean it's easy, but we have good processes. I've got some unbelievably great people on the board who are super-smart and capable, and that just breeds more of that.

Samuel further noted how he perceived that many individuals in today's society prefer to write a check rather than provide the additional time needed for serving as a board member, "there's a lot of people I've met who are a lot more interested in writing a

check than investing their time or their energy.” Likewise, any potential connections between an organization and well-known local or national celebrities may also complicate the board recruitment process. As Jessica shared, her organization learned the hard way that many people initially were more interested in being connected with a celebrity rather than serving the mission of the SDP organization:

We had a really tough time in the beginning having people who volunteered and wanted to be on our board just because they wanted to be with [our local celebrity founder]. They wanted to be around her and they wanted to just be a part of what she was a part of, but they didn’t really have the passion for what we were doing. We are a working board. It’s a lot of work to do what we do and I think when a lot of people found that out, they were like, “Oh, I don’t want to do this much work.” We’ve had to weed out those types of people who come around just because of the name that’s attached to it and not necessarily to do the work. When I say dedicated, that’s what I’m really speaking to is people who really want to be here, who genuinely care about girls.

This highlights the importance for SDP leaders critically examining the underlying motives of prospective board members. Recruitment efforts should also examine the emotional and social intelligence competencies as prior literature on nonprofit sport organizations suggests cognitive competencies alone (e.g., financial, strategic, technical skills) are insufficient for successful board performance (Balduck et al., 2010). Several directors expressed the challenges in recruiting highly qualified board members. This extends the findings of Wicker and Breuer (2011) who found this to be a critical challenge among Germany community sport club.

Those representing the smallest organizations in this study described how they were in various stages of transitioning from their initial board of personal acquaintances to more sophisticated board members. For example, Christian expressed how his organization was in a position to recruit individuals with better expertise who would provide the necessary guidance and ownership of the organization:

This last year I brought on three board members with really strong marketing backgrounds. I brought on an attorney that professionally does mergers, and his help comes in the way of what we do with our partnerships, MOUs, contracts, vendor agreements and things like that. We have become more focused on building a board that can own an organization versus a board that just likes lacrosse and likes kids.

Those participants who discussed board and volunteer recruitment generally noted the perceived value of a given sport for connecting with individuals and creating the urge to get involved with an organization. For example, Jennifer suggested the primary sport of her organization's youth development program in the Northeastern part of the United States was an imperative factor in board and volunteer recruitment, stating, "I think that soccer connection is really important, and that's what actually attracts a lot of people." Similarly, several other executive directors expressed a perceived unique appeal given their combination of sport and education-based programs for addressing local community issues. This supports findings from prior research on volunteer motives in SDP, highlighting 'love for sport' as an important motive (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013). These studies, however, were focused on program volunteers rather than board members. Findings from this current study indicate that these findings may

also extend to core volunteers (i.e., board members) in the SDP setting.

On a different note, James perceived his SDP organization in the Southeastern part of the United States was actually at a disadvantage in terms of recruiting highly skilled board members given the plethora of other health-related nonprofits in the same geographical location. He did not perceive his organization being recognized as dealing with health-related issues despite the nature of SDP programs:

our board has probably been the most difficult human resource to build because at least here in [the Southeast] there's a lot of traditional organizations, Joe DiMaggio Hospital, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer, all organizations that are health-related. Those organizations pull at people's hearts because it's a lot of times tied to them. [Our organization] doesn't deal with a health issue.

Given the growing body of research on the unique nature of 'love of sport' among sport volunteers in SDP settings (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013), SDP leaders struggling with board recruitment ought to re-evaluate the underlying motives of why prospective professionals may or may not want to serve as board members. The health-related nonprofits mentioned by James may serve as a strong personal motive, yet as many directors noted, many individuals relate with SDP nonprofits based on their own prior sport experiences.

One potential strategy for improving board recruitment was identified by Jessica. She noted the need for additional help in order to successfully manage her organization's recent growth and upcoming program expansion. In order to address the challenges of only having four members on the current Board of Directors, Jessica discussed how she had recently participated in a citywide board member recruitment fair organized by the

local Junior League:

We were there, along with maybe 10 or 15 other nonprofits. It was a really interesting experience...It was really neat because I'd say 90% of the people there had never heard of [our organization]. We had a chance to really sell our program and talk about the things that we're doing. We got about, I'd say 25-30 people who signed up that wanted to participate in the meet and greet... who were very interested and wanted more information and wanted to consider board appointment...It was awesome.

These types of board member recruitment fairs are typically organized by various community organizations in U.S. urban settings and could provide valuable opportunities for SDP leaders to recruit board members. These recruitment events are not only important as they can help SDP leaders in light of reported time constraints, but also provide an opportunity to interact with a broad range of prospective board members. This is important since volunteer recruitment is associated with the perceived match between an organization and an individual's personal motives (Clary et al., 1998). Hence, SDP leaders ought to appeal to different target groups of volunteers since prior studies have found people to volunteer in SDP for various motives (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013; Welty Peachey et al., 2014).

**Board retention.** Four executive directors interviewed for this study also discussed board retention as an important element of their human resource capacity. Jennifer, for example, perceived her organization had done fairly well in terms of board retention over the years, yet there was room for additional improvement and therefore she was not fully satisfied. However, others expressed challenges in retaining board members

within their organizations. Given the voluntary or small nature of many SDP organizations, Stephanie shared an interesting experience, as she perceived that her organization's investment in their organizational staff had noticeably increased their board retention:

our [board members] can now focus on fundraising and all these things instead of the day to day operations...our board members are not burdened with all those day to day things so they're more excited to be here. I've seen our retention rate now and our recruitment rate go way up. People are now seeing, since we have staff, we have more energy behind that so... it's more attractive to people to be on our board.

Interestingly, Andrew, representing one of the larger organizations in this study, suggested his experience was that board recruitment and retention became more challenging as his organization grew, "you have to work to get them, to keep them, to engage them, and to help them grow and develop and feel like they're contributing and learning and achieving, and it's very hard, the bigger you get." Despite these reported challenges, most directors interviewed in this study did not identify board retention as a noticeable challenge. This is in contrast to Wicker and Breuer's (2011) study on German sport clubs, which indicated that retention of primary volunteers (including board members) was the most pressing challenge for the nonprofit clubs. Additional research is needed to further explore the element of board retention within the SDP context. Developing a better understanding of factors associated with board recruitment and retention ought to be a priority given the perceived importance of board involvement as a critical element within the dimension of human resources capacity.



**Paid staff.** The importance of paid staff and need for additional paid staff further emerged as an important element within the dimension of human resources capacity in this study. A total of 10 executive directors interviewed discussed this aspect. Although most organizations were characterized by a need for additional paid staff, the perceived importance of the core (paid) staff within each nonprofit still emerged as an critical element of their human resources capacity. This finding extends Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) results on the perceived importance of paid staff for increased organizational capacity in SDP. In contrast to their study, however, the sample in this study consisted of SDP nonprofits operating in a high-income country rather than a low-income country. This is important to note as capacity elements may vary between SDP contexts given the diverse geographic locations of SDP initiatives. The following quote from Isabella portrays the views expressed by many of the directors when asked about the most important aspects of their human resources capacity:

I have to say it's our staff, it's our full time paid stuff. They're the heart of the program. They're the ones who dedicate enormous talent, energy, commitment to ensuring that the programs ... That they're running well, that they're also done in a very intentional way.

Similarly, Josh echoed what Isabella and many others expressed regarding the perceived value and importance of his paid staff when asked the same question:

I definitely would say my staff is one of our strongest for sure ... Willing to invest not only their job time, but their life into what we do. I think it makes a huge impact. There's [only] four of us, which is pretty incredible, considering we're serving over 600 kids a year.

Michelle further shared how the lack of sufficient paid staff required her to focus some of her time on operating programming rather than representing the organization externally and focusing on the future direction of the organization, “[currently,] it's myself and then two other full time people. Really I need to be focused on more external big picture stuff. We need more people in the transient doing the direct service. Right now I've been doing both.” Several other executive directors shared similar experiences and spoke about having to serve multiple roles and working hard to do more with less. The focus on day-to-day operations rather than the bigger picture of an organization has previously been observed in a case study of a Canadian sport club (Misener & Doherty, 2009). However, their finding was based on the observation by one of the researchers during club board meetings. In contrast, findings in this study emerged from directors explicitly stating that they not only are focused on day-to-day activities, but attributed this to lack of sufficient numbers of paid staff members. This is an important contribution of this study, as paid staff has not emerged as a capacity element in prior studies on capacity in a nonprofit sport context (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). Wicker and Breuer (2011) mentioned the existence of paid staff among some of their sport clubs, yet their study was a quantitative assessment and did not examine the perceived value or challenge in terms of paid staff.

Having paid staff members and the executive director work harder and wear many different hats might work initially for some organizations, yet could also result in additional issues and subsequent staff turnover. SDP leaders need to be cognizant of the potential ramifications of overworking their existing staff members. For example, as Anthony shared from his experience:

I think that it's easy to get bogged down, this idea of like you got to always cut the budget...I think it was easy for me to get trapped in this idea of we're all going to work harder. We're all going to work more hours. We're all going to wear more hats. That can be exhausting. I think you run in the danger of burn out if we don't bring on more staff.

Unfortunately, most directors did not express a similar understanding of the potential danger of overworking their paid staff members. Instead, the majority spoke about the need for additional full-time paid staff, yet the lack of budgetary resources for doing so. Several organizations in this study relied on part-time paid staff members through funding from the Up2Us and AmeriCorps programs. However, as Christian suggested, some perceived that “no number of part-time staff will ever make up for a full-time employee.” This is interesting as prior findings from Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) case study indicated how core staff members in their voluntary SDP organization expressed the perceived importance of having a part-time paid staff member rather than just volunteers.

In terms of hiring additional paid staff members, participants representing smaller grassroots SDP initiatives also discussed the challenges of simply getting into a position whereby they were able to hire and retain paid staff members. As a result, several directors from these smaller SDP nonprofits shared how they had to make personal sacrifices including giving up their own compensation for extended periods of time in order to make ends meet for their other paid staff member(s). Matthew, for example, shared his own experience in this matter on West Coast:

Getting funding has been really difficult...we didn't have a big enough budget

that people believe that we can manage grants. Things like that have been really difficult but what it's taken is really beneath the bedrocks for the organization and going without salary and really going through financial difficulties for me to keep the mission alive long enough where people could start to believe in us and invest in us. It's taken that sacrifice from my end. Without someone doing that, it's really difficult to grow unless you have some angel investor that comes out of nowhere.

Similarly, William perceived the lack of paid staff as the biggest weakness and challenge of his organization located along the East Coast. In fact, he himself was still serving as the executive director without receiving a paycheck. Yet, William with support from some core volunteers, had worked hard to build up the organization's resources to be in a position where they can finally move toward relying on paid staff. William perceived that to be an important element to strengthen their grassroots programs, ultimately resulting in better program outcomes for participating youth:

Everybody will have a different role that will be supported by volunteers and board members, but we'll have people who are paid and consistent, and will be responsible for actually making sure things are done a certain way. I'm excited about that. We just need to put sustainable, long-term, paid staff in front of these kids and in the program so we can actually develop stronger, deeper relationships, and provide better outcomes for our kids.

Although directors reported similar perceived benefits of having more paid staff members, none of the participants mentioned the paid staff-volunteer relationship. Based on these interviews, it appears most of the organizations are committed to hire their first

paid staff members or additional paid staff members as soon as they have sufficient financial resources for doing so. While some of the reasons for doing so as outlined above are reasonable, it is also important that SDP leaders develop a better understanding of the potential conflicts among paid staff and volunteers in a nonprofit setting (See Garner & Garner, 2011; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Netting et al., 2004; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). These disagreements in nonprofit settings range from concerns over organizational identity, organizational values, goals and objectives to disagreements about what constitutes meaningful roles and responsibilities for volunteers. In order to mitigate some of this intra-organizational conflict, SDP leaders should include volunteers in organizational decision-making processes (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

**Finding roles.** The ability and openness to finding roles and tailoring responsibilities to the needs and skill sets of individual volunteers or staff members also emerged as an important element within human resource capacity in this study. A total of five executive directors spoke about developing new roles for interested individuals rather than placing them in standardized positions within the organization where they may not be as motivated or skilled to succeed. For example, Josh shared his own experience by stating:

The way I approach it is, instead of trying to fit people into a box, I try to learn who the person is that's interested in volunteering; what their gifts are, what they're interested in, what they think they can help us with. Then, help them create a job description for themselves. Because if I just say, "Look, I have to have this role. I need you to fit in this role," if it doesn't match their skill-set and their giftings, then I might be setting somebody up for failure.

Christian discussed how his own experience taught him the value of using a similar approach to manage the executive director-board member relationship in his lacrosse-based SDP organization, “What I have found very valuable is just sitting down with each board member and saying, ‘what are you good at, what do you want to do and what don't you want to do?’” Utilizing this type of approach has allowed Christian and other directors to develop a broad range of different board members role and responsibilities. For example, by emphasizing this type of strength-based approach, SDP leaders had created unique board structures ranging from individuals with deep pockets to others who were unable to provide financial support, yet had other unique skills including expertise in strategic planning, branding, or promotions. As stated by Christian, leaders guided by this approach are committed to “make sure everyone has their own specific to-do list based on their strengths rather than [standard board] committees and just a blanket approach.” Others noted how their volunteer staff members, especially college students, were full of ideas and wanted to get more engaged in the program. For example, William acknowledged his appreciation for their drive to seek greater engagement, yet also brought attention to how this ultimately fell on himself and his paid staff to figure out what types of opportunities were available.

The perceived importance of this strength-based approach to finding roles for individuals interested in helping an SDP organization has not been reported in prior literature on organizational capacity in SDP settings (Svensson & Hambrick, in press) or community sport club settings (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). This finding warrants future research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the human resource management practices of SDP organizations. The

reported importance of having the flexibility and willingness to find roles based on the strengths of prospective board members or volunteers could be of relatively more importance in this context given the reported challenges and resource constraints of grassroots SDP entities (See Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008b, 2011; Sanders et al., 2014).

**Shared values and engagement.** A total of 12 executive directors also expressed shared values among people involved with the organization as an important element of their human resource capacity for goal achievement. These individuals emphasized their perceived dependence on individuals that resonate with their respective mission statements. For example, James stated “We depend on volunteers to carry [our fundraising] events out effectively because we're not a large nonprofit organization in terms of our budget, so we depend on people who really resonate with the mission.” To this extent, Jennifer described how the shared values among her staff and volunteers created an environment that “feel more like a family.” She further noted, “we feel pretty close about things that are affecting one another, and we want everyone to share in the success.” The perceived importance of shared values among internal stakeholders in this study extends the findings from community sport club literature where Doherty et al. (2014) and Misener and Doherty (2009) found shared values depicted as a critical element for clubs’ broader goal achievement ability. The findings in the current study also support Svensson and Hambrick’s (in press) findings of the perceived importance of shared values as an imperative aspect for the broader organizational capacity in an SDP setting. Additional research is needed to explore the values of SDP stakeholders (staff members, board members, volunteers) to develop a better understanding of how these values can help SDP leaders advance their recruitment and retention efforts.

Daniel—representing the youngest organization in this study - further shared how the initial success during his inaugural period as the director is largely attributed to the passion and engagement of a Coach Across America Coach leading all sport-based activities along with a volunteer spearheading the academic components. He shared, “we've been really, really lucky in terms of just getting those two critical pieces set up with really great people.” Having dedicated individuals who are driven to be engaged in organizational activities was overwhelmingly noted as one of the primary reasons for organizations’ abilities to fulfill goals and ultimately, their respective missions.

Mobilizing a group of volunteers and staff members with a common focus and shared belief in the mission of the organization could subsequently result in increased staff engagement. Speaking from his experience operating a baseball-focused SDP organization in the Northeast, Samuel expressed a strong positive future outlook for the organization and stated: “we’re successful because we have beautiful people on board with us who are totally driven to do what we are, which is to help educate life-long learners, help develop specific-minded leaders, and people who just compete.” Similarly, Stephanie adamantly expressed the importance that everyone in her organization from top to bottom was actively involved in program activities:

I'd say one of our biggest strengths is that all of our staff are involved on a pretty specific program level... our board chairs skateboard. Most of our board members skateboard. If they don't skate, their kids skateboard or they used to skateboard. Most of our staff have been involved with [our organization] since they were preteens.

The common focus and shared values among board members and internal staff was



perceived as imperative for goal achievement given that these SDP organizations were unable to provide sufficient financial compensation compared to other local organizations. These findings support prior literature highlighting the perceived importance of shared values for overall capacity in SDP (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). As noted by Rothschild and Milofsky (2006), stakeholder values and passions are also an essential aspect of the nature of nonprofit organizations. In order to advance our understanding of capacity in SDP, future research is needed to develop an in-depth understanding of the substantive values held by people engaged in in SDP. In other words, future research needs to go beyond examining the perceived importance of shared values in SDP. Moreover, SDP leaders need to further recognize the need for nonprofit organizations to emphasize their unique values rather than trying to compete with larger for-profit entities (Frunkin & Andre-Clark, 2000).

**Staff recruitment.** Five executive directors also spoke about the perceived importance of staff recruitment. Whereas prior capacity literature brought attention to central role of volunteer recruitment (Doherty et al., 2014; Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2014), staff recruitment does not appear as a salient theme in regards to their broader capacity and goal achievement ability. This might be due to the emergence of paid staff as important within the human resource capacity of SDP entities in this study. These findings also support prior literature on capacity in an SDP setting (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). One particular aspect that emerged was the ability of organizations to engage former program participants as staff members. This was perceived to provide a stronger connection to the organization. Directors also perceived the importance of having these individuals develop and learn their skills and the values of the organization

from a participant perspective. For example, Alexander shared his experience in operating an outdoor and adventure sport-based organization and the perceived value of having program staff that participants can easily relate to:

They have the highest, I think, cultural awareness and ability in terms of the populations that we work with, whether they speak the language [such as] Arabic, Spanish, Vietnamese, and that they come from the same neighborhoods that a lot of our participants come from and even the same programs. I think for our participants, it's really important, because they can see themselves in our staff. For a lot of them, they never [before] thought that they could potentially get a job doing the things that we do.

This might be an element of capacity that is more prevalent among SDP entities rather than other nonprofit sport organizations, considering the nature of SDP programming and the underserved groups many of these organizations work with. Other examples from directors interviewed in this study included the use of sport-based employment training programs. These had reportedly helped participants develop foundational skills and expertise that could later be translated into working for the organization or for other entities. Regardless if former participants are recruited as for staff or not, it is imperative that SDP leaders recruit highly qualified staff members to advance their ability to fulfill their respective missions. As Samuel suggested, the broader organizational capacity of an SDP organization is dependent on the ability of its founder or leader to “surround themselves with people who are better than they are. That's my goal. I don't want people around me who will agree with me all the time.” This approach is needed as programmed or functional conflict (disagreement serving the organization’s

interest) is crucial in order to facilitate creativity, different perspectives, and a better understanding of an issue. This element could be of increased importance in SDP given the complex realities of these programs and the broader environments in which they operate (Schulenkorf et al., 2014).

**Staff retention.** A total of five of executive directors also expressed the perceived importance and influence of staff retention on their human resources capacity and ability to fulfill organizational goals. Retaining highly talented and dedicated staff members emerged as a critical challenge for several organizations. Most executive directors that mentioned staff retention echoed Alexander's experience, as he stated: "I think one big challenge in a small organization for human resources is trying to retain valuable staff, because it's difficult to create opportunities for growth within a smaller organization." Anthony further expressed a need for capacity building in terms of how his organization could overcome this challenge, "I think that's an area where we can definitely get better. I'm not sure how to do that yet." The critical challenge of retaining highly qualified staff members not only emerged among executive directors of SDP organizations with less than five paid staff members, but also among some of the largest and most successful (financially) organizations represented in this study. As an example of the latter, Andrew adamantly shared, "one challenge in an organization of our size, which is about 16 people [on paid staff], is attracting and keeping phenomenal people. It's probably one of the things we focus and discuss and deliberate about more than anything." He continued by emphasizing that in his experience, at some point you face a dilemma when your best staff members want to transcend to the next level, but you do not have any such positions for them to get promoted.

Several directors also expressed their desire for having more financial resources for staff compensation. A common belief was that increased pay would help retain valuable core staff members. For example, Landon stated, “I think pay. If we could pay more...I think pay is always a tricky one and retaining quality talent with the amount of pay that we [provide], it’s a challenge.” This perception is not much unlike many organizations (nonprofit and for-profit alike) that tend to focus on financial compensation for retaining staff and/or increasing their motivation. Dissatisfaction with pay could override an employee’s mission attachment if their basic needs are not met (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003) Yet, a basic understanding of motivational theories suggest increased pay will not do much, if anything, to provide greater meaning for staff members once the basic financial needs (i.e., ability to pay for housing, food, and regular personal expenses) are met.

Therefore, as the results of Kim and Lee’s (2007) empirical analysis indicated, the mission of a nonprofit organization can serve a significant role in employee retention. As the authors argued, establishing a strong mission attachment can help reduce nonprofit employees’ dissatisfaction with compensation and career advancement. Hence, SDP leaders need to develop and emphasize mission attachment as a tool for increased staff retention given their frequently limited financial resources and financial capacity of SDP organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). SDP organizations ought to focus on how can they provide additional value and differentiate themselves from competitors. The possibilities here could include an organizational commitment to provide authentic recognition of their contributions, flexible work schedules, greater autonomy, increased responsibilities, or an allotted amount of time to work on organizational projects of their

own choosing for advancing the SDP nonprofit.

**Staff training.** Another area that emerged as a key element for the broader human resource capacity in the current study was the extent of training and support for paid staff members. Five executive directors indicated the perceived importance of staff training for building human resources capacity and strengthening the ability of their organizations to fulfill its goals and objectives. Whereas prior literature has reported development and support for volunteers as a critical element of capacity (Doherty et al., 2014), on-going training and development opportunities for paid staff does not appear in literature on organizational capacity in nonprofit sport settings. In this study, educating existing staff members was considered a crucial aspect in light of the limited numbers of full-time staff with many of these organizations. Some interviewees provided specific examples of training activities for their staff members, yet others (e.g., Josh) noted the need “to build our capacity to train our staff better.” Jennifer voiced similar views in reflecting on areas of weakness in terms of her organization’s human resource capacity for goal achievement, “the key thing I think that we could employ is better training. I mean, that's the challenging part because we only have limited resources and we only do so much with what we have.”

Of participants expressing a stronger ability to currently provide training for staff members, Stephanie shared how she was in the process of training and empowering staff to lead different skateboard-based programs she had previously initiated, saying “right now I'm actually training staff to lead the programs that I've started. I'm sort of a Johnny Appleseed right now. I'm building, I'm sprouting something, building up staff, building up volunteers, building up a program, getting kids excited.” While Stephanie was largely

doing all the training on her own, Alexander expressed how his organization not only emphasized staff training, but also intentionally budgeted for these types of activities to allow for professional growth and cross training among its paid staff members:

The thing we're trying to do here is to build in opportunities for professional growth through having a budget for training activities as well as for different staff activities, and tasking staff members with things that are outside of their day-to-day tasks, so that they can learn how to do different things [in different] parts of the organization, whether it's having a field program manager help with a grant proposal or give a presentation to a donor.

Despite the different experience and perceived ability to provide training opportunities, these executive directors emphasized staff training as a crucial element in regards to the organization's capacity and ability to achieve goals. This finding brings attention to the perceived importance of paid staff as an element of capacity of SDP organizations compared to other sport and non-sport settings (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). In contrast to the membership-based nature of community sport clubs that have been the focus of prior capacity research in sport management (See Cordery et al., 2014; Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013, 2014; Wicker et al., 2014), SDP organizations rely on their (limited) staff in all operational aspects including recruiting any potential volunteers from outside the organization. This contextual difference warrants additional research examining how SDP leaders develop and support staff members through various training initiatives. Understanding different approaches used by these entities is crucial for improving future SDP capacity-building initiatives. Despite the perceived importance of paid staff in SDP,

many of the directors in this study also expressed their strong volunteer dependence, which has required their staff to recruit and retain large groups of volunteers to conduct their community programming.

**Volunteer dependence.** Eight executive directors perceived their dependence on volunteers as an important element in regards to the ability to fulfill goals. This aspect of their human resources capacity was discussed in terms of the sheer number of volunteers needed for operating grassroots programs. The interviewees openly shared how they and their staff members could not do what they do in their respective communities without relying primarily on volunteers. For example, William described how he largely relied on volunteers from a local university in running his organization's community programs:

I have 16 volunteers that are consistent. They come and they help me reach the kids that we have in the center. There is no way I can do this by myself. We have about close to 60 kids in the program, and a lot of these kids need individual attention. By having a lot of volunteers that can work with kids individually, it makes it easier for us to do what we need to do to be more effective.

Other directors shared similar stories and noted specific examples of different volunteers and the importance of not only their time, but also their specialized skills for operating these SDP programs. Anthony, for example, discussed how his squash-based educational program relied on volunteers with a diverse range of expertise including therapy, accounting, administration, as well as the game of squash itself. Similarly, Jessica shared how her volunteer-based SDP organization relied on volunteers with varied backgrounds that were crucial in staging their annual summer camp programs. As she stated,

We have folks who are fitness instructors, nutritionists and dieticians who volunteer with us. We have exercise physiologists that volunteer with us, counselors, people who are certified in youth counseling and grief counseling, nurses. We have a really deep volunteer pool and they really make this thing work.

The volunteer dependence and diverse backgrounds of program volunteers as shared by directors in this study extends Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) findings on organizational capacity of an international SDP organization. Similar to findings in their case study, findings from this study highlight a heavy volunteer dependence on volunteers with strong professional expertise. The latter is in contrast to the limited volunteer expertise reported in Sharpe's (2006) study of a grassroots nonprofit sport organization in Canada, yet supports the perceived importance of strong professional expertise as reported by Misener and Doherty (2009) in their case study on the capacity of a Canadian community sport club.

**Volunteer recruitment.** The ability to recruit volunteers emerged as a salient theme in terms of the human resources capacity of participating organizations. This aspect was perceived as essential for its broader organizational capacity given the volunteer dependence and limited paid staff of many of these nonprofits. A total of 13 executive directors highlighted the perceived importance of volunteer recruitment. For example, Alexander shared how his organization puts on over 300 different events per year requiring volunteer assistance and therefore volunteer recruitment is crucial, yet remains challenging for his organization:

I think it's a challenge with volunteer management in terms of the investment that



we need to put in to recruit qualified volunteers, because you just get a whole range of people that want to help out, it's a challenge, but for us right now, it's worth it.

Andrew shared a similar perspective of the continuous challenge in recruiting highly qualified volunteers. Despite representing the largest organization in the current study, Andrew expressed the hard work needed to continuously recruit as you need more outstanding volunteers the larger your organization gets, “you have to work to get them, to keep them, to engage them, and to help them grow and develop and feel like they're contributing and learning and achieving, and it's very hard, the bigger you get.” The perceived importance of volunteer recruitment in terms of the overall capacity of SDP organizations supports similar findings in prior literature on the capacity of community sport clubs (e.g., Wicker & Breuer, 2014; Wicker et al., 2014) and non-sport nonprofits (e.g., Young et al., 2008). Wicker and Breuer (2013a) further found sport clubs seeking organizational change reported even bigger issues in terms of recruitment of volunteers. However, findings from this study further contribute to the literature by highlighting specific details on the lived experiences of SDP practitioners within the SDP context. This is important for furthering our understanding of SDP volunteerism and organizational theory as prior literature has largely focused on the motives of individual volunteers rather than the recruitment efforts and experiences by the organizations (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013, 2014).

A common theme among interviewees in discussing volunteer recruitment was the challenge in adequately recruiting and managing volunteers when the organization's paid staff already had their hands full in serving other roles and responsibilities. Isabella's

perspective provides an example of this dilemma:

There's a catch 22 to this which is because our paid program staff are working so hard just to run the essential programs and do their best to create a really great experience for the kids, they're stretched very, very thin, and recruiting and maintaining the enthusiasm of volunteers takes a lot of time as well. We just haven't been able to carve out enough paid staff time, or find that magical volunteer who would want to coordinate other volunteers.

Isabella's statement supports the earlier discussion of the different nature of community sport clubs (member-based) and SDP organizations (lack of membership-structure). Therefore, it is important to understand the specific elements of capacity within an SDP setting. As Isabella and others discussed during their interviews, the limited number of paid staff with their organization resulted in increasing demands for their existing staff to have many different responsibilities. Although these organizations are volunteer dependent, the lack of a membership structure meant that volunteer recruitment required considerable investment and time commitment by existing staff. The majority of directors shared this experience.

However, it is important to recognize that there were some exceptions. In contrast the directors voicing their challenges in recruiting volunteers, Christian shared a noticeably different experience from operating a lacrosse-based SDP organization in the Southern parts of the United States. He stated:

The coaches that we have with our competitive programs they are young professional, [and] the biggest thing with them is that I don't ever have to recruit. We get phenomenal coaches that volunteer with our program with very little

effort to go recruit them. They come and find me. They really love the mission of the organization and they seek us out and say, I want to get involved, how can I coach, how can I help.

Several of these coaches were former NCAA Division I student-athletes or collegiate club-level lacrosse players. This finding supports prior literature reporting the sport itself serving as a prominent motive among SDP volunteers (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013). Some directors felt the ability to recruit these individuals with little or no effort was strengthened by the organization's geographical location and close proximity to a major metropolitan setting where these individuals had relocated for their professional careers. At the same time, this warrants future research to explore potential sport differences given the tremendous recent growth of lacrosse in the United States. For example, Christian brought attention to the growth of lacrosse among local high schools. Many of these youth players need to complete community service hours as part of their education and therefore are enthusiastic about helping a lacrosse-based community program. The ease of recruitment could be due the specific emphasis on a particular sport by this organization along with the relative lack of lacrosse-based community nonprofits at this point in time. Nonetheless, this suggests that perhaps sport could not only serve as a 'hook' for participants (Hartmann, 2003), but may serve a similar purpose for connecting with volunteers.

Jessica expressed a similar experience in not having to necessarily go out and recruit volunteers for their summer camp programs. However, in contrast to Christian's experience, Jessica discussed how her organization initially had a tough time recruiting the right volunteers, but have improved by developing strong and lasting relationships

with other local organizations. As such, Jessica felt fortunate that she now has a consistent interest of volunteers who seem to identify with the mission of the organization and its participants:

Our camp is every year in June. We'll get emails in March saying hey do you still need me? I'm interested. I think people see that we are impacting a good number of girls every year through our programs and people really want to be a part of something that's impactful. I think that people identify. I will say a lot of the volunteers that we get are minorities and minority women to be exact. They see themselves in those girls.

Although the aforementioned examples were largely an exception compared to the other organizations participating in this study, all of these directors still agreed on the importance of the ability to recruit volunteers to get involved with the organization. James highlighted the perceived importance and need for continuous volunteer recruitment in describing his experience of managing an SDP organization in the Southeastern parts of the United States:

There's levels of leadership [in different areas] that we really need to run a tight ship, but we don't bring in enough revenue to sustain hiring someone to manage all of those areas. What we're trying to effectively do is utilize volunteers and interns to meet some of these demands. That's really been a challenge.

The nature of after-school SDP programs presents some unique challenges regarding volunteer recruitment. Executive directors representing organizations operating after-school programs also brought attention to the challenges in recruiting volunteers for such programs since a lot of people work during those times. As Josh noted:

You [therefore] have to figure out which demographic doesn't work from nine to five. College students end up being a big group, and then retired people end up being a big group of people who can volunteer during that time; then trying to do targeted outreach to those communities.

Yet, as Michelle experienced in her role as the executive director of a squash-based SDP organization in the Midwest, reliance on college students as your primary group of volunteers brings a unique set of benefits and challenges for an organization. Her organization has established a strong relationship with a major local university and therefore involved numerous students in their programming. Nonetheless, she shared her perspectives:

Having the college student there is really modeling what we want the kids to be doing. The biggest challenge I would say is I really seeing college students come back next year [and] the [following] year. College students get jobs, they transfer, maybe their interests change...

Something the directors did not discuss was the development and support provided for volunteers, which has emerged as a critical element in regards to the capacity of community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014). Nonetheless, it is imperative for SDP leaders to recognize the importance of not only strengthening their volunteer recruitment efforts, but also their ability to retain volunteers. Providing training and support for volunteers can help nonprofit sport organizations increase volunteer retention rates (Cuskelly et al., 2006). One tactic found among some SDP nonprofits is the use of minimum volunteer time requirements. At first, this may seem as a beneficial strategy given the time constraints of staff members. However, as Filo et al. (2014) suggested,

SDP leaders ought to avoid any kind of volunteer time requirement as prior literature suggests this can limit the development of their volunteer identity within the organization. Instead, another strategy to consider for increasing volunteer retention is to identify relational volunteer job assignments as volunteers are more likely to continue their volunteering or volunteer more hours when they perceive a positive relational job design (Alfes et al., in press). At the same time, it is important that SDP leaders carefully reflect on the task allocation among volunteers and paid staff. Based on a recent assessment of Red Cross volunteers, unreasonable tasks appear negatively associated with future volunteer intentions (van Shie et al., 2014). As evident from findings in the current study, the limited human resources capacity of several organizations and the lack of adequate paid staff were perceived to be due to limited financial capacity.

**Summary of findings for RQ1.** In summary, the ability of an organization to mobilize and deploy human capital is an integral part of the capacity of a nonprofit organization (Hall et al., 2003), and is perceived as critical for the remaining aspects of organizational capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). In this study, 11 elements emerged that reportedly influenced organizations' ability to achieve their goal(s): board involvement, board recruitment, board retention, paid staff, finding roles, shared values and engagement, staff recruitment, staff retention, staff training, volunteer dependence, and volunteer recruitment.

Board involvement emerged as the most salient theme and was perceived as essential for increased goal achievement ability. This is important since strong emotional attachment to an organization is associated with increased perceived board performance (Hoye, 2007). Board members were considered to serve important roles as advocates for

the organization and for facilitating relationships with high-profile decision-makers. However, in many organizations, board members were engaged in a lot more than simply governance and financial support. SDP leaders reportedly aimed to leverage the networks of board members for mentoring, tutoring, job placement, and more. The perceived strong knowledge, skills, and expertise among board members supported Doherty et al.'s (2014) findings on the central role of volunteer knowledge and skills as an element of capacity among sport clubs. The involvement of board members in operating many different organizational aspects could potentially be relatively more important in SDP context given the small size of many of these nonprofit entities and lack of a membership structure. The perceived importance of board involvement in regards to the human resources capacity of SDP nonprofits is an important contribution to the literature since it does not appear in prior research on capacity of community sport clubs (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013, 2014).

Subsequently, recruitment of board members was mentioned as another important element of human resources capacity. Directors expressed the perceived importance for identifying appropriate roles for prospective board members, yet shared the challenges in cultivating relationships with highly qualified individuals to serve on the board of a small grassroots nonprofit. The sport associated with their respective organizations and the perceived unique nature of SDP nonprofits were reported as important motives for recruiting prospective board members. Recruitment fairs can provide valuable opportunities for utilizing such recruitment tactics and advancing organizational board recruitment. Overall, SDP leaders ought to appeal to different target groups of volunteers

since prior studies have found people to volunteer in SDP for various motives (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Board retention was also noted as another critical element of capacity by some interviewees. Yet the lack of discussions of board retention by most other participants is in contrast to Wicker and Breuer's (2011) study on German sport clubs, which indicated that retention of primary volunteers (including board members) was the most pressing challenge for the nonprofit clubs.

Paid staff also emerged as a perceived imperative element of human resources capacity. Furthermore, most interviewees expressed a strong need for additional paid staff to operate their organizational functions. This perceived importance and need for paid staff extends Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) findings on the perceived importance of paid staff for increased organizational capacity in SDP. Although prior research has reported a focus on day-to-day operations rather than the big picture in a sport club (Misener & Doherty, 2009), findings in this study emerged from directors explicitly stating that they not only are focused on day-to-day activities, but that they perceive this is due to lack of sufficient paid staff members. This is another important contribution of this study, as paid staff has not emerged as a capacity element in prior studies on capacity in a nonprofit sport context (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). Unfortunately, many directors expressed having to overwork their existing staff due to lack of financial resources. In fact, several directors made many personal sacrifices including going without salaries for extended periods of time in order to make ends meet for their organizations.



The ability and openness to finding roles and tailoring responsibilities to the needs and skill sets of individual volunteers or staff members also emerged as an important element within the human resources capacity of SDP organization in this study. This approach was perceived to further help increase the engagement of volunteer and staff members within the organization, which ultimately was perceived to increase their goal achievement ability. The perceived importance of this strength-based approach to finding roles for individuals interested in helping an SDP organization has not been reported in prior literature on organizational capacity in SDP settings (Svensson & Hambrick, in press) or community sport club settings (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011).

Another salient theme emerged in terms of shared values among people involved with the organization. This was perceived as an integral part of the organization in regards to increased capacity and goal achievement. Directors sought to develop a group of individuals who connect with their respective mission statements. This extends Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) findings of the perceived importance of shared values as an imperative aspect for the broader organizational capacity in an SDP setting. Shared values were further perceived to facilitate increased engagement. Therefore, SDP leaders need to further recognize the need for nonprofit organizations to emphasize their unique values rather than trying to compete with larger for-profit entities (Frunkin & Andre-Clark, 2000).

Another unique contribution of this study was the emergence of staff recruitment as a perceived element of human resources capacity. This does not appear in prior literature on sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014; Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al.,

2014). However, this could be due to perceived importance of paid staff in regards to capacity within the SDP setting (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). Several directors highlighted engaging former participants as staff members as a valuable strategy since beneficiaries can easily relate to these individuals. Yet regardless if staff is recruited from former participants or not, it is imperative that SDP leaders recruit highly qualified staff members to advance their ability to fulfill their respective missions.

The ability to retain staff was also identified as an important element of human resources capacity by several directors. However, retaining highly talented and dedicated staff members emerged as a critical challenge for several of these organizations. SDP leaders should develop and emphasize mission attachment as a tool for increased staff retention (Kim & Lee, 2007) given the limited financial resources and financial capacity of SDP organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). Providing on-going support and development for staff could help in reducing staff turnover. Staff training was perceived as another crucial element of capacity in SDP by several interviewees. Although prior literature has reported development and support for volunteers as a critical element of capacity (Doherty et al., 2014), on-going training and development opportunities for paid staff does not appear in literature on organizational capacity in nonprofit sport settings.

In light of the reported need of additional paid staff by most SDP leaders interviewed, directors openly shared how they and their staff members could not do what they do as organizations in their respective communities without relying primarily on volunteers. Hence volunteer dependence emerged as another element within their human resources capacity. This study extends Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) findings on the role of volunteer dependence in organizational capacity in an SDP setting.

Nonetheless, directors reported strong perceived professional expertise among their existing volunteers which is in contrast to findings reported in Sharpe's (2006) study of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization, but similar to Misener and Doherty's (2009) findings in their case study of a community sport club.

Recruitment of qualified volunteers also emerged as a critical element of human resources capacity. The perceived importance of volunteer recruitment in terms of the overall capacity of SDP organizations yet noticeable challenges support similar findings in prior literature on the capacity of community sport clubs (e.g., Wicker & Breuer, 2014; Wicker et al., 2014) and non-sport nonprofits (e.g., Young et al., 2008). A common theme among interviewees in discussing volunteer recruitment was the challenge in adequately recruiting and managing its volunteers when the organization's paid staff already had their hands full in serving other roles and responsibilities. The lack of a membership structure among SDP nonprofits meant that volunteer recruitment required considerable investment and time commitment by existing staff. At the same time, it is important to note that there were a few exceptions whereby directors indicated most volunteers approached their organization with little or no organizational recruitment needed. This could be due to the potentially unique motivation of 'love of sport' among SDP volunteers compared to traditional community nonprofits.

**RQ2: What critical elements exist within the financial capacity of the SDP organizations?**

According to Hall et al.'s (2003) framework, financial capacity refers to a nonprofit's ability to maintain and expend financial capital in a sustainable manner. Similarly, Bowman (2011, p. 38) suggests financial capacity refers to the "resources that

give an organization the wherewithal to seize opportunities and react to unexpected threats.” Six elements emerged in this study: financial management, fundraising, financial campaigns, grant funding, special events, and other revenue sources (Table 4.3).

**Financial management.** The ability to manage the organization’s financial activities including financial reporting and various deadlines for payments, reports, or funding proposals emerged as a salient theme in regards to the financial capacity of SDP organizations in this study. A total of 14 directors discussed the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their financial management and how this was considered an important aspect in terms of their broader capacity. This aspect of their financial capacity also included the ability of the organization to maintain adequate bookkeeping of its financial assets and liabilities. In this regard, interviewees often talked about the perceived importance of having a paid staff member responsible for financial management and bookkeeping. Yet, as noted in the findings regarding human resource capacity, many of the executive directors expressed a lack of sufficiently paid staff members. This was suggested to be due to limited fiscal resources, supporting Akingbola’s (2013) and Wicker and Hallmann’s (2013) argument on the influence of financial capacity on an organization’s human resources capacity.

In terms of financial management, directors discussed how having someone in a financial management position was perceived to be important in order for them to develop a stronger ability to analyze their financial aspects. This is important since broader nonprofit management literature has consistently reported limited financial literacy among nonprofit board and staff members (Fredericksen & London, 2000; Yung et al., 2008). The need for professional financial expertise was apparent from the

interviews. For example, Alexander suggested because his organization only had a part-time bookkeeper, they did not have the ability to be as thorough as they would like in analyzing internal revenues and expenses for identifying how to maximize their program investments.

**Table 4.3**

*Summary of Financial Resources Capacity Findings*

<u>Capacity Element</u>	<u>Sample Quote</u>
Financial management	Right now the person that does all our accounting, payroll for all of our coaches, and myself and our other main staff, is a volunteer. He's working 10-20 hours a week just doing all of our I-9s, all of our documentation, HR, all of that stuff... our biggest next step I'd say is to hire somebody to fill those shoes. (Stephanie)
Fundraising	I think fundraising is always an issue for everyone. Doesn't matter how successful you are and how big you get, you got to maintain and be sustainable. That's probably our biggest challenge every year. (Landon)
Financial campaigns	I'm going to have to go out and find a mentor to help me with that. We're going to have to figure it out together. No one currently on our board has ever been part of a tackling a campaign, trying to raise \$3 million for a building. That's going to be huge. We have to go out and learn how to do that. (Anthony)
Grant funding	I had recently a couple people present grants to me that I just basically said, "No, we're not going to apply for that." If we win this grant, we get money, but it's tied up to do something that we're not really doing, which is going to limit our capacity to maintain what we are currently struggling to pull off already (Josh)
Special events	When I first started...we put on a 3 day squash tournament fundraiser...the gross was \$48,000 and we netted 42. The board was skeptical that we could do this because it hadn't in the past ever raised anything more than 13,000 at once. For 3 consecutive years, we grossed around 100 to \$115,000 [on 2 annual events]. (Anthony)
Other revenue sources	Because of the way we've contracted our relationship with the professional sports teams around the 50/50 raffle, I think we're in a really good spot with that as well, to maintaining that relationship ... That's close to \$40,000 a year in income for us, but that takes about 20 volunteers a game to pull that off. (Josh)
Expenses	\$500,000 can just wash up in a year or two pretty quickly if you don't invest wisely in your programs. (Samuel)

At the same time, Alexander was excited to share that his organization is transitioning toward hiring a full-time financial manager, which will allow the

organization to have someone in the office throughout the week focused on financial management. However, the financial costs associated with hiring someone responsible for accounting and bookkeeping emerged as a common challenge for most directors. The noticeable financial challenges of many nonprofit sport organizations (See Cordery et al., 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2014) should warrant investments by SDP leaders in establishing adequate financial management practices. This applies even in the absence of sufficient funds for hiring additional staff. Based on the aforementioned studies of the financial capacity of sport clubs and the findings in this study, SDP leaders ought to increase volunteer engagement, increase board efficiency, and recruit of individuals with strong financial expertise. Some directors shared how they had been able to build their financial management ability through the expertise of its volunteers. For example, Christian stated:

We have a treasurer who is pro-bono, has a very strong finance background. She has managed our budget and our finances for years... Overall, as far as the management and oversight [of financial aspects] we're pretty strong. She does a great job, despite being pro-bono she's very responsive. Yeah, I actually don't really have a big issue with [our financial management].

Others who considered financial management to be a key area of strength did so not only because of the perceived financial expertise of their financial manager, but also due to a strong personal understanding and background in financial management:

I have a fair amount of financial management background myself. I feel that we have a very good grasp of what they numbers are. Being able to do accurate forecasts and have the management tools we need to understand what the

financial situation is (Isabella).

The perceived value of having staff with personal financial backgrounds was an important finding of this study, as this was perceived to positively influence an organization's financial capacity. This can have important implications for the staff hiring or board member recruitment processes in SDP organizations, as many nonprofit staff tends to lack sufficient financial knowledge and skills (See Yung et al., 2008). Moreover, James expressed a strong sense of confidence in the person responsible for his organization's financial management and further described the use of Quickbooks software as the primary platform for keeping their financial records organized. Having the ability to organize and record an organization's financial activities is crucial in order to comply with funders' requirements for various grants and means of financial support. Jessica expressed her sincere appreciation for the important role of one of her volunteer board members in this regard:

Our CPA, I believe does a really good job of managing it. She is a stickler for forms and documents and making sure we report expenses. We were not always good at that, [but] the past few years, we've been doing a lot better with doing that. That's a credit to our [volunteer] board member.

Future research should examine the financial management practices of SDP nonprofits in more detail. Developing a better understanding of different types of software and financial management systems could contribute to the development of more efficient capacity-building initiatives in SDP. Additional research is also needed to examine the financial records of SDP organizations in conjunction with their perceived financial ability. For example, Josh was open about how he was not satisfied with his

own understanding of the organization's financial capacity, yet has been remarkably successful in turning around the financial state of his organization:

I took over the organization with \$57,000 in debt, and we have over \$200,000 in the bank right now, that's in two and a half years. I think we've had a pretty good turnaround. Where I don't understand it all, is okay, as long as I find the people that can come around me that do. I'm trying to hire these people, and prove to the board that we need to invest our money in a development director.

Michelle, on the other hand voiced her experience in terms of the organization's financial management after she took over as the director following 14 years with another nonprofit in the Midwest:

When I came on they expected me to do all the bookkeeping, all the financials, and all the payroll. I actually said, 'That's not a good use of my time or skills.' It does feel hard to manage. We don't have a set database for donors. The systems aren't in place yet. Right now as an organization it doesn't feel that great.

This brings attention to the importance for board and staff members in SDP organizations to develop a clear understanding of the expected roles and responsibilities of each position. Furthermore, the board governing an SDP organization ought to develop a strong understanding of the importance of financial management and the perceived value as noted by many other participants in this study of having either a designated financial manager or relying on external expertise. Stephanie noted how even for her relatively small SDP organization with only one full-time paid staff member, financial management duties required a substantial commitment by one of its volunteers:

Right now the person that does all our accounting, payroll for all of our coaches,



and myself and our other main staff, is a volunteer. He's working 10-20 hours a week just doing all of our I-9s, all of our documentation, HR, all of that stuff... our biggest next step I'd say is to hire somebody to fill those shoes.

Financial management practices including basic bookkeeping activities can quickly become time-consuming tasks. Recruiting staff and board members with financial expertise could serve as a valuable short-term tactic for smaller organizations. However, SDP organizations need to examine how to reallocate or increase their financial resources in order to hire a full-time financial manager. This requires an understanding of fundraising, which emerged as another critical aspect of an organization's financial capacity.

**Fundraising.** All 17 directors perceived fundraising as an essential element in regards to their financial capacity and overall ability to achieve organizational goals. As the following paragraphs depict, many of the participants reported noticeable challenges in terms of raising funds, although a few expressed a strong ability to solicit funds for their organizations. However, as Andrew noted, the importance and on-going challenges of fundraising do not disappear simply because you grow your budget or organizational size:

I raise money every single day I wake up... It's all relationships and writing and talking and meeting and dinners and lunches. It's stewardship. It's hard, hard work. We're about to hire a director of institutional advancement, which is basically a chief development officer.

Whereas a few directors such as Andrew shared years of fundraising experience, many participants were relatively new in their positions or represented smaller grassroots

organizations that had not been around for more than a few years. The ability to raise sufficient funds for SDP programming activities was perceived as a challenge by many directors. Similar to Andrew's experience, these individuals discussed how fundraising is a constant endeavor. Many directors made statements similar to what James noted about his organization when asked about their largest challenges regarding its financial capacity:

Well, it's the recruitment of funds. It's the greatest challenge because we're only operating on two-fifths of the revenue pool. We're bringing in money through program registration. We're bringing in money through private sponsors, but we're not getting any grant money, we don't have an effective fundraising game plan, and we haven't had Steve Jobs or Apple or anybody of that magnitude commit \$500,000 to us every year for the next 100 years.

Landon largely summarized the perceptions of participating executive directors regarding fundraising in SDP organizations, when he stated, "I think fundraising is always an issue for everyone. Doesn't matter how successful you are and how big you get, you got to maintain and be sustainable. That's probably our biggest challenge every year." This emerged as one of the most salient themes in the current study. For several of these organizations, part of this challenge was suggested to be the lack of a clear and coherent fundraising strategy or plan. Although Misener and Doherty (2009) found similar concerns in their case study of a Canadian sport club, no prior research appears to have examined the perceived fundraising experiences of SDP leaders. Yet the noticeable concerns of fundraising support prior reports of the apparent financial need of many international SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008). Findings in this study therefore contribute

to our understanding of organizational capacity in SDP (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). This warrants additional research to examine the financial vulnerability of SDP nonprofits during the last 10 years. Despite the anecdotal reports of financial issues in SDP, little is known regarding their actual financial developments over time. This type of study could add important insight to our understanding of SDP. One of many questions to consider in such work is how the rapid growth in sheer number of SDP initiatives has influenced the financial capacity of these organizations (See Coakley, 2011). As Sanders et al. (2014) noted, NGOs engaged in SDP work are increasingly competing for support for funders.

Other directors shared the perceived lack of appeal compared to other nonprofit entities soliciting donations as well. In other words, these individuals suggested a sense of rejection of their organization from funders/donors compared to other charitable causes. The reported challenges in regards to financial capacity supports prior findings from research on sport clubs in Germany (Wicker & Breuer, 2014) and New Zealand (Cordery et al., 2014), yet is in contrast to prior literature on sport clubs in Switzerland (Wicker et al., 2014) and Canada (Sharpe, 2006). The perceived role of financial appeal, however, does not appear in any prior literature on capacity of nonprofit sport organizations and thus adds important new insight. This could be due to the heavy donor-dependence of SDP nonprofits compared to the member-based nature of sport clubs where a great deal of revenues stem from membership fees (e.g., Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Regardless, it is important for SDP leaders to understand that lack of support for charitable organizations from potential donors is rarely due to a rejection of a charity brand. Instead, Faulkner, Truong, and Romaniuk (in press) found that non-awareness of a

given charity is 14 times higher than rejection levels among potential donors. Hence, SDP leaders ought to focus on raising awareness about their mission and grassroots programs in local communities.

Several directors also perceived the role of personal relationships as an important element in regards to financial capacity for on-going financial support. As an example, Jessica shared how in her experience of leading an SDP organization in the United States, personal relationships with funders resulted in continuous support and renewal of many partnerships with funding agencies. Similarly, when asked about his fundraising experience, Matthew stated, “simply it comes down to what I’ve seen as that people invest in you based on your relationship with them, how long you’ve been around and how much they believe in you.”

The perceived importance of cultivating and maintaining these personal relationships for generating sustainable funding supports prior literature on successful nonprofit fundraising strategies for major gifts and annual giving donors (Waters, 2011). Based on structural equation modeling in a quantitative study of 1,706 nonprofit donors in the United States, Waters (2011) found the top variables influencing the level of trust among both major gift donors and annual giving were related to the donor-fundraiser relationship. Relationship nurturing was reported as the most significant variable, highlighting the importance for SDP leaders to cultivate and maintain strong personal relationships with donors. SDP practitioners can strengthen these relationships by providing personalized communication (e.g., handwritten notes) about the progress of the organization and specifically about how their funds are helping the organization. Moreover, it is also important for SDP leaders to openly discuss the needs and interests of

each major gift donor from the onset of their relationship.

Interestingly, Matthew went even further and suggested the perceived importance of personal fundraising credibility was a central aspect of successful donor relationships:

I see other EDs that have these big, these big degrees from big universities and they get large funding from people because they just believe in them and it creates this network for you. That [is] something that I'm thinking about doing. My friend, he raises a half a million dollars a year and every time someone brings him up they're like, he's a Harvard grad. It's the first thing that they say about him, his funders and everyone that works with him.

This brings attention to the potential importance of personal fundraising credibility and how it may stem from one's educational background. The potentially 'deep-pockets' of other graduates of institutions such as Harvard warrants future research on the role of educational affiliation for fundraising credibility in nonprofit management. This warrants additional research on correlates of nonprofit fundraisers. Given the scarce research in this area, such a study should examine different types of nonprofit settings (SDP and non-SDP)..

Furthermore, a few other directors also expressed how their grassroots programming complicates their fundraising ability. The inability to fulfill mandated funding requirement(s) regarding after-school programs emerged as a critical weakness in terms of their financial capacity. For example, Alexander stated:

I think the challenge is that there is a lot of funding for after-school activities, but they're very narrowly focused on specific academic outcomes. We don't yet fit the typical requirements for a youth service organization to get one of those after-

school program contracts.

Isabella, however, went even furthered and shared how in her experience, fundraising for SDP organizations in the United States has changed considerably due to recent economic issues around the country. She not only discussed how fundraising remains an on-going challenge for her nonprofit, but also how she perceives that funding agencies have reallocated their funds to areas that do not necessarily apply to her organization's programming:

I'm not satisfied. It's a constant struggle. It's the majority of where my time and energy goes. It's been very hard for us. A couple years ago we had a pretty substantial financial set back during, I guess due to the larger economic downfall. Grant funding... The grant landscape changed pretty significantly and we got hit fairly hard by that. A lot of the monies that had been provided to things like education and after school programs started to get redirected to basic human services.

These types of environmental factors are certainly not specific to SDP organizations; however, they do provide an important contextual factor for SDP nonprofits operating within the United States. It is important to recognize that beyond an organization's capacity (human, financial, and structural), the ability of nonprofits to fulfill their missions is also influenced by environmental factors (Hall et al., 2003; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2015). Prior research on sport clubs has indicated that different revenue diversification strategies have marginal impact on systematic volatility from environmental factors such as the broader national economy (Wicker et al., 2015). Furthermore, findings from Wicker and Breuer's (2015) study of nonprofit sport clubs

highlight that resource scarcity is not necessarily due to poor organizational management, but could be due to higher-level environmental factors. For example, sport clubs located in larger communities were more likely to have financial capacity issues. At the same time, the financial vulnerability of the local community was also associated with the financial capacity of the sport club (Wicker & Breuer, 2015). This warrants future research on how environmental factors affects SDP nonprofits. Although it is important to understand these types of environmental factors while planning organizational growth or expansion, it is still imperative for SDP leaders to develop a better understanding of their own organizational capacity as they have greater control over the factors that impact their overall ability to operate and fulfill their missions than environmental factors.

Some of the younger directors interviewed in this study also noted how they perceived their lack of a fundraising or financial background was a noticeable weakness in terms of their financial capacity. In this regard, Anthony self-reflected on his own experience in serving as an Executive Director and reflecting on his lack of prior fundraising experience:

We're working on raising a team and making sure we're doing it together and trying to be really inclusive on how we go about fundraising and sharing out story. If I had to rate myself between one and a 10, and a one being sucky and never making enough money and 10 being awesome and having reserves of 2 years worth of expenses, then I'm probably around a 5 is where I am right now. I'm right in the middle.

While he expressed a modest picture of his own fundraising ability, it is important to note that he successfully turned an organization that was unable to raise more funds

than it was spending during the two years prior to his arrival into an organization that generated a six-figure reserve within only three years. Josh depicted a similar picture and delineated fundraising as one of the most important aspects of his organization's financial capacity:

How satisfied am I personally? I struggle because I don't have a business background. I'm not necessarily satisfied with my understanding of our organization's financial capacity, and what we are fully capable of doing. I think that's an area of weakness. With that said, I understand the concept of trying to bring in more than you spend. So, I feel like I've done a good job. I took over the organization with \$57,000 in debt, and we have over \$200,000 in the bank right now, that's in two and a half years. I think we've had a pretty good turnaround.

Lack of financial knowledge and skills are common characteristics of nonprofit staff in broader nonprofit management research (Fredericksen & London, 2000; Yung et al., 2008). Interestingly, the participants in this study who openly noted a lack of satisfaction with their fundraising abilities or understanding of financial aspects appeared to have been quite successful in improving the financial health of their respective organizations. Additional research is needed to examine the perceived financial knowledge and skills among SDP practitioners. Future research in this area should also examine the relationship between perceived financial knowledge and actual financial performance. Findings in this study raise an interesting question of whether the perceived lack of financial knowledge influenced these directors to seek additional help, work more diligently on fundraising, and subsequently become quite successful in doing so.

It is also important to note the need for understanding the desire (or lack thereof)



for organizational growth among SDP organizations. As findings in this study highlighted, several organizations are either in the middle of a financial capital campaign for building their own facilities or aspire to do so. Yet, Michelle, for example, expressed how this is not part of her vision:

I think ideally in the next three to five years I would like the budget to be around 550 thousand. I think that's it. We're not trying to be huge. Our capacity is maybe 60 kids at a max. Even if someone gives us a million dollars, we probably use that for scholarship or put it in a bank. We're not trying to triple our program or buy a facility.

Thus, it is imperative to avoid assumptions regarding the ambition of organizations to grow financially and programmatically. As Balduck et al. (in press) argued based on their quantitative study of Flemish sport clubs, it is crucial to consider the intentions or ambition of an organization for growth and professionalization as this can in turn influence the perceived level of organizational capacity. Different levels of organizational ambition regarding large-scale growth might be one reason why some participants in this study expressed a lack of confidence or satisfaction in their fundraising abilities despite having turned entire organizations around in just a few years.

A few executive directors, especially representing smaller grassroots initiatives, also discussed the perceived importance of leveraging social media opportunities for reaching people. These findings support the growing emphasis on utilizing social media within SDP to promote action among followers (Thorpe & Rhinehart, 2014; Svensson, Mahoney, & Hambrick, in press). These directors perceived that you never know who might come across your organization and be interested in becoming a financial supporter.

Samuel summarized this by stating:

I think you got to realize that on the weekend I'm working with our web designer on changing some things up, realizing that every single second you have in the twitter world, online, social media, it's an opportunity ... You never know when that person's going to find out about you and captures with you, but there's that level of patience because you just can't rush it. The first year we totally rushed it in certain things and kind of jumped in the action plan without the vision.

Other directors emphasized having patience in terms of fundraising efforts given the perceived importance of building and cultivating personal relationships for successful fundraising. Although several organizations in this study had been relatively successful in securing funds, operating financial capital campaigns, and increasing their annual reserve funds, one challenge was shared among all of these organizations.

The ability to secure large gifts emerged as a critical weakness even for organizations operating on multi-million dollar annual budgets. Andrew provided a valuable example as he represented the organization with the largest annual budget in this study (Table 3.1). His organization had also successfully operated multi-million dollar financial campaigns during its 20-year tenure in the Northeastern part of the United States. Despite having an annual budget of \$1.8 million, the organization's largest gift during the previous fiscal year was \$100,000. In fact, he further emphasized that the organization generally does not receive large gifts (i.e., \$25,000+): "Maybe the average gift [is] \$2,000. You could say that's large, and it is pretty large [for an individual donation], but on the other hand, it's a lot of \$2,000 gifts to get you to \$1.8 million."

Although cultivating major or annual gift donors is certainly a time-consuming

task, it is important to understand the positive significance of relationship nurturing and other relationship cultivation strategies in other nonprofit settings (Waters, 2011). For major gift donors this also includes sharing tasks in identifying the best use of the gift. Thus, it is important to take the time to get to know prospective major gift donors. At the same time, SDP leaders need to be aware of the negative influence of reporting (i.e., providing financial audits or reports to major donors) on the level of satisfaction among major gift donors. Despite these insightful findings, future research is needed to examine donor relationships in SDP as giving can vary noticeably from context to context and the aforementioned research was focused in a nonprofit healthcare setting.

Another reported concern in terms of securing large gifts was the perception that these individuals already have fixed budgets and are constantly approached by a plethora of charitable organizations. Although wealthy individuals may have many philanthropic initiatives to choose from, it is important for SDP leaders to recognize that individuals tend to have multiple mental budgets. In their qualitative study of 42 North American donors, LaBarge and Stinson (2013) found that philanthropic gifts are not confined to charitable giving budgets. Instead, donors expend such gifts against other mental budgets. For example, special events were often attended, yet seldom considered to count against their charitable giving budget. Instead, some considered it an entertainment expense while others noted it as a business or personal expense. Findings from their study further indicated mental budget flexibility.

This ability of large-scale donors to classify their gifts as charitable or non-charitable expenses provides an opportunity for SDP leaders to solicit a gift that may not otherwise be made to the organization. In other words, a wealthy individual may have

met his/her annual goal in terms of a personal charitable giving budget, yet research suggests a donor could be willing to offer additional financial support against other mental budgets after exhausting the charitable budget (LaBarge & Stinson, 2013). Hence, SDP practitioners should target multiple donor budgets in their fundraising efforts rather than relying on solely cause-based solicitations.

**Financial campaigns.** Six executive directors also brought attention to the perceived importance of successfully implementing capital campaigns for increasing their financial capacity. As previously noted, Anthony successfully turned his organization around from a financial deficit to a six-figure surplus in only three years of serving as its executive director. Yet, perhaps his continuous quest for improving his fundraising skills is part of why he has been quite successful. Even after sharing the financial improvement of the organization, Anthony adamantly noted how he sought guidance in how to implement his first multi-million dollar financial campaign:

I don't have any idea what I'm doing. I'm going to have to go out and find a mentor to help me with that. We're going to have to figure it out together. No one currently on our board has ever been part of a tackling a campaign, trying to raise \$3 million for a building. That's going to be huge. We have to go out and learn how to do that.

The importance of financial campaigns, however, was discussed by several of the executive directors participating in this study. Isabella, for example, shared how her organization owns its own facility, yet it is not maintained and the nonprofit lacks the financial capital needed for facility renovations. As a result, she recently initiated a committee to explore the potential for a major financial campaign in order to improve its

facilities.

We have just formed a facility committee that includes board members, staff members, and a general contractor as a volunteer to start looking at that. We need to plan ahead for some pretty significant capital investment in the next few years. That's going to mean a major fundraising campaign.

Interestingly, the majority of participants discussing upcoming financial campaigns or those who had successfully raised millions of capital through financial campaigns were urban squash-based educational organizations. Unlike other organizations, executive directors from squash-based SDP nonprofits appeared confident and ambitious in their ability to undertake large-scale campaigns for building their own facilities. This raises questions regarding whether there are some attributes of the sport of squash or its community that differentiate the financial capacity of these organizations from those centered around other sports. The only other organization that did not express noticeable financial concerns was a lacrosse-based SDP entity. Although outside the scope of the current investigation, squash and lacrosse are two sports often associated with groups in the high socio-economic status. Squash, for example, is played at many IVY-league institutions of higher education. When asked about their recent success in an on-going multi-million dollar campaign for the construction of a dedicated urban squash-based educational facility, Landon shared his experience of what he perceived to be the most important aspect in successful capital campaigns:

Everything in Capital Campaign is momentum. You get one big donor which [you] usually have a couple in your back pocket and you get, want them to commit and then you go to the next one and you say, "Hey, I just got that guy,

would you join us?” “Yes.” Then you build momentum. I think that is the trick for drawing the big bucks.

A sport such as squash is not only expensive to play (typically only offered at private clubs), but the individuals who do play squash could potentially connect an organization with others potential wealthy donors. This warrants future research to examine potential differences in the financial capacity of SDP organizations based on the type of sport(s) associated with an organization.

**Grant funding.** Grant funding also emerged as a salient theme regarding aspects of financial capacity considered essential for goal achievement. Twelve executive directors discussed the perceived importance of this element and their experiences in grant funding. Understanding revenue sources within the SDP context is crucial since prior literature suggests financial volatility among nonprofit sport organizations can be associated with their primary types of revenue sources (See Wicker et al., 2013). Some participants in this study were dependent on grant funding while others expressed frustration in terms of rejection of grant request(s). Yet, regardless of their level of success in obtaining grant funding, the vast majority of executive directors discussing this area had a shared belief in the importance of grant revenue sources.

However, a few directors shared how their organizations largely relied upon grant revenue sources from various foundations and funding agencies. These included grants from local, regional, and national grant agencies. The type of foundations ranged from non-sport community foundations to sport-focused entities such as U.S. Soccer Foundation or the Women’s Sport Foundation. For example, Alexander shared how grants constitute the primary revenue source for his organization on the West Coast. He

shared some insights into the organization's ability to secure and manage various grants:

Yeah, we have a full-time development manager that is our point person on grants. She has a grant ... what is it, a database that she uses, to track all of our donors to [our organization] so everyone from individuals to corporations to foundations. Then we create a grant calendar and use that to track when proposals and reports are due.

Similarly, Jessica's organization in Southeastern part of the United States also relied heavily on grants. The majority of their revenues came from various foundations at the local, regional, and national levels. Interestingly, Jessica's organization does not have any paid staff members, yet herself and the board president have been able to secure a lot of their program funding from these types of grants. One reason for this success despite not having a paid staff members could be the commitment by Jessica and her board president to submit monthly grant proposals:

I do the grant writing for [our] 40 girls. Our board president writes a few grants here and there, but I've had a really good year in raising funds... We write grants every month. It's our goal to write and to send that proposal every month for small, medium and large grants.

Developing tangible and achievable short-term goals such as submitting one grant application per month or a set number per quarter within each level (local, regional, national) could be a valuable strategy for SDP organizations to overcome limited human resources capacity and secure grant funding. Jessica also expressed how she was proud of her ability to develop strong relationships with the grant agencies, which she perceived has resulted in on-going support. For example, her organization recently received a \$5000

grant supported by ESPNW from one of these foundations. This supports earlier discussions on importance of relationship nurturing in regards to fundraising (Waters, 2011) and the perceived importance of personal relationships among directors in this study. Findings in this study of the prevalence of grant funding among several SDP nonprofits is in contrast to prior literature on community sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2013). Those organizations tend to rely heavily on membership dues, public subsidies, and sponsorship revenues (Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2012, 2013). The perceived importance of grant funding among SDP organizations in this study could be due to the fact that SDP organizations do not have a membership structure to generate revenues. Future research is needed to examine the revenue streams of SDP organizations in more detail.

Whereas some directors expressed a heavy reliance on grant funding, others perceived grant funding to be challenging or too demanding given their current organizational capacity. Several interviewees spoke of the time commitment needed to not only research and prepare grant applications, but also to manage different grant cycles and grant reporting requirements. A few executive directors discussed weighing the benefits and challenges of committing towards certain grant opportunities. For example, although Josh's soccer-based organization on the West Coast was the recipient of a national grant from the U.S. Soccer Foundation, he expressed concerns about allocating finite resources towards something that may not necessarily result in any return for the organization:

I had recently a couple people present grants to me that I just basically said, "No, we're not going to apply for that." If we win this grant, we get money, but it's tied



up to do something that we're not really doing, which is going to limit our capacity to maintain what we are currently struggling to pull off already. It's a vicious cycle. If we're going to actually enter in the grant world, we need to have a strategic plan about why are we writing these grants, and how are they going to help us to reach our goals, and not just, "Oh, here's \$10,000 we can get, or here's \$3,000 we can go get."

This brings attention to the importance for SDP leaders to critically examine different grant opportunities as reporting requirements and expense stipulations may vary considerably. In light of the competitive nonprofit grant landscape, it is crucial for SDP nonprofits to ensure that these funding opportunities align with their organizational mission (Dolnicar, Irvine, & Lazarevski, 2008). Otherwise, the tension between grant funding and organizational mission may compromise the intent of the SDP entity. Tactics for minimizing this issue could be the inclusion of volunteers in the grant preparation process as well as the application of a *mission filter* to ensure grant funding supports the underlying mission of the nonprofit entity (Dolnicar et al., 2008). It is important to develop a thorough understanding of grant requirements and to identify grants that align with an organization's existing programming. Although financial pressures could make certain large grants seem attractive, SDP managers ought to critically examine the potential challenges associated with adding or changing programming for funding purposes.

A number of executive directors also perceived that the lack of multi-year grant cycles presented a critical challenge in terms of their financial capacity and overall goal achievement ability. For example, Alexander shared:

We don't have any multi-year grants, and so you always feel like you're on a hamster wheel of writing proposals and reports, and always needing to find new fits with foundations, because oftentimes they'll change their priorities or their system. It's always needing to figure out what's the fit with this foundation, or what's the fit with this grant.

Several executive directors also expressed the perceived importance of securing a relatively large grant for its credibility in subsequent grant applications. Being the recipient of a national or well-noted regional grant was perceived to increase the organization's financial credibility. Several of the interviewees who had a successful track record in securing grants shared Landon's beliefs in the perceived value of additional exposure or credibility from that initial grant:

We have for the past two years being very successful in grants. It was not a success in the past, [but] two years [ago] we just hit a big grant year. That kind of gave us some stability and gave us some visibility to other foundations. Which is kind of, where we've been trying to get the past, five or six years.

Landon attributed part of this success to the fact that it took the organization five years to graduate its first class of program participants. In other words, during the initial struggles for grant funding, his organization did not have any evidence of program success. However, once they were able to highlight an entire class of youth participants who had completed a five-year program they seemed to have a stronger appeal to funding agencies. Moreover, Landon also alluded to the amount of time it took him and his staff members to cultivate genuine relationships with decision-makers who have a say in the grant funding process. This supports prior literature on the role of personal relationships

in nonprofit fundraising (Waters, 2011).

The perceived importance of securing a large initial grant that could serve as a springboard for additional grant funding was also echoed by several executive directors who did not have a track record of success in terms of grant applications. For example, Matthew openly shared his interest in wanting to secure a federal grant as the base funding for his SDP programs. His analogy brought attention to the challenges of trying to operate without such grant support:

What I would like is to get a federal grant that would keep us afloat, be the base of what we do while we add in everything else. It's hard to have a salad without a green. I would like for all my other funders from private foundations, some community foundations, some companies, really to just be the other ingredients in that salad bowl, to be the tomato and the cucumbers and the broccoli. I want that [federal grant] base. I haven't been able to get that base in. Once I can get that, I'll feel much better about our future.

Evidently, lack of success in grant funding can raise concerns about an SDP organization's financial future. Despite following the requests from previously denied grant applications, Matthew expressed frustration in pursuing grants as he had been rejected again despite making all the funder's requested changes. It is possible that the discrepancies in terms of grant success may be due to geographical differences. Some organizations relied heavily upon grants as their primary revenue source, while others reported struggles in securing any type of grant funding for their programming. Nonetheless, the majority of directors shared the perceived importance of grant funding as a revenue source in SDP.

Findings in this study of the prevalence of grant funding among several SDP nonprofits is in contrast to prior literature on community sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2013). Those organizations tend to rely heavily on membership dues, public subsidies, and sponsorship revenues (Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2012, 2013). The perceived importance of grant funding among SDP organizations in this study could be due the fact that SDP organizations do not have a membership structure for generating such revenues. Future research is needed to examine the revenue streams of SDP organizations in more detail, given the different nature of SDP nonprofits compared to community sport clubs (e.g., Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2013). Revenue from special events also emerged as another prominent revenue source among SDP nonprofits in this study.

**Special events.** A total of nine executive directors expressed the perceived importance for securing large amounts of financial capital through various fundraising events. The types of special events varied from gala dinners to sport competitions. However, the ability to develop an annual special event was perceived to provide a trusted source of sustainable income. For example, Andrew suggested his squash-based educational organization is very financially viable after operating for over 20 years in the Northeast, in part due to a special event raising over one million dollars annually for the organization. Yet, the importance of special events was not necessarily unique for only well-established SDP entities. Smaller organizations such as William's newly established nonprofit along the East Coast also relied heavily on an annual corporate tournament at a local NBA arena with a \$5,000 entry fee per team. William attributed much of the success of the corporate basketball tournament to the unique opportunity for the corporate

staff members to experience something (i.e., playing on an NBA court) they may not be able to do otherwise. Therefore, cultivating strong relationships and leveraging potential sport connections with local professional teams or intercollegiate athletic departments could allow for the development of these types of special events. Many of the organizations operating urban squash educational programs also expressed a successful track record in using their courts to stage corporate squash-tournaments. These findings suggest SDP organizations appear to target the ‘love for sport’ motive (See Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013) among not only volunteers, but also among donors. This warrants additional research since these findings do not appear in prior literature on financial capacity of nonprofit sport organizations (e.g., Cordery et al., 2013; Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). However, in their study of a national sample of German sport clubs, Feiler et al., (2014) found a significant positive effect of staging non-sport social events on the amount of donations received by the clubs. Although interviewees in this study reported the importance of sport-based special events, these events appeared to serve a similar function for SDP nonprofits as non-sport events do for German sport clubs and their financial capacity.

Despite his lack of fundraising experience, Anthony shared that his organization’s first squash-based tournament with a \$500 entry fee grossed approximately \$48,000, which resulted in a net gain of \$42,000. The organization had previously never raised more than \$13,000 from its traditional fundraising dinner/gala event. During the following three years, the organization made an annual net profit of approximately \$110,000 from the squash tournament. In 2014, the organization also incorporated a

crowdfunding component to the annual event. As a result, the gross income from the event peaked at \$178,000, with a net profit of \$166,000. These sport-based special events emerged as significantly more profitable than more traditional fundraising events (dinners, etc.) for organizations in the current study. This could have important implications based on prior research on mental budgeting in regards to nonprofit organizations. Recent findings suggest that donors often do not consider expenses related to fundraising events (e.g., dinner/gala) against their mental charitable budget (LaBarge & Stinson, 2014). As previously mentioned, this is important as it provides an opportunity for nonprofit managers to target different mental budgets for increasing the amount of funds solicited from each donor. Findings from this study further indicate the potential value of leveraging special events for considerable revenue even among SDP organizations with limited fundraising experience. The success of sport-based special events for fundraising in this study may be due to donors considering such expenses against other mental budgets. Future research is needed to develop a better understanding of mental budgeting among SDP donors.

**Other revenue sources.** The SDP organizations selected for this study also relied on a variety of additional revenue sources beyond grants, special events, and board fees. Other revenue streams included individual donations, service fees, program fees, and endowment funding. Six executive directors noted the importance of individual donations for their financial capacity. This supports prior literature on the role of individual donations as a primary funding source for both sport nonprofits (See Wicker et al., 2015) and non-sport nonprofits (See Kearns et al., 2014). SDP organizations that are dependent on these types of contributions may want to consider instituting a recurring giving

program. In her experience, Jessica suggested, “The good thing about some of our recurring donors is we can count on them giving \$1200 a year because they give \$100 every month and we can count on that money.” Others had developed ‘friends of the future’ programs whereby individual donors committed to multi-year agreements of four-figure donations. However, it is crucial for SDP leaders to recognize the need for considerably different relationship cultivation strategies for annual giving donors compared to major gift donors (Waters, 2011). For example, prior literature indicates reporting has a positive influence on annual giving donors while assurances negatively influenced the perceived satisfaction of annual giving donors. Hence, as Waters (2011, p. 472) argued, “behavior, more than verbal assurances, will produce increased satisfaction levels in the nonprofit–donor relationship.”

Another prevalent revenue stream delineated as important for the financial capacity of several organizations was corporate funding. The types of corporate support included a broad range of businesses such as adidas, Chipotle, Coca-Cola, and The Home Depot. The role of corporate involvement in SDP initiatives is certainly up for debate as several critics have raised concerns regarding the underlying intentions of these neo-liberal funding structures in SDP (e.g., Levermore, 2008a). The perceptions of participants varied from those accepting any corporate funding as the dollars were perceived to ultimately help benefit more children regardless of the nature of the corporation to those executive directors who carefully evaluated the alignment between their SDP entity and potential corporations. Despite concerns over mission alignment, prior research has found no significant influence of private funding streams on nonprofit program delivery (Guo, 2006; Hughes & Luksetich, 2004). Yet, prior research on

community sport clubs indicates that those relying on external revenues from sponsorships were significantly more likely to report financial and volunteer challenges compared to clubs that did not rely on sponsorship revenues (Coates et al., 2014).

Therefore, additional research is needed to examine the role of corporate funding in SDP.

A broad range of other alternative revenue sources including public funding were also mentioned, but did not emerge as salient themes by themselves. Yet, the importance of these alternative types of revenue sources did emerge as important aspects for their broader financial capacity. For example, some interviewees discussed how they generated service fee revenues by charging local municipalities or school districts for providing their SDP programming. Others generated modest revenues through program fees. These were generally structured using a sliding-scale system based on a participant's family household income. Another executive director shared how his organization had successfully established a 50/50 raffle partnership with a local MLS team that helped generate roughly \$40,000 in annual proceeds. Overall, additional research is needed on revenue streams in the SDP context since broader nonprofit management literature has indicated considerable differences in interactions among revenue streams depending on the nature of the nonprofit (See Guo, 2006; Kim & Van Ryzin, 2014; Tinkelman & Neely, 2011). However, financial expenses are another important aspect to consider in regards to financial capacity.

**Expenses.** Four executive directors mentioned the perceived importance of sustainable expenditures of financial capital in regards to its overall financial capacity. As Samuel, noted, even “\$500,000 can just wash up in a year or two pretty quickly if you don't invest wisely in your programs.” To this extent, programming and human resources



were noted as the primary expense items for their respective SDP organizations. Anthony further suggested that an organization's budget tells a story of what it cares about as one can see where the money is being invested. These findings supported those of Doherty et al. (2014) on the importance of stable expenses for financial sustainability in their study on community sport clubs. Yet overall, few studies examining capacity of sport organizations have considered expenses (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). The ability to manage expenses was mentioned by some of the interviewees, yet most of the executive directors participating in this study did not perceive expenses to be a critical element associated with overall financial capacity and the ability to achieve organizational goals. This is concerning as financial expenses directly influence the financial capacity of a nonprofit organization. Future research should examine expenses based on financial statements and annual reports of SDP organizations. These findings could further be supplemented by qualitative inquiries of the perceived financial expenses and rationale behind them by SDP practitioners.

**Summary of findings for RQ2.** The ability to solicit and expend financial resources in a sustainable manner is known as the financial capacity of a nonprofit organization (Hall et al., 2003). Six elements of financial capacity emerged in this study: financial management, fundraising, financial campaigns, grant funding, special events, and other revenue sources. The ability to manage the organization's financial activities including financial reporting and various deadlines for payments, reports, or funding proposals emerged as a salient theme in this study. Although this was perceived as a crucial element of capacity, many directors expressed a perceived lack of financial capacity. This was suggested to subsequently influence other areas of capacity such as

limit the organization's human resources capacity. These findings support Akingbola's (2013) and Wicker and Hallmann's (2013) argument on the influence of financial capacity on an organization's human resources capacity. Therefore, the board governing an SDP organization ought to develop a strong understanding of the importance of financial management and making this a priority of the nonprofit.

Fundraising, on the other hand, emerged as the most salient element within the financial capacity of organizations in this study. All interviewees shared the perceived importance of fundraising. Again, however, despite the perceived importance of this capacity element, many directors reported noticeable challenges in terms of raising funds, especially in terms of securing large gifts. This could be partly due to the lack of fundraising experience among many of the directors. At the same time, directors perceived fundraising to be an issue regardless of the size of the SDP organization. However, part of this challenge appeared to be due to lack of a clear and coherent fundraising strategy or plan. Misener and Doherty (2009) found similar concerns in their case study of a Canadian sport club; however, no prior research appears to have examined the perceived fundraising experiences of SDP leaders. The noticeable concerns of fundraising support prior reports of the apparent financial need of many international SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008). Overall, the reported challenges in regards to their financial capacity supports prior findings from research on sport clubs in Germany (Wicker & Breuer, 2014) and New Zealand (Cordery et al., 2014), yet is in contrast to prior literature on sport clubs in Switzerland (Wicker et al., 2014) and Canada (Sharpe, 2006). However, the perceived role of financial appeal in this study does not appear in any prior literature on capacity of nonprofit sport organizations and thus adds important

new insight that warrants future research. It is important for SDP leaders to understand that lack of support for charitable organizations from potential donors is rarely due to a rejection of a charity brand. Instead, SDP leaders ought to focus on raising awareness about their mission and grassroots programs in local communities (Faulkner et al., in press). At the same time, it is important to understand that limited financial capacity may not necessarily be due to poor organizational management as the financial capacity of a nonprofit is also influenced by higher level environmental factors (Hall et al., 2003; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2015). Nonetheless, SDP practitioners can increase their fundraising by developing a better understanding of relationship cultivation strategies (Waters, 2011). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that individuals tend to have multiple mental budgets (LaBarge & Stinson, 2013). Hence, SDP practitioners should target multiple donor budgets in their fundraising efforts rather than relying solely on cause-based solicitations.

The ability to successfully implement financial campaigns also emerged as another perceived important element of financial capacity. The ability to implement capital campaigns was considered imperative for increasing overall financial capacity. At the same time, this was perceived to positively influence other areas of capacity including infrastructure and process capacity. Several directors utilized capital campaigns for building their own standalone facilities, which was reported as a crucial aspect of their organizational development. The apparent success of squash-based SDP nonprofits in capital campaigns raises questions regarding whether there are some attributes of the sport of squash or its sport community that differentiate the financial capacity of these organizations from those centered around other sports.

Another salient element of financial capacity was grant funding since the majority of participants considered this essential for goal achievement. Some interviewees in this study were dependent on grant funding while others expressed frustration in terms of rejection of grant request(s). Regardless, there was largely a consensus on the perceived importance of this type of funding for increased financial capacity and overall goal achievement ability. The type of grants ranged from non-sport community foundations to sport-focused entities such as U.S. Soccer Foundation or the Women's Sport Foundation. Interestingly, the presence of paid staff dedicated toward grant applications did not appear to be essential as some organizations had been successful with only volunteers while others with paid staff continued to struggle in terms of grant funding. Developing tangible and achievable short-term goals such as submitting one grant application per month or a set number per quarter within each level (local, regional, national) could be a valuable strategy for SDP organizations to overcome limited human resources capacity and secure grant funding. Findings in this study of the prevalence of grant funding among several SDP nonprofits were in contrast to prior literature on community sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2013). Those organizations tend to rely heavily on membership dues, public subsidies, and sponsorship revenues (Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2012, 2013). This difference could be due to the lack of membership structure among SDP nonprofits. At the same time, it is important to note that some directors expressed a sense of critical reflection on allocation resources towards grant funding since there is no real guarantee of any financial return for the organization. It is crucial for SDP nonprofits to ensure that these funding opportunities align with their organizational mission (Dolnicar et al., 2008). Moreover, several directors expressed a perceived importance of securing a

large grant for increasing their financial credibility. However, although financial pressures could make certain large grants seem attractive, SDP managers ought to critically examine the potential challenges associated with adding or changing programming for funding purposes.

The use of special fundraising events also emerged as a central element of the financial capacity of participating SDP nonprofits. Although the specific type of special events varied from gala dinners to sport competitions, the ability to develop an annual special event was perceived to provide a trusted source of sustainable income. Sport-based special events were expressed as noticeably more successful than traditional nonprofit fundraising events (e.g., gala dinner). Therefore, cultivating strong relationships and leveraging potential sport connections with local professional teams or intercollegiate athletic departments could allow for the development of these types of special events. These findings indicate SDP organizations appear to target the ‘love for sport’ motive (See Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013) among not only volunteers, but also among donors. This warrants additional research since these findings do not appear in prior literature on financial capacity of nonprofit sport organizations (Cordery et al., 2013; Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). This also brings attention to the importance of understanding mental budgeting since donors often do not consider expenses related to special fundraising events against their mental charitable budget (LaBarge & Stinson, 2014). Thus, these findings indicate the potential value of leveraging special events for considerable revenue even among SDP organizations with limited fundraising experience.

Other revenue sources including individual donations, service fees, program fees,

and endowments were also perceived as crucial for financial capacity. The perceived importance of individual donations supports prior literature on the role of individual donations as a primary funding source for both sport nonprofits (See Wicker et al., 2015) and non-sport nonprofits (See Kearns et al., 2014). SDP organizations that are dependent on these types of contributions may want to consider instituting a recurring giving program. Corporate funding was also perceived as attractive for several SDP nonprofits, although a few directors did raise concerns about the alignment (or lack thereof) between a corporation and the mission of their SDP nonprofit. SDP leaders ought to be careful in pursuing corporate funding since prior research on community sport clubs indicates that those relying on external revenues from sponsorships were significantly more likely to report financial and volunteer challenges compared to those that did not rely on such revenues (Coates et al., 2014). Moreover, concerns linger regarding the underlying intentions of corporate funding within SDP literature (Levermore, 2008a). A broad range of other alternative revenue sources including public funding, program service fees, and contract revenue did not emerge as salient themes by themselves. However, the importance of these alternative types of revenue sources did emerge as important aspects for their broader financial capacity.

Last, but not least, some directors discussed the importance of sustainable financial expenses in regard to their broader financial capacity. The primary expenses appear to be programming and human resources. Although the ability to manage expenses was mentioned by some of the interviewees, the majority of the executive directors participating in this study did not report expenses as a critical element associated with its overall financial capacity and organizational goal achievement ability.

This is concerning as financial expenses directly influence the financial capacity of a nonprofit organization.

**RQ3: What critical elements exist within the structural capacity of the SDP organizations?**

In addition to mobilizing and deploying human and financial capital, organizational capacity also requires existing structures that allow for these resources to function. According to Hall et al. (2003, p. 37), structural capacity refers to the “processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, and support structures within an organization that help it to function.” As previously mentioned, structural capacity consists of three sub-dimensions: (a) relationship and network capacity, (b) infrastructure and process capacity, and (c) planning and development capacity. Emergent themes will be discussed within each of these areas (Table 4.4).

**Relationship and network capacity.** The ability and process of developing and cultivating relationships with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., funders, members, volunteers, and other organizations) is considered an organization’s relationship and network capacity (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2013). Five elements emerged in this study in regards to relationship and network capacity: mutually beneficial relationships, memorandums of understanding, partnership management, partnership formation, and organizational flexibility (Table 4.4).

***Mutually beneficial relationships.*** Nine executive directors expressed the perceived importance of mutually beneficial relationships for its broader structural capacity. Having genuine relationships with external partners who understand the value of the SDP agency’s work was perceived as imperative aspect increased goal

achievement. As Anthony stated, “It’s not that we’re going in and saying give us something. This has to work both ways.” Similarly, Jennifer expressed her perceived value of cultivating mutually beneficial collaborative relationships:

We're not always walking around with our hand out and saying what can you do to help us. We're looking at it as what can we do to enhance what you're doing, and benefit from your resources, and likewise, bring resources to the table so that there is synergy and truly create collaboration.

These types of engaged relationships with external partners were perceived to promote reciprocity between the respective organizations, which executive directors portrayed as a fundamental aspect for maintaining sustainable inter-organizational partnerships. This brings attention to the importance of having external partners who understand the value of what an SDP organization does and can not only provide resources, but also serve as champions on behalf of the SDP entity. This was expressed as one of the main reasons why having mutually beneficial relationships was perceived as a crucial element for participants’ organizational goal achievement ability. Those partnerships that interviewees characterized as mutually beneficial were perceived to subsequently help increase the capacity of the SDP agency as these types of external partners were considered more vested in the inter-organizational relationships. As Anthony stated, “let’s share the successes together, not try and to claim hey, we did more than you did or you did less than we did.” This appeared to serve as a core value embraced by SDP executive directors in their quest to cultivate and maintain a broad range of inter-organizational partnerships for increasing their overall organizational capacity. The broad range of existing partnerships extends prior SDP literature reporting



the heavy dependence on external relationships with various stakeholders (e.g., Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010). Findings in this study supported the perceived critical role of balanced relationships and engagement with partners similar to what Doherty et al. (2014) found in their focus groups with presidents of 51 Canadian sport clubs.

The perceived importance of mutually beneficial partnerships among SDP organizations in this study are also important as these types of relationships can help connect local community programs with broader policy-level efforts (Sugden, 2010). In order to minimize potential negative or unintended outcomes of external partnerships, SDP leaders ought to be transparent about intended roles and responsibilities from the onset of a partnership.

*Memorandums of understanding.* Written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) do not appear as a critical element in prior literature on the structural capacity of nonprofit sport organization (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006). However, four executive directors in this study noted MOUs as an important strategy for managing their external relationships. Hence, this is another important contribution of the current study to our understanding of organizational capacity of nonprofit sport organizations.

One example representing the use of these written memorandums is that of Josh's soccer-based organization on the West Coast. Following a few experiences where external partners did not follow through on their intended promises, he worked hard with his staff to develop and identify clear expectations of any external partnership, "we try to be really clear and draw the memorandum of understanding with our partners. We say, here's what you're going to get when you partner with [our organization]; here's what

we'll do for you.” Implementing written MOUs can help strengthen inter-organizational relationships as it promotes a discussion about clear expectations for each party from the onset of such a partnership. The use of MOUs has been instrumental for nonprofits engaged in relationships with institutions of higher education (Bushouse, 2005) and corporate businesses (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). This in turn can help minimize potentially unforeseen consequences for SDP practitioners such as frustration or even getting ‘burned’ by some potential community partners as Josh had experienced.

***Partnership management.*** Partnership management also emerged as one of the most salient themes in regards to the relationship and network capacity of participating organizations. A total of 12 executive directors emphasized their own perceived strengths and challenges in coordinating the tasks involved in having multiple inter-organizational partnerships. The ability of an organization to successfully manage these relationships was identified as a crucial aspect for the longevity of the partnerships.

As previously mentioned, the majority of executive directors interviewed in this study expressed a strong dependence on external partners for operating day-to-day activities in their respective communities. This presence of relationships with a broad range of external stakeholders has been fairly well documented in prior SDP studies across different settings (e.g., Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010) and could be due to the lack of resources among many SDP initiatives (Kidd, 2008). A number of organizations in this study were engaged in relationships with entities including private corporations, school districts, municipalities, professional sport teams, and other community-based service organizations. The broad spectrum of external partners was perceived a necessity for the SDP entities to be able to operate and fulfill its missions.

**Table 4.4***Summary of Structural Resources Capacity Findings*

<u>Capacity Element</u>	<u>Sample Quote</u>
<u>Relationship and network capacity</u>	
Mutually beneficial relationships	We're looking at it as what can we do to enhance what you're doing, and benefit from your resources, and likewise, bring resources to the table so that there is synergy and truly create collaboration. (Jennifer)
Memorandums of understanding	We try to be really clear and draw the memorandum of understanding with our partners. We say, here's what you're going to get when you partner with [our organization]; Here's what we'll do for you. (Josh)
Partnership management	There are lots of resources out there in the form of college readiness programs, corporations... [Yet] all of this needs staff time to manage it. I keep throwing ideas at [my staff] and relationships I know I could cultivate and they keep saying, [no], not yet, we can't handle it, we don't have time (Isabella)
Partnership formation	Most of the time with organizational partners they reach out to us; they say we do this, and we would like your organization to be the beneficiary of what we do. (Christian)
Organizational flexibility	We take advantage of the opening that they provide, so we're not a rigid organization. We're a very flexible organization. I would say our flexibility and that we also offer an added value [is a strength of ours] (James)
<u>Infrastructure and process capacity</u>	
Internal structure	We are all good friends, but sometimes that can be tricky when other factors are at play or if people are not pulling their weight or don't understand what it means to be professional. (Stephanie)
Organizational culture	I think our culture very much supports our ability to achieve our mission and our vision. We recognize that we're an organization that creates experiential learning and wants kids to have fun. We try to bring that inside our staff culture as well. (Isabella)
Access to facilities	We get all of our sites for free because we run it all through the schools. (Josh)
Internal systems and procedures	One of the main areas that we saw as a gap for us is actually documenting policies and creating a handbook of everything. We have some pieces and parts in place, but not everything. So that's something that we are committed to working on in the next year (Jennifer)
<u>Planning and development capacity</u>	
Strategic planning	I'm not just the executive director. I'm also the van driver and the one that deals with all the parents...so it's just finding time within doing all that, doing laundry, stuff like that. Finding the times in between doing all of that stuff to work on longer-term goals and vision is probably the biggest challenge. (Daniel)
Plan implementation	I think a lot of it time's going to tell. I think we're setup for it. I think we're ready for it. Time will tell though in terms of our actual ability to [implement it] (Samuel)

The increasing number of external relationships, however, consequently requires staff members to allocate more and more time towards maintaining these partnerships. Gazley and Abner (2014) found similar findings in their study of charitable organizations involved with in-kind donation partnerships whereby the increased capacity constraints on the organization sometimes outweighed the partnership benefits.

Findings in this study bring attention to the potential capacity constraints that appear to be the result of the multitude of external partnerships of SDP nonprofits. This is further undermined by the apparent lack of sufficient resources in SDP (Kidd, 2008). Future research should examine the relationship between these partnerships and organizational capacity constraints in more detail before recommendations can be made regarding partnership management in SDP. The broad range of external partners, however, also extends prior findings on Canadian sport clubs (Misener & Doherty, 2009).

Nonprofit sport organizations (SDP and non-SDP entities) appear to engage with a more diverse set of external stakeholders than other types of nonprofit organizations. Additional research is needed to examine the potential unique attributes of the nonprofit sport context. At the same time, it is important to recognize that contextualization appears crucial even within SDP as prior studies indicated varying types of structures and balances of power in partnerships (See Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011a; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sugden, 2010).

In a more recent study of community sport clubs, Misener and Doherty (2012) found Canadian sport clubs were involved in an average of six external partnerships.

Although the number of external partnerships was beyond the primary purpose of this study, findings clearly indicated that most participating SDP nonprofits engaged in noticeably more partnerships ranging from corporate partners to other community-based nonprofits.

One way that some of the organizations in this study attempted to minimize the potential burden for any individual staff member in managing multiple relationships was to share the responsibility for managing partnerships. For example, Alexander noted how this had helped his SDP nonprofit:

We have staff that specifically they work with specific schools. Myself, I own a lot of the relationships around the funders. Our operations director owns a lot of the relationships around our partner programs that are the fee-for-service programs. That definitely helps, just distributing those relationships across the organization.

At the same time, a few other interviewees of smaller SDP organizations expressed the challenge of trying to share the responsibility with a limited number of paid staff members. This brings attention to the perceived influence of other dimensions of capacity on the ability (or lack thereof) to build and cultivate external partnerships. For example, Isabella expressed how her organization's lack of capacity hindered the organization from collaborating with other community and educational organizations that could help fulfill the needs of their program participants. She stated:

There are a lot more things I wish we are doing. There are lots of resources out there in the form of college readiness programs, corporations... [Yet] all of this needs staff time to manage it. I keep throwing ideas at [my staff] and relationships

I know I could cultivate and they keep saying, [no], not yet, we can't handle it, we don't have time. It's frustrating because these are resources that I know would serve our kids but we just don't have the capacity to take advantage of them at the moment.

Hence, while scarcity of resources can serve as a determinant in the formation of external partnerships (Wicker et al., 2013), these relationships may unintentionally result in additional capacity constraints (Gazley & Abner, 2014), which subsequently may inhibit an organization from maximizing the benefits of external partnerships. For example, heavy dependence on external funding agencies has resulted in unequal power structures and conflicts of interests for SDP organizations (See Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey & Banda, 2011; Straume & Hasselgård, 2014). Directors in this study did not explicitly state these issues in operating SDP nonprofits in North America, although the dependence on external funders was still evident from the interviews.

Nonetheless, there was consensus among the interviewees on the importance of communication for successfully managing external relationships. This is an important finding as prior SDP literature has suggested a lack of sufficient partnership communication in SDP including external relationships with high performance sport entities (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010). In this study, for example, Jessica shared how her volunteer-driven nonprofit utilized an informational newsletter as a way to keep their organizational partners updated on their latest activities:

We try to make sure we reach out. We do a monthly informational newsletter that keeps people up-to-date on what we're doing. I think for us, just being able to

communicate with our partners is where we find the easiest way to manage those.

Partnership communication was further portrayed as an on-going long-term process. While identifying potential partners who recognize and understand the value of an SDP entity is essential, identifying a clear person of contact within each party is another important aspect of successful inter-organizational partnerships. Having the SDP staff be clear, honest, and responsive to external partners was perceived as crucial for promoting reciprocal and sustainable relationships whether with a corporate funder or another community service organization. As Landon noted, “You’ve got to be honest every time you can, you’ve got to be loyal every time you can and you have to treat people the right way...it’s small things everyday for a long period of time.” One way Adam’s organization tried address this issue in its school partnerships was to provide a stipend for local teachers to also serve as site liaisons:

A lot of times we have a teacher, and they end up being ... They're kind of like the site director. They end up being the go-between. If the schools ... If there's an issue with how the program's going to run in the school, they can kind of straddle both worlds. We're paying them as a coach. They're obviously a teacher there. They can usually mesh that together pretty well in terms of how things should flow.

Although this requires an organization to utilize additional financial resources, SDP administrators perceived that the local ownership and responsiveness by these teachers far outweighed the relatively small financial investment. At the same time, the nature of the partnering organization was also identified as a challenge in terms of managing external relationships. For example, as Jennifer suggested, when you work with

recreational departments and other local service providers:

There's a lot of transitory staff, you know, they don't stay long. A lot of turnover and so, you may have one rec center director that really loves what you're doing, and then another rec center director that comes in and take their place that could care less, and you know, you need to just kind of roll with the punches, and sometimes that means you don't get your consideration like you did before, and you may even have to just say well listen, this isn't going to work, we're moving on, and we've had to do that in some situations. But ... and sadly ... you know, when you don't get that kind of support and cooperation, then that kind of filters down to the kids.

This brings attention to not only the importance of clear communication, but also to the need for the staff of SDP organizations to critically reflect on the nature of existing partnerships over time as organizational changes may result in unforeseen challenges in these relationships. Whereas prior studies have examined some the prevalence and types of partnerships of SDP organizations (See Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Lindsay & Banda, 2011), findings from this study further contribute to the SDP literature by (a) highlighting the perceived importance of partnership management by SDP leaders, and (b) providing insight into the lived experiences of SDP practitioners in regard to different aspects of partnership management and how it is perceived to influence their broader structural capacity.

***Partnership formation.*** Another element of relationship and network capacity that emerged as crucial for the structural capacity of participating SDP organization was partnership formation. Ten executive directors in this study discussed how they perceived



their ability to identify potential partnerships and subsequently build new partnerships as an important strength of their overall relationship and network capacity. As an example, Isabella noted why she perceived partnership formation to be an important strength of her organization's relationship and network capacity, "I think we're very persistent. If there's an organization we're really interested in partnering with, we will spend the time to reach out and really actively pursue them and make our case and hopefully win them over." Initially, most of the SDP entities were dependent on this type of persistence when initiating external relationships. The executive directors and their staff members reportedly worked extensively to identify potential external partners that could help them increase their capacity.

Over time, however, there was consensus that a broad range of potential community entities seeking to get involved and support a SDP nonprofit would approach them to initiate a partnership. Christian, for example, expressed how in his experience potential partners seem to drive the formation of potential collaboration, "most of the time with organizational partners they reach out to us; they say we do this, and we would like your organization to be the beneficiary of what we do." Some of the directors representing the larger and more established nonprofits also shared how they recently hired paid staff responsible for facilitating relationship building with potential partners in the local community.

***Organizational flexibility.*** Organizational flexibility was also identified as an important aspect in regards to increasing an organization's relationship and network capacity. Six executive directors brought attention to the importance of being open to potential program changes or scheduling changes in order to make an external partnership

work. For example, as James and several others shared, there are often limitations on when an SDP organization may utilize a particular field or sports facility through external partnerships. Although several of the urban squash educational organizations in this study have their own facilities or are in the process of capital campaigns for constructing their sport facilities, those relying on partnerships with private squash clubs still shared the importance of flexibility as the clubs need to balance the needs and demands of paying members with those of the nonprofit partner entity.

Another example included those SDP organizations utilizing facilities through partnerships with local municipalities where contracts gave the external partner the first right of refusal for usage of city-owned sport and recreational facilities. This emergent element of structural capacity does not appear in prior SDP literature or nonprofit management literature on organizational capacity. However, as Samii, Van Wassenhove, and Bhattacharya (2002) discovered in their international development case study, embracing flexibility and incorporating such mechanisms and values into MOUs can be instrumental in creating more effective cross-sector partnerships. Therefore, SDP leaders ought to not only be flexible, but should also allow for flexibility in their MOUs in order to increase the likelihood of successful relationships with each external partner. Further, it is necessary to realize the importance of contextual understanding since it can dictate the most appropriate type of partnership structure for SDP organizations (Hasselgård & Straume, 2015; Lindsey, 2013).

***Summary of relationship and network capacity findings.*** The ability and process of cultivating and maintaining external relationships is considered an organization's relationship and network capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Having genuine and mutually

beneficial relationships with external partners who understand the value of the SDP agency's work was perceived as an imperative element for increased goal achievement. This brings attention to the importance of having external partners who understand the value in what an SDP organization does and can not only provide resources, but also serve as a champion on behalf of the SDP entity. Findings in this study supported the perceived critical role of balanced partnerships similar to what Doherty et al. (2014) found in their study of 51 community sport clubs. Findings also extend prior SDP literature reporting the heavy dependence on external relationships with various stakeholders (e.g., Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010). SDP leaders should be transparent about roles and responsibilities from the onset of a partnership to minimize potential unintended outcomes.

Written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) also emerged as an important element of the relationship and network capacity of SDP nonprofits. This does not appear as a critical element in prior literature on the structural capacity of nonprofit sport organizations (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006). However, the use of MOUs is instrumental for nonprofits engaged in relationships with institutions of higher education (Bushouse, 2005) and corporate businesses (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Similarly, findings in this study suggest MOUs can help SDP leaders strengthen their inter-organizational relationships and ultimately increase their structural capacity.

One of the most salient themes in this study in regards to elements of relationship and network capacity was partnership management. Many directors in this study expressed a heavy dependence on external partnerships and further noted the ability of an

organization to successfully manage these relationships as a crucial aspect for the longevity of the partnerships. Relationships with a broad range of external stakeholders as found among SDP nonprofits in this study has been fairly well documented in prior SDP studies across different settings (e.g., Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010) and could be due to the lack of resources among many SDP initiatives (Kidd, 2008). Although these relationships were considered essential to the operation of SDP organizations, the increasing number of partnerships consequently required staff members to allocate more and more time toward maintaining these relationships. Hence, it is important to recognize that the increased capacity constraints sometimes outweighed the benefits of a given external partnership (Gazley & Abner, 2014). One way some of the organizations in this study attempted to minimize the potential burden for any individual staff member in managing multiple relationships was to share the responsibility for managing partnerships. Findings in this study further bring attention to the importance of clear communication in an inter-organizational partnership. In addition, the staff of SDP organizations ought to critically reflect on the nature of existing partnerships over time as organizational changes may result in unforeseen challenges in these relationships.

In addition to on-going partnership management, partnership formation also emerged as an important element of the relationship and network capacity. Directors spoke about how the ability to identify potential partnerships and subsequently build new partnerships was an important strength of their overall relationship and network capacity. At the same time, organizational flexibility was noted as another important element within this sub dimension of structural capacity. Being open to potential program or

scheduling changes in order to make some external partnerships work was identified as an important ability for increasing structural capacity. These aspects should be incorporated into the earlier mentioned MOUs since prior research suggests including such mechanisms and values into the MOUs can be instrumental in creating more effective cross-sector partnerships (Samii et al., 2002).

**Infrastructure and process capacity.** Infrastructure and process capacity refers to organizational structures and systems such as organizational policies, internal operational documents, and internal resources for implementing day-to-day operations. Examples found in prior studies of nonprofits include internal communication systems and organizational culture (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003). Unfortunately, little is known about the infrastructure and process capacity of SDP organizations. The majority of SDP literature related to aspects of structural capacity remains focused on external partnerships (e.g., Cameron, 2013; Lindsey, 2013; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), despite the importance of understanding the structure of organizations implementing SDP programs (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). Four elements emerged in regards to the infrastructure and process capacity in this study: internal structures, organizational culture, access to facilities, and internal systems and procedures (Table 4.4).

***Internal structure.*** Internal organizational structure was mentioned by six executive directors as an element perceived to be crucial in regard to infrastructure and process capacity. The level of formalization in organizational structure varied among interviewees from a few expressing a perceived satisfaction to others noting this element as a pressing need for improvement. For example, as Stephanie suggested, “Right now, we don't really have a lot of structure. We're working towards it.” These findings support

prior literature identifying formalization as a central capacity element among both SDP organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, in press) and community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014). Moreover, this study further contributes to our understanding of the capacity of U.S. based nonprofit sport organizations as prior studies have primarily focused on organizations in international contexts including Canada (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006), New Zealand (Cordery et al., 2013), and countries in Europe (Wicker & Breuer, 2011; Wicker et al., 2014). Identifying internal champions and bringing staff or board members on board with the ability to recruit other highly skilled and motivated individuals was perceived as an important strategy for trying to overcome the lack of sufficient internal structure. Given the relatively small sized staff of most SDP organizations in this study, participants also brought attention to the advantages and challenges of having a group of friends working together, “we are all good friends, but sometimes that can be tricky when other factors are at play or if people are not pulling their weight or don't understand what it means to be professional.” This brings attention to an interesting dynamic of SDP organizations over time. Initially, many of the organizations appear to be founded by a group of individuals (and often personal friends) that share similar values. However, as Svensson and Hambrick (in press) found in their case study of Gainline Africa, an informal structure can subsequently result in frustration among internal stakeholders and a need for re-structuring.

Other directors interviewed in this study discussed their desire to expand board governance structures. This could either include an expansion of the number of current board members or the addition of an advisory board. For example, Anthony expressed his own view on the need for improving his organization’s governance and the perceived

benefits of adding more high-profile decision-makers for improving its overall organizational capacity:

We have one board right now. We'll expand the board so we can have subcommittees. We'll add in a board of trustees, a different level that's really just about relationships. The big players in the city who can make things happen that we don't have access to. It should strengthen our governance and actually provide more organizational capacity to transition from an organization that's housed in [an athletic club] to one that has its own facilities and can handle that burden.

It is crucial to consider the role of advisory boards in addition to board of directors and paid staff members when talking about nonprofit governance. The perceived importance of governance structure reported in this study does not appear in prior literature on organizational capacity of nonprofit sport organizations (e.g., Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). This is an important contribution of the current study as an advisory board can supplement governance by boards of directors by performing a broad range of organizational activities (Saidel, 1998). For example, an advisory board can connect a nonprofit with key stakeholder groups and decision-makers in the local community or increase collaboration among a given organization and other community-based nonprofits.

***Organizational culture.*** A total of 10 directors also perceived their organizational culture as an important element with regards to organizational capacity. Prior nonprofit management literature suggests an organizational culture embracing shared values of organizational practices constitute a central aspect of the infrastructure and process capacity of nonprofits (See Gibbs et al., 2002; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Thomson, 2010).

Findings in this study bring attention to a capacity element not found in prior research examining organizational capacity in SDP (See Svensson & Hambrick, in press). In this study, several executive directors spoke about the importance of having an informal and flexible culture to enable staff members to be the most successful in their endeavors. For example, Josh shared how he tries to balance serious work responsibilities with more informal and fun moments in the office:

Well, they jokingly call me the Michael Scott of the non-profit world in the office. I like to have fun, I make them walk over to my desk and watch YouTube videos all the time. I just think we are doing some really serious work... We have to remember that it also needs to be fun.

The perceived importance of establishing a fun and balanced culture could be due to the lack of human resources capacity and the reported concerns of burnout among paid staff members as found in this study. It appears that several SDP directors recognized that an organizational culture can serve as the guiding framework for internal stakeholders in day-to-day operations (Chen et al., 2013). Directors also noted how they have developed or are working on changing their cultures within their respective nonprofits. This supports findings from prior literature indicating how managers can transform an organizational culture over time (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005; Maxwell & Taylor, 2010; Maxwell et al., 2013). However, SDP leaders should also make sure that volunteers understand the culture and mission of the organization (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008), since the mission statement is arguably the most influential aspect of a nonprofit organization (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013). Having an internal culture that aligns with the organization's core program values was also perceived as imperative for increasing an



organization's goal achievement ability in this study. This brings attention to the importance for SDP leaders to ensure they have a clear and motivating mission statement. In his study of nonprofit hospitals, McDonald (2007) found mission statements embracing innovation promoted an organizational culture of shared values of new ideas and acceptance. Hence, SDP leaders could transform their organizational cultures by revising the mission statement and subsequently integrating those values in day-to-day organizational activities. For example, as Isabella expressed:

I think our culture very much supports our ability to achieve our mission and our vision. I think it's a very important part of it. I think there's an enormous amount of collaboration and play. We recognize that we're an organization that creates experiential learning and wants kids to have fun. We try to bring that inside our staff culture as well.

Another important component of the culture of the SDP nonprofits in this study was an organizational emphasis on doing what's best to increase the quality of programs for participating youth. For example, as Landon noted, "we are not here for money, we are here for the quality of the service that we provided them. We base our efforts in love; you've got to love to do what we do and how it works." Driven and passionate staff and board members were perceived as crucial for increased structural capacity. Michelle, for example, expressed how her squash-based educational organization's board members were involved in many day-to-day activities including tutoring, playing squash, and assisting with transportation of youth, which had created culture of personal engagement. She further stated:

[Our board members] are super connected with the day to day ... Yeah I've never

seen that before. The culture of the organization is actually really thriving, really excited to grow. They're all really happy that I am there. They're open to new ideas.

Other directors of squash-based educational organizations shared similar stories. Evidently, numerous board members from the squash community seem to not only be prone to provide financial support, but also have a genuine interest in the grassroots programs of their respective organizations. At the same time, it is important to note that a few directors expressed some challenges in terms of their current organizational culture. For example, William brought attention to the challenges of having an SDP entity based around only one central staff member, “Everything is based around me, that's why I'm spending a lot of time trying to figure out a way to move [volunteers] to high levels of leadership.” This highlights the importance and the challenges in trying to grow an SDP entity beyond the ideas of the founder in light of limited organizational resources.

Some participants representing organizations that utilize part-time staff members including those subsidized through grant programs such as Coach Across America also suggested those part-time staff members at times seemed to have their own identity. This highlights some of the challenges of balancing the dynamics of full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff members within a nonprofit entity. For example, one director shared how some problems with one part-time staff member subsequently created a very negative organizational culture for the entire organization. This brings attention to the importance of being clear about organizational values when recruiting staff members and ensuring an alignment between prospective employees and those organizational values. It is imperative for SDP leaders to understand that facilitating cultural change can be a

challenging task, yet it can be attainable if utilizing proper strategies (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005). In this regard, nonprofit leaders can instill organizational values through transformational leadership (Jaskyte, 2010). This warrants future research on leadership in SDP. Additional work is needed on exploring the role of servant leadership and how it relates to the culture of SDP organizations. Based on a systematic review of literature on servant leadership in organizational contexts, Parris and Welty Peachey (2012) argued this type of leadership provides a viable tool for improving the well being of internal stakeholders.

*Access to facilities.* Access to facilities emerged as a salient theme in regards to the structural capacity of participating SDP nonprofits. This finding is similar to prior studies examining community sport clubs through Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework of capacity (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). However, findings from this study provide important insights into a relatively unexplored aspect in SDP literature, as the nature of SDP nonprofits is considerably different from community sport clubs. A total of 14 executive directors spoke about perceived strengths and challenges in terms of facilities for their local programming. Several organizations relied on arrangements whereby they rented facilities or borrowed them through partnerships with other local organizations. While this approach did not require multi-million dollar capital campaigns, it did create other issues, as often the SDP organizations were not the primary facility tenants. In other words, the partner organizations generally had first right of refusal and could therefore deny access or change the scheduling on short notice. This evidently created some programming issues as directors were forced to scramble to identify alternative locations

and subsequently inform parents. Furthermore, operating out of a different organization's facility limited potential organizational growth. For example, Anthony expressed how his organization currently operates through a private sport club:

They're all paying members and so I think that now that we're 44 kids, we have a problem. We can't grow. The [sport] club can't let us grow because they don't have the space. We overflow into the hallway for desks and that stuff for the kids. [Yet] the [Sport] Club provides us with opportunities and we have to keep in mind that it's a private club. We have to make sure that we're not getting in people's way.

In contrast to the majority of participating organizations, most of the squash-based SDP organizations either had their own stand-alone multi-million dollar facilities or were in the process of finishing capital campaigns to build such facilities. Andrew's organization contributed the majority of the construction cost for their facility, which developed through a partnership with a local university. However, despite the up-front cost, he noted the many perceived benefits of this arrangement:

It was a brilliant deal for us, because we don't have to manage the real estate or pay for it. We just get to use it for free for 50 years, and we use it all the time. We contributed \$6 million to do it. That's sort of like our lifetime rent, so it didn't come for nothing. We had to put major money into this, but we did that, and now we're partnered. We get all kinds of stuff. We get volunteers, we get technology, we get institutional support.

While the squash-based organizations expressed a strong value and satisfaction in having their own facilities, the few other directors whose organizations had their own

facilities noted considerably more challenges. This included lack of financial funds to adequately maintain and repair these facilities, especially in the wake of the recent economic recession. Another issue of operating their own sport facility was its location relative to program participants. For example, Isabella shared:

Our actual location isn't very community based. Certainly not based in an area where there are kids from under-served situations who are marginalized, who are low income, which is the population that needs this. Therefore, when kids came to us they had to come from far away around the city and really could only do it if parents could drive them.

This highlights the importance of considering the ramifications of a given locations for current programming needs. Moreover, practitioners also ought to account for potential organizational growth in terms of participants as well as staff members. An alternative to engaging in the developing of an independent facility is to consider program implementation through local public school systems. Jessica, for example, suggested their partnership “with the public school system has been great for that.” Similarly, Josh stated, “we get all of our sites for free because we run it all through the schools.” Because these relationships were with local schools looking for additional after-school programs, his soccer-based organization does not have to pay the city or any private soccer clubs for facility rentals, freeing up financial capital for other expenses. Other directors including Samuel discussed how they benefited from a similar exchanges of resources with various institutions of higher education for implementing programming through partnerships. The latter was appealing to several entities since it also helped expose participants to potential opportunities in higher education while providing a

steady stream of student volunteers for the respective organizations. Hence, a strong relationship and network capacity could allow SDP nonprofits to overcome insufficient access to sport and programming facilities.

***Internal systems and procedures.*** Having internal systems and procedures that allow for maximal use of existing human and financial capital was also expressed as important in regard to an organization's broader capacity. A total of 11 executive directors spoke about various examples of how having these systems and procedures (or lack thereof) was perceived to influence the ability to achieve organizational goals. According to Hall et al. (2003), written policies and procedures have emerged as an important element of the infrastructure and process capacity of nonprofits in Canada. Similarly, Doherty et al. (2014) found presidents of sport clubs expressed the perceived importance of having written policies for guiding internal stakeholders. Despite these findings, little remains known about specific examples of the types of internal policies and procedures perceived as crucial for increased capacity. This study contributes to bridge the gap in the literature by highlighting specific examples in a SDP context. For example, Anthony brought attention to what he perceived to be a challenge in terms of insufficient systems for professional development within his soccer-based organization:

There's a capacity issue and we need better systems in place to provide everyone with professional development or professional learning opportunities that are of interest to them and more time to go out and do things that would make everyone either better at their job or happier in general.

Executive directors perceived cross-role understanding and other types of professional development as crucial aspects of their structural capacity. Similar to

Anthony's quote above, other directors expressed how developing internal systems and procedures was of utmost importance to them and one of their most pressing current needs. These findings provide support for prior claims of the lack of proper structures among SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008). For example, when asked about his satisfaction with his organization's infrastructure and process capacity, Christian noted:

Not satisfied at all and I say that being if I get hit by a bus tomorrow this organization just unravels on itself. We have definitely been a start-up for six, seven years now and that is definitely not how you operate an organization. We are looking at getting away from that start-up mentality, that make it up on the fly drive that we have and going into a more efficient approach. That is definitely a big thing on my to-do list is to build out those processes, refine the system that we have in place for programming, for development, for strategic planning, for whatever it may be.

Most directors were aware of this capacity challenge and emphasized a desire to create better policies, structures, and procedures to increase the overall efficiency of their organization. For example, Jennifer described how her organization became aware of this challenge when they recently completed a self-evaluation and applied for a local community foundation operational grant. She suggested:

One of the main areas that we saw as a gap for us is actually documenting policies and creating a handbook of everything. We have some pieces and parts in place, but not everything. So that's something that we are committed to working on in the next year.

The specific types of internal systems and procedures varied in nature, but

included those focused on donor and fiscal management, volunteer management, human resources management, and program evaluation. Although the specific types of systems or procedures needed may have varied from organization to organization, there was a consensus among directors that infrastructure and process capacity was one of their current top priorities during the coming 12 months. Prior literature on community sport clubs indicates infrastructure and process capacity to be a relatively small challenge among clubs (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). At the same time, those lacking access to sport facilities (i.e., limited infrastructure capacity) often form additional inter-organizational partnerships (Misener & Doherty, 2012; Wicker et al., 2013). The emergent findings in this study on the perceived importance of strengthening infrastructure and process capacity for increased organizational capacity does not appear in prior capacity literature. However, several SDP studies have indicated that many grassroots organizations lack sufficient infrastructure (e.g., Kidd, 2008; Lindsay & Grattan, 2012) to adequately implement SDP programs. In this study, Michelle summed up the experiences of most directors, when asked about her squash-based organization's internal structures, policies, and procedures, "that's actually what I'm working on right now, infrastructure in all areas." The relatively important nature of infrastructure and process capacity in SDP warrants future research to further examine how SDP leaders are increasing this aspect of capacity.

***Summary of infrastructure and process capacity findings.*** Infrastructure and process capacity refers to organizational structures and systems such as organizational policies, internal operational documents, and internal resources for implementing day-to-day operations (Hall et al., 2003). Little is known about the infrastructure and process



capacity of SDP organizations. The majority of SDP literature related to aspects of structural capacity remains focused on external partnerships (e.g., Cameron, 2013; Lindsey, 2013; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), despite the importance of understanding the structure of organizations implementing SDP programs (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). Four elements emerged in regard to the infrastructure and process capacity in this study: internal structures, organizational culture, access to facilities, and internal systems and procedures.

The level of formalization in the organizational structure varied among interviewees, yet there was an agreement among participants about the perceived importance of having more formalized structures. These findings support prior literature identifying formalization as a central capacity element among both SDP organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, in press) and community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014). Several nonprofit organizations consisted largely of close friends, but over time this was seen as problematic for the growth and development of the organization. Similarly, as Svensson and Hambrick (in press) found in their case study of Gainline Africa, an informal structure can subsequently result in frustration among internal stakeholders and a need for re-structuring.

The majority of executive directors also voiced the culture of the organization as an important element with regard to its structural capacity. Findings in this study bring attention to a capacity element not found in prior research examining organizational capacity in SDP (See Svensson & Hambrick, in press). Nonetheless, prior nonprofit management literature suggests an organizational culture embracing shared values of organizational practices constitute a central aspect of the infrastructure and process

capacity of nonprofits (See Gibbs et al., 2002; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Thomson, 2010). Given the nature of SDP initiatives, findings in this study suggest the perceived importance of having an informal and flexible culture to allow for staff members to be most successful in their endeavors. For example, this included balancing serious work responsibilities with more informal and fun endeavors. From these conversations, it appears that several SDP directors recognized their role in organizational culture could serve as the guiding framework for internal stakeholders in day-to-day operations (Chen et al., 2013). An organizational emphasis on doing what is best for increasing the quality of programs for participating youth also emerged as a central value of participating organizations. At the same time, it is worth noting that a few directors expressed some concerns and challenges in terms of their existing culture. However, it is important for SDP leaders to understand that facilitating cultural change can be a challenging task, yet it can be attainable if proper strategies are utilized (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005). In this regard, nonprofit leaders can instill organizational values through transformational leadership (Jaskyte, 2010).

Access to facilities also emerged as a salient theme in regard to the structural capacity of participating SDP nonprofits. Although this finding is similar to prior studies examining community sport clubs (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011), findings from this study provide important insight into a relatively unexplored aspect in SDP literature. As previously mentioned, the nature of SDP nonprofits is considerably different from community sport clubs. A number of participating organizations relied on partnerships for access to various facilities. However, this appears to create additional issues as the SDP organizations were not the primary

facility tenants and hence faced changes or cancellations on short notice. This resulted in SDP leaders scrambling to find alternative sites for their day-to-day programming. These types of relationships further limited the potential growth of SDP programs. Interestingly, however, the majority of the squash-based educational SDP organizations in this study had their own multi-million dollar facilities or were in the process of pursuing their own facility. This increase in structural capacity was facilitated by their increased financial capacity and ability to successfully implement financial campaigns. At the same time, the few other organizations that operated their own facilities expressed noticeably more concerns about lack of funds for proper maintenance or renovation of their property. An alternative to engaging in developing an independent facility is to consider program implementation through local public school systems, which some directors had successfully done. Hence, a strong relationship and network capacity could allow SDP nonprofits to overcome insufficient access to sport and programming facilities.

Having internal systems and procedures that allow for maximal use of existing human and financial capital was also expressed as one of the most important elements in regards to an organization's broader structural capacity. The specific types of internal systems and procedures varied in nature, but included those focused on donor and fiscal management, volunteer management, human resources management, and program evaluation. Internal systems emerged as one of the most pressing current needs of the SDP organizations in this study. These findings provide support for prior claims of the lack of proper structures among SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008). Doherty et al. (2014) found presidents of sport clubs expressed the perceived importance of having written policies for guiding internal stakeholders. Despite these findings, little remains known

about specific examples of types of internal policies and procedures perceived as crucial for increased capacity. This study contributes to the gap in the literature by highlighting specific examples in a SDP context. For example, creating systems that allow for professional development and cross-role understanding was perceived as instrumental for increasing the overall capacity of the organization. Despite the existing challenges in this area of capacity, it is encouraging to hear that most directors were aware of these shortcomings and are aiming to create better policies, structures, and procedures for increasing the overall efficiency of their organization. Nonetheless, this emerged as one of the most important capacity issues among participating SDP organizations.

**Planning and development capacity.** Planning and development capacity refers to the ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, evaluation practices and processes, and research for organizational development (Hall et al., 2003). In contrast to the work by Hall et al. (2003), Misener and Doherty (2009) found planning and development capacity was perceived as relatively more important than other aspects of capacity for organizational goal achievement. Elements emerging in prior studies included strategic planning, creative planning, and plan implementation (Doherty et al., 2014). Three elements regarding planning and development capacity emerged in this study: strategic planning, plan implementation, and evaluation (Table 4.4).

**Strategic planning.** Similar to Doherty et al.'s (2014) finding among presidents of Canadian sport clubs, developing strategic plans focused on the bigger picture of fulfilling an organization's vision was reported as an important capacity element among SDP leaders in this study. A total of 15 executive directors discussed this element of planning and development capacity. Many of the directors interviewed expressed current

or prior engagement in various types of strategy development and planning for organizational growth. A few directors expressed a sense of confidence and satisfaction with their strategic planning. Representing the largest organization in this study, Andrew was pleased with his agency's ability to develop a strategic plan, "I'm very satisfied in how we develop a strategic plan and think about growth. I'm very pleased with that, and we have a very exciting strategic plan. The delivery and achievement of that strategic plan is a massive undertaking." Most staff members, however, expressed various challenges in their experience of engaging in strategic planning. This is consistent with broader nonprofit management literature (Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000) as well as prior studies on community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009). This was especially prevalent among directors representing younger and smaller organizations. For example, Daniel described his situation in running a small-scale start-up SDP entity:

I'm not just the executive director. I'm also the van driver and the one that deals with all the parents. I do tutoring when I'm there with the kids, usually, and just running all of the little day-to-day details, so it's just finding time within doing all that, doing laundry, stuff like that. Finding the times in between doing all of that stuff to work on longer-term goals and vision is probably the biggest challenge.

Regardless of the extent of strategy development, there was also an agreement on the time commitment involved in proper strategic planning. Part of this was due to the need to involve the broad range of internal organizational stakeholders. Prior literature has clearly highlighted SDP organizations dependency on relationships with a broad range of stakeholders including grassroots organizations, international nonprofits,

governments, sport federations, educational institutions and the private sector (See Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b, 2011c; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sugden, 2010). However, findings from this study further indicate the importance of understanding the needs and interests of internal stakeholders for increased goal achievement ability. Coordinating various schedules of volunteer board or staff members, part-time staff members, as well as paid staff tasked with running day-to-day operations was noted as a considerable challenge in facilitating planning efforts. For example, Jennifer summarized the experience of many of the directors when speaking about her organization's strategic planning:

It's been a challenge over the years, because you are kind of in the thick of things, trying to just get the job done, and to take time and sit back and look at a long range picture and plan, it takes time and it takes, you know, input from the board, and staff, and other stakeholders, and so it's not something that happens overnight. So, you kind of have to balance between getting the job done, and looking at strategic things.

Similarly, Alexander shared his staff's struggles in even creating the basic capacity for engaging in such strategic planning, "oftentimes, we feel like we're just caught up reacting to opportunities that come to us. Right now, we're trying to intentionally build the capacity that we need to be able to be more strategic about how we plan." Others such as Christian highlighted some perceived uncertainty in the ability of their organization to successfully engage in strategic planning aimed at organizational development:

We have just now gotten to the point where we know what works and what

doesn't work. That light bulb moment came a couple about a year ago and so we have honed in on that. Just simplifying, making sure things are that there is a process in place that isn't convoluted, that doesn't have everyone's hands in it and that sort of thing. We will see. I'm not sure what to expect in this next strategic plan.

The findings in this study extend the SDP literature on strategic planning. The only prior study was a case study examining a single international SDP nonprofit (Svensson & Hambrick, in press). In contrast, findings from this study provide insight into emergent themes across multiple SDP organizations. Some directors also spoke about the challenges of achieving the ambitious future vision of some founders and board members. Jessica, for example shared how the ultimate future vision of the founder of her voluntary organization is to create their own facility for delivering local grassroots programs. In reflecting on this long-term goal, Jessica suggested:

The biggest challenge is us trying to even mentally fathom being able to have a multimillion-dollar facility. It seems so far off and considering how small we are now, it seems like a distant dream. Probably the biggest challenge is us really being able to imagine how we're going to get there financially.

This brings attention to the delicate balance of having ambitious, yet attainable, goals for an organization and its staff members. A future vision of a large-scale facility or something similar is not discouraged, but it is important to note the importance for executive directors and boards of directors to also identify more manageable short-term goals and objectives on the path to achieving such a vision. It is crucial for organizational leaders to not only develop opportunities for staff members to achieve short-term goals

related to the broader vision, but to also celebrate this success throughout the organization. Recognizing individual contributions and how they relate to the bigger picture of the organization can provide a sense of encouragement for individuals, but also a sense of motivation for others within the organization. This type of transparency also has the potential to educate internal stakeholders and provide them with a better understanding of the future direction of the organization. At the same time, SDP leaders need to ensure their organizations have sufficient structures in place to support not only plan development, but also plan implementation.

***Plan implementation.*** Wicker and Breuer (2013a) highlighted that while strategy development can help reduce organizational problems, simply having a strategy does not necessarily guarantee any successful outcomes unless the strategy is associated with subsequent policies for implementation. The ability to transition from a tentative idea or strategic plan to tangible implementation of such plans emerged as a noticeable challenge for many of the organizations in this study. Doherty et al. (2014) found similar concerns among presidents of Canadian sport clubs. However, although many of the directors described challenges in putting plans into action, they did perceive plan implementation as a crucial aspect of an organization's planning and development capacity. For example, when discussing his satisfaction with plan implementation, Josh voiced some of his concerns and the challenges in putting those plans into action:

Not as satisfied as I would [like to be]... Just because we're new at it. Our board is fond of those committees, thinking, "This is how we can really get a lot of stuff done; we'll break off, not meet as often, but we'll meet in committees." What that's done for me, is it's slowed the work down a lot, because I have to wait for



the committee to meet. I have to try to keep them all engaged; they all have random ideas, they're like, "Okay, let's go figure this stuff out." Then, they'll talk for a month. It's just a learning curve, but the intentions are good. The execution of it is just tricky.

As Bryson (2010) noted, the mere presence of strategic planning does not necessarily guarantee any potential organizational benefits unless the nonprofit leaders successfully implement the strategic plan. Wicker and Breuer's (2013a) findings from their study of a large-scale sample of German sport clubs further supported this point. Other directors shared how they were not sure of what to expect as several of them were engaged in their first major strategic planning efforts with a nonprofit entity. Although directors perceived they were ready to begin the implementation process, they also noted the uncertainty in doing so. For example, as Samuel shared, "I think a lot of it time's going to tell. I think we're set up for it. I think we're ready for it. Time will tell though in terms of our actual ability to do it." At the same time, it is important to note that a few directors expressed higher levels of satisfaction with their ability to implement plans. For example, Isabella suggested:

I'm actually very satisfied. We're coming out of a couple really difficult years where we were really just in survival mode. Now the shift is towards what are we building, what are we creating, how are we making improvements. In the last few months I've seen some real tangible changes that are following the things we set up for ourselves in our planning sessions. That's been very exciting.

Directors expressing satisfaction with their plan implementation still indicated how getting to such a position had taken considerable time. These organizations shared

many of the planning and plan implementation struggles of other SDP nonprofits in this study. Again, the mere presence of a strategic plan does not necessarily result in any organizational benefits unless nonprofit leaders successfully implement the plan (Bryson, 2010). In her examination of 240 YMCA organizations, Siciliano (1996) found the use of formal strategic management approaches was associated with increased organizational benefits regardless of organizational size. Based on her findings, SDP leaders ought to consider the use of a strategic planning subcommittee rather than utilizing a consultant or assigning it to the entire board of directors. One area of planning and development capacity often noted in nonprofit management literature is the ability to monitor and evaluate various organizational programs.

***Evaluation.*** In the current study, seven executive directors highlighted the ability to engage in evaluation as an important aspect in terms of their ability to engage in planning and development. For example, Isabella shared how this is “actually something that we are trying to tackle. We've been working on creating sort of coherent program assessment process for awhile.” Her organization has reportedly been successfully in evaluating and improving its own programs by partnering with a local university for more systematic evaluations. Others such as Josh shared how they benefitted from receiving evaluation data from the national organizations responsible for the curriculums that the local SDP organization was implementing. In this regard, evaluation efforts were driven by external requirements from the national partners. It is crucial, however, for SDP leaders to recognize the importance of contextualizing SDP evaluation efforts. As noted by Harvard scholars Ebarhim and Rangan (2010), traditional performance measures are unlikely to provide much insight for nonprofit leaders aiming to promote social change

due to the complexity of their work and environment. Therefore, SDP leaders need to develop a better understanding of their local context and subsequently the most appropriate evaluation approach. Collaborating with local institutions of higher education could allow them to do so since they are often seeking opportunities for community engagement. Furthermore, such an approach may be more cost-effective than utilizing a consultant agency.

At the same time, Michelle also voiced her support for the potential value of having some type of standardized evaluation tools and approaches for likeminded organizations. However, the lack of sufficient evaluation practices among other organizations could be due to the considerable amount of resources required, combined with a lack of capacity, among SDP nonprofits (Donnelly et al., 2011; Levermore, 2011). At the same time, SDP leaders ought to recognize the potential organizational value in implementing an inclusive evaluation approach involving a multitude of local stakeholders (Sugden, 2010). The emphasis on professional development among several directors in this study is encouraging as prior research has found a significant positive association between professional development and monitoring and evaluation practices among nonprofits (Marshall & Suárez, 2014). Furthermore, nonprofits adopting evaluation practices are also associated with increased strategic decision-making (LeRoux & Wright, 2010).

***Summary of planning and development capacity findings.*** Planning and development capacity refers to the ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, evaluation practices and processes, and research for organizational development (Hall et al., 2003). Three elements emerged regarding planning and development capacity in this

study: strategic planning, plan implementation, and evaluation. Similar to Doherty et al.'s (2014) finding among presidents of Canadian sport clubs, SDP leaders in this study reported developing strategic plans focused on the bigger picture of fulfilling an organization's vision as an important capacity element. Many of the directors interviewed expressed current or prior engagement in various types of strategy development and planning for organizational growth. Although some were confident in their planning ability, others voiced noticeable challenges in doing so. This was especially true among the smaller organizations where the director may also be serving as the program coordinator and assisting with many day-to-day activities. This limited their ability to focus on the bigger picture and planning for their long-term future. The various challenges in regards to planning among most interviewees supported broader nonprofit management literature (Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000) as well as prior studies on community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Although it is well-established that SDP nonprofits depend on a broad range of external partners (Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b, 2011c; Levermore, 2008a; Lindsey, 2013; Lindsey & Banda, 2010; Sugden, 2010), findings from this study also bring attention to the importance for SDP leaders to understand the needs and interests of a broad range of internal stakeholders for increasing their planning and development capacity. Moreover, it is crucial for organizational leaders to understand the importance of not only developing opportunities for staff members to achieve short-term goals related to the broader vision, but to also celebrate this success throughout the organization.

Although most organizations in this study were engaged in some type of strategic planning, the ability to transition from such a tentative idea or strategic plan toward

tangible implementation of such plans emerged as a noticeable challenge for most of the organizations. Hence, simply having a strategy does not necessarily guarantee any positive outcomes unless the plan is associated with subsequent policies for strategy implementation (Bryson, 2010; Wicker & Breuer, 2013a). Doherty et al. (2014) found similar concerns to the findings in this study among presidents of Canadian sport clubs. However, findings in this study further highlight the high level of uncertainty among many directors since they were at the beginning of the implementation process and did not necessarily know what to expect. In fact, several directors shared how they were engaged in their first major strategic planning efforts with a nonprofit entity. Nonetheless, based on findings of prior research with YMCA organizations, SDP leaders ought to consider using a strategic planning subcommittee rather than utilizing a consultant or assigning it to the entire board of directors (Siciliano, 1996).

The ability to engage in evaluation was also considered an important aspect by several directors in terms of their ability to engage in planning and development. The types of evaluation used for organizational development varied from those conducting internal assessment to others having the benefit of receiving assessment data from larger national organizations. Others collaborated with local institutions of higher education for strengthening their evaluation and overall organizational development. SDP leaders need to develop a better understanding of their local context and subsequently the most appropriate evaluation approach since traditional performance measures are unlikely to provide much insight for nonprofits aiming to promote social change (Ebarhim & Rangan, 2010). Although the lack of sufficient evaluation practices among many of these organizations could be due to the considerable amount of resources required and limited

capacity among SDP nonprofits (Donnelly et al., 2011; Levermore, 2011). SDP leaders ought to recognize the potential organizational value in implementing an inclusive evaluation approach involving a multitude of local stakeholders (Sugden, 2010). The increasing organizational emphasis on professional development among several organizations in this sample is important since prior research found a significant positive association between professional development and monitoring and evaluation practices among nonprofits (Marshall & Suárez, 2014).

**Summary of findings for RQ3.** In summary, organizational capacity requires existing structures that allow for human and financial resources to function. According to Hall et al. (2003, p. 37), structural capacity refers to the “processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, and support structures within an organization that help it to function.” As previously mentioned, structural capacity consists of three sub-dimensions: (a) relationship and network capacity, (b) infrastructure and process capacity, and (c) planning and development capacity.

First, the ability and process of cultivating and maintaining external relationships is considered an organization’s relationship and network capacity (Hall et al., 2003). Having genuine and mutually beneficial relationships with external partners who understand the value of the SDP agency’s work was perceived as imperative for increased goal achievement. This brings attention to the importance for having external partners who understand the value in what an SDP organization does and can not only provide resources, but also serve as champions on behalf of the SDP entity. Findings in this study supported the perceived critical role of balanced partnerships similar to what Doherty et al. (2014) found in their study of 51 community sport clubs. Findings also

extend prior SDP literature reporting the heavy dependence on external relationships with various stakeholders (e.g., Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010). SDP leaders should be transparent about roles and responsibilities from the onset of a partnership to minimize potential unintended outcomes.

Written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) also emerged as important in the relationship and network capacity of SDP nonprofits. This does not appear as a critical element in prior literature on the structural capacity of nonprofit sport organization (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Sharpe, 2006). However, the use of MOUs has been instrumental for nonprofits engaged in relationships with institutions of higher education (Bushouse, 2005) and corporate businesses (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Similarly, findings in this study suggest MOUs can help SDP leaders strengthen their inter-organizational relationships and ultimately increase their structural capacity.

One of the most salient themes in this study regarding elements of relationship and network capacity was partnership management. Many directors in this study expressed a heavy dependence on external partnerships and further noted the ability of an organization to successfully manage these relationships as crucial for the longevity of the partnerships. Relationships with a broad range of external stakeholders as found among SDP nonprofits in this study have been fairly well documented in prior SDP studies across different settings (e.g., Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011a; Sugden, 2010) and could be due to the lack of resources among many SDP initiatives (Kidd, 2008). Although these relationships were considered essential to the operation of the SDP organizations, the increasing number of partnerships consequently required staff members to allocate more and more time toward maintaining these relationships. Hence, it is important to recognize

that the increased capacity constraints on the organization sometimes outweighed the benefits of a given external partnership (Gazley & Abner, 2014). One way some of these organizations in this study were trying to minimize the potential burden for any individual staff member in managing multiple relationships was to share the responsibility for managing partnerships. Findings in this study bring further attention to the importance of clear communication in inter-organizational partnerships. In addition, the staff of SDP organizations ought to critically reflect on the nature of existing partnerships over time as organizational changes may result in unforeseen challenges in these relationships.

In addition to on-going partnership management, partnership formation also emerged as an important element of the relationship and network capacity. Directors spoke about the ability to identify potential partners and subsequently build new partnerships as an important strength of their overall relationship and network capacity. At the same time, organizational flexibility was noted as another important element within this sub dimension of structural capacity. Being open to potential program changes or scheduling changes in order to make external partnerships work was identified as an important ability for increasing structural capacity. These aspects should be incorporated into the earlier mentioned MOUs since prior research suggests including such mechanisms and values in the MOUs can be instrumental in creating more effective cross-sector partnerships (Samii et al., 2002).

Second, infrastructure and process capacity refers to organizational structures and systems such as organizational policies, internal operational documents, and internal resources for implementing day-to-day operations (Hall et al., 2003). Little is known



about the infrastructure and process capacity of SDP organizations. The majority of SDP literature related to aspects of structural capacity remains focused on external partnerships (e.g., Cameron, 2013; Lindsey, 2013; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), despite the importance of understanding the structure of organizations implementing SDP programs (Schulenkorf et al., 2014). Four elements emerged in regard to the infrastructure and process capacity in this study: internal structures, organizational culture, access to facilities, and internal systems and procedures.

The level of formalization in the organizational structure varied among interviewees, yet there was an agreement among participants about the perceived importance of having more formalized structure. These findings support prior literature identifying formalization as a central capacity element among both SDP organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, in press) and community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014). Several organizations consisted largely of close friends, but over time this was seen as problematic for the growth of a nonprofit. Similarly, as Svensson and Hambrick (in press) found in their case study of Gainline Africa, an informal structure can subsequently result in frustration among internal stakeholders and a need for restructuring.

The majority of executive directors also indicated the culture of the organization was an important element with regard to its structural capacity. Findings in this study bring attention to a capacity element not found in prior research examining organizational capacity in SDP (See Svensson & Hambrick, in press). Nonetheless, prior nonprofit management literature suggests an organizational culture embracing shared values of organizational practices constitutes a central aspect of the infrastructure and process

capacity of nonprofits (See Gibbs et al., 2002; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Thomson, 2010). Given the nature of SDP initiatives, findings in this study suggest the perceived importance of having an informal and flexible culture to allow for staff members to be successful in their endeavors. For example, this included balancing serious work responsibilities with more informal and fun endeavors. From these conversations, it appears that several SDP directors recognized the role their organizational culture could serve as a guiding framework for day-to-day operations (Chen et al., 2013). An organizational emphasis on doing what is best for improving the quality of programs for young participants also emerged as a central value in this study. At the same time, it is worth noting that a few directors expressed some concerns and challenges in terms of their existing culture. However, it is important for SDP leaders to understand that facilitating cultural change can be a challenging, yet attainable, task, when utilizing proper strategies (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005). In this regard, nonprofit leaders can instill organizational values through transformational leadership (Jaskyte, 2010).

Access to facilities also emerged as a salient theme in regard to the structural capacity of participating SDP nonprofits. Although this finding is similar to prior studies examining community sport clubs (See Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker & Breuer, 2011), findings from this study provide important insight into a relatively unexplored aspect in the SDP literature. As previously mentioned, the nature of SDP nonprofits is considerably different from community sport clubs. A number of participating organizations relied on partnerships for access to various facilities. However, this appears to create additional issues as SDP organizations were not the primary facility tenants and hence faced changes or cancellations on short notice. This resulted in SDP

leaders scrambling to find alternative sites for their day-to-day programming. These types of relationships further limited the potential growth of SDP programs. Interestingly, however, the majority of the squash-based educational SDP organizations in this study had their own multi-million dollar facilities or were in the process of pursuing their own facility. This increase in structural capacity was facilitated by their increased financial capacity and ability to successfully implement financial campaigns. At the same time, the few other organizations that operated their own facilities expressed noticeably more concerns about lack of funds for proper maintenance or renovation of their property. An alternative to developing an independent facility is to consider program implementation through local public school systems, which some directors had successfully done. Hence, a strong relationship and network capacity could allow SDP nonprofits to overcome insufficient access to sport and programming facilities.

Having internal systems and procedures that allow for maximal use of existing human and financial capital was also expressed as one of the most important elements in regard to an organization's broader structural capacity. The specific types of internal systems and procedures varied in nature, but included those focused on donor and fiscal management, volunteer management, human resources management, and program evaluation. This emerged as one of the most pressing current needs of the SDP organizations in this study. These findings provide support for prior claims of the lack of proper structures among SDP organizations (Kidd, 2008). Doherty et al. (2014) found presidents of sport clubs expressed the perceived importance of having written policies for guiding internal stakeholders. Despite these findings, little remains known about specific examples of types of internal policies and procedures perceived as crucial for

increased capacity. This study contributes to the gap in the literature by highlighting specific examples in a SDP context. For example, creating systems allowing for professional development and cross-role understanding was perceived as instrumental for increasing the overall capacity of the organization. Despite the existing challenges in this area of capacity, it is encouraging to hear that most directors were aware of these shortcomings and aimed to create better policies, structures, and procedures for increasing the overall efficiency of their organization.

Last, planning and development capacity refers to the ability of an organization to utilize strategic plans, evaluation practices and processes, and research for organizational development (Hall et al., 2003). Three elements emerged regarding planning and development capacity in this study: strategic planning, plan implementation, and evaluation. Similar to Doherty et al.'s (2014) finding among presidents of Canadian sport clubs, developing strategic plans focused on the bigger picture of fulfilling an organization's vision was reported as an important capacity element among SDP leaders in this study. Many of the directors interviewed expressed current or prior engagement with various types of strategy development and planning for organizational growth. Although some were confident in their planning ability, others voiced noticeable challenges in doing so. This was especially true among the smaller organizations where the director may also serve as the program coordinator and assist with many day-to-day activities. This limited their ability to focus on the bigger picture and planning for their long-term future. The various challenges in regards to planning among most interviewees supported the broader nonprofit management literature (Eisinger, 2002; Fredericksen & London, 2000) as well as prior studies on community sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014;

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The ability to engage in evaluation was also considered an important aspect by several directors in terms of their ability to engage in planning and development. The types of evaluation used for organizational development varied from those conducting internal assessment to others having the benefit of receiving assessment data from larger national organizations. Others collaborated with local institutions of higher education for strengthening their evaluation process and overall organizational development. SDP leaders need to develop a better understanding of their local context and subsequently the most appropriate evaluation approach since traditional performance measures are unlikely to provide much insight for nonprofits aiming to promote social change (Ebarhim & Rangan, 2010). Although insufficient evaluation practices among many of these organizations could be due to the considerable amount of resources required and the lack of capacity among SDP nonprofits (Donnelly et al., 2011; Levermore, 2011). SDP leaders ought to recognize the potential organizational value in implementing an inclusive evaluation approach involving a multitude of local stakeholders (Sugden, 2010). The increasing organizational emphasis on professional development among several organizations in this sample is important since prior research found a significant positive association between professional development and monitoring and evaluation practices among nonprofits (Marshall & Suárez, 2014).

**RQ4: How do the three dimensions of organizational capacity relate to each other in the context of the SDP organizations?**

In addition to identifying dimensions of organizational capacity, Hall et al. (2003) also argued for the importance of examining connections between capacity dimensions. This is important for moving beyond descriptive lists of capacity characteristics (Eisinger,

2002) and examine how the capacity in one area can positively or negatively influence the capacity levels in the other areas. Prior literature on community sport club has highlighted several different connections between capacity dimensions (See Coates et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). Findings in this study provide evidence of these connections, which highlight the multidimensionality of organizational capacity. Several perceived connections between capacity dimensions were highlighted in the previous sections. However, given the importance of understanding these connections, this section summarizes the connections among capacity dimensions in the context of this study.

In this study, there was a clear perceived connection between financial capacity and human resources capacity. Many directors highlighted the clear need for additional paid staff to operate their organizational programs, yet lack of financial capacity for supporting such positions. This in turn resulted in a heavy dependence on volunteers and existing paid staff members extending their responsibilities. This extends Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) recent findings on similar connections among capacity dimensions in their case study of an international SDP organization. For example, as Daniel noted:

There's not enough money honestly to have as much staff as is really needed. For example, this woman is a volunteer, and if we didn't have her or if she decides to move on and do something else, it's going to be really tough to fill that because it's more of a job that just one or two paid staff members can really do.

This brings attention to the importance for SDP leaders to critically examine their volunteer recruitment and retention strategies. As James suggested, “working with limited [financial] capital resources, internships and volunteering is going to be the

method in which we can overcome this problem.” Providing training and on-going support for core volunteers is of utmost importance in light of the volunteer dependency among these SDP nonprofits. Findings in this study further contribute to our understanding of capacity in SDP by highlighting managerial concerns over the connections among capacity dimensions. For example, as Isabella stated when discussing the cost associated with hiring additional paid staff:

We're in that sort of 'catch 22' position where we really can't afford to do it, but we can't afford not to do it. Every time I get my attention diverted into facility related needs or program related needs or other sorts of operations, that's time I'm not spending at a higher level, really being the executive director of the organization. That directly impacts our ability to raise the money that we need to fund the program sufficiently.

Whereas the lack of financial resources for hiring paid staff has resulted in many SDP nonprofits relying on increased number of volunteers, SDP leaders ought to recognize that some literature suggests inadequate financial capacity may also negatively influence the volunteer recruitment and retention efforts of nonprofit sport organizations (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). Yet, directors in this study expressed the unrealistic ratio between paid staff and program participants. For example, Adam noted, “right now we only have two full-time employees to kind of oversee and manage all aspects of our programs, and we have 20 sites with 1000 kids with a mentoring center.” Adam, however, did further indicate that his organization is currently examining how to better develop their resources with the help of an external consultant. In doing so, he shared how “the consultant has advised us that we should hire somebody to take over more of the



[program functions and management] so that I can devote more of my time to the fundraising side of things.” Unfortunately, several other SDP organizations in this sample did not have the resources to utilize external consultants for increasing their capacity.

Matthew, for example, shared the experience of these organizations:

Getting funding has been really difficult as a community-based organization that formed organically because we didn’t have enough years in our history [for financial credibility]... what it’s taken is really [going] beneath the bedrocks for the organization and going without salary and really going through financial difficulties for me to keep the mission alive long enough where people could start to believe in us and invest in us. It’s taken that sacrifice from my end.

Whether directors perceived their organization had adequate financial capacity or not, there was a consensus on the time constraints among its staff members and how this negatively influenced aspects of their structural capacity. A lot of directors reported how not only their staff, but also themselves were overwhelmed with focusing their time on day-to-day activities rather than a long-term vision. Evidently, limited financial and human resources capacities appeared to negatively influence the planning and development capacity as well as the infrastructure and process capacity of SDP organizations. This is concerning as SDP leaders need to ensure they are not falling victim to the nonprofit starvation cycle as underinvestment in organizational infrastructure can result in an inability to fully function as an organization or to serve its intended target groups (Gregory & Howard, 2009). Although this is largely fueled by lack of understanding among funders of the true costs of operating successful nonprofits, it is still important for SDP leaders to be cognizant of this prevalent issue across the

United States.

In terms of structural capacity, several directors in this study indicated the perceived connections between their structural capacity and its human resources and financial capacities. Lack of financial capital to hire sufficient paid staff was often reported as a determinant of external partnerships. This supports prior findings by Wicker et al. (2013) on European sport clubs. In the context of this study, these types of partnerships often involved relationships with educational institutions or other community-based organizations. For example, as William shared:

we are in the midst working with [a] university to bring on a federal AmeriCorps Vista. The university will pay for that for us. That person will be thinking about scalability. How do we scale up our program, partnerships with organizations, etc.? That person will work 40 hours a week alongside me.

At the same time, the increasing number of external partnerships was perceived to negatively influence other areas of capacity due to the increased time demands of managing multiple inter-organizational relationships. Findings in this study provide evidence that while scarcity of resources can serve as a determinant of forming external partnerships; these relationships can also unintentionally result in increased capacity constraints (See Gazley & Abner, 2014 for similar findings in a non-sport setting). This extends our understanding of capacity in SDP as prior literature has noted the perceived influence of human resources capacity on an organization's external partnership capacity, yet the increased capacity constraints from increased partnerships has not been reported (Svensson & Hambrick, in press).

However, these findings are in contrast to those in Hall et al.'s (2003) study,

which suggested lack of skills among internal stakeholders to negatively influence the planning and development capacity of Canadian nonprofits. Sharpe (2006) found similar findings in her study of a Canadian sport organization suggesting internal stakeholders did not have the sufficient skills to meet external demands. However, the skills, competence, and engagement of internal stakeholders were overwhelmingly perceived as strengths by directors interviewed in this study. Moreover, these critical strengths were further suggested to positively influence other aspects of capacity including external partnerships. In other words, there was largely a consensus that their respective SDP nonprofits would be even worse of if it was not for their few, but highly qualified and engaged staff and volunteers.

At the same time, other challenges in organizations' human resources capacity (e.g., time constraints, lack of paid staff) were perceived to negatively influence the planning and development capacity of many SDP organizations. This was suggested to largely be due paid staff feeling overwhelmed with day-to-day activities rather than focusing on their future vision and strategically planning for organizational development. Misener and Doherty (2009) found insufficient planning to negatively influence the both the financial capacity and the ability to cultivate external partnerships in their case study of a Canadian sport club. This was not the case among SDP organizations in this study. Although many directors reported a perceived lack of sufficient strategic planning and subsequent plan implementation, this was not suggested to negatively influence their current financial or planning and development capacity. Instead, SDP leaders in this study perceived insufficient planning to be a concern for the long-term sustainability and future capacity of their organization. This could be due to the relatively young nature of

many of SDP nonprofits as the majority of these organizations have emerged during the last 10 years (See Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2010).

**RQ5: How do participating SDP organizations address challenges within the human resources, financial and structural capacities?**

Eisinger (2002) called for the need “to move beyond simply logical lists of capacity characteristics to an empirical understanding of which of these contribute to organizational mission fulfillment” (p. 118). Evidence of how SDP organizations are addressing capacity challenges is consistently noted throughout the findings. This builds on our limited understanding of how SDP practitioners are operating within existing capacity constraints (See Svensson & Hambrick, in press). Whereas Svensson and Hambrick found their case organization to be in the midst of organizational restructuring for overcoming lack of engagement among volunteer staff members, findings in this study highlighted how existing capacity constraints facilitated innovative problem solving by SDP leaders. For example, many directors spoke about the perceived importance of having highly qualified board members from the corporate sector for access to their professional networks. Yet, this created challenges for several SDP organizations since individuals often had limited time to allocate towards the nonprofit and their grassroots efforts in the local community. This was considered problematic as it could result in a lack of interaction between the board members and organizations’ beneficiaries. Alexander’s organization had found success with a new tactic for overcoming this barrier:

it's our belief that [board members] can really truly understand our work only by being out in the field, and meeting the kids, and hearing their stories. One thing

that we've been doing for about a year now is, at each of our board meetings, every other month, we have a youth participant come and basically present to the board their experience with [our organization]. I think that has been a really powerful piece of our board meetings in terms of compelling the board members to want to play a more active role, to getting them to understand the value of the work that we do.

Many directors emphasized developing increased engagement among these board members. Despite the potential challenges in doing so, Christian suggested he had to personally take the time to understand the unique interests and strengths of each individual board member before successfully increasing the overall board engagement.

For example:

I have made a much stronger effort to reach out to board members on an individual level. [W]hen I first stepped on, I dismantled all of the committees. In our organization committees just aren't valuable because we're not such a complex organization that we needed that. What I have found very valuable is just sitting down with each board member and saying, "What are you good at, what do you want to do and what don't you want to do?" I have a to-do list basically I have custom-built a to-do list for each individual board member.

Similarly, others were attempting to overcome capacity constraints by having their existing board president take charge of similar efforts to better understand each board member's connections. There was a perception that there may be many untapped opportunities through existing connections of board members due to lack of sufficient understanding of their backgrounds. As Jessica noted, "I think a lot of us may have

connections that we are just not aware of or we're just not tapping into. Our president is leading that effort to dig into each one of our board members' connections." Yet others referred to the sport-based values of hard work and trying to foster a stronger work ethic among existing staff members for overcoming existing capacity constraints. For example, Adam suggested, "I think wrestling has taught us how to have a pretty strong work ethic, and I think that has allowed us to overcome some of our shortcomings when it comes to staffing." This had become a common tactic due to the perceived "catch 22" situation whereby directors recognized the need for additional paid staff for increasing their capacity, yet did not perceive they had sufficient funds available for doing so.

In this study, it appeared most directors were hesitant to commit to potential investments in additional staff or increased infrastructure. However, in doing so, these organizations are becoming yet another victim of the chronic underinvestment in sufficient infrastructure among nonprofits in the United States (Gregory & Howard, 2009; Lecy & Searing, in press). Gregory and Howard suggested funders carry a lot of the responsibility for this development. Nonetheless, the lack of investment in sufficient infrastructure may be even more of an issue in SDP as prior literature suggests funding agencies often exert strong influence of SDP organizations due to unequal power structures in funding partnerships (See Beacom, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011b; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Levermore, 2008a). Svensson and Hambrick (in press) found some noticeable infrastructure challenges (including lack of formalization) in their case organization, yet findings in this study add additional insight into the perceived importance and pressing need for increased infrastructure and process capacity compared to other capacity dimensions among SDP nonprofits in the United States. Furthermore,

while planning and development capacity was scarce among many organizations in this study, it is important to recognize that prior literature provides evidence that even among small nonprofits with scarce resources and a heavy dependence on their external partners, it is possible to systematically advance their organizational functioning and increase their organizational capacity (Grabowski et al., in press).

The perceived importance of human resources capacity, but lack of sufficient paid staff appeared to have facilitated innovative solutions among several organizations as they had no other choice, but to try and figure how to operate within the existing capacity limitations. For example, some focused on identifying volunteers willing to commit considerable amount of hours toward fulfilling the mission of their organization. Others tried to overcome the lack of human resource capacity through participation in programs such as the AmeriCorps or Coach Across America program. Yet, Matthew shared how:

[when] I got my first AmeriCorps staff member and the board was a problem for me, there became a problem with my staff and our culture became very negative for a while. At the end, I realize this was because I didn't do a good enough process of bringing people in and vetting them well enough. We addressed that last year. We have this whole process of hiring.

Similar to Matthew, other directors were focused on improving their systems as they had begun to realize the potential influence of their infrastructure and process capacity on other aspects of capacity. In rare instances, this was achieved by working with an external consultant for identifying ways to increase their organizational capacity. However, in most cases, this was something that directors themselves had to make a personal priority and a lot of them suggested that developing written policies, more

formal procedures, and better internal systems were among their top priorities at the moment for the upcoming year. Other ways included a commitment towards investing in professional development opportunities for internal staff. Although directors perceived they were unable to allocate sufficient funds for hiring another full-time staff members, several did allocate a smaller amount of capital towards on-going professional learning activities for their paid staff. Along these lines, Anthony stated, “I’ll be discussing with the board about professional development opportunities and whether or not it’s appropriate to hire a consultant to work with me, to help me with the fundraising piece.”

The limited human and financial capacity of several SDP organizations in this study appeared to negatively have influenced their ability to engage in planning for organizational development. At the same time, most organizations seemed to slowly be moving in the right direction by building on their own experiences and integrating planning and development into their core organizational activities. For example, although Jennifer noted how planning had been a challenge over the years for her nonprofit, she also stated:

So, this year we actually made a greater effort to put together a strategic plan that was more detailed. In fact, that is what we are going through right now, so I'm kind of going crazy with that. But, it also has required involvement from folks who are experts in that. So, we have consulted them, and working with us this year, pro bono, which is such a benefit. So now, given the resources available to us we've been able to actually put together some planning...as well as redrafting our organizational chart, and tying all this to the budget. It's quiet a thorough process, it kind of makes my head explode, but it's been really good.



Based on these discussions, interviewees appeared to have developed an understanding of some of the connections between dimensions of organizational capacity (Hall et al., 2003). For example, as the aforementioned quote highlights, several SDP leaders are beginning to be more cognizant of these connections for increasing their overall goal achievement ability. For example, when asked about how he is trying to overcome existing capacity challenges, Alexander suggested:

I think just by making all of our roles here more efficient. We're going to hire an office manager shortly, and that will give myself and the operations director a lot more capacity to work on some of these bigger-picture issues, like strategic planning. We'll be less caught up in the day-to-day management.

For a lot of other organizations, however, plan implementation was largely an afterthought in large part due to lack of sufficient human, financial, or structural capacity. Despite the noticeable infrastructure and process capacity challenges, findings in this study did also indicate that SDP leaders are increasingly aware of these shortcomings and are making this their own priority during the coming 12 months. For example, Adam is currently one of only two paid staff members running an organization with over 20 sites and 1,000 participants. However, as many other directors, he expressed the perceived importance of having written manuals and procedures in place for the future viability of the organization. In this regard, Adam and his colleague are currently using Dropbox for file sharing and documentation. He further stated:

Right now, I'm the executive director, but also largely I'm the program director even though specific people have done different tasks, like I'm overseeing all that. I'm creating a manual so that this is what a [future] program director manages,

each aspect of it, and this is exactly how I went about doing it, so that there's some documentation in terms of how we've done this in the past and what's been successful and what hasn't.

Overall, findings from this study suggested SDP leaders are increasingly developing an understanding of organizational capacity and areas in need of improvement for the future sustainability of their nonprofit. They are subsequently aiming to address these issues through various innovative ways in light of their complex realities. As Jennifer noted, the biggest challenge in achieving their future vision is “making sure that we're doing the right things with the resources we have to be able to take it to the next level.” Regardless of the specific challenges of a given organization, Matthew’s quote further represents the impression given by most SDP directors in this study, “my mission is to be able to walk away from my organization and know that it could survive. That’s my goal. “

### **Future Research**

This study was the first to examine organizational capacity of SDP nonprofits in the United States through the lens of Hall et al.’s (2003) multidimensional framework. Future research should explore SDP organizations through the lens of alternative capacity frameworks as well as across different geographical settings. The perceived active involvement of many SDP board and staff members beyond traditional responsibilities also warrants future research on the human resource engagement in SDP. Developing a better understanding of factors associated with board recruitment and retention should be a priority given the emergence of board involvement as a critical capacity element in this study. Moreover, additional research is needed on the human resources management

practices of SDP organizations. The reported importance of having the flexibility and willingness to find roles based on the strengths of prospective board members or volunteers could be relatively more important in a SDP context given the reported challenges and resource constraints of grassroots SDP entities (See Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008b, 2011; Sanders et al., 2014).

It is also important to further examine the substantive values that people in SDP hold. Findings in this study as well as Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) recent case study have brought attention to the perceived central role of shared values for the broader capacity of these SDP nonprofits. However, future research needs to go beyond examining the perceived importance of shared values in SDP. Emphasizing unique values is an important strategy for nonprofits to differentiate themselves from larger corporate entities (Frunkin & Andre-Clark, 2000). Developing a better understanding of the values of SDP stakeholders (staff members, board members, volunteers) can also help SDP leaders advance their recruitment and retention efforts. The reported ability by some organizations in this study to recruit individuals with little or no effort warrants future research to explore potential sport differences given the tremendous recent growth of lacrosse in the United States. The ease of recruitment could be due the specific emphasis on a particular sport by this organization along with the relative lack of lacrosse-based community nonprofits at this point in time. Nonetheless, this suggests that perhaps sport could not only serve as a 'hook' for participants (Hartmann, 2003), but may serve a similar purpose for connecting with volunteers.

Future research is also needed on the financial management practices of SDP nonprofits for developing a better understanding of different types of financial

management systems. Findings from such studies could contribute to the development of more efficient capacity-building initiatives in SDP. Additional research is also needed to examine the financial records of SDP organizations in conjunction with their perceived financial ability. Moreover, the reported perceived importance of personal fundraising credibility also calls for additional research on correlates of nonprofit fundraisers. Such a study should examine different types of nonprofit settings (SDP and non-SDP) given the lack of literature in this area.

Additional research is needed to examine the perceived financial knowledge and skills among SDP practitioners. Future research in this area should examine the relationship between perceived financial knowledge and actual financial performance. Furthermore, scholars also need to consider organizational ambition for growth in future studies examining perceived financial capacity or other dimensions of organizational capacity (Balduck et al., in press). Future studies are also needed to examine donor relationships in SDP as giving can vary noticeable from one nonprofit context to another (Waters, 2011). In addition, the apparent differences in financial capacity among organizations in this study warrants follow-up research to examine potential capacity differences based on the type of sport(s) associated with an organization.

In this study, revenues from special events emerged as a prominent revenue source for several SDP nonprofits. However, little is known about revenue streams of SDP organizations. Therefore, future research should examine the types of revenues and the interaction among these revenue sources within the SDP setting since prior literature has indicated noticeable contextual differences (See Guo, 2006; Kim & Van Ryzin, 2014; Tinkelman & Neely, 2011). In addition, more research is needed on the role of corporate

funding in SDP (Levermore, 2008a). Recent scholarship on European sport clubs has suggested increased reliance on corporate revenues could be associated with increased volunteer and financial issues (See Coates et al., 2014).

Scholars should also examine expenses based on financial statements and annual reports of SDP organizations. These findings could further be supplemented by qualitative inquiries of the perceived financial expenses and rationale behind them by SDP practitioners. Findings from this study also indicate the potential value of leveraging special events for considerable revenue among SDP organizations, even those with limited fundraising experience. Therefore, future research is needed to develop a better understanding of mental budgeting (See LaBarge & Stinson, 2014) among SDP donors.

Findings in this study also indicate SDP organizations appear to target the 'love for sport' motive (See Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Welty Peachey et al., 2013) among not only volunteers, but also among donors. Therefore, additional research is needed to examine this further since such findings do not appear in prior literature on financial capacity of nonprofit sport organizations. Furthermore, while there is growing number of anecdotal reports of financial issues in SDP, little is known regarding their actual financial developments over time. Therefore, future research is needed to examine the financial vulnerability of SDP nonprofits during the last 10 - 15 years. This type of study could add important insight to our understanding of SDP. One of many questions to consider in such work is how the rapid growth in sheer number of SDP initiatives (See Coakley, 2011) has influenced the financial capacity of these organizations. As Sanders et al. (2014) noted, today NGOs engaged in SDP work are increasingly competing for support for funders. However, little is known of the potential ramifications of these

developments.

Findings from this study also brought attention to the potential capacity constraints from the multitude of existing external partnerships of many SDP nonprofits. The formation of these relationships could arguable be driven by the apparent lack of sufficient resources in SDP (See Kidd, 2008). Nonetheless, future research should examine the relationship between these partnerships and organizational capacity constraints. Findings from such a study could help develop a better understanding of partnership management as well as the connections among capacity dimensions in SDP. The perceived importance of organizational culture as an element of the structural capacity of SDP nonprofits in this study also warrants future research on leadership in SDP and how leadership influences the culture of an organization (See Jaskyte, 2010).

It is also important to develop a better understanding of the infrastructure and process capacity within SDP organizations. The perceived importance of developing internal systems and procedures calls for additional research to examine the infrastructure of SDP nonprofits in more detail. The reported emphasis on developing systems allowing for professional development of internal staff also raises questions regarding how SDP leaders are developing and support staff members through various training initiatives. Findings from such studies could help in the development of more efficient capacity-building initiatives for strengthening the infrastructure and process capacity of SDP nonprofits. Moreover, additional research is also needed on the planning and development capacity of SDP organization. Little is known regarding this dimensions of capacity among SDP nonprofits, yet findings from this study indicate a clear connection between other aspects of capacity and the ability (or lack thereof) of the development and

subsequent implementation of strategic plans for organizational development.

It is also important to recognize that beyond an organization's capacity (human, financial, and structural), the ability of nonprofits to fulfill their missions is influenced by higher level environmental factors (See Hall et al., 2003; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2015). Prior research on sport clubs has indicated that different revenue diversification strategies have marginal impact on systematic volatility from environmental factors such as the broader national economy (Wicker et al., 2015). At the same time, the financial vulnerability of the local community has also been associated with the financial capacity of sport clubs (Wicker & Breuer, 2015). Future research should consider how environmental factors affect SDP nonprofits. Yet although it is important to understand these types of environmental factors while planning organizational growth or expansion, it is still imperative to develop a better understanding of the organizational capacity in SDP for identifying how SDP leaders can improve their organizational ability to operate and fulfill its mission within these existing environments.

### **Summary of Findings**

In summary, prior nonprofit literature suggests organizations are unable to implement new programs or change unless they have sufficient capacity for doing so. Guided by Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework of organizational capacity, the purpose of this study was to explore elements of organizational capacity in SDP organizations and how SDP leaders are addressing capacity challenges in the United States. This research builds on Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) call for an empirical and theoretical discussion on the nature of capacity in SDP. This study's contributions also help build on the theoretical understanding of organizational capacity in sport

management. Findings from this study also further our understanding of nonprofit capacity since there is a consensus among scholars that elements within each capacity dimension are context specific.

A total of 11 elements emerged in regards to the human resources capacity that reportedly influenced organizations' ability to achieve their goal(s): board involvement, board recruitment, board retention, paid staff, finding roles, shared values and engagement, staff recruitment, staff retention, staff training, volunteer dependence, and volunteer recruitment. Board involvement and shared values and engagement, and paid staff emerged as the most salient themes. However, there was also a clear lack of sufficient paid staff members. This was reportedly due to insufficient financial capacity, which sheds light on the perceived connections among capacity dimensions.

Several directors shared how they at various points had to give up their salary or make similar sacrifices for making ends meet for their organizations. Overall, six elements of financial capacity emerged in this study: financial management, fundraising, financial campaigns, grant funding, special events, and other revenue sources. Fundraising emerged as the most salient theme within financial capacity. Many participants expressed noticeable financial capacity challenges and concerns, especially in securing large gifts. However, a few organizations had still been quite successful in operating multi-million dollar capital campaigns. Interestingly, the financial capacity appeared to vary noticeably depending on the type of sport associated with the SDP organization. Squash-based SDP entities appeared to have had considerable financial success. Revenues from special sport-based fundraising events emerged as prominent revenue sources among the sample organizations.



Five elements emerged in regards to the relationship and process capacity of SDP nonprofits: mutually beneficial relationships, memorandums of understanding, partnership management, partnership formation, and organizational flexibility. The majority of interviewees expressed a strong desire to create true collaboration through shared leadership and values. At the same time, partnership management emerged as a salient theme since the heavy dependence on external partnerships also placed additional capacity constraints on the internal staff. Nonetheless, a lot of the sample organizations utilized creative external partnerships in attempts to overcome other capacity issues.

In this study, infrastructure and process capacity emerged as relatively more important for the organizational capacity and future viability of SDP nonprofits. This finding does not appear in prior literature on the capacity of nonprofit sport clubs. Four elements emerged in regards to the infrastructure and process capacity in this study: internal structures, organizational culture, access to facilities, and internal systems and procedures. Having internal systems and procedures that allowed for maximal use of existing human and financial capital emerged as one of the most important capacity elements in this study. Many directors expressed this as a pressing current need. Therefore, many of them had recently made it their own priority to create better policies, structures, and procedures for increasing the overall efficiency of their organization during the coming year. Limited human, financial, and infrastructure and process capacities also appeared to have negatively influenced the ability of directors to develop and implement proper planning for organizational development.

Three elements emerged regarding planning and development capacity in this study: strategic planning, plan implementation, and evaluation. Although most directors

expressed some prior engagement in strategic planning, the actual implementation of those plans was reported as a much bigger concern. The challenge in terms of planning and development was reportedly due to directors having to focus on day-to-day activities as a result of their limited human resources capacity. This was especially prevalent among smaller SDP organizations where the director might also be responsible for the transportation of participants to and from daily programming.

Overall, this study contributes to Svensson and Hambrick's (in press) call for an empirical and theoretical discussion on the nature of capacity in SDP. Findings in this study extend our understanding of organizational capacity among nonprofit sport organizations and highlight the lived experiences of SDP leaders within existing complex environments. The aim of this research was not only to identify elements of capacity within SDP, but also to explore how SDP organizations are trying to address existing capacity challenges. This study's findings provide a foundation for future research on the nature of organizational capacity in SDP. Developing a better understanding of capacity in SDP is imperative for designing more effective capacity-building initiatives that increase the ability of these organizations to fulfill their respective missions.

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- Wicker, P., Longley, N., & Breuer, C. (2015). Revenue volatility in German nonprofit sports clubs. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 44*(1), 5-24.
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## Appendix A – Interview Guide

### **Organizational Approaches**

1. Please tell me about your organization’s model of development.
2. What role does education have in your programming?

### **Human Resources Capacity Questions**

1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge in the area of human resources?
  - a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?
2. What is your organization’s greatest strength in the area of human resources?
3. How does your organization’s human resources capacity influence the organization’s ability to fulfill its objectives?
4. How satisfied are you with your ability to recruit and retain internal stakeholders?

### **Financial Capacity Questions**

1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to its ability to finance its activities and to manage its finances?
  - a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?
2. What is your organization’s greatest strength with respect to its ability to finance its activities and to manage its finances?
3. How satisfied are you with your organization’s ability to manage its budgets and keep track of where the money is going?
4. Please tell me about your organization’s primary revenue sources.
5. Is there anything you would like to see changed internally or in your organization’s external environment to help strengthen your organization’s finances/financial management?

### **Structural Capacity Questions**

#### General

1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge in the area of structural capacity?
  - a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?
2. What is your organization’s greatest strength in the area of structural capacity?
3. How does your organization’s structural capacity influence the organization’s ability to fulfill its objectives?

#### Relationships and Networks

1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to your external relations capacity?
2. What is your organization’s greatest strength with respect to your external relations capacity?
3. What sorts of relationships are important to your organization?
  - a. What led to the formation of these partnerships?

- b. Please tell me about the quality of these relationships.
  - c. How do you management these relationships?
4. How satisfied are you with your organization's ability to build and maintain these relationships?

#### Infrastructure and Process Capacity

1. How satisfied are you with your organization's infrastructure and process capacity?
2. What is your organization's greatest challenge with respect to organizational infrastructure, processes, and systems?
3. How would you describe your organizational culture?
4. Please tell me about your access to sport facilities.
5. How does your infrastructure and process capacity influence the organization's ability to achieve your goals?

#### Planning and Development Capacity

1. How satisfied are you with your organization's development and implementation of strategic plans?
2. What are the "best things" about your organization's planning and development capacity?
3. What are the "worst things" about your organization's planning and development capacity?
4. What is your organization's greatest challenge with respect to developing its vision for the future and a plan to get there?

Appendix B – Research Questions Grid

<p><b>RQ1: What critical elements exist within the human resources capacity of the SDP organizations?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge in the area of human resources?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What is your organization’s greatest strength in the area of human resources?</li> <li>3. Do you have problems obtaining the kinds of contributions you would like from your volunteers/paid staff/board?</li> <li>4. Is there anything that you would like to see changed internally or in your organization’s external environment to help strengthen the contributions of your volunteers/paid staff/board?</li> <li>5. How does your organization’s human resources capacity influence the organization’s ability to fulfill its objectives?</li> </ol>
<p><b>RQ2: What critical elements exist within the financial capacity of the SDP organizations?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to its ability to finance its activities and to manage its finances?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What is your organization’s greatest strength with respect to its ability to finance its activities and to manage its finances?</li> <li>3. How satisfied are you with your organization’s ability to manage its budgets and keep track of where the money is going?</li> <li>4. Please tell me about your organization’s primary revenue sources.</li> <li>5. Is there anything you would like to see changed internally or in your organization’s external environment to help strengthen your organization’s finances/financial management?</li> </ol>
<p><b>RQ3: What critical elements exist within the structural capacity of the SDP organizations?</b></p>	<p>Relationships and Networks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to your external relations capacity?</li> <li>2. What is your organization’s greatest strength with respect to your external relations capacity?</li> <li>3. What sorts of relationships are important to your organization?</li> </ol>

- a. What led to the formation of these partnerships?
- b. Please tell me about the quality of these relationships.
- c. How do you management these relationships?
4. How satisfied are you with your organization’s ability to build and maintain these relationships?

Infrastructure and Process Capacity

1. How satisfied are you with your organization’s infrastructure and process capacity?
2. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to organizational infrastructure, processes, and systems?
3. How would you describe your organizational culture?
4. Please tell me about your access to sport facilities.
5. How does your infrastructure and process capacity influence the organization’s ability to achieve your goals?

Planning and Development Capacity

1. How satisfied are you with your organization’s development and implementation of strategic plans?
2. What are the “best things” about your organization’s planning and development capacity?
3. What are the “worst things” about your organization’s planning and development capacity?
4. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to developing its vision for the future and a plan to get there?

**RQ4: How do the three dimensions of organizational capacity relate to each other in the context of the SDP organizations?**

1. How does your organization’s human resources capacity influence the organization’s ability to fulfill its objectives?
2. How does the way in which your organization is financed affect its ability to achieve its objectives?
3. How does your organization’s structural capacity influence the organization’s ability to fulfill its objectives?

**RQ5: How do participating SDP organizations address challenges within the human**

1. What is your organization’s greatest challenge in the area of human resources?
  - a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?
2. What is your organization’s greatest challenge with respect to its ability to finance its activities and to manage its finances?



**resources,  
financial and  
structural  
capacities?**

- a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?
3. What is your organization's greatest challenge in the area of structural capacity?
  - a. How are you addressing these organizational challenges?

## CURRICULUM VITAE

PER G. SVENSSON

### EDUCATION

<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>University of Louisville</b> Educational Leadership & Organizational Development Specialization: Sport Administration
<b>M.S.</b>	<b>2011</b> Summa Cum Laude	<b>University of Louisville</b> Major: Sport Administration
<b>B.S.</b>	<b>2010</b> Summa Cum Laude	<b>Slippery Rock University</b> Major: Sport Management Minor: Marketing
<b>Certificate</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>George Washington University</b> School of Business Sports Philanthropy Certificate Program

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### SCHOLARLY AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Peer-Reviewed Publications

**Svensson, P. G. & Hambrick, M. E.** (In Press). "Pick and choose our battles" – Understanding organizational capacity in a sport for development and peace organization. *Sport Management Review*.

Hambrick, M. E., & **Svensson, P. G.** (In Press). Exploring the role of social media in a small sport-for-development organization. *International Journal of Sport Communication*.

**Svensson, P. G., Mahoney, T. Q., & Hambrick, M. E.** (In Press). Twitter as a communication tool for nonprofits: A study of sport-for-development organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (Impact Factor: 1.837)*.

**Svensson, P. G., Huml, M. R., & Hancock, M. G.** (2014). Exploring partnerships between community service organizations and an intercollegiate athletic department. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 18(4)*, 97-128. Journal Acceptance Rate: 9.7%

Andrassy, E., Bruening, J., **Svensson, P.**, Huml, M., & Chung, M. (2014). The role of organizational capacity in student-athlete development. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 7(2), 218-244.

Huml, M. R., **Svensson, P. G.**, & Hancock, M. G. (2014). Exploring the role of educational institutions in student-athlete community engagement. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Sport*, 7, 224-244.

Mahoney, T. Q., Hambrick, M. E., **Svensson, P. G.**, & Zimmerman, M. (2013). Examining emergent niche sports youtube exposure through the lens of the psychological continuum model. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 13(3/4), 218-238.

## **2. Articles in Review**

Huml, M. A., Hancock, M. G., & **Svensson, P. G.** (In Review). Community service and college athletics: The philosophy of student-athlete engagement for NCAA athletic departments. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*.

## **3. Book Chapters**

Hums, M. A., & **Svensson, P. G.**, Walker, S., & Lizandra, M. (2014). International sport. In L.P. Masteralexis, C.A. Barr, & M.A. Hums, (Eds.) Principles and practices of sport management. (5th Ed.) (197-228). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

## **4. Academic Presentations**

**Svensson, P. G.**, & Schmidt, S. (2015, April). Opportunities and challenges for athletes to promote social change: A case study of the #LGBTSportsChat. Presented at the 2015 Muhammad Ali Center Athletes and Social Change Forum.

Andrassy, E., Bruening, J., **Svensson, P.**, Huml, M., & Chung, M. (2015, April). Best practices in student-athlete development. Presented at the 2015 American Educational Research Association Conference, Chicago, IL.

**Svensson, P. G.**, & Hambrick, M. E. (2015, March). The role of social media for relationship-building: A case study of a small international nonprofit sport organization. Presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Association for Communication and Sport Summit in Charlotte, NC.

**Svensson, P. G.**, & Levine, J. (2015, March). Examining athletic department policies and procedures through the lens of OCR's guidelines on sexual violence. Presented at the 2015 Sport Recreation Law Association Conference in Charlotte, NC.

- Levine, J., & **Svensson, P. G.** (2015, February). Capabilities approach in sport for development and peace policy. Presented at the 2015 Southern Sport Management Conference, Baton Rouge, LA.
- Svensson, P. G.** & Hambrick, M. E. (2014, May). Understanding organizational capacity through the adoption and use of social media in sport-for-development. Presented at the 2014 the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Marchesseault, D. & **Svensson, P. G.**, & MacLennan, R. (2014, March). Opportunities and challenges for athletes engaged in promoting social change: The role of organizational capacity and governance. Presented at the 2014 Muhammad Ali Center Athletes and Social Change Forum, Louisville, KY.
- Svensson, P. G.** (2014, March). Bound for failure or success? Exploring organizational approaches in sport-for-development. Presented at the 2014 Southern Sport Management Conference, Nashville, TN.
- Svensson, P. G.**, Huml, M. R, & Hancock, M. G. (2013, May). The impact of student-athlete community service partnerships on community agencies. Presented at the 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Austin, TX.
- Svensson, P. G.**, Mahoney, T. Q., & Hambrick, M. E. (2013, May) Social media for social change: A content analysis of how sport-for-development organizations use twitter. Presented at the 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Austin, TX.
- Huml, M., & **Svensson, P. G.** (2013, March). Exploring the role of educational institutions in student-athlete community engagement. Presented at the 2013 Muhammad Ali Center Athletes and Social Change Forum, Louisville, KY.
- Mahoney, T. Q., **Svensson, P. G.**, & Hambrick, M. E. (2013, March). Mobile applications—encouraging the competitive spirit or reckless behavior?: An examination of negligence. Presented at the 2013 Sport Recreation Law Association Conference, Denver, CO.
- Mahoney, T. Q., Hambrick, M. E., **Svensson, P. G.**, & Zimmerman, M. (2013, February). Examining emergent niche sports youtube exposure through the lens of the psychological continuum model. Presented at the 2013 Sport Communication Conference, Austin, TX. Awarded Distinguished Paper Honor.
- Svensson, P.G.** (2012, November). Digital divide or provide? Challenging stereotypes on the role of new innovations in technology for advancing SFD in the global south. Presented at the 2012 Sport and the Global South International Conference, Fairfax, VA.

**Svensson, P.G.** (2012, November). Sport-for-development and the olympism philosophy: An interdisciplinary approach to international relations. Presented at the 2012 International Studies Association – Northeast Region Conference, Baltimore, MD.

**Svensson, P. G., & Psutka, C.** (2012, March). Advancing integrated sport for development and peace teaching, research, and practice: The use of new media and technology. Presented at the 2012 University of Notre Dame Student Peace Conference, South Bend, IN.

Mahoney, T. Q., **Svensson, P. G.**, & Moorman, A. (2012, March). Impact of social media on sport: Damages in 140 characters or less. Presented at the 2012 Sport Recreation Law Association Conference, Greensboro, NC.

**Svensson, P. G.**, Eiden, B, Rixman, P., & Lyras, A. (2011, November). Integrated SFD field experience: An international SFD program in Botswana (Poster). Presented at the Next Step 2011 Sport for Development Conference, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago.

## **5. Grants**

**Svensson, P. G.** (2015). College of Education and Human Development Graduate Student Travel Award. Funded by the University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development in the amount of \$350.

**Svensson, P. G.** (2014). Doctoral Research Grant funded by the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) in the amount of \$1,650.

**Svensson, P. G.** (2014). Travel to Pittsburgh, PA for the 2014 North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Conference. Funded by the University of Louisville Health and Sport Sciences Department in the amount of \$180.

**Svensson, P. G.** (2014). College of Education and Human Development Graduate Student Travel Award. Funded by the University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development in the amount of \$250.

**Svensson, P. G., & Huml, M. R.** (2013). Graduate Student Council Research Grant. Funded by the University of Louisville Graduate Student Council in the amount of \$300.

**Svensson, P. G.** (2013). Travel to Austin, TX for the 2013 North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Conference. Funded by the University of Louisville Health and Sport Sciences Department in the amount of \$195.

**Svensson, P. G.** (2012). College of Education and Human Development Graduate Student Travel Award. Funded by the University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development in the amount of \$250.

## **6. Academic Awards**

Doctoral Fellowship, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, 2012 – 2015

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### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**University of Louisville, Louisville, KY**  
**Department of Health and Sport Sciences**

**August 2012 – present**

#### **Courses taught:**

Organizational Behavior in Sport (SPAD 382) – Spring 2015 (x2)

Introduced students to major management theories and concepts to help them develop a better understanding of how to apply their skills and knowledge for managing sport organizations. Teaching practice strongly focused on developing problem-based and critical thinking skills for advancing the ability of students to serve as future managers.

Sport for Development and Peace Entrepreneurship (SPAD 571) – Fall 2014

Focused on cultivating informed critical thinking by developing students' practical and theoretical knowledge on how to design and manage projects and organizations aimed at promoting positive social change. Students were introduced to different aspects of SDP including underlying theories, different sub-sectors of SDP (e.g., peace-building, health promotion, social inclusion), social entrepreneurship, and management of nonprofits. Case studies and partnerships with local SDP programs combined classroom learning with opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in the local community.

Special Topic: PGA Championship (SPAD 561) – Summer 2014

Engaged students in theoretical and practical learning regarding managing large-scale sport events including: event bid process, governance and structure of professional golf, corporate hospitality, customer service, tournament operations, security and crowd management, and volunteer management. Worked closely with PGA of America staff during the 2014 PGA Championship in managing a group of 30 students assisting their staff in serving corporate clients at Valhalla Golf Club. The special topics course was featured a total of five times on the evening news of WAVE-3 News (NBC), WDRB (Fox), and WLKY (CBS).

Organizational Behavior in Sport (SPAD 382) – Spring 2014

Introduced students to major management theories and concepts to help them develop a better understanding of how to apply their skills and knowledge for managing sport organizations. Teaching practice strongly focused on developing problem-based and critical thinking skills for advancing the ability of students to serve as future managers.

### Sport for Development and Peace Entrepreneurship (SPAD 571) – Fall 2013

Focused on developing students' practical and theoretical knowledge on how to design and manage projects and organizations aimed at promoting positive social change. Students raised over \$1700 through a crowdfunding campaign for a local SDP program. In addition, students got to apply their knowledge and skills in developing project proposals for solving a real-life problem presented by a well-recognized international SDP organization.

### Sport Finance (SPAD 404) – Spring 2013

Focused on teaching students basic financial and economic concepts necessary to understand the sport business industry. Topics included financial ratios, facility funding, financial statements, as well as economical aspects such as economic impact analyses. As part of the course, I also engaged students in exploring financial aspects of professional sport, intercollegiate sport, nonprofit sport as well as the sporting goods industry. An emphasis in this course was on engaging students in applying concepts and developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills through case studies.

### Sport for Development and Peace (SPAD 561) – Fall 2012

Focused on developing students' practical and theoretical knowledge on how to design and manage projects aimed at promoting positive social change. Topics included: the role of sport organizations in health promotion, youth development, gender and disability equality, peace-building, career and economic development, monitoring and evaluation, nonprofit management, the role of technology, as well as the social impact of sport mega-events.

### **Teaching Assistant:**

#### Sport Management & Leadership (SPAD 625, Dr. Meg Hancock) – Spring 2013

Conducted an in-depth assessment of teaching pedagogy through participant observations, focus groups with students, and in-depth interviews with Dr. Meg Hancock and students.

### **Guest Lectures:**

Sport for Development. (2013, March 25) SPAD 284 Issues and Ethics in Sport (Professor Gary Bernstein). University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

Financial Aspects of the Professional Golf Industry. (2012, November 15) SPAD 404 Financial Principles in Sport (Dr. Marion Hambrick). University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

Sport for Development. (2012, May 2). SPMT 196 Global Sport Management (Dr. Brian Crow). Slippery Rock University. Slippery Rock, PA.

Sport for Development: Social Change through Sport. (2012, April 23). SPAD 281 Principles in Sport Administration (Dr. Meg Hancock). University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

Sport in Sweden. (2012, February 15). SPAD 509 International Sport (Dr. Mary Hums). University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

Sport for Development Service-Learning Opportunities. (2012, January 11). SPAD 561 Sport for Development and Peace (Dr. Alexis Lyras). University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

Sport for Development. (2011, November 21). SPAD 281 Principles in Sport Administration (Dr. Mary Hums). University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

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## **SERVICE**

### **1. University**

Member, Organizing Committee, Conversations with Champions, 2014 - 2015

Member, University of Louisville Sport Administration Master's Applicant Interview Team, 2013 - 2015

Panel Member, Faculty/Student Mentor Panel, CEHD Doctoral Student Orientation, 2014

Member, University of Louisville Health and Sport Sciences Department Chair Search Committee, 2013 - 2014

Member, University of Louisville Sport Administration Assistant Professor and Instructor Search Committee, 2012

### **2. Professional**

Guest Reviewer, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 2015

Guest Reviewer, International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing, 2015

Guest Reviewer, Journal of SPORT, 2014

Guest Reviewer (Two Manuscripts), Journal of Sport for Development, 2013

### **3. Sport Industry**

Member, Local Organizing Committee of 2014 and 2015 NWBA Nationals, 2013 – 2015

Volunteer, Louisville Adapted Beep Baseball Program, 2014

Volunteer, Louisville Adapted Leisure Sled Hockey Clinic, 2013 & 2014

Program Coordinator (Volunteer), Girls on the Run Louisville, 2013

Volunteer, Girls on the Run Louisville 5K, Louisville, KY, 2012 & 2013

Volunteer, Ford Ironman, Louisville, KY, 2010 & 2011

Volunteer, Metro Parks Adapted Leisure Program, Louisville, KY, 2011

Volunteer, Big East Swimming & Diving Championships, Louisville, KY, 2011

Volunteer, PGA Tour WGC Bridgestone Invitational, Akron, OH, 2008-2010

Supervisor, Slippery Rock University Intramural Sports, Slippery Rock, PA, 2008 – 2009

Volunteer, YMCA Sport Department, Butler, PA, 2008 - 2009

### **4. Community**

Mentor & Volunteer, Cochran Elementary School, Louisville, KY, August 2014 – 2015



Mentor & Volunteer, Engelhard Elementary School, Louisville, KY, 2012 - 2014  
Volunteer, Adelante! Hispanic Achievers After-School Program, Louisville, KY, Spring 2012

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### **HONORS**

2015 University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development  
Outstanding Graduate  
2015 University of Louisville Graduate Dean's Citation  
2013 University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development  
IdeaFestival Scholar  
2012 University of Louisville – Graduate School Student Spotlight - December  
2011 University of Louisville Outstanding Master's Student in Sport Administration  
2011 National Sports Forum Case Cup Champion  
2009 Slippery Rock University Sport Management Student of The Year

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### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Member, North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), 2012 – Present  
Member, Southern Sport Management Association (SSMA), 2014 - Present  
Member, Sport & Recreation Law Association (SRLA), 2012 – 2013, 2015 – Present  
Member, International Sociology of Sport Association (ISSA), 2013 - 2015

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### **OTHER CONFERENCES ATTENDED**

2013 Beyond Sport Summit, Philadelphia, PA, USA  
2012 Social Media for Nonprofits Conference, Chicago, IL, USA  
2011 Next Step Sport for Development Conference, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago  
2009 Sport Entertainment & Venues Tomorrow Conference, Columbia, SC, USA  
2008 Sport Entertainment & Venues Tomorrow Conference, Columbia, SC, USA

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