

Opening the “Black Box”: Exploring Board Decision Making in Non-Profit Sport Organizations
Operating in a Multi-Level Governance System

Erik Lachance

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School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system. Four major research objectives were addressed: (1) the way non-profit sport organization Boards make decisions, (2) the types and impacts of non-profit sport organization Boards' internal factors on their decision making, (3) the types and impacts of non-profit sport organization Boards' external factors on their decision making, and (4) the similarities and differences in non-profit sport organization Boards' decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model.

Strategic decision-making theory is applied alongside internal (i.e., organization size; organization age; Board structure; Board size; leader-member exchanges; professionalization; socio-demographic indicators; motivation; and skills, expertise, and experience) and external factors (i.e., legal requirements, institutional pressures, inter-organizational relationships, market conditions, collaboration, stakeholders, and federated sport model) – originating from the Integrated Board Performance Model and relevant sport governance literature – to comprise the dissertation's theoretical framework.

A multiple case study methodology was used featuring six non-profit sport organizations Boards (two national and four provincial/territorial) operating in the Canadian sport system. Data were collected longitudinally through three methods: non-participant overt observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents. Data were thematically analyzed via NVivo12, and SPSS was used for descriptive statistics and comparisons of the observed Board decisions (i.e., t-tests, ANOVA).

Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations was identified as information and engagement based, which incorporated multiple sources of internal and external information,

involved five members, and occurred over two meetings with some informal interactions (e.g., email discussions between Board members). Five internal factors impacted Board decision making: Board composition, Board size, Chair-Chief Executive Officer relationship, Board meeting practices and environment, and technology. The first four had a positive impact, while the latter resulted in both a positive and negative impact on Board decision making. Two external factors had a negative impact on Board decision making: the sport system structure and market conditions. Seven statistically significant differences were identified in Board decision making at the provincial/territorial level (none for national non-profit sport organizations) and 21 between levels (i.e., national versus provincial/territorial) of the federated sport model. More similarities than differences were found when comparing Board decision making within (i.e., two non-profit sport organizations at the national level, four non-profit sport organizations at the provincial/territorial level) and between (i.e., national versus provincial/territorial non-profit sport organizations) levels of a federated sport model, notably related to duration and interactions. However, differences were attributed to sources of delays, the process to acquire information, and the types of information sources used. Overall, non-profit sport organizations Boards' decision making in a federated sport model is characterized with complexities arising from internal and external factors, thereby having a positive or negative impact on duration, delays, interactions, process to acquire information, and types of information sources used to make decisions. These notions are illustrated in the developed Non-Profit Sport Organization Board Decision Making Model, which address the dissertation's overall purpose.

Altogether, this dissertation offers theoretical and practical contributions. Notably, it demonstrated strategic decision-making theory's temporal and contextual boundary to investigate the chosen phenomenon at the group level (i.e., Boards) of non-profit sport

organizations in a federated sport model. Further, the conceptual rigour of the applied theory is developed as novel variables (e.g., technology) to measure sub-constructs (e.g., impediments) identified in this dissertation should be incorporated to better understand decision making.

Results also contribute to the broader sport governance literature as the approach undertaken in this dissertation supports the value and need for multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal research designs to better understand process-based phenomena (e.g., Board decision making).

Practically, this dissertation's results develop strategies and recommendations for Boards of non-profit sport organizations. Specifically, Boards should understand virtual meetings are convenient, cost-friendly, and allow decisions to be made even when restrictions are imposed during a health crisis (e.g., travel, social). However, delays and challenges in engagement are found during virtual meetings. To engage members during decision making, Chairs have an important role to ensure a diverse set of perspectives are gathered from individual members, thereby making a better informed decision. Formalizing decision making with purposefully developed documents (e.g., Board papers) and an action registry is also vital for Boards to be transparent and accountable in their decisions made.

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Statement of Author Contributions and Originality

I, Erik L. Lachance (henceforth referred to as “author”), am solely responsible for the development, structure, and completion of this research project. The author was the lead researcher of this research project as he created the purpose and research questions, applied an appropriate theoretical framework based on seminal works, selected and administered the methodological design including both data collection and analysis, interpreted the results, and wrote each of the four individual articles along with the first and final chapters comprised in this dissertation. The author, does, however, acknowledge the support of his supervisor (henceforth referred to as “supervisor”), Prof. Milena M. Parent. This support was in the form of guidance, discussions, and review of the research project including the results and articles. Considering the nature of this dissertation for which Chapters II, III, IV, and V are presented as co-authored articles, this section provides clarity to readers on the contribution of the author and supervisor.

Chapter II, Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Chapter V were each developed and drafted by the author. More precisely, for each chapter, the author crafted the purpose and research questions, developed the literature review and theoretical framework, collected and analyzed data, interpreted the results, and drafted the discussion, contributions, and conclusion sections. The author informed the supervisor throughout the writing process. The supervisor assisted in the article’s revisions. Of note, Chapter II was submitted to the 2022 North American Society for Sport Management Conference Student Research Competition on December 20th, 2021, ultimately receiving a runner-up decision and acceptance for presentation. In addition, Chapter V was submitted to the 2022 Administrative Sciences Association of Canada Conference on January 28th, 2022 and subsequently received a “Best Paper Award” (Tourism and Sport Management Division) and acceptance for presentation. Each of these articles, as presented in

this dissertation (i.e., Chapter II, Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Chapter V), are currently in preparation to be submitted to top-tier sport management journals (e.g., *Sport Management Review*, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *Journal of Sport Management*).

Beyond the chapters presenting the dissertation's individual articles, the author confirms all content was conceptualized, developed, and written by himself. The author, thus, states all ideas, techniques, quotes, or any additional material from the articles included here, published or not, are in complete accordance with the APA's (7th edition) standard referencing practices. The author declares this document is original and has not been submitted for any other degree at another institution. As such, this document represents the dissertation in its entirety.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full name
CCES	Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COC	Canadian Olympic Committee
NPSO	Non-profit sport organization
NPSOs	Non-profit sport organizations

Chapter I: Introduction

Governance continues to be a popular phenomenon of interest among practitioners and academics (Bevir, 2011; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020; Winand & Anagnostopoulos, 2019) due to the pitfalls of various for-profit (e.g., Boeing; Kennedy, 2022), non-profit (e.g., USA Gymnastics; Denhollander, 2019), and public organizations (e.g., Ottawa Police Service/Ottawa Police Service Board; Laming, 2022). Generally speaking, governance is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon understood as the way organizations are directed, controlled, and regulated (Bevir; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Shilbury & Ferkins; Winand & Anagnostopoulos). Within governance, a central group is the board of directors (Board). Recognized as “an organized group of people with the [collective authority] to control and foster an institution” (Houle, 1997, p. 6), the Board’s importance as it relates to governance is demonstrated in two ways.

First, the Board’s collective authority provides them with the ability to make decisions (McLeod et al., 2021b; Pugliese et al., 2009), thus impacting the performance of organizations (Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Hoye & Doherty, 2011; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000) and systems (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). A notable example of Boards’ importance to achieve outcomes is observed in the rise of good governance (i.e., high moral and ethical standards; Geeraert, 2018; Zintz & Gérard, 2019) where this group is often mentioned in relation to key principles (e.g., Board composition, roles, and powers, Board processes, Board reporting and performance; Australian Sports Commission, 2012; see Thompson et al., 2022 for more examples).

Second, the Board’s specific roles and responsibilities are important to consider for governance. By enacting these roles and responsibilities, Boards act as fiduciaries in respect to their shareholders (i.e., for-profit organization) or stakeholders (i.e., non-profit organization), all

the while balancing the process to strategize, and monitor, control, and evaluate the Chief Executive Officer (CEO; Cornforth, 2001; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015; Garratt, 2010; Houle, 1997; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Hoye & Doherty, 2011). By respecting their roles and responsibilities, Boards must be effective as a group. Thus, Board effectiveness is arguably impacted by the group's ability to efficiently complete its most central and ubiquitous function: making decisions (McLeod et al., 2021b; Pugliese et al., 2009).

Given the importance of Boards for governance, it may come as no surprise that most research from the broader management field (Cornforth, 2012, 2014) and sport management have focused on this group (Hoye & Doherty, 2011; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). Specific to the sport governance literature, Board research has examined a variety of topics such as (but not limited too) roles and responsibilities (e.g., Yeh et al., 2011), gender diversity (e.g., Wicker et al., 2020), commitment (e.g., Cuskelly, 1995), conflict (e.g., Kerwin et al., 2011), leadership (e.g., O'Boyle et al., 2019, 2020), power distribution (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003b), cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), strategic capability (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012), role ambiguity (e.g., Doherty, & Hoye, 2011), and Board effectiveness (e.g., relationship with organizational effectiveness; Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000). Together, the sport Board literature has been categorized as individual-level (e.g., motives of Board members; Inglis & Cleave, 2006), process-level (e.g., Chair and CEO relationship; Hoye, 2004), and outcome-level research (e.g., low role ambiguity predicts higher levels of individual Board member performance; Doherty & Hoye).

Though previous research has been valuable to establish knowledge on Boards (e.g., lack of collective leadership to foster collaborative governance among Board members; Shilbury et al., 2020) and examined this group in different types of for-profit (e.g., professional sport team;

McDonald & Sherry, 2010) and non-profit sport organizations (NPSOs; e.g., national-level; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014), three gaps remain: (1) a lack of process research on Boards; (2) a lack of multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal research to understand Board processes; and (3) a lack of comparative research on Board processes within and between levels of a governance system (e.g., federated sport model). Each of these gaps are further described below.

Lack of Process Research on Boards

First, current research has focused more on individual-level constructs to the detriment of process-level constructs (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Beyond inquiries on individual-level constructs, however, lies a smaller body of research examining process-level constructs (e.g., norms; Doherty et al., 2004). To this effect, McLeod et al. (2022) stated: “While ... studies have significantly enhanced understandings of board processes in sport, there are aspects of board process research that remain unexplored, and, that have the potential to reveal important insights for our field” (p. 79-80). Despite receiving less attention than individual-level constructs, process-level constructs have been suggested to be more important to understand and predict outcomes like Board and/or organizational effectiveness (Bezemer et al., 2018; Brown, 2014; Gabrielsson et al., 2019; Hoye & Doherty; Huse et al., 2011; McLeod et al.; Zatoni & Pugliese, 2019).

In addition to a lack of research on process-level constructs in the sport governance literature (Hoye & Doherty, 2011; McLeod et al., 2022), decision making, which refers to “the process of identifying and solving problems” (Daft, 2021, p. 528; Drucker, 1966), has yet to be explicitly examined among Boards (cf. Anagnostopoulos et al., 2014; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2017; Byers & Slack, 2001; Hill & Kikulis, 1999; Hindman et al., 2021; Kikulis et al., 1995; Sack & Johnson, 1996; Winkler, 1984). For instance, some researchers in the sport governance

literature have implicitly discussed decision making in relation to their results as demonstrated in the following quotation: “genuine collaborative governance characterized by robust, deliberative two-way dialogue and shared decision-making” (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015, p. 394). However, sport governance researchers have failed to provide adequate information to effectively describe and analyze the process (e.g., number of actors involved, negotiations, delays, length, number of information sources; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010) undertaken by Boards to make decisions.

As such, sport governance researchers are left without knowledge on the process by which Boards fulfill one of their most central activities, making decisions (Byers et al., 2012; McLeod et al., 2021b). To advance this gap, research explicitly examining decision making in sport organization Boards is needed. Such research would advance previous implicit claims regarding decision making (cf. Anagnostopoulos et al., 2014; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2017; Byers & Slack, 2001; Hill & Kikulis, 1999; Hindman et al., 2021; Kikulis et al., 1995; Sack & Johnson, 1996; Winkler, 1984) by understanding this phenomenon according to aspects like length, delays, negotiations, actors, and information sources (see Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). Notably, these aspects are required to garner an understanding about decision making (Nutt & Wilson, 2010), which prior sport governance research has yet to accomplish given their implicit examinations of this phenomenon. This notion is supported by the dearth in knowledge about, for example, the time required for sport organization Boards to make decisions, the number of individuals involved, location(s) of meetings, delays encountered, process to acquire information, and types and number of information sources used (cf. McLeod et al., 2021a; Kerwin et al., 2011; O’Boyle et al., 2020; Takos et al., 2018; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015; Shilbury et al., 2020).

Lack of Multi-Method, In Situ, and Longitudinal Research to Understand Board Processes

Second, though some research in the sport governance literature has examined process-related constructs like conflict (e.g., Kerwin et al., 2011; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), collective leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020), cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), or norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004), three methodological concerns can be noted. The first concern relates to the dominance of single-method research to investigate Board processes. For instance, most sport Board research has used a questionnaire (e.g., Adriaanse, 2016; Cuskelly, 1995; Cuskelly et al., 1998; Doherty et al.; Doherty & Carron; Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Hoye, 2004, 2007; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a, 2003b; Inglis & Cleave, 2006; Fahrner & Harris, 2021; McDonald & Sherry, 2010), interviews (e.g., Kerwin et al.; O’Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.; Van Bussel & Doherty), or documents from secondary sources (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b), with a few exceptions (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012, 2015; Kerwin, 2013; Soares et al., 2010). An issue with the single-method approach is the inability to corroborate claims made by participants from other data collection methods (e.g., triangulation; Yin, 2018). Further, the use of a single method (e.g., interviews) is criticized with recall issues among participants since they can be challenged with having to accurately remember past events, activities, and information (Babbie, 2016) to describe the phenomenon after the fact (e.g., collective leadership; O’Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.).

As a consequence to using these two methods, there is dearth of longitudinal research conducted on sport Board processes, thus representing the second methodological concern. This is the result of using questionnaires (e.g., Fahrner & Harris, 2021) or interviews (e.g., Shilbury et al., 2020) in a cross-sectional manner to investigate processes. Considering a process is understood as “a sequence of individual and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding

over time in context” (Pettigrew, 1997, p. 338), previous Board processes research can be argued as being flawed by an inability to investigate and understand a phenomenon as it unfolds in the boardroom of sport organizations (cf. Doherty & Carron, 2003; Doherty et al., 2004; Fahrner & Harris; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2020; Shilbury et al.; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015). With the above in mind, research on Boards incorporating longitudinal research designs to capture the complexities of processes inside the boardroom would be timely to challenge current knowledge derived from cross-sectional inquiries (cf. Pettigrew).

A final methodological concern resides in the use of questionnaires or interviews to investigate Board processes. The application of these two methods is an assumption by which they can be each used as proxies to understand processes undertaken in the boardroom. However, the methodological concern resides in the inability for these methods to examine processes like decision making as it unfolds in the organizational setting (i.e., boardroom). As such, research on Boards in the sport governance literature has largely treated the boardroom as a “black box” given the scarcity of inquiries investigating phenomena in action inside sport organization boardrooms (cf. Adriaanse, 2016; Cuskelly, 1995; Cuskelly et al., 1998; Doherty et al., 2004; Doherty & Carron, 2003; Doherty & Hoyer, 2011; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Hoyer, 2004, 2007; Hoyer & Cuskelly, 2003a, 2003b; Inglis & Cleave, 2006; Fahrner & Harris, 2021; Kerwin et al., 2011; McDonald & Sherry, 2010; O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015). To this effect, Hindman et al. (2021, p. 15) recently stated “observations of sport organization decision-makers would be useful for further investigating how leaders navigate decisions” instead of relying on previously applied methods like questionnaires (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty; Fahrner & Harris; McDonald & Sherry) or

interviews (e.g., Kerwin et al.; O’Boyle et al.; Van Bussel & Doherty). Observations provide a fruitful and unfiltered account of the actions and behaviours of actors relating to a phenomenon (e.g., decision making), which questionnaires nor interviews cannot accomplish (Gray, 2014).

Given these methodological concerns, it becomes crucial to move beyond single-method, post-hoc, and cross-sectional investigations of sport Board processes. With this in mind, research on Board processes should feature multiple methods (e.g., corroborate participant claims via different data collection sources), *in situ* data collection (e.g., observing Boards as they make decisions during meetings), and longitudinal designs (e.g., capture the complexities of processes like decision making as it unfolds over time; Bezemer et al., 2018; Cornforth, 2014; Huse et al., 2011; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Pettigrew, 1997).

Lack of Comparative Research on Board Processes

The third and final gap in the sport governance literature is regarding the lack of comparisons and insights into similarities and/or differences of sport organization Board processes (e.g., decision making) within and between levels of a governance system (e.g., federated sport model). This has been the result of research conducted in the context of a single sport organization (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Ferkins et al., 2009; McDonald & Sherry, 2010; O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011, 2015) or multiple NPSOs operating at a single level of a sport system such as national (e.g., Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013, 2014; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2012; Kikulis et al., 1995), provincial/territorial (e.g., Cuskelly, 1995; Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Hoye, 2004, 2006, 2007; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Kerwin et al., 2011; Soares et al., 2010), or community (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Doherty & Carron, 2003; Doherty et al., 2004; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015). Even though some sport Board research has included organizations at

different levels of a sport system, such as national-level and provincial/territorial-level NPSOs (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2019; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020), comparisons of Board processes within and between levels of a sport governance system are lacking.

This lack of knowledge remains despite past research being conducted in NPSOs operating in a country (e.g., Australia, Canada; Shilbury et al., 2020; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020) with a multi-level governance system for sport, which refers to a “system of continuous negotiations among nested governments at several territorial tiers” (Marks, 1993, p. 392) and is known in the sport governance literature as a federated sport model (i.e., “the delegation of power and authority from a central [national] authority to various regions usually within a bounded geographical context”; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020, p. 94). Further, studies have included multiple organizations either from the same or different levels of a sport system, yet fail to discuss comparisons in their study (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al.). To further demonstrate this issue, a recent study claiming to investigate collective leadership within and between levels of a sport system network (i.e., golf in Australia) only gathered data from the perspective of the national-level NPSO Board (O’Boyle et al.), thus ignoring the potential for comparisons to be gleaned according to similarities and/or differences *within* and *between* this governance system known as a federated sport model.

Considering most research from the broader management field has been conducted in for-profit organizations operating in an unitary governance system, the structure of most Western countries’ sport systems (e.g., Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom) offers a valuable context to investigate Board processes (Bradshaw & Toubiana, 2014; Chelladurai & Zintz, 2015; Harvey, 2013). Such value resides in complexities present in a federated sport model like increased demands from funding partners and members, managing relationships with other

NPSOs at multiple levels (e.g., national, provincial/territorial, and community), or differences in capacity (e.g., financial, human) across the system (Harvey; Hoyer et al., 2020; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020; Parent et al., 2018; Parent et al., 2019; Parent et al., 2020) compared to an organization operating in an unitary governance system (Bradshaw & Toubiana; Cornforth, 2012, 2014).

Given the three gaps in the sport governance literature, the purpose of this dissertation was to explore Board decision making in NPSOs operating in a multi-level governance system. Four research objectives were developed where each represents the main topic for the research articles included in this dissertation:

1. Explore the process undertaken by NPSO Boards to make decisions;
2. Explore the different types and impacts of internal factors on NPSO Boards’ decision making;
3. Explore the different types and impacts of external factors on NPSO Boards’ decision making; and
4. Explore similarities and differences in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model.

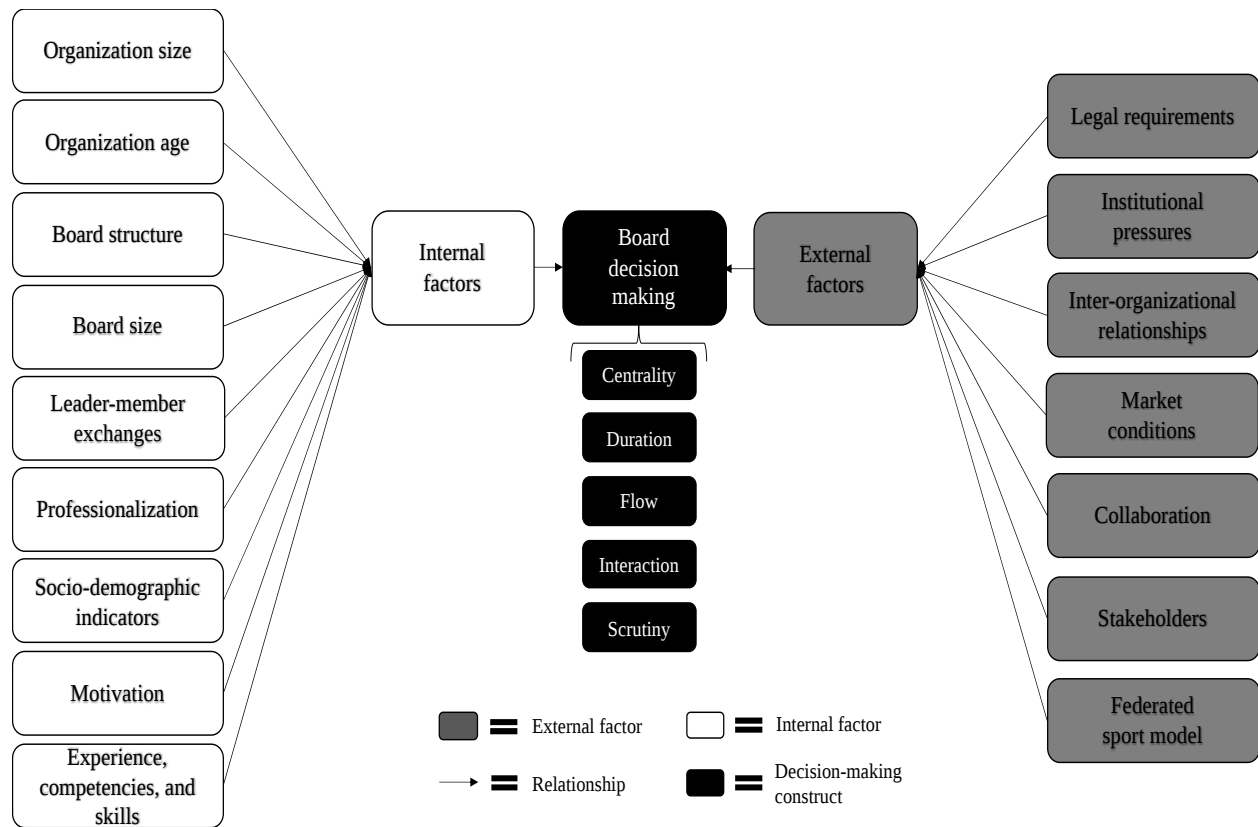
Theoretical Framework

To guide this dissertation, a theoretical framework (i.e., structural representation of relationships between concepts to understand a phenomenon; Doherty, 2013) was applied. More precisely, this dissertation applied strategic decision-making theory as developed from the “Bradford studies” (Butler et al., 1979/1980; Cray et al., 1988, 1991; Hickson et al., 1985; Hickson et al., 1986; Hickson et al., 2018; Kenny & Wilson, 1984; Mallory et al., 1983; Wilson, 1982; Wilson et al., 1982; Wilson et al., 1986). This theory is selected for its ability to analyze

decision making as it unfolds in organizations (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.) rather than providing a post-hoc depiction of steps for managers to take for decisions (e.g., rational model; Archer, 1980; Blai, 1986).

However, strategic decision-making theory does not provide explanations specific to internal and/or external factors impacting decision making in organizations, such as in Boards. This limitation demonstrates the need and the value of incorporating multiple perspectives into a theoretical framework in an attempt to better understand a phenomenon (Doherty, 2013; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). To counter this limitation and complete the theoretical framework, constructs from Hoye and Doherty's (2011) Integrated Board Performance Model are applied to explore the types and impacts of internal and external factors on NPSO Board decision making. More precisely, Hoye and Doherty suggested internal and external factors directly impact Board processes like decision making.

Considering the Integrated Board Performance Model is not a theory (see Bacharach, 1989; Doherty, 2013; Whetten, 1989) and is somewhat dated, additional constructs are included in the dissertation's theoretical framework. Notably, these constructs originate from past (e.g., leader-member exchanges; Hoye, 2004, 2006) and more recent sport governance research (e.g., collaboration, Chair collective leadership style; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015; Shilbury et al., 2020). Together, the selected internal and external factors are combined with strategic decision-making theory to form the dissertation's theoretical framework (see Figure 1.1). Additional details regarding strategic decision-making theory (e.g., comparison with other decision making theories and models, constructs) and the selected internal and external factors comprised in the dissertation's theoretical framework are provided in the following sub-sections.

Figure 1.1*Theoretical Framework***Strategic Decision-Making Theory**

Strategic decision-making theory was developed from a series of studies originating at the University of Bradford (Hickson et al., 2018). Known as the “Bradford studies,” this collective body of work provided the foundations for strategic decision-making theory (Butler et al., 1979/1980; Cray et al., 1988, 1991; Hickson et al., 1985; Hickson et al., 1986; Kenny & Wilson, 1984; Mallory et al., 1983; Wilson, 1982; Wilson et al., 1982; Wilson et al., 1986). Though the current body of research on decision making spans decades and multiple academic disciplines (e.g., mathematics, engineering, psychology, sociology, management; Nutt & Wilson, 2010), strategic decision-making theory’s focus is on the process by which decisions are made in organizations (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). This is an important distinction from other theories or

models related to decision making in the broader management field that provide a post-hoc depiction of this phenomenon like the rational model (e.g., Archer, 1980; Blai, 1986), the bounded rationality model (e.g., Simon, 1945), the Carnegie model (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963), the structuring of unstructured processes model (e.g., Mintzberg et al., 1976), the garbage can model (e.g., Cohen & March, 1974; Cohen et al., 1972; March, 1982; March & Olsen, 1976), and management science (e.g., Markland, 1973). To further demonstrate the comparison between other theories and models with strategic decision-making theory, each are briefly discussed below.

Originating from the perspective of Adam Smith (1863), the rational model of decision making presents a series of steps describing how decisions should be made (Daft, 2021). The model's foundational assumption is the belief that decision makers (e.g., managers) act in an economic rational way (Daft; Smith). The model also assumes decision makers have all the relevant information available to them, and both political and emotional behaviours are absent (Daft; Smith). The rational model of decision making presents linear steps where managers analyze the problem in order to find solutions. As problems are defined by managers, various solutions are identified where each is considered in terms of its outcomes before selecting the best alternative (Daft). The rational model of decision making's steps are as follows: monitor the decision environment, define the problem about which a decision has to be made, diagnose the problem, identify decision alternatives, analyze alternatives, select the best alternative, implement the alternative, and evaluate the decision (Archer, 1980; Blai, 1986; Daft). Beyond the simplicity of this model, its main limitation is its inability to provide an account of the process by which decisions are made (Daft).

In response to the rational model of decision making, Simon (1945, 1955) developed the bounded rationality model. The model's main assumption is managers are not rational beings, considering our emotions and personal experiences, and the inability for all information to be available (e.g., limited perception; Simon). From this notion, he argued decision makers like managers select the information they feel is most appropriate to solve the problem at hand in which a smaller number of potential solutions and their respective outcomes are identified (Simon). As a result, this model leads to satisficing, which refers to when individuals like managers stop looking for other alternatives to a problem once the first solution is identified (Simon).

In a similar fashion to the bounded rationality model, the Carnegie model argues organizations fail to make rational decisions and these decisions are not made as an entire organization (Cyert & March, 1963). Considering this premise, the Carnegie model puts forth a central notion for decision making in organizations: sub-units and their diverse interests should be accounted for when making decisions. From this premise, decisions in organizations are understood as being made by coalitions (Cyert & March). Coalitions are made up of individuals (e.g., managers) within the organization who possess time and cognitive abilities to solve the problem, yet are often comprised of diverse interests (Cyert & March). As such, decisions, according to the Carnegie model, are divided into sub-problems for which the various sub-units of the organization assume a role to make decisions (Cyert & March). An advantage of this model is its ability to consider decision making in organizations as a political process, which lies in the politics and bargaining that arises from coalitions in organizations (Cyert & March). Nevertheless, the Carnegie model is limited by the potential for organizational sub-units to make decisions based on their own rationalities and interests as opposed to the entire organization.

Further, managers are often found in a situation where they prioritize short-term solutions to the detriment of long-term strategies. This results in a phenomenon known as problemistic searches where managers quickly search for alternatives to a problem and identify a single solution at which point the search for additional choices to make a decision ends (Cyert & March).

As a response to previous models on structured decision making (i.e., planned and routine decisions with procedures and processes to follow to make a decision), Mintzberg et al. (1976) analyzed decisions in top management teams, where unstructured decisions (i.e., unplanned or abnormal decisions without a clear procedure or process to solve the problem at hand) take place and there is a need for these individuals to make “better” decisions. From this notion, Mintzberg et al. developed a model comprised of three phases. First, the identification phase includes two routines: decision recognition and diagnosis routine. The decision routine starts when a manager becomes aware that a decision needs to be made, while the diagnosis routine occurs afterwards to clarify and define issues around the problem. Second, the development phase is the “heart of the decision-making process” itself (Mintzberg et al., p. 255). This phase is based on two routines: search routine and design routine. Search routines occurs when managers begin to look for solutions to the problem based on past personal experiences. If the initial search for solutions is unsuccessful, managers move to the design routine where they must “grope along building their solution brick by brick without really knowing what it will look like until it is completed” (Mintzberg et al., p. 256). The third and final phase is comprised of three routines: screening routine, evaluation-choice routine, and authorization routine. The screening routine refers to the process of limiting the number of potential alternatives that can be used to solve the problem. Next, the evaluation-choice routine is concerned with a judgment (e.g., one individual making the decision on their own), bargaining (e.g., decision is made by a group of individuals), or

analysis among managers (e.g., generation of more factual information before making a judgment or bargaining). Though this model has been widely discussed and accepted in the broader management field, it is limited by its focus on describing how (unstructured) decisions should be made in organizations compared to an analysis and understanding of the process to make decisions in real time (e.g., strategic decision-making theory; Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018).

The garbage can model discusses decision making in organizational anarchies, which have an organic structure (i.e., adaptive, less formalized, and decentralized) and ability to rapidly change, thereby responding to changes in the environment (Cohen & March, 1974; Cohen et al., 1972; March, 1982; March & Olsen, 1976). Considering the velocity of change (i.e., situations presenting managers with limited or no time to make decisions; Eisenhardt, 1989) in anarchies, decision making is argued to be random and up to chance to some degree (Cohen & March; Cohen et al.; March; March & Olsen). From the conditions of the organization, decision making is based on four streams: a stream of problems, a stream of choice opportunities, a stream of participants, and a stream of solutions (Cohen & March; Cohen et al.; March; March & Olsen). Decision making is, therefore, seen as a garbage can where we find individuals, problems, choices, and solutions. Given that managers are forced to operate in this chaotic structure and organizational environment, decision making is unsystematic and illogical (Cohen & March; Cohen et al.; March; March & Olsen). Further, managers are faced with having to make multiple decisions simultaneously as opposed to a single decision at a time (cf. Archer, 1980; Simon, 1945, 1955). Decision making according to this model occurs when the correct individuals within the organization identify choices for solutions to be made to solve the problem (Cohen & March; Cohen et al.; March; March & Olsen). By this logic, a limitation lies in situations where

problems are either left unsolved (e.g., lack of individuals and identification of choices) or, worse, managers attempt to solve problems despite poorly understanding the situation. Despite these issues, the garbage can model provides important aspects to understand decision making in organizations like chance and timing (Cohen & March; Cohen et al.; March; March & Olsen).

The management science approach to decision making is based on complex and advanced mathematical equations and statistics (Daft, 2021). Mathematical equations and statistics are used to provide information and identify a solution to a problem (Daft). The emergence of this approach has been linked to World War II where mathematics was used to solve war-time problems faced by the military (Daft). Post-World War II, these mathematical principles were then used by managers to inform decisions (Daft). Though it is beyond the goal of this paragraph to provide an overview and detail of the various mathematic approaches used in management science, examples of various models include the decision tree (e.g., Sarin & Wakker, 1994), Monte Carlo techniques (e.g., Lee et al., 2010), queuing theory (e.g., Tabari et al., 2012), linear programming (e.g., Charnes & Cooper, 1957), and sabermetrics (e.g., Lewis, 2004). Despite the management science approach's appropriateness for structured decisions that can be identified easily and quantified, it is limited by its inability to analyze unstructured decisions and features of this process that go beyond quantitative variables (e.g., individuals' emotions, politics).

Although each theory/model presented above has its strengths and weaknesses, none provides an analysis of decision making as it unfolds in organizations. Rather, these theories and models provide a post-hoc analysis of decision making, which presents little value to address the dissertation's stated purpose. Instead, strategic decision-making theory, by way of the Bradford studies, allows decision making to be understood according to five constructs: centrality, duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (Cray et al., 1988; see Table 1.1 for a summary).

Table 1.1*Summary of Constructs from Strategic Decision-Making Theory*

(Sub-)Constructs	Definition
Centrality	Level of authorization for the decision.
Duration	Length of the decision.
Gestation time	Time between first mention of a problem until action is taken.
Process time	Time between first action until final decision is reached.
Flow	Delays during the decision.
Disruption	Length of delays occurring during the decision.
Impedance	Types of delays occurring during the decision.
Interaction	Location of discussions/negotiations and actors involved.
Formal interaction	Discussions and negotiations occurring in formal settings.
Informal interaction	Discussions and negotiations occurring in informal settings.
Scope of negotiation	Number of actors involved in the decision.
Scrutiny	Information sources used in the decision.
Effort	Source of information used in the decision.
Expertise	Type of information used in the decision.

Note. Table contents based on Cray et al. (1988).

First, centrality is concerned with the level authorizing the decision (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). This construct is comprised of seven sub-constructs to indicate the level of authorization for the decision including: decision was authorized by an individual below the divisional level of the organization; decision was authorized by an individual at the divisional level of the organization; decision was authorized by the CEO; decision was authorized by the CEO, but later ratified by the Board; decision was authorized by the Board; decision was authorized by Board committees, but later ratified by the Board; and decision was authorized by an external organization (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.).

Second, duration is related to the length of the decision (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). This construct is measured according to the total of two sub-constructs: gestation time and process time. Gestation time is the total time elapsed from the first mention of a problem (e.g., need to make a decision) until the first action is taken to make a decision (e.g., discussions among actors; Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). In contrast, process time is represented by the time

between when the first action is taken to make a decision until a final decision is reached (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.).

Third, flow is concerned with the types and lengths of delays during the decision (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). This construct is comprised of two sub-constructs: disruption and impedance. Disruption is concerned with the length of the delays during the decision (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). In turn, impedance is related to the types of delays occurring during the decision (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). Strategic decision-making theory includes five impediment types (i.e., reasons for the delays): no impediments are present, waiting for pertinent information to become available, waiting to conduct research to obtain and analyze information, internal sources of opposition, and external sources of opposition (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.).

Fourth, interaction is understood as the location and negotiations between actors during the decision (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). This construct is explained by three sub-constructs: formal interaction, informal interaction, and scope of negotiation. First, formal interaction is represented as discussions of the decision occurring during formal settings like meetings (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). Second, informal interaction is related to the discussions about the decision occurring in informal settings like hallways or watercoolers (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). Finally, the scope of negotiation refers to the number of actors involved in the decision (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.).

Scrutiny, the fifth and final construct, is concerned with the number of information sources used in the decision (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). This construct is comprised of two sub-constructs: effort and expertise. Effort is represented as the source and how the information is acquired for the decision (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). This sub-construct is understood according to information being acquired from four sources: information from

individual's personal experience, expertise, or opinions; readily accessible documents; conduct research; and integrate multiple information sources (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). In turn, expertise is related to the type of information sources used during the decision (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.). Examples of information source types include documents like organizational policies and/or individuals personal experiences, expertise, and opinions from staff members (Cray et al.; Hickson et al.).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the relevance of strategic decision-making theory is further demonstrated by its application in past sport management research. This application in the context of a large-scale sport event (e.g., Parent, 2010) and an intercollegiate association (e.g., Hill & Kikulis, 1999) supports the use of this theory's constructs to analyze decision making in sport (Slack & Parent, 2006; Slack & Thurston, 2021). Further, Slack and Thurston (p. 259) stated "the considerable number of published works emanating from this research project is one measure of its acceptance" in the management field. Beyond these notions, applying strategic decision-making theory in this dissertation "not only [enhances] our understanding of the decision-making process in organizations in our field but also [extends]" it (Slack & Parent, p. 270; Slack & Thurston). Given their use of constructs related to the strategic decision-making theory, both of the previously cited empirical studies are briefly reviewed below.

Hill and Kikulis (1999) applied three constructs related to strategic decision-making theory known as complexity (i.e., specific intricacies related to the decision), politicality (i.e., impact of individuals' interests, influence, and negotiation), and rules-of-the-game (i.e., formal structure and informal rules within an organization; Butler, 1991; Hickson et al., 1986). These constructs were applied to explain the decision to restructure an intercollegiate association in Canada. Results demonstrated how diverse interests, levels of influence, and the rules of the

game (e.g., constitutions) impacted the interpretation of the decision, behaviors of actors, and emergence of the decision to restructure (Hill & Kikulis).

In contrast to the previous study, Parent (2010) applied four of the five constructs of strategic decision-making theory. Parent investigated the change in an organizing committee's decision making during the lifecycle (i.e., planning mode, implementation mode, and wrap-up mode) of a large-scale sport event. Results from this study identified the influence of the event lifecycle mode on the organizing committee's decision making (Parent). For instance, interactions changed from being formal in the planning mode involving multiple actors compared to being informal with fewer scope of negotiation in the implementation mode (Parent). Interestingly, information sources also changed as the organizing committee was using external sources (e.g., stakeholders) in the planning mode, while the implementation mode shifted decision making to be more internally focused (e.g., using personal characteristics of organizing committee members; Parent). This study's contributions lie in the application of strategic decision-making theory to investigate decision making in a sport event context. Such results are important for sport events as they indicated how time, context, and resources can influence the decision making of organizing committees throughout the three modes of the event lifecycle (Parent). Despite these contributions, this study did not consider the duration (e.g., length) of the examined decisions, detailed reporting on the lengths of delays, number of actors involved, or information sources used (e.g., number of sources used).

The above content presented a comparison of strategic decision-making theory in relation to other theories and models. This also included a review of strategic decision-making theory's five constructs for which decision making can be analyzed as it unfolds inside organizations. Despite this ability, strategic decision-making theory cannot identify the types nor explain the

impacts of factors arising either internally or externally on decision making (cf. Cray et al., 1988). Given this limitation, internal and external factors based on the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty, 2011) and relevant sport governance literature are applied to the theoretical framework. Both internal and external factors are presented next.

Internal Factors

Given the posited direct relationship between internal factors and Board decision making (Hoye & Doherty, 2011), constructs from the Integrated Board Performance Model are included in this dissertation. More precisely, these factors are associated to those internal to the organization and Board, which includes organization size (i.e., number of employees); Board size (i.e., number of members); Board structure (i.e., number and types of committees); professionalization (i.e., constitutional requirements for Board composition and/or recruitment, organizational policies); organizational age (i.e., number of years from present time to foundation); socio-demographics indicators (e.g., education, age); motivation (i.e., reasons for member's involvement on the Board); and skills, expertise, and experience (i.e., number of years' experience on current Board, individuals' expertise/knowledge, personal background; Hoye & Doherty).

It is also important to consider other factors that could be identified during this dissertation's data collection process. Such additional internal factors are based on past and more recent sport governance research including: rent-seeking (i.e., personal motives based on self-interests; McLeod et al., 2021a); power distribution (i.e., distribution of influence and capacity to make decisions; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003b); passion (i.e., strong emotional inclination towards an activity deemed important by individuals; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020); leadership style (i.e., collective, which fosters the involvement of individuals and a democratic process in Board

activities; O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020); and leader-member exchanges (i.e., (i.e., development of positive dyadic relationships; Hoye, 2004, 2006; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a).

The inclusion of these internal factors is needed as strategic decision-making theory only presents constructs for decision making to be analyzed. This differs from having additional constructs in the form of factors impacting decision making arising internally from within the organization or Board, which is fulfilled via the included factors as listed above. The inclusion of these factors is important for this dissertation to assess the potential types and impacts of internal factors on NPSO Board decision making, thus addressing the second research objective.

External Factors

Factors from organizations’ and Boards’ external environments are suggested to directly impact Board decision making (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Though this is posited in the Integrated Board Performance Model, there is a dearth of research in the sport governance literature that considers the impact of factors from the environment of organizations on Board processes (Hoye & Doherty). One exception is Soares et al.’s (2010) study, where political factors were investigated in relation to their impact on decision making in provincial/territorial-level NPSOs. Results from this study indicated the presence of various political factors influencing decision making: provincial/territorial government policies, power of affiliated clubs, power of the media, club coaches’ role, and power of football club directors (Soares et al.). In particular, the authors found government influence through public policy had the most important influence on decision making (Soares et al.). Beyond this study, however, we have limited knowledge about the potential role and impact of other external factors on a vital governance process for different kinds of sport organizations (e.g., NPSOs) like Board decision making.

According to the Integrated Board Performance Model, external factors include legal requirements (i.e., imposed laws and regulations by governments and/or sport governing bodies); institutional pressures (i.e., influence from governments and/or sport governing bodies); interorganizational relationships (i.e., cooperative relationships between organizations not reliant on control mechanisms from the market or hierarchies); and market conditions (i.e., funding availability, participation rates, crisis; Hoye & Doherty, 2011).

In addition, it is important to consider the potential presence of other external factors not mentioned in the Integrated Board Performance Model, but discussed in past and more recent sport governance research. Such external factors include, for example, collaboration (i.e., involvement of interrelated NPSOs responsible for delivering a purpose supported by both policy and funding; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015); stakeholders (i.e., individuals, groups, and organizations who influence or can affect a NPSO's actions; Esteve et al., 2011); and the federated sport model (see above definition; Harvey, 2013; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020).

The inclusion of external factors is required to provide an understanding of the potential impact of a NPSO Board's environment on a central process, decision making. These external factors are not discussed in applied constructs to analyze decision making as that is the role of strategic decision-making theory in the theoretical framework. Rather, the role of these external factors is to assess their relevance and impact on NPSO Board decision making, which addresses the dissertation's third research objective.

Epistemology and Methodology

The selected epistemology (i.e., "providing philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate"; Crotty, 1998; Maynard, 1994, p. 10) for this dissertation is pragmatism. Pragmatism

is concerned “with the application – ‘what works’ – and solutions to problems” (Creswell, 2003, p. 11; Weaver, 2018). From this epistemology, pragmatism views the problem as being paramount. Weaver (p. 1287) explained “pragmatists rejected the idea that social inquiry using a single scientific method could access truths regarding the real world.” Thus, a variety of approaches are selected by the researcher to better understand the problem at hand (Crotty). The appropriateness and rationale of this epistemology for this dissertation are stated below.

First, this epistemology allows different approaches to be selected to best understand and solve the problem at hand, which in the case of this dissertation is NPSO Board decision making. The ability to select different approaches allows the dissertation to move beyond the previous dominance of post-positivism as demonstrated by the use of questionnaires in the sport governance literature to investigate Board-related phenomena (e.g., Adriaanse, 2016; Cuskelly, 1995; Cuskelly et al., 1998; Doherty et al., 2004; Doherty & Carron, 2003; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Hoye, 2004, 2007; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a, 2003b; Inglis & Cleave, 2006; Fahrner & Harris, 2021; McDonald & Sherry, 2010). Selecting different approaches is also not limited to specific data collection methods as various ways to analyze the data can be used.

Second, the selection of a pragmatic epistemology allows the flexibility to incorporate multiple methods in the dissertation. This compares to most of the sport Board literature, which have applied a single method (e.g., questionnaires or interviews; Fahrner & Harris, 2021; O’Boyle et al., 2020). The use of multiple methods demonstrates a more robust research design than some found in the sport governance literature where a single-method, post-hoc, and cross-sectional approach is used to make conclusions about processes unfolding inside the boardroom.

Specific details for the selected methodology, data collection methods, and data analysis approaches are found in each of the four individual research articles comprised in this

dissertation (see Chapter II, Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Chapter V). However, a brief overview of the methodology is provided here.

The dissertation applied a multiple case study methodology (Yin, 2018) in which the unit of analysis was six NPSO Boards (two national, four provincial/territorial) from Canada (see Table 1.2 for sample characteristics). Overall, at a broader organizational level, these NPSOs are considered as small given a range of full-time employees (i.e., 11 in NPSO1, eight in NPSO2, six in NPSO3, six in NPSO4, six in NPSO5, and five in NPSO6; Parent et al., 2021). However, the size of the included NPSO Boards varies from small (i.e., seven or less members; NPSO3, NPSO5), medium (i.e., between eight and 10 members; NPSO1, NPSO4, NPSO6), and large (i.e., more than 10 members; NPSO2; Parent et al.). The small-sized nature of this sample is also attributed to the inclusion of provincial/territorial-level NPSO Boards given their limits in resources (e.g., number of full-time employees; Misener & Doherty, 2009) and greater variations in size compared to those at the national level (Wicker & Kerwin, 2020). Nevertheless, this dissertation's sample is comprised of smaller-sized NPSOs rather than larger ones (Parent et al.). The CEO and Chair of the included NPSO Boards in this dissertation's sample were provided with a letter of information (see Appendix A and Appendix B) and consent form (see Appendix C and Appendix D) via email by the author. Written consent was gained from one of these individuals sending a signed copy of the consent form via email to the author.

To capture the complexities and ambiguities of NPSO Board decision making from start to finish, a multi-method (i.e., non-participant overt observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents), *in situ*, and longitudinal design was used. Data were collected from June 2020 to October 2021. A total of 36 Board meeting non-participant observations were completed virtually (six per NPSO; see Table 1.3 for more information). Prior to the first conducted

Table 1.2*Descriptive Sample Characteristics of Included NPSOs*

NPSO Pseudonym	NPSO Level in Canadian Sport System	Board size ^a	Number of Board committees ^b	Summer/ Winter Sport	Olympic/ Non-Olympic Sport	Recognized NPSO among national or provincial/ territorial sport governing bodies ^c
NPSO1	National	10	15	Summer	Olympic	Yes; Sport Canada
NPSO2	National	11	10	Summer	Olympic	Yes; Sport Canada
NPSO3	Provincial/ Territorial	7	7	Summer	Olympic	Yes; Provincial/ Territorial sport governing body
NPSO4	Provincial/ Territorial	8	0	Summer	Olympic	Yes; Provincial/ Territorial sport governing body
NPSO5	Provincial/ Territorial	6	6	Summer	Olympic	Yes; Provincial/ Territorial sport governing body
NPSO6	Provincial/ Territorial	9	2	Summer	Olympic	Yes; Provincial/ Territorial sport governing body

Notes. ^a Board size is determined by the number of individuals who hold a voting or non-voting (e.g., ex-officio) position according to the conducted observations and documents collected in relation to the structures of the included NPSOs.

^b Number of Board committees is determined by the number listed on collected documents related to the structures of the included NPSOs.

^c For anonymity purposes, the names of the provincial/territorial sport governing bodies are not provided.

Table 1.3*Descriptive Information of Conducted Observations*

NPSO Pseudonym	Observation number ^a	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Time (EDT)	Length (minutes)
NPSO1	Observation #1	19/06/2020	10:00 a.m. to 12:23 p.m.	143 min.
	Observation #2	24/08/2020	2:00 p.m. to 3:35 p.m.	95 min.
	Observation #3	04/10/2020	2:00 p.m. to 3:46 p.m.	106 min.
	Observation #4	04/12/2020	11:00 a.m. to 1:16 p.m.	136 min.
	Observation #5	05/02/2021	11:00 a.m. to 12:33 p.m.	93 min.
	Observation #6	23/04/2021	11:00 a.m. to 12:08 p.m.	68 min.
NPSO2	Observation #1	16/07/2020	7:00 p.m. to 8:31 p.m.	91 min.
	Observation #2	03/09/2020	7:30 p.m. to 9:25 p.m.	115 min.
	Observation #3	29/09/2020	7:00 p.m. to 8:32 p.m.	92 min.
	Observation #4	20/10/2020	7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	120 min.
	Observation #5	25/11/2020	7:00 p.m. to 9:13 p.m.	133 min.
	Observation #6	26/01/2021	7:00 p.m. to 9:10 p.m.	130 min.
NPSO3	Observation #1	21/06/2020	10:00 p.m. to 11:07 p.m.	67 min.
	Observation #2	09/08/2020	10:00 p.m. to 11:50 p.m.	110 min.
	Observation #3	20/09/2020	10:00 p.m. to 11:20 p.m.	80 min.
	Observation #4	01/11/2020	10:00 p.m. to 11:10 p.m.	70 min.
	Observation #5	11/01/2021	10:00 p.m. to 11:04 p.m.	64 min.
	Observation #6	08/02/2021	10:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.	60 min.
NPSO4	Observation #1	07/07/2020	7:30 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.	70 min.
	Observation #2	14/07/2020	7:30 p.m. to 8:25 p.m.	55 min.
	Observation #3	11/08/2020	7:30 p.m. to 8:31 p.m.	61 min.
	Observation #4	18/08/2020	7:32 p.m. to 9:32 p.m.	120 min.
	Observation #5	25/08/2020	7:30 p.m. to 9:10 p.m.	100 min.
	Observation #6	02/09/2020	7:30 p.m. to 9:10 p.m.	100 min.
NPSO5	Observation #1	03/09/2020	4:45 p.m. to 7:07 p.m.	142 min.
	Observation #2	14/10/2020	6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.	140 min.
	Observation #3	04/11/2020	7:00 p.m. to 8:54 p.m.	114 min.
	Observation #4	24/11/2020	7:00 p.m. to 9:05 p.m.	125 min.
	Observation #5	17/12/2020	7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	105 min.
	Observation #6	04/02/2021	7:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.	135 min.
NPSO6	Observation #1	08/07/2020	7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	60 min.
	Observation #2	24/09/2020	7:00 p.m. to 8:27 p.m.	87 min.
	Observation #3	14/11/2020	12:00 p.m. to 12:23 p.m.	23 min.
	Observation #4	04/02/2021	5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	90 min.
	Observation #5	22/04/2021	8:00 p.m. to 9:58 p.m.	118 min.
	Observation #6	16/09/2021	8:00 p.m. to 9:59 p.m.	119 min.

Notes. ^a All observations conducted virtually through technological platforms including Zoom and Google Meets.

observation, all participants – that is, individual Board members, CEOs, and other ex-officio members attending meetings (e.g., Board committee members, staff members) – were provided with a letter of information (see Appendix E and Appendix F) and consent form (see Appendix G and Appendix H) via email by the author. Each participant was asked to read both documents, followed by providing their written consent by sending a signed copy of the consent form via email to the author. All observed participants freely accepted to participate and provided a signed consent form to the author.

In addition, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted with CEOs, Chairs, and individual Board members (three participants per NPSO; see Table 1.4 for more information). Prior to the interviews, participants were sent a letter of information (see Appendix I and Appendix J) and consent form (see Appendix K and Appendix L) via email by the author. All interviewees were asked to read both documents provided by the author. Interviewees were then asked to provide a signed copy of the consent form via email to the author. All interviewees freely accepted to participate as all signed consent forms were sent to the author. For the individual interviews, different interview guides were used for the CEOs (see Appendix M and Appendix N) and Board members (see Appendix O and Appendix P).

Finally, over 6,000 document pages arising from 978 sources were collected from publicly available sources (e.g., websites of included national- and provincial/territorial-level NPSOs) and confidential information provided by participants (see Table 1.5 for more information) to the author. Specific to confidential information, these sources were sent by participants to the author via email either before or after conducted observations and interviews. A detailed record of these documents was kept in a Microsoft Excel document by the author whereby all sources were sorted according to their origin, name, and date collected.

Table 1.4*Descriptive Information of Interviewees*

NPSO Pseudonym	Interviewee Pseudonym	Current position ^a	Years of experience in current position ^b	Interview length ^c
NPSO1	NPSO1_Chair	President	9 years	34 min.
	NPSO1_BoardMember	Director-at-large	10 years	37 min.
	NPSO1_CEO	Chief Executive Officer	5 years	69 min.
NPSO2	NPSO2_Chair	President	8 years	46 min.
	NPSO2_BoardMember	Vice-President	4 years	56 min.
	NPSO2_CEO	Chief Executive Officer	8 years	45 min.
NPSO3	NPSO3_Chair	President	3 years	40 min.
	NPSO3_BoardMember	Treasurer	7 years	41 min.
	NPSO3_CEO	Chief Executive Officer	9 years	65 min.
NPSO4	NPSO4_Chair	President	1 year	65 min.
	NPSO4_BoardMember	Secretary	8 years	65 min.
	NPSO4_CEO	Chief Executive Officer	8 years	50 min.
NPSO5	NPSO5_Chair	President	2 years	57 min.
	NPSO5_BoardMember	Vice-President	2 years	48 min.
	NPSO5_CEO	Chief Executive Officer	4 years	35 min.
NPSO6	NPSO6_Chair	President	7 years	38 min.
	NPSO6_BoardMember	Vice-President	4 years	30 min.
	NPSO6_CEO	Chief Executive Officer	11 years	42 min.

Notes. ^a Position of interviewees determined from collected documents related to the structures of included NPSOs, and claims from participants during interviews when asked to provide their current position on their respective Board.

^b Years of experience in current position on the NPSO Board was determined from claims by interviewees during the conducted interviews.

^c Interview length is provided in minutes.

Table 1.5*Descriptive Information of Collected and Analyzed Documents*

NPSO Pseudonym	Number of collected documents ^a	Number of pages ^b
NPSO1	108	990
NPSO2	236	1,498
NPSO3	235	2,161
NPSO4	215	791
NPSO5	114	805
NPSO6	70	611
Total:	978	6,856

Notes. ^a Collected and analyzed documents originated from publicly available information (e.g., NPSO websites, media articles) and confidential sources provided to the author by participants (e.g., Board meeting minutes, financial audits). All documents were electronic.

^b Represents the total amount of pages from all collected and analyzed documents from each individual NPSO.

Dissertation Outline

The dissertation is structured in an article-based format where each research article is presented, followed by an overall discussion and conclusion. Each article addresses one of the stated research objectives. However, together the four research articles contribute to the overarching purpose of this dissertation. This approach follows the fundamental characteristics of an article-based dissertation whereby each individual research article is unique, yet contributes equally to the dissertation (Dunleavy, 2003).

The remaining sections of this dissertation are as follows. First, the four research articles are presented (see Chapter II, Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Chapter V respectively). Second, an overarching discussion and conclusion is presented where the stated purpose of the dissertation is addressed (see Chapter VI). For the reader's reference, a summary of each subsequent chapter is offered below.

Chapter II Summary

The first research article is titled “Board decision making in NPSOs: A multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal approach.” This research article explored Board decision making in NPSOs. Using strategic decision-making theory to guide the data collection (e.g., multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal) and analysis (e.g., deductive codes based on the theory for the thematic analysis) processes, Board decision making was analyzed in six NPSOs. Data were collected from 36 observations (six per NPSO), 18 interviews (three per NPSO), and over 6,800 document pages. A total of 66 decisions were observed from June 2020 to October 2021. Following a thematic analysis and descriptive statistics in SPSS (e.g., number of actors involved in decisions, length of observed decisions), NPSO Board decision making was found to be information- and engagement-based. On average, NPSO Board decision making had a duration of 590 hours, took two meetings involving five individuals, had between two and three delays (e.g., technology), and consulted 40 information sources (with most sources being incorporated on more than one occasion like the opinions or expertise of individual Board members).

Chapter III Summary

The second research article is titled “Board decision making in NPSOs: Do internal factors matter?” This research article explored the types and impacts of internal factors on Board decision making in NPSOs. The theoretical framework combined strategic decision-making theory with internal factors identified from relevant literatures. Six NPSOs were examined and data were collected from 36 observations, 18 interviews, and over 900 documents (representing over 6,000 pages). Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis identified five internal factors impacting Board decision making: Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, Board meeting practices and environment, and technology. The first

four internal factors positively impacted Board decision making by having Board members with altruistic motives and a broad skill-set of expertise and past experiences. A smaller Board size was important to foster greater meaningful engagement among Board members and efficiently manage discussions. A positive relationship between the CEO and Chair is important to gather information quickly that is trustworthy and transparent to make informed decisions. Having formalized procedures and policies for decision making leads to using a greater number of information sources, while a collegial boardroom is important to foster discussions where Board members feel comfortable to speak freely to share their expertise and opinions. Technology had a positive (i.e., cost-friendly, convenient) and negative impact (i.e., limited the engagement of certain Board members) on decision making.

Chapter IV Summary

The third research article is titled “The impact of external factors on Board decision making in NPSOs.” This research article explored the types and impacts of external factors on Board decision making in NPSOs. The theoretical framework combined strategic decision-making theory with external factors identified from relevant literatures. Data were gathered from six different NPSOs and included 36 observations, 18 interviews, and over 900 documents. A thematic analysis was undertaken to identify the various types and impacts of external factors. Results demonstrated the negative impact of two external factors on Board decision making: the sport system structure and market conditions. Notably, the sport system structure factor was attributed to managing demands from external stakeholders such as members and funding partners, which forced NPSO Boards to make certain decisions. In turn, market conditions from the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., health crisis) created the need to hold a greater number of Board meetings via virtual platforms where a situation with high risk and uncertainty was present. This

situation was characterized with changing daily information arising from different sources and the need for NPSO Boards to make unplanned decisions.

Chapter V Summary

The fourth, and final, research article is titled “NPSO Board decision making in a federated sport model: Exploring similarities and differences within and between levels.” In this research article, similarities and differences in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels of a multi-level governance system were explored. To address this purpose, six NPSOs were included in the sample; two national-level and four provincial/territorial-level (i.e., two from each of the national-level NPSO’s system). Data were gathered from a combination of 36 observations and over 900 documents. All data were inputted into SPSS and three statistical analyses were performed: two t-tests (i.e., within level for two national-level NPSOs, and between level for two national-level NPSOs versus four provincial/territorial-level NPSOs) and a one-way ANOVA (i.e., within level for four provincial/territorial-level NPSOs). No statistically significant differences were identified at the national level. However, seven statistically significant differences were found between NPSO Board decision making at the provincial/territorial level. In addition, Board decision making differed more between levels given 21 statistically significant differences were found between national- and provincial/territorial-level NPSOs.

Chapter VI Summary

The concluding chapter presents an overall discussion related to the dissertation’s purpose. This is accomplished by providing further analysis and discussion from this dissertation’s results with relevant bodies of literature from sport management (e.g., sport governance) and the broader management field (e.g., governance, decision making). This final

discussion includes a presentation of the dissertation's theoretical contributions and practical implications. This is followed by a reflection on the dissertation process and future research directions.

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Chapter II: Exploring Board Decision Making in NPSOs: A Multi-Method, In Situ, and Longitudinal Approach

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore Board decision making in NPSOs. Using a multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal approach, a total of 36 observations were conducted during Board meetings of six NPSOs in Canada along with 18 interviews (Chairs, individual Board members, and CEOs) and 978 documents. Data were thematically analyzed and descriptive statistics are offered from the 66 observed decisions. Results demonstrated NPSO Boards use an information- and engagement-based approach to make decisions. On average, decisions are made during two meetings, involved five individuals, two to three delays (e.g., technology), and 40 different (internal and external) information sources. Results suggest a novel type of decision making for NPSO Boards: dispersed. This study provides rich insight and understanding on decision making, which is a central process for NPSO Boards, yet has been largely overlooked in the sport governance literature thus far.

Keywords: decision; decision-making process; strategic decision-making theory; board of directors; qualitative; Canadian sport system

Lachance, E. L., & Parent, M. M. (In preparation). Board decision making in NPSOs: A multi-method, in situ, and longitudinal approach.

Introduction

“What is one activity every manager – no matter what level of the hierarchy what industry, or what size or type of organization – engages in every day? Decision making.”

(Daft, 2021, p. 527).

Decision making, which refers to the processing of information to solve problems (Drucker, 1966), is a central function in organizational life (Daft, 2021) and in governance (Hoye & Doherty, 2011; McLeod et al., 2021b). The importance of decision making as a process is represented by the very need for managers to make decisions related to the procedures, operations, and direction of organizations, thus allowing for survival and growth (Daft). Decision making is also vital to enhancing outcomes like sport organizations’ or systems’ effectiveness (Hoye & Doherty).

One organizational group for which decision making is central to its existence and required for the enactment of roles and responsibilities is the Board. More precisely, the Board is an organized group of individuals at the top of the structure with the collective authority and power to govern an organization (Carver, 2006; Hoye et al., 2020). Board power and authority are seen in its decision making. These decisions, thus, are required for the Board to enact its roles (i.e., setting and monitoring the organization’s mission, planning and developing policy, appointing and monitoring the CEO, and managing relationships with external stakeholders; Hoye & Doherty, 2011) and responsibilities (e.g., duty of care, fiduciary duty; Hoye et al.).

Though the above notions demonstrate the Board’s role for decision making in organizations and the ability for this process to impact outcomes (e.g., organizational effectiveness; Hoye & Doherty, 2011), two gaps remain in the sport governance literature. First, similar to the broader research in sport management where decision making is largely ignored

(Byers et al., 2012), the first gap is the dearth of explicit investigations on decision making in this ubiquitous and vital group for NPSOs. For instance, previous sport governance research has made implicit claims about decision making based on the impact of an examined process (e.g., collective leadership; O’Boyle et al., 2020) on this phenomenon. However, decision making – as a process unfolding over time and involving multiple actors – was not defined nor examined according to key tenets like length, information sources, delays, actors and negotiations, or level of authorization (cf. Hickson et al., 2018). These tenets are vital for claims to be made when forging an understanding of decision making. Yet, at this time, we are left without an explicit understanding of Board decision making, such as the types and number of information sources, negotiations between actors, or delays (see Hickson et al.). Research is needed to move beyond implicit claims about decision making (e.g., Kerwin et al., 2011; O’Boyle et al.; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011, 2015; Shilbury et al., 2020; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015) to provide a better understanding of this phenomenon in NPSO Boards.

Second, previous process-based research in the sport governance literature has been hindered by the treatment of the boardroom as a “black box.” This black box issue occurs from single-method and post-hoc studies examining Board processes (Zattoni & Pugliese, 2019) such as conflict (e.g., Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2020), leader-member exchanges (e.g., Hoyer, 2004), power and rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b), and norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004). These studies, though each providing important contributions for knowledge about sport Boards, claim to examine processes, but do not access the boardroom to observe the phenomenon (e.g., decision making) as it unfolds in the organizational setting (Pettigrew, 1997). This issue arises from using either questionnaires (e.g., Doherty et al.; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Inglis & Cleave, 2006) or interviews (e.g.,

Kerwin et al., 2011; O’Boyle et al.; Van Bussel & Doherty), with few noted exceptions (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012, 2015; Soares et al., 2010).

Considering the very nature of processes, which are “a sequence of individual and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding over time in context,” it is vital to select an appropriate research design and data collection methods (e.g., longitudinal, multi-method; Pettigrew, 1997, p. 338). Such process-based approaches would provide real-time insights into governance processes like Board decision making (Cornforth, 2014; Huse et al., 2011), thus advancing previous research and breaking down the black box issue in the sport governance literature (cf. Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020).

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore Board decision making in NPSOs. Based on the purpose, the following research question was posed: how do NPSO Boards make decisions? To answer this research question, this study applied a multi-method (i.e., combination of non-participation observations, semi-structured interviews, documents), *in situ* (i.e., observing Boards during meetings), and longitudinal approach (i.e., exploring decision making over time as opposed to cross-sectionally; see the Method section for more details).

Theory

In this section, literature pertaining to Boards and decision making in sport is presented. This is followed by the study’s applied theoretical framework.

Board Research in Sport

Like the broader management field (Cornforth, 2014), most sport governance research has focused on Boards. This prevalence of Board research is supported by various inquiries in professional sport organizations (e.g., Takos et al., 2018), national-level NPSOs (e.g., Ferkins &

Shilbury, 2012), provincial/territorial-level NPSOs (e.g., Kerwin et al., 2011), community-level NPSOs (e.g., Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), or multiple NPSOs from different levels of a sport system (e.g., national and provincial/territorial; Shilbury et al., 2020; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020).

Previous Board research in sport has examined topics like roles (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021a); motivation (e.g., Inglis & Cleave, 2006); politics (e.g., Soares et al., 2010); collective leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020); authentic leadership (e.g., Takos et al., 2018); leader-member exchanges (e.g., Hoye, 2004); conflict (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2011; Kerwin et al., 2011; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015); power distribution (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003); selection, orientation, and evaluation (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2004); power and rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b); strategic capability (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012); and gender diversity (e.g., Wicker & Kerwin, 2020). Sport governance researchers have also investigated Board effectiveness by applying previously developed and validated self-assessment questionnaires (e.g., Hoye & Auld, 2001) or via the perceptions of individual members (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011).

Board research in the sport governance literature has demonstrated the importance of certain processes (e.g., leadership, conflict, cohesion, norms, power; Hoye & Doherty, 2011). For instance, conflict (i.e., task, relationship, process) among Board members negatively impacts levels of satisfaction, commitment, and perceived decision quality (Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010), thus impacting individual-level and group-level outcomes (Kerwin et al., 2011). Leadership research in Boards has also demonstrated the importance of processes occurring in the boardroom. Notably, a higher perceived quality of dyadic relationships among executives, Chairs, and individual Board members – and thus, the ability to enact their roles and responsibilities – contributed positively to the group’s effectiveness (Hoye, 2004). Other

researchers suggested low levels of trust and information sharing between national-level NPSO Boards and their members (e.g., provincial/territorial-level NPSOs) negatively impacts the ability for collective leadership to be developed within and between organizations in the sport system (O’Boyle et al., 2020). A final example is the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty). This model, based on Board literature from the broader management field and sport management, posits processes occurring inside the boardroom (e.g., decision making) directly impact outcomes like the group’s and organization’s effectiveness (Hoye & Doherty).

Despite the knowledge gleaned from existing process-related research on sport Boards, there is a dearth of understanding about this group’s most central and ubiquitous process, decision making. This lack of understanding is problematic considering the posited relationship between Board decision making and effectiveness (Hoye & Doherty, 2011) and the limited knowledge stemming from research observing this phenomenon as it unfolds in the boardroom (cf. Kerwin et al., 2011; McLeod et al., 2021b; O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). Relevant inquiries on decision-making research in sport management are reviewed below.

Decision-Making Research in Sport

Though there is a dearth of decision-making research in sport management (Byers et al., 2012) compared to other bodies of literature (e.g., management; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010), some exceptions are noted. For instance, decision making has been examined in a large-scale major sport event (e.g., Parent, 2010) and different types of sport organizations like European football clubs (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2014; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2017), the National Basketball Association (NBA; e.g., Hindman et al., 2021), small for-profit leisure businesses (e.g., Byers & Slack, 2001), intercollegiate athletics associations (e.g., Hill & Kikulis, 1999), national-level NPSOs (e.g., Kikulis et al., 1995), and provincial/territorial-level NPSOs

(e.g., Soares et al., 2010). Findings have demonstrated, for example, the importance of time to understand decision making in sport events given their temporal nature (Parent) and the positive impact of leisure industry unique features like the hobby motive (Byers & Slack). Other studies have found tensions arising from organizational changes related to the control in decisions between professionals and volunteers (Kikulis et al.) and how diverse interests, level of influence, and rules of the game impact the behaviors of actors and process to make a restructuring-related decision (Hill & Kikulis). A more recent study discussed the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the NBA's decision making where cognitive (i.e., bounded rationality) and moral limits (i.e., bounded morality) were found to impact decisions made (Hindman et al.). Finally, two studies developed a framework to understand decision making specific to corporate social responsibility in European football clubs (i.e., Anagnostopoulos et al.; Anagnostopoulos et al.). Although a small body of literature exists (Byers et al.), the above line of sport decision-making research suggests the importance of this process to understand organizational life and enhance outcomes, such as effectiveness. However, this research is limited as fundamental aspects of decision making are not provided like the types and number of information sources, actors involved, negotiations, delays, and length (Nutt & Wilson). These fundamental aspects are required to gain an understanding of decision making in sport. This gap is further presented below according to sport Board decision-making research.

Sport Board Decision-Making Research

Besides the aforementioned studies, which have provided insights into decision making in different types of sport organizations and events, this phenomenon is poorly understood in the sport governance literature. Though implicitly referenced in sport Board research (e.g., collective leadership; O'Boyle et al., 2019, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020), these studies fail to provide an

explicit, in-depth analysis of this process, such as the types and number of information sources, length, negotiations, and number of actors involved (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010). Additional examples of implicit claims towards decision making in previous Board research is found in relation to conflict (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), political factors (e.g., Soares et al., 2010), strategic capability (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011), authentic leadership (e.g., Takos et al., 2018), leader-member exchanges (e.g., Hoye, 2004), collaborative governance (e.g., Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015), and rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b).

The above issue leaves sport governance research with a poor understanding of the way Boards make decisions, which is a central and ubiquitous process in organizations (Daft, 2021; Nutt & Wilson, 2010). Notably, such knowledge would provide an understanding of how NPSO Boards make decisions according to key aspects of this phenomenon like duration, potential delays, negotiations, actors involved, and information sources (cf. Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010). These aspects can help provide a deeper analysis of Board decision making, beyond the implicit examinations and claims currently found in the sport governance literature where an appropriate research design should be applied to understand this process (e.g., multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal). This deeper analysis and refined understanding would help Boards make better decisions and, as a result, achieve better outcomes (e.g., effectiveness).

Theoretical Framework

A variety of theories and models are available to researchers to understand decision making such as the rational model (e.g., Blai, 1986), the bounded rationality model (e.g., Simon, 1955), the Carnegie model (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963), the structure of unstructured decision-making processes (e.g., Mintzberg et al., 1976), and strategic decision-making theory (e.g., Cray

et al., 1988). Though it is beyond the scope of this study to review each theory/model, the breadth of knowledge related to this phenomenon is acknowledged in the wider management field (see Nutt & Wilson, 2010).

This study used strategic decision-making theory as developed by the “Bradford studies” (Cray et al., 1988). Strategic decision-making theory is appropriate for this study because it helps identify different types of decisions based on a variety of constructs. This allows decision making to be examined as it unfolds in organizations (Hickson et al., 2018) according to specific concepts (e.g., scrutiny; Cray et al.). This approach improves upon other theories/models, as they typically only provide a post-hoc analysis or depiction of decision making for managers according to linear steps (e.g., Blai, 1986; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Simon, 1955). The selected theory is described below.

Strategic Decision-Making Theory

Strategic decision-making theory originated from studies conducted at the University of Bradford (Hickson et al., 2018). Compared to previous decision-making research conducted on organizations based on developing typologies or different categories to provide a post-hoc description of decisions made in examined cases (e.g., Blai, 1986; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Simon, 1955), the Bradford studies focused on decision making as it unfolds in an organizational setting (Hickson et al.).

Three types of decision making were identified from the Bradford studies: (1) sporadic (i.e., greater disruption, impedance, expertise, informal interaction, and process time with some scope of negotiation, and a high level of authorization); (2) constricted (i.e., greater expertise, and fewer scope of negotiation, formal interaction, effort, and lower level of authorization); and

(3) fluid (i.e., greater formal interaction, some scope of negotiation, fewer disruption, impedance, expertise, and process time, and a high level of authorization; Cray et al., 1988).

To describe these types, five constructs were developed: scrutiny, interaction, flow, duration, and centrality (Hickson et al., 2018). First, scrutiny includes two sub-constructs: expertise (i.e., number of additional sources used to provide information during the decision) and effort (i.e., how the information was acquired for the decision; Cray et al., 1988). Second, interaction is understood through three sub-constructs: (a) informal interaction (i.e., discussions about the decision in informal settings such as hallways or watercoolers), (b) formal interaction (i.e., discussions about the decision in formal settings like meetings), and (c) scope of negotiation (i.e., number of individuals involved during the decision; Cray et al.). Third, flow refers to disruption (i.e., length and number of events that interrupt the decision) and impedance (i.e., reasons given by informants for the delays in the decision; Cray et al.). Fourth, duration includes gestation time (i.e., interval from the initial mention of an issue until the start of specific action to make a decision) and process time (i.e., interval from the start of specific action to the moment when the final decision is authorized for implementation; Cray et al.). Finally, centrality refers to the level responsible for the decision's authorization (Cray et al.). These (sub-)constructs will be used to describe and analyze Board decision making in this study.

Method

A case study methodology was used for this study (Yin, 2018) featuring a combination sample (i.e., purposeful and convenience). From a purposeful standpoint, Boards operating in NPSOs (i.e., organizational entities focused on the generation of social impact and value as opposed to directly and uniquely pursuing profit-based ventures; Daft, 2021) were included. In

comparison, from a convenience standpoint, the included NPSO Boards were recruited from the Canadian sport system because of the researchers' contextual knowledge.

NPSO Boards were invited to participate via email in April and May 2020. Following initial recruitment, six NPSO Boards accepted to participate: two operated at the national level, while the remaining four were at the provincial/territorial level. In line with the ethics certificate obtained for this study, pseudonyms are used for the NPSOs (i.e., NPSO1, NPSO2, NPSO3, NPSO4, NPSO5, NPSO6). Likewise, pseudonyms are used for the interview participants (e.g., NPSO1_Chair, NPSO1_BoardMember, NPSO1_CEO). Though the specific sports are not provided, each NPSO represents a summer Olympic sport and is recognized and funded by their respective sport governing body, such as Sport Canada for those at the national level. The specific name of the provincial/territorial-level sport governing bodies associated with the four provincial/territorial-level NPSOs is not provided to preserve anonymity. A brief description of the sample is provided below.

NPSO1 operates at the national level with 11 employees, a Board size of 10, and 15 Board-related committees. Within NPSO1's sport network, NPSO3 and NPSO4 each operate at the provincial/territorial level. NPSO3 has six employees, a Board size of seven, and seven Board-related committees. NPSO4 has six employees, a Board size of eight, and no Board-related committees. In contrast, NPSO2 operates at the national level with eight employees, a Board size of 11, and 10 Board-related committees. Within NPSO2's sport network, NPSO5 and NPSO6 each operate at the provincial/territorial level. NPSO5 has six employees, a Board size of six, and six Board-related committees. NPSO6 has five employees, a Board size of nine, and two Board-related committees.

Data Collection

Data were collected from June 2020 to October 2021 using non-participant overt observations (henceforth observations), semi-structured interviews (henceforth interviews), and documents. Given the complexities and ambiguities around processes (Pettigrew, 1997), such as Board decision making, the selection of multiple data collection methods was appropriate to corroborate results from each source (Cray et al., 1988; Yin, 2018). For example, observations analyzed the various information sources and behaviours of actors involved in decision making whereas the interviews and documents provided additional insights to corroborate the parameters of decisions made (e.g., asking participants to explain the process to make decisions on their Board, items from Board meeting agendas and minutes to determine the start and finish of the decisions made). Further, the selection and use of these data collection methods was crucial to capture the various aspects of decision making as it unfolded in the boardroom (cf. Cray et al.). For instance, the incorporation of observations supports this notion considering it gets “beyond people’s opinions and self-interpretations of their attitudes and behaviours, towards an evaluation of their actions in practice” (Gray, 2014, p. 413).

Observations

Observations, representing the primary data source, were conducted during six Board meetings for each NPSO. A total of 36 observations were conducted via Zoom and Google Meets where the first author’s microphone and camera were turned off, thus not interfering or influencing the observed processes in action and acting as a “fly on the wall” (Huse et al., 2011). Observations were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim representing a total of 60 hours (average of 98 minutes per observation). Data were derived from a structured observation sheet and field notes (Gray, 2014). The observation sheet was based on the fundamental concepts from

the strategic decision-making theory (e.g., Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018; see Table 2.1 and Appendix Q). The field notes collected information on objective and subjective aspects occurring in the boardroom (Gray). Specific to objective aspects, the first author took detailed notes in a notebook pertaining to things like the type of platform used for Board meetings, number of meeting attendees, and meeting agenda items. In the same notebook, the first author noted subjective reactions of individual Board members (e.g., facial expressions, body language) during the meetings and discussions related to matters for decisions along with their interactions with others for the subjective aspects.

Interviews

Following completion of the observations, interviews were conducted with three participants from each case: the CEO, Chair, and one individual Board member (purposefully selected from the conducted observations). The individual Board member from each case was selected because of their knowledge of and involvement (e.g., actively engaged in discussions) in the observed decisions. Interview questions stemmed from the theoretical framework; examples include: can you describe how decisions are made by the Board?; during decision making, do Board members have discussions between one another to make a decision?; and are any external (e.g., consultants, other individuals' experience/knowledge) or internal (e.g., Board members' opinions/expertise, CEO opinions/expertise) information sources used by the Board in decision making? All 18 interviews were conducted by phone by the first author and lasted 30 minutes to 69 minutes (average of 48 minutes). Data saturation was reached as results from the observations were corroborated by multiple participants in each case (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and sent to participants for member-checking.

Documents

Documents (e.g., strategic plans, organizational structures, annual reports, financial audits, newsletters) from each NPSO were obtained during the data collection process (i.e., June 2020 to October 2021) via publicly available information (e.g., NPSO websites, media sources) and additional confidential sources provided by participants to the first author (e.g., meeting agendas and minutes, emails). A total of 978 documents representing 6,856 pages were collected.

Data Analysis

The first author inputted all data (observation and interview transcripts, and documents) into NVivo 12 (qualitative data analysis software) for analysis. A deductive and inductive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2022) six steps (i.e., familiarizing yourself with the dataset; coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming theme; and writing up) was used. The deductive analysis used strategic decision-making theory's constructs (Cray et al., 1988) while the inductive analysis included novel codes identified during data collection (e.g., external stakeholders used for information).

The first author began by reading each observation and interview transcripts twice (i.e., familiarization) to identify the decisions from the observed Board meetings. Next, documents, such as Board meeting agendas and minutes provided insights on the start and finish of observed decisions. He then created initial codes within the dataset (i.e., initial coding), such as individual expertise and opinions, external stakeholders, and documents for information sources. Next, theme development took place, whereby deductive codes based on the theoretical framework allowed the information sources (i.e., scrutiny), authorization level (i.e., centrality), delays (i.e., flow), actors and negotiations (i.e., interaction), and length of decisions (i.e., duration) to be analyzed. In addition, inductive codes not related to strategic decision-making theory constructs

(e.g., technology as an impediment) were identified to gain a better understanding of each observed Board decisions. At this point, the authors discussed and confirmed the data's interpretation (i.e., theme refinement and naming). The authors interpretation of the data were supported via consulted claims in collected documents (e.g., Board meeting agendas) and observation field notes, thereby establishing triangulation (Yin, 2018). From the analysis, 66 decisions were observed. The analysis results are presented below (i.e., write-up).

Considering the quantitative nature of the applied theory's constructs (e.g., decision making duration, length of delays, number of actors involved in discussions), descriptive statistics were also undertaken using SPSS. These descriptive statistics were tabulated from the structured observation sheet used in this study. Data were manually inputted into SPSS by the first author. Consistent with strategic decision-making theory (e.g., Cray et al., 1988), the structured observation sheet allowed decision making to be scored in relation to each of the five constructs (see Table 2.1 below for information on measures for each variable).

Results

Thematic analysis results are first presented, followed by the descriptive statistics for the decisions observed.

NPSO Board Decision Making: Thematic Analysis

Two themes were identified regarding NPSO Board decision making: information-based decision making and engagement-based decision making. These themes present two key characteristics of NPSO Board decision making – that is, using different information sources and fostering engagement. These characteristics were noted as equally important by NPSO2's Chair:

So we try to be democratic, we try to be consensus building. We generally try to work towards a consensus and we've been relatively successful with that. ... You recruit

people to the Board for their skill set and for different viewpoints ... and I am very much of the viewpoint that that you have to solicit opinions.

Information-Based Decision Making

Participants indicated information was vital for a decision to be made. More precisely, participants mentioned the importance of gathering enough information to make an informed decision, as demonstrated in the following quotation:

We need to make clear and informed decisions and that comes from a maximum of information we can collect. Whether the information is positive or negative, we still have to consider it all and it is essential for our decisions. (NPSO3_BoardMember)

To foster the use of gathering information to make an informed decision, collected documents demonstrated the development of written resources (e.g., Board papers, CEO reports).

Having informed-based decision making was also important for Boards to understand the potential impact of their decisions on stakeholders (e.g., members), as NPSO2's CEO noted:

I think we have a similar approach where we want to find out the information before making a decision and making sure that we're looking at what are the ramifications of those decisions ... how will this be perceived from a political point of view.

An additional point for Boards to make informed decisions was the importance of gathering information because of a lack of knowledge on the topic, as explained by NPSO5's Board member: "We are a Board that listens to one another and others outside the organization. When we aren't certain about something then we go and get the information we need." However, gathering information from a variety of internal and external sources can make for lengthy decision making as due diligence is required (e.g., investigating different perspectives, value of these perspectives, and trustworthiness of provided information). NPSO5's Chair highlighted this

issue: “We do get to our decisions a little slowly, but it is from gathering a variety and multitude of information sources.”

Engagement-Based Decision Making

For decision making, participants discussed the importance for NPSO Boards to be engagement-based in their approach, as NPSO2’s Board member noted: “I think it’s just the open communication, consensus seeking attitude within the Board.” This engagement-based approach was linked to Boards’ ability to have open and transparent discussions, which should be characterized by respect between individuals as demonstrated in the following quotation:

For us to be effective, every Board member must be respectful of other opinions.

Generally speaking, that’s been the case on the Board. We did have some friction at times, and I don’t have a problem with diverse opinions. But everybody has to respect the opinions that are being presented by everyone else. (NPSO4_Chair)

Other participants mentioned the value of being open and transparent during discussions about decisions to gain more support and engagement from other Board members, as NPSO2’s Board member explained: “I think transparency is important. But more important for any kind of decision is that, if you don’t have support from all the people involved behind it, then it’s difficult to implement and difficult to support that decision going forward.” Further, a team approach developed as a means to make an engagement-based decision, which NPSO5’s Board member highlighted: “I would say we have an approach to work as a team to make decisions collectively.”

NPSO Board Decision Making: Descriptive Statistics

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the analysis and the descriptive statistics for each variable. The results of this analysis are noted below according to the included variables.

Table 2.1*Description of Variables and Descriptive Statistics Results*

Variables	Description for Measurement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Centrality ^b	Average of decision authorization level: lower-level employee (1); manager (2); CEO (3); CEO, but ratified by the Board (4); Board committee (5); Board (6); external organization (7).	6.02	0.123
Duration ^c	Total length (hh:mm:ss) of observed decision based on the sum of gestation time and process time.	590:05:00	1250:37:00
Gestation time	Time from first mention of problem until first action to make a decision measured in hours, minutes, and seconds (hh:mm:ss).	00:36:47	04:08:26
Process time	Time from first action to make a decision until final decision is made measured in hours, minutes, and seconds (hh:mm:ss).	593:34:00	1261:36:00
Flow	Measured according to two sub-constructs below.		
Disruption ^b	Sum of delay lengths during observed decisions.	3.14	4.677
No delays	No delays during decision (0).	0.44	0.500
Intermittent	Delays lasting less than 5 minutes during decision (1).	1.15	1.979
Continual	Delays lasting more than 5 minutes, but ending before the meeting concludes (2).	0.06	0.387
Prolonged	Delays lasting beyond the meeting or multiple meetings (3).	0.61	1.094
Impediments ^c	Sum of delay(s) types during observed decisions.	2.29	2.292
Consulting wrong documents ^a	Delay caused by consulting wrong documents (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.03	0.173
External sources of opposition	Delay caused by external source of opposition (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.05	0.369
Family members ^a	Delay caused by family members (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.08	0.319
Internal sources of opposition	Delay caused by internal source of opposition (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.15	0.588
Locating documents to share ^a	Delay caused by locating documents (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.03	0.173
Technology ^a	Delay caused by technology (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.67	1.155

	Waiting for pertinent information to become available	Delay caused by waiting for relevant information to become available (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.56	1.165
	Waiting to conduct research	Delay caused by waiting to conduct research (1=1 delay, 2=2 delays, etc.).	0.05	0.210
Interaction ^c		Sum of formal interaction and informal interaction.	2.15	1.694
Formal interaction		Number of meetings related to observed decisions (1=1 meeting, 2=2 meetings).	1.47	1.026
Informal interaction		Number of informal discussions mentioned by participants related to observed decisions (1=1 informal discussion, 2=2 informal discussions).	0.68	1.055
Scope of negotiation		Number of individuals involved in observed decisions (1=1 individual, 2=2 individuals).	5.05	2.645
Scrutiny		Measured according to two sub-constructs below.		
Effort ^b		Sum of the process to acquire sources of information used during observed decisions.	48.41	60.288
	Conduct research	Number of times information is acquired from conducted research=5 for each instance.	1.18	4.441
	External stakeholders ^a	Number of times information is acquired from external stakeholders=4 for each instance.	0.32	1.349
	Integrate information from multiple sources	Number of times information is acquired from integrating multiple sources=3 for each instance.	4.36	7.959
	Readily accessible information	Number of times information is acquired from readily accessible information=2 for each instance.	0.97	1.806
	Individuals' expertise and opinions	Number of times information is acquired from individual's expertise/opinions=1 for each instance.	28.42	42.021
Expertise ^c		Sum of internal and external expertise used during the observed decisions.	39.77	53.442
	External expertise ^a	Sum of external expertise information sources used during the observed decisions.	2.08	5.295
	COC ^a	Number of information sources from the COC (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.02	0.123
	CCES ^a	Number of information sources from the CCES (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.02	0.123
	Community sport organizations ^a	Number of information sources from community sport organizations (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.26	0.997

Consultants/Contractors ^a	Number of information sources from consultants/contractors (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.20	0.749
Health authorities ^a	Number of information sources from health authorities (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.18	1.239
International sport organization ^a	Number of information sources from international sport organizations (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.15	0.707
Media ^a	Number of information sources from the media (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.08	0.615
National sport organizations ^a	Number of information sources from national sport organizations (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.44	1.040
Provincial/Territorial governments ^a	Number of information sources from provincial/territorial governments (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.09	0.547
Provincial/Territorial sport governing bodies ^a	Number of information sources from provincial/territorial sport governing agencies (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.32	1.166
Provincial/Territorial sport organizations ^a	Number of information sources from provincial/territorial sport organizations (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.27	0.921
Sport Canada ^a	Number of information sources from Sport Canada (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.02	0.123
Internal expertise ^a	Sum of internal expertise information sources used during the observed decisions.	37.82	50.479
Board committee members expertise/opinions ^a	Number of information sources from Board committee members (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	0.91	3.387
Board members expertise/opinions ^a	Number of information sources from Board members (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	24.97	41.018
CEO expertise/opinions ^a	Number of information sources from the CEO (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	6.94	8.432
Documents ^a	Number of information sources from documents (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	3.77	5.880
Staff expertise/opinions ^a	Number of information sources from the staff (1=1 time, 2=2 times, etc.).	1.27	4.146

Notes. ^a Represents a novel variable (i.e., not discussed in the applied theory) identified during the conducted observations.

^b These variables and sub-variables were measured as a hierarchical variable.

^c These variables and sub-variables were measured as an interval variable.

Of note, within the 66 observed decisions, the types of decisions made among the NPSO Boards in this study varied according to those related to policy development (e.g., COVID-19 return-to-play protocols; $n=56$), operations (e.g., cancellation of competitions and events; $n=4$), politics (e.g., contractual issues between NPSOs; $n=3$), structure (e.g., Board Chair and Vice-Chair nominations/appointment; $n=2$), and performance (i.e., CEO evaluation; $n=1$).

Centrality

For centrality, 65 of 66 observed decisions were authorized by the Board ($M=6.02$; $SD=.123$). The lone exception was a decision related to COVID-19 return-to-play protocols, which was authorized by a provincial/territorial health authority. Though this is not surprising considering this study's focus on decision making in NPSO Boards, results indicated only one observed decision was authorized by an external organization. Collected documents, namely the Board meeting agendas and minutes, corroborated the authorized decisions.

Duration

The average length of duration for Board decision making was 590h 05m 0s ($SD=1250$ h 37m 0s), with a minimum of 0h 2m 41s (i.e., approving an expense for equipment purchase) and a maximum of 5378h 25m 53s (i.e., return-to-play protocol development). Within this duration, gestation time was a minor contributor, as it had an average length of 0h 36m 47s ($SD=4$ h 08m 26s). In contrast, process time had an average length of 593h 34m and 0s ($SD=1261$ h 36m 0s). Collected documents corroborated information on duration, such as through the items on Board meeting agendas and minutes.

Flow

Between two and three delays were found (i.e., impediments; $M=2.29$; $SD=2.292$). The length of these delays (i.e., disruption; $M=3.14$; $SD=4.677$) was generally intermittent ($M=1.15$;

$SD=1.979$), continual ($M=.06$; $SD=.387$), or prolonged ($M=.61$; $SD=1.094$). There were rare instances where no delays were present during Board decision making ($M=.44$; $SD=.500$).

Beyond the number and lengths of delays, variations in the types of causes or reasons were observed. The most prominent cause of delays was technology ($M=.67$; $SD=1.155$): Board members would either be muted when attempting to speak, which caused a disturbance in the discussion because the individual had to become aware they were muted then unmute themselves to participate. Further, document screen sharing caused technology-based delays, as Board members or the CEO struggled at times to locate the document on their laptop or desktop, followed by the process to share their screen with others. The second highest type of delay was waiting for information ($M=.56$; $SD=1.165$), which was caused by NPSOs having to wait for external stakeholders, such as sport governing bodies, health authorities, and other NPSOs (e.g., national, community), to share vital information with them to make an informed decision. Other delays were attributed to sources of internal opposition ($M=.15$; $SD=.588$). In some instances, individual Board members would voice their disagreement of the decision being made and propose an alternative for which additional discussions would take place in hopes of reaching consensus. Additional causes for delays included family members ($M=.08$; $SD=.319$), such as a partner or children distracting an individual Board member during a discussion, external source of opposition (e.g., provincial/territorial health authority refusing to approve return-to-play policies; $M=.05$; $SD=.369$), conducting research (e.g., individual Board member tasked with searching other NPSO websites to inform policy development; $M=.05$; $SD=.210$), consulting the wrong documents ($M=.03$; $SD=.173$), and locating documents to share ($M=.03$; $SD=.173$).

Interaction

Boards made decisions over the course of two interactions ($M=2.15$; $SD=1.694$). Most interactions were formal ($M=1.47$; $SD=1.026$), occurring during Board meetings. Boards did have some informal interactions about decision making ($M=.68$; $SD=1.055$). Specific to the scope of negotiation, Board decision making typically involved five individuals ($M=5.05$; $SD=2.645$). Collected documents, such as the Board meeting agendas and minutes, corroborated the above information on interaction.

Scrutiny

The descriptive statistics indicated Boards acquired and used various internal (e.g., Board members expertise and opinions) and external (e.g., sport governing bodies) information sources during their decision making. Specific to effort ($M=48.41$; $SD=60.288$), most information was acquired from individuals' expertise/opinions ($M=28.42$; $SD=42.021$). In addition, information was acquired from integrating information from multiple sources (e.g., combining Board members' expertise and opinions with information from an organizational policy; $M=4.36$; $SD=7.959$), conducting research ($M=1.18$; $SD=4.441$), readily accessible information (e.g., consulting organizational policies; $M=.97$; $SD=1.806$), and external stakeholders (e.g., consultants/contractors, sport governing bodies, health authorities; $M=.32$; $SD=1.349$).

Beyond how information was acquired, the types of information used by Boards during their decision making varied greatly ($M=39.77$; $SD=53.442$), and can be divided into those internal ($M=37.82$; $SD=50.479$) and external to the Board and organization ($M=2.08$; $SD=5.295$). For internal information sources, the most relied upon was the expertise/opinions of individual Board members ($M=24.97$; $SD=41.018$), followed by the expertise/opinions of the CEO ($M=6.94$; $SD=8.432$), documents ($M=3.77$; $SD=5.880$), expertise/opinions of staff

members ($M=1.27$; $SD=4.146$), and Board committee members expertise/opinions ($M=.91$; $SD=3.387$). In turn, external information sources included documents or opinions from other international- ($M=.15$; $SD=.707$), national- ($M=.44$; $SD=1.040$), provincial/territorial- ($M=.27$; $SD=.921$), or community-level NPSOs ($M=.26$; $SD=.997$). Additional external information sources included documents and/or opinions from individuals in organizations like provincial/territorial sport governing bodies (e.g., government departments; $M=.32$; $SD=1.166$), consultants/contractors ($M=.20$; $SD=.749$), health authorities ($M=.18$; $SD=1.239$), provincial/territorial governments ($M=.09$; $SD=.547$), the media ($M=.08$; $SD=.615$), the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC; $M=.02$; $SD=.123$), Sport Canada ($M=.02$; $SD=.123$), and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES; $M=.02$; $SD=.123$).

Discussion

When examining the findings, characteristics describing NPSO Boards' decision making differed from the three types originally developed in the Bradford studies (i.e., sporadic, constricted, and fluid; Cray et al., 1988). Results suggest NPSO Board decision making is not exclusive to one of the three types originally suggested by the Bradford studies. More precisely, NPSO Board decision making show similarities with the sporadic type considering the number of delays (i.e., high level of disruption and impedance); length (i.e., high level of process time); individuals' skills, expertise, and experience (i.e., high level of expertise); and level of authorization (i.e., NPSO Board). However, the decisions examined also differed from the sporadic type because there was a relatively high level of scope of negotiation. Namely, at least five members were involved, on average, and formal interactions were more prominent than informal interactions. In turn, NPSO Board decision making was also like the constricted type considering the amount of internal information used (i.e., individuals; high level of effort and

expertise) and number of formal interactions required. Despite these similarities, the observed decisions differed from the constricted type as the level of authorization was high and the scope of negotiation was not limited. The same conclusions can be derived for the fluid type as NPSO Board decision making was also characterized with formal interaction and a high level of authorization. However, differences were found in the high level of expertise, scope of negotiation, disruption, impedance, and process times in the observed decisions.

Instead of being categorized into one of the three types (cf. Cray et al., 1988), NPSO Board decision making is understood as having high levels of authorization, process time, scope of negotiation, effort, and expertise with some delays (i.e., disruption, impedance). This decision-making type is labelled as dispersed, which is a contribution of this study to NPSO Board governance literature, as well as to the broader decision-making literature. Nevertheless, characteristics of this decision-making type are consistent with the two identified themes and the applied theory. For instance, the high level of process time (i.e., duration; Cray et al.) can be explained by the decision type considering those strategic in nature made by the observed NPSO Boards in this study (e.g., developing return-to-play-protocols to relaunch their sport) took a greater amount of time than operational decisions (e.g., approving an expense for equipment purchase). In contrast, the high number of information sources used by NPSO Boards in their decision making speaks to the scrutiny construct (Cray et al.) and the importance of gathering a diverse set of perspectives, both internal and external, to make an informed decision (i.e., information-based decision making). Not relying on a diverse set of perspectives could result in situations like satisficing (i.e., search for alternatives to a problem stops once a solution is identified; Simon, 1955) or problemistic searches (i.e., rapid search for alternatives to identify a single solution to a problem; Cyert & March, 1963). These situations would arguably limit the

presence of information-based decision making considering an alternative to a problem is quickly chosen as opposed to gathering various internal and external information sources to properly evaluate the issue at hand. In turn, the characteristics regarding the number of individuals involved in decision making (i.e., scope of negotiation sub-construct within the interaction construct; Cray et al.) is consistent with NPSO Boards' engagement-based approach, whereby a collegial boardroom with open and transparent discussions is fostered to make a decision. These discussions prevent issues like groupthink from occurring, whereby individuals simply support a point to make a given decision (Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Raven, 1998). This situation is problematic considering the absence of open and transparent discussions where critical perspectives are shared, which would limit the ability for Board members to be engaged and make informed decisions as a group.

This study's context can help explain differences in NPSO Boards' decision making compared to those presented by the Bradford studies (e.g., Cray et al., 1988). More precisely, this study's sample was comprised of NPSOs operating in a federated sport model, which differs from for-profit organizations or organizations operating in an unitary governance model. On one hand, for-profit organizations are typically larger in size and operate with a Board comprised of shareholders and the CEO, who assumes the role of Chair in some cases (i.e., CEO duality), in comparison to smaller-sized non-profit organizations with a Board comprised of an ex-officio CEO and individuals (e.g., organizational members) who are nominated and elected at an Annual General Meeting (Carver, 2006; Hoye & Doherty, 2011). The absence of CEO duality in the context of NPSO Boards could explain why information like expertise and opinions from an ex-officio member (i.e., CEO) were incorporated and relied upon during decision making to provide intel on organizational matters. On the other hand, the complexities of a federated sport model

compared to an unitary governance model, such as a multi-level collaboration between multiple actors and increased demands from funding partners, sport governing bodies, and members (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2015; Parent et al., 2021), could explain why various internal and external information sources were incorporated into their decision making.

Results also suggest additional variables are required to measure certain sub-constructs (i.e., operationalization) – as demonstrated in Table 2.2 (see italics) – and should be added to strategic decision-making theory. However, these additional variables are focused within two constructs: flow and scrutiny. More specifically, the added variables in the flow construct is related to the impediments sub-construct (i.e., technology, consulting wrong documents, locating documents to share, and family members). First, technology, as a reason for delays (e.g., Board members being on mute, screen sharing documents) can be explained by the contemporary nature of organizational operations, whereby the prominence of virtual meetings has grown compared to the 20th century when the Bradford studies occurred (cf. Cray et al.) and restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining three additional variables are also related to the growing presence of technology in organizations and the boardroom – that is, holding meetings virtually – due to travel and social restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic (cf. Cray et al.). For instance, Board members consulting wrong documents or attempting to locate documents on their personal computers to share during discussions were challenged because their meetings were held virtually. This arguably differs than traditional in-person meetings whereby documents are typically printed and distributed to attendees. Nevertheless, holding virtual meetings also explains the addition of family members (e.g., causing distractions in the background) as a reason for delays (cf. Cray et al.). This added variable is important to consider as it differs from traditional in-person meetings in which a

Table 2.2*Operationalization of Strategic Decision-Making Theory Constructs and Sub-Constructs*

Constructs	Sub-Constructs	Variables/Measurement for Operationalization
Centrality		Decision authorized by an external organization Decision authorized by the Board Decision authorized by a Board committee Decision authorized by the CEO, but ratified by the Board Decision authorized by the CEO Decision authorized by a manager Decision authorized by a lower-level employee
Duration	Gestation time	Time from first mention of problem until first action to make a decision measured in hours, minutes, and seconds (hh:mm:ss)
	Process time	Time from first action to make a decision until final decision is made measured in hours, minutes, and seconds (hh:mm:ss)
Flow	Disruption	Intermittent Continual Prolonged
	Impediments	External source of opposition Internal source of opposition Waiting for information to become available Waiting to conduct research <i>Consulting wrong documents</i> <i>Locating documents to share</i> <i>Technology</i> <i>Family members</i>

Interaction	Formal interaction	Number of meetings held for the decision.
	Informal interaction	Number of informal discussions for the decision.
Scrutiny	Scope of negotiation	Number of individuals involved in the decision.
	Effort	Readily accessible information Individual's expertise and opinions Conduct research <i>External stakeholders</i> Integrate multiple information sources
	Expertise	<i>Internal expertise</i> <i>Board member's expertise and opinions</i> <i>Board committee member's expertise and opinions</i> <i>CEO's expertise and opinions</i> <i>Staff member's expertise and opinions</i> <i>Documents</i> <i>External expertise</i> <i>COC</i> <i>CCES</i> <i>Community sport organizations</i> <i>Consultants/Contractors</i> <i>Health authorities</i> <i>International sport organizations</i> <i>Media</i> <i>National sport organizations</i> <i>Provincial/Territorial governments</i> <i>Provincial/Territorial sport governing bodies</i> <i>Provincial/Territorial sport organizations</i> <i>Sport Canada</i>

Notes. Novel variables and measurement to operationalize specific sub-constructs and constructs of strategic decision-making theory are italicized.

formal environment is created as individuals travel to a specific location and participate in discussions within a private room (e.g., conference room). Such a formal environment was not created during virtual meetings considering the delays related to family members found.

Second, external stakeholders should be incorporated as an added variable in the effort sub-construct for the scrutiny construct (cf. Cray et al., 1988). This is important as results demonstrated NPSO Boards acquired and relied on information (e.g., documents, informal discussions, and opinions) from external stakeholders during their decision making (e.g., consultants/contractors, sport governing bodies, other NPSOs in their sport network). The incorporation of information from external stakeholders during Board decision making supports stakeholders' impact on NPSOs (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2015; Naraine et al., 2020; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Parent et al., 2021) because of increased accountability to funding partners and expectations (e.g., safe sport, good governance; Parent et al.).

Third, the remaining added variables within the scrutiny construct are specific to the expertise sub-construct. Results suggest the types of information sources used could be external or internal to the Board and organization. This distinction is important to consider as the Bradford studies provided insights on the types of information sources (e.g., CEO expertise and opinions), yet did not categorize these further (cf. Cray et al., 1988). The need to incorporate external and internal information sources in the measurement of the expertise sub-construct resides in a better operationalization (cf. Cray et al.). Specifically, the ability to distinguish between external and internal information sources provides additional, worthy insights into decision making. For instance, the federated nature of NPSOs in Canada could explain why external information sources are found (cf. Cray et al.) as organizations share and acquire information from one another (i.e., systemic governance; Henry & Lee, 2004). In turn, internal

information sources provide insights on some nuances of decision making in NPSO Boards like the use of ex-officio members' (i.e., CEO, staff) expertise and opinions, which arguably differs from practices in for-profit organizations (cf. Cray et al.) where CEO duality is present.

Overall, results offered rich insights into the decision making of NPSO Boards. These insights were gleaned from a multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal approach compared to single-method, post-hoc, and cross-sectional designs demonstrated in previous sport Board research (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Kerwin et al., 2011; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). Thus, this study's approach extends previous claims in the sport governance literature regarding Board decision making (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al.; McLeod et al., 2021b; O'Boyle et al. Shilbury et al.) thanks to a focus on its fundamental aspects (e.g., duration, delays, information sources; Nutt & Wilson, 2010).

Theoretical Contributions

First, this study demonstrates the applicability of strategic decision-making theory to explore decision making at a group-level in the context of NPSOs. This differs from seminal research of strategic decision-making theory, which was focused on organizational decisions rather than those made by a single group (e.g., Board) in the organization (cf. Cray et al., 1988). Though the Bradford studies original sample included public, non-profit, and for-profit organizations in Britain, this study suggests NPSO Board decision making cannot be categorized into either a sporadic, fluid, or constricted type (cf. Cray et al.). The differences in the decision-making type could be attributed to the nature of NPSOs in our sample, which operate in a federated sport model. This compares to the Bradford studies sample of organizations, which most (except for the public organizations) operated under an unitary governance model. There is also a case to be made regarding the Bradford studies' approach to observe, compare, and derive

conclusions from decision making occurring in different organization type and industries. Nevertheless, a novel type (i.e., dispersed) is suggested, thereby advancing the applied theory and its previously developed decision-making typology (cf. Cray et al.).

Second, results contribute to the operationalization of strategic decision-making theory through the addition of variables to better measure certain sub-constructs (i.e., impediments, effort, and expertise). Specific to the impediments sub-construct, the following variables are worthy of inclusion in strategic decision-making theory: consulting wrong documents, locating documents to share, technology, and family members. Further, external stakeholders were identified as an added variable in the effort sub-construct. Specific to the expertise sub-construct, the following variables should be considered when investigating decision making in NPSO Boards: (a) external expertise including consultants/contractors, COC, CCES, Sport Canada, health authorities, other NPSOs (e.g., international, national, provincial/territorial, community), media, provincial/territorial governments, provincial/territorial sport governing bodies; and (b) internal expertise arising from Board members' expertise and opinions, Board committee members' expertise and opinions, CEO expertise and opinions, and documents (see Table 2.2 for a summary). Nevertheless, the identification of novel variables (as listed above) advances strategic decision-making theory's ability to describe contemporary decision making.

Third, this study's research design contributes to a more robust understanding of Board decision making in organizations. Specifically, the ability to observe and collect data about the phenomenon as it develops naturally over time in the organizational setting provides a more robust understanding. This robust understanding resides in the ability for decision making to be directly examined from start to finish, with information being both gathered and corroborated simultaneously from multiple methods. Such a methodological approach is vital for research to

move beyond a reliance on post-hoc, single-method, and cross-sectional understandings of a phenomenon that is by its very nature, a process unfolding over time.

Managerial Implications

First, Boards should foster engagement-based decision making. This can be accomplished by involving all Board members in decision making to gather a diverse set of perspectives, thereby making a decision as a group rather than it being influenced by a single individual. This engagement-based decision making should be led by a Chair who engages multiple members in discussions about the decision to gather others' expertise and opinions (i.e., information-based decision making). This also demonstrates the importance of the Chair's role in managing discussions. For instance, the Chair should be a moderator during the discussions whereby they facilitate the inclusion of members and different perspectives to garner an informed decision.

Second, Boards should attempt to minimize sources of delays during decision making. This can be done by having clear procedures such as for voting (e.g., raising hands via video or using video platforms features like polling) or orientation sessions to learn the operations of virtual platforms (e.g., Zoom). It is, however, important for Boards to understand certain decisions made at this organizational level require greater time given risk conditions. As such, delays may be inherently present during decision making. Despite this issue, Boards can implement some strategies mentioned above to mitigate prolonged delays.

Conclusion

This study explored Board decision making in NPSOs. Through a multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal design, results demonstrated NPSO Boards made decisions averaging just over 590 hours, occurring over at least two meetings with two to three delays, and involving five individuals and 40 different information sources. Results also highlighted the importance

information- and engagement-based decision making. To conclude this study, limitations and future research directions are offered.

First, this study had a small sample size and was limited to decision making in one group at the top of the organizational structure. Thus, future research should attempt to gather a larger sample size of NPSO Boards in addition to other organizational groups or departments. To this effect, this work should consider, for instance, how decision making rights between volunteer Board members and employees influence the process for decisions to be made in NPSOs (e.g., higher ambiguity in decision making rights between the Board and CEO could create more impediments), a topic outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, considering this study's delimitation to a single group (i.e., Board) operating within an organization (i.e., NPSO), this stream of research is important to assess the results' transferability and make broader claims about decision making in sport organizations.

Second, health and travel restrictions with the COVID-19 pandemic forced observations to be conducted virtually, while interviews were completed over the phone. From this limitation, future research should determine the ability for this study's design and approach to be implemented in person (e.g., the process to collect data through technological means as opposed to being physically on location). However, this study does demonstrate the viability of collecting data through technological means, such as conducting observations virtually, which may be a more popular approach given the increased use of technology in organizations today. Such an approach to conduct observations is worthy of future application considering the first author was able to be a "fly on the wall" as only participants had their video and audio on during observed Board meetings. Thus, this approach limits a potential influence in behaviours or actions compared to a researcher attending Board meetings held in person.

Third, additional research is warranted to develop a taxonomy to describe decision making in NPSOs. Such research would not only contribute to the NPSO literature by describing and classifying decision making in this context, but also for strategic decision-making theory (cf. Cray et al., 1988), such as critically revising the original typology given this study's results. To this effect, the presence of internal and external information sources should be considered in future research attempting to understand decision making at the group-level in organizations operating in a federated sport model (cf. Cray et al.).

Finally, though the decision making was examined from start to finish through multiple methods, this study did not consider factors impacting these decisions. Such factors could, for instance, arise from the external environment (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic) or inside an organization (e.g., Chair leadership style). Thus, future research should explore the impacts of different external and internal factors on decision making (e.g., delays, information sources). Such research would be important to further advance results of this study by providing potential explanations for the characteristics of NPSO Boards' decision making.

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Chapter III: Board Decision Making in NPSOs: Do Internal Factors Matter?

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of internal factors on NPSO Boards' decision making. Featuring six Canadian NPSOs (two national, four provincial/territorial), data were gathered from 36 non-participant overt observations of Board meetings, 18 semi-structured interviews (CEOs, Chairs, and individual Board members), and over 900 documents, then thematically analyzed. Results identified five internal factors impacting NPSO Board decision making: Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, boardroom environment and meeting practices, and technology. The first four internal factors positively impacted NPSO Board decision making, while technology had a negative (e.g., delays, limited engagement) and positive (e.g., cost-friendly, convenient) impact. Results demonstrate the need for sport governance research to consider multiple internal factors when examining decision making given their simultaneous occurrence inside the boardroom. NPSO Boards should be cautious when implementing technology into their decision making considering the potential for delays and limited engagement.

Keywords: decisions; decision-making processes; board of directors; not-for-profit organizations; qualitative; case study

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Introduction

Empirical research pertaining to sport governance has grown since the early 2000s (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). This increased attention is attributed to governance failures like state-sponsored doping in Russia (e.g., McLaren, 2016) and the Houston Astros cheating scandal (e.g., Elmore & Matthews, 2022), which have tarnished sport organizations' legitimacy (Hoye, 2017).

A key group within sport governance is the Board (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). The Board's importance resides in its collective power and authority to make decisions related to selected roles (e.g., managing external relationships, establishing and monitoring the organization's mission, selecting and monitoring the CEO, and planning and development of policy; Hoye & Doherty) and responsibilities (e.g., duty of care and fiduciary duty; Hoye et al., 2020). From its collective power and authority to make decisions, the Board, thus, impacts organizational (e.g., Hoye & Doherty) and system outcomes (e.g., effectiveness; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007).

Sport governance research has investigated various phenomena (e.g., roles, leadership, conflict) in Boards (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). Despite this growing body of literature, a gap remains as previous research has investigated different single and purposefully selected factors occurring inside boardrooms, such as gender diversity (e.g., Wicker & Kerwin, 2020), commitment (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001), motivation (e.g., Inglis & Cleave, 2006), leadership (e.g., collective; O'Boyle et al., 2020), leader-member exchange relationships (e.g., Hoye, 2004), power (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003), rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b), or norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004).

This is problematic as such internal factors do not arguably act in siloes in the boardroom. Instead, these internal factors occur simultaneously and affect processes (e.g.,

decision making) unfolding over time in the boardroom. For instance, collective leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020), which is viewed as a process occurring inside the boardroom featuring collaborative, democratic, and engaging discussions led by the Chair (O’Boyle et al.), could inhibit the potential for conflict (e.g., relationship; Kerwin et al., 2011) between Board members or rent-seeking behaviours (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b) so better decisions can be made. In contrast, negative changes in Board members’ commitment (e.g., Cuskelly et al., 1998) leading to a lack of cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003) could inhibit engagement during decision making. Such examples, however, demonstrate the need to consider multiple internal factors as we are left without an understanding of these factors’ simultaneous impact(s) on processes like decision making (cf. Kerwin et al.; McLeod et al.; O’Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al., 2020; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015). Such research would be timely considering the lack of knowledge and assessments regarding the types and impacts of multiple internal factors on Boards most central process, making decisions.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the impact of internal factors on NPSO Boards’ decision making. The following two research questions were posed: (1) what internal factors impact NPSO Board decision making?; and (2) how do these internal factors impact NPSO Board decision making?

Theory

Considering the importance of the Board in for-profit sport organizations and NPSOs, the amount of empirical and non-empirical research continues to grow (see Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). This body of knowledge is derived from research in different countries – like Canada (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011), Australia (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Hoye, 2004; Shilbury et al., 2020), New Zealand (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012),

Scotland (e.g., McLeod et al., 2020), and India (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b) – as well as organizations ranging from the national level (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020) to the community level (e.g., Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015).

Some researchers have examined the Board’s impact on outcomes like organizational effectiveness (e.g., Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000), while sport governing bodies have advocated for sport Boards to follow good governance principles (e.g., Australian Sports Commission, 2020). Of relevance for this study, some researchers have focused on internal factors in sport Boards (e.g., Board collective leadership; O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020), which is elaborated upon below.

Sport Board Research: Internal Factors

Researchers interested in Board internal factors have examined these at the individual and process levels (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). For instance, individual-level internal factors have included roles (e.g., McLeod et al., 2020); commitment (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001); motivation (e.g., Inglis & Cleave, 2006); passion (e.g., Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020); satisfaction (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010); and individuals’ skills, expertise, and experience (e.g., Hoye & Doherty, 2011). In turn, process-level internal factors have included norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004), cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), role ambiguity (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011), conflict (e.g., Kerwin et al., 2011; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), collective leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020), authentic leadership (e.g., Takos et al., 2018), leader-member exchanges (e.g., Hoye, 2004), power distribution (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003), and rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b).

These studies demonstrate the importance of internal factors given their impact on individual-level outcomes (e.g., perceived individual Board member effectiveness; Doherty &

Hoye, 2011) and group-level outcomes (e.g., Board effectiveness; Hoye, 2004). For instance, low levels of role ambiguity lead to higher perceived levels of individual Board member effectiveness (Doherty & Hoye). A positive relationship between the CEO and Chair enhances the group's effectiveness (Hoye). In turn, there can be a negative impact of conflict on individual (e.g., frustration, stress) and group outcomes (e.g., perceived decision quality; Kerwin et al., 2011). Further, conflict (i.e., task, relationship, and process) negatively impacts perceived decision quality, satisfaction, and commitment of individual Board members (Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010). Conversely, task and social cohesion among Board and committee members predict their satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of the group (Doherty & Carron, 2003). Moreover, small group sizes lead to lower perceived levels of social cohesion than larger group sizes (Doherty & Carron).

Other researchers have examined leadership styles among Boards, such as authentic (e.g., Takos et al., 2018) and collective (e.g., O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). Notably, an authentic leadership style promotes trust among Board members, thus reducing the potential for group disharmony and the development of toxic sub-groups (Takos et al.). O'Boyle et al. (p. 16) found "an overpowering President or Chair was an inhibiting factor in fostering a culture of collective leadership." From this claim, a democratic approach arising from a collective leadership style is deemed important to achieve organizational outcomes (e.g., effectiveness; O'Boyle et al.). In contrast, an absence of collective leadership appears to inhibit collaboration (Shilbury et al.).

Despite these studies, few have considered the simultaneous impact of multiple internal factors on Board processes. For instance, most studies focus on a single internal factor whether it be role ambiguity (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011), leadership (e.g., O'Boyle et al., 2020), cohesion

(e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), conflict (e.g., Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004), or commitment (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). This single-factor approach is problematic as internal factors arguably do not operate in silos within the boardroom: some might be interrelated or explain the impact of others (e.g., conflict among Board members arising from tensions in the Chair's leadership style; Kerwin et al., 2011; O'Boyle et al.). Thus, it is critical to simultaneously consider the impact of multiple internal factors on Board processes, like decision making, as combining them can “enhance the ability to advance and critique” (Doherty, 2013, p. 6) management phenomena.

The lone exceptions to the above (beyond those who investigated a relationship such as between role ambiguity and Board performance; Doherty & Hoyer, 2011) are Doherty and Carron (2003) and Hamm-Kerwin and Doherty (2010). Doherty and Carron investigated cohesion in NPSO Boards and incorporated additional internal factors into their analysis including satisfaction, effort, and intention to quit. Doherty and Carron found task and social cohesion predicted Board members' satisfaction. In turn, Hamm-Kerwin and Doherty's study investigated intragroup conflict and its impact on Board member satisfaction, commitment, and perceived decision quality. This study considered multiple internal factors and found a negative relationship between the three examined variables and intragroup conflict (Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty). These findings support the need to consider multiple internal factors akin to Doherty and Carron's and Hamm-Kerwin and Doherty's approach. Given the current study's focus on internal factors' impact on Board decision making, the decision-making literature is reviewed.

Sport Decision-Making Research

Though little research exists on decision making in sport, researchers have examined its relation to phenomena like corporate social responsibility (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2014),

the leisure industry (e.g., hobby time; Byers & Slack, 2001), the merger and restructuring of an intercollegiate athletic association (e.g., Hill & Kikulis, 1999), and sport events (e.g., velocity, event lifecycle modes; Parent, 2010).

Specific to the sport governance literature, previous research on internal Board factors have made claims related to decision making (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). More precisely, these claims are either focused on a subjective perception and assessment of decision quality from the participants themselves (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty; Kerwin et al.) or on the impact of leadership styles (e.g., collective leadership) on decision making (e.g., low levels of trust and information sharing; O'Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.). For instance, O'Boyle et al. suggested collective leadership positively impacts decision making as a greater number of information sources are incorporated by engaging individual members in discussions. However, this claim is made without an explicit analysis of decision making such as the impact of types of information sources (e.g., use of documents, including opinions from Board members). Other examples of claims regarding the impact of internal factors on Board decision making are found in authentic leadership (e.g., Takos et al., 2018), conflict (e.g., Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b), cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004), and strategic capability (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012) research.

Though these claims have demonstrated the need to consider internal factors in relation to decision making in Boards (e.g., negative impact of task, relationship, and process conflict; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010), our understanding of this phenomenon is poor. Although decision making is ubiquitous and vital for organizational life (Daft, 2021), researchers' (e.g., Byers et al., 2012; Parent, 2010) calls for future inquiries explicitly examining this phenomenon

have gone unanswered. Such an understanding is important to understand various aspects of Board decision making like the length, the types and number of information sources, negotiations between actors, and types of delays (e.g., Cray et al., 1988).

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a “structural representation of the relationships among concepts” (Doherty, 2013, p. 7). For this study, these concepts are decision making and internal factors, with the latter being posited as impacting the former (see Hoye & Doherty, 2011). This study’s theoretical framework was developed to include multiple perspectives, thereby capturing the complexities and ambiguities of the examined phenomenon (Doherty). First, strategic decision-making theory is used to analyze and understand Board decision making. Second, the internal factors found in the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty) and discussed in prior empirical research (e.g., collective leadership; O’Boyle et al., 2020) are included. Overall, the theoretical framework was used to guide data collection (e.g., development of interview guide questions) and analysis (e.g., deductive thematic analysis of the applied theory’s constructs and internal factors from the sport governance literature). The theoretical framework is presented below.

Strategic Decision-Making Theory

Strategic decision-making theory offers researchers the ability to analyze decision making as it occurs in an organizational setting (Cray et al., 1988) in contrast to other theories/models that are limited to a post-hoc or step-by-step approach to understand this phenomenon (e.g., bounded rationality model; Simon, 1955). Strategic decision-making theory considers five constructs: centrality, duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (Cray et al.).

First, centrality refers to the level responsible for authorizing the decision, which ranges from external organizations or the Board down to lower-level employees (Cray et al., 1988). Second, duration represents the length of time of a specific decision (Cray et al.). Length of time is assessed with two sub-constructs: (1) gestation time or the interval between the first mention of a problem (e.g., need to make a decision) until an individual takes action to make a decision, and (2) process time or the interval between the first action taken by an individual until a final decision is made (Cray et al.). Third, flow represents the delays occurring during the decision and is comprised of two sub-constructs: disruption (i.e., length of time for the delays) and impediments (i.e., reasons and types of delays; Cray et al.). Fourth, interaction refers to the number of individuals involved in the decision and the location of these interactions (Cray et al.). This construct is understood through three sub-constructs: scope of negotiation (i.e., number of individuals involved), formal interaction (i.e., discussions occurring in formal organizational settings like meetings), and informal interaction (i.e., discussions occurring away from organizational settings; Cray et al.). Finally, scrutiny is the information sources used during the decision and is understood according to two sub-constructs: effort and expertise (Cray et al.). Effort refers to the source by which information is acquired from during the decision (Cray et al.). Expertise is the types of information sources used during the decision (Cray et al.).

Internal Factors

Internal factors include those from the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty, 2011), notably: organizational size (i.e., number of employees); organizational age (i.e., number of years since foundation); Board size (i.e., number of individual members); Board structure (i.e., number and types of committees); level of professionalization (i.e., constitutional requirements related to Board composition and/or recruitment, types of organizational policies);

individual Board members' socio-demographics (e.g., age, education); motivation (i.e., reasons for individuals' involvement on the Board); and skills, expertise, and experience (i.e., number of years' experience on current Board, individuals' expertise/knowledge, personal background). Additional factors discussed in recent empirical research were also considered including: conflict (i.e., disagreements between individuals about performed tasks, process to perform tasks, and/or personal; Kerwin et al., 2011); power distribution (i.e., distribution of capacity and influence to make decisions; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003); passion (i.e., inclination and emotions towards an activity individuals deem important; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020); rent-seeking (i.e., personal self-interests motives; McLeod et al., 2021b); leadership style (e.g., collective, which fosters a democratic process and involvement of individuals in Board activities; O'Boyle et al., 2020); and leader-member exchanges (i.e., development of positive dyadic relationships; Hoye, 2004).

Method

A case study methodology (Yin, 2018) was used and featured six NPSO Boards from the Canadian sport system: two national- and four provincial/territorial-level. These NPSO Boards were selected according to a purposeful and convenience sample. Notably, included Boards in the sample operated within a non-profit entity related to sport. In turn, the Canadian sport system was selected for convenience given the authors' knowledge of this context so recruitment (i.e., completed via email by the first author in April and May 2020) could be facilitated. To respect the ethics certificate obtained for this study, pseudonyms are used for the NPSOs (e.g., NPSO1) and for the participants (e.g., NPSO1_Chair). The sports represented and meeting dates of the conducted observations are also not provided to preserve anonymity. General details pertaining to the study's sample are provided below.

Each NPSO in this study represents a summer Olympic sport and receives funding from their respective sport governing body. NPSO1 has 11 employees and operates at the national level with 10 Board members and 15 committees. In NPSO1's sport network, two provincial/territorial-level NPSOs (i.e., NPSO3 and NPSO4) are also included. NPSO3 has six employees, seven Board members, and seven committees, while six employees, eight Board members, and no committees are found in NPSO4. In contrast, NPSO2 is comprised of eight employees and operates at the national level with 11 Board members and ten committees. In NPSO2's sport network, two provincial/territorial-level NPSOs (i.e., NPSO5 and NPSO6) are also included. NPSO5 is comprised of six employees, six Board members, and six committees compared to five employees, nine Board members, and two committees found in NPSO6.

Data Collection

Three data collection methods were used: non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents. Observations and interviews represented primary data sources, while documents acted as a secondary source. Observations were chosen as a primary data source to allow the first author to directly observe NPSO Boards decision making in real time as it occurred in the boardroom. Interviews, as an additional primary data source, allowed participants to identify and explain the impact of internal factors on their decision making. Finally, documents were used to corroborate results from the observations and interviews (i.e., triangulation; Yin, 2018). Data were collected between June 2020 and October 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, observations were conducted by the first author virtually (camera and microphone off) via videoconferencing platforms (i.e., Zoom, Google Meets) during six Board meetings for each NPSO. Data were collected via field notes (e.g., noting individuals' behaviours, Board practices, meeting environment) as it allowed the first

author to identify internal factors impacting the observed decisions, such as how individual members navigated the virtual meeting environment or the Chair's leadership style. Objective features of the observed decisions were also noted like locations of meetings, types of delays, and actors involved in discussions. Each observation was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. A total of 36 observations (representing 60 hours) were conducted.

After completing the observations, interviews were conducted with three individuals: the CEO, Chair, and one individual Board member (i.e., purposefully selected based on their knowledge and actions towards the observed decisions). Eighteen interviews were conducted by the first author by phone due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and lasted 48 minutes on average (range: 30 to 69 minutes). Examples of interview questions included: what internal factors positively impacted your Board's decision making?; and what internal factors negatively impacted your Board's decision making? The observations also provided insights to form probing questions (e.g., do you believe the positive relationships among members in your boardroom contribute to making better decisions?; do you believe technology inhibited your Board's decision making?). Theoretical saturation was reached because participants' claims were corroborated with one another in each case. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and member checked.

Documents were also collected throughout the data collection period (e.g., to corroborate the start and finish of decisions through Board meeting agendas and minutes). 6,856 document pages from 978 documents (e.g., strategic plans, annual reports, financial audits, organizational structures) were collected from publicly available sources (e.g., NPSO websites) and confidential sources provided by participants to the first author (e.g., emails, Board meeting agendas, Board meeting minutes).

Data Analysis

The first author inputted all data into NVivo12 for a deductive and inductive thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke's (2022) six steps: familiarizing yourself with the dataset; coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up. The deductive thematic analysis was based on the theoretical framework, while the inductive thematic analysis represents novel codes needed to understand the observed NPSO Board decisions.

For familiarization, the first author began by reading all observation and interview transcripts twice to gain an understanding of the different decisions made by the Board as identified from the conducted observations and explained by interview participants. This was supplemented by reading all documents once to identify decisions' start and end points. Next, initial coding began as the first author inserted "tags" to passages in the observation and interview transcripts. These initial codes originated from novel facets (e.g., ambiguities in reading body language) in the dataset in addition to those found in the study's applied theoretical framework (e.g., altruistic-based motives; see Table 3.1 below). Following this phase, the first author combined the identified initial codes into distinct (sub-)themes. For the theme refinement phase, the second author reviewed the analysis to confirm the first author's data interpretation and the so-called "story" represented in the themes. In this step, documents and observation field notes were consulted to further corroborate (i.e., triangulation; Yin, 2018) the first author's interpretation of the data. Next, each theme was named and a report is offered below.

Results

Five themes representing internal factors impacting NPSO Board decision making were identified: Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, boardroom environment and

meeting practices, and technology. Each theme is elaborated upon below and supported with interview quotations, observation field notes, and relevant documents. A summary of the results (e.g., themes, sub-themes, initial codes/descriptions) is also offered in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Results Summary: Themes, Sub-Themes, and Initial Codes/Description

Theme	Sub-Themes	Initial Codes/Description
Board composition	Diverse set of skills, expertise, and experience	Sport-specific skills, expertise, and experience Business-specific skills, expertise, and experience
Board size	Individual members' motives	Altruistic-based motives
	Small and medium	Greater engagement among members Fewer prolonged discussions Consensus reaching is easier
	Large	Challenges to engage all members Greater prolonged discussions Difficult to reach consensus at times
Chair-CEO relationship	Trust and transparency	Sharing of information Information is truthful and accurate
Boardroom environment and meeting practices	Bilateral communication	Information flow
	Chair leadership style	Collective Engage multiple members and perspectives
	Formalized policies and procedures	Board papers Action registry Detailed agenda
	Collegial boardroom	Respect for one another's opinions Sharing diverging perspectives
Technology	Convenient and cost-friendly	No required travel to a specific location Low cost compared to in-person meetings
	Challenges in engagement	Ambiguities in reading body language Lack of knowledge about platforms functions

Board Composition

The Board composition's importance in relation to decision making was attributed to, on one hand, having a diverse set of skills, expertise, and experience, and, on the other hand, individual members' motives. First, Boards relied on the diversity of their members' skill, expertise, and experience to make decisions. As NPSO3's CEO explained, "there is a good mix of people with expertise [in our sport]. That's for sure. There are people with a lot of experience who come from different professional backgrounds." Specifically, participants mentioned the importance of having sport-specific expertise as well as expertise in different business areas (e.g., finance) to make informed decisions. This notion was highlighted by NPSO4's Chair:

The expert skillsets we have are important. For me ... it's important to have some familiarity with the sport but we obviously have others who have no connection to the sport and that works well. It provides a different perspective ... [one] that doesn't carry so much baggage as someone who's been in the sport for 20 or 30 or 40 years.

Another participant noted relying "on people with business backgrounds because I don't have a business background and financial background ... I think everyone brings such a different set of experiences" (NPSO2_BoardMember). In addition, decision making was facilitated by experienced Board members, as demonstrated in the following quotation: "having people who've been on the Board for a long time, they navigate those situations well" (NPSO2_CEO). This diversity in skills, expertise, and experiences allowed Boards to make more informed decisions given the quality of the information acquired during decision making (e.g., qualified individual with a specific expertise on the Board), as seen in the following quotation: "It allows us to have a good picture of things and capable of having the resources to make decisions" (NPSO3_BoardMember). This demonstrates the ability for Boards to acquire information

directly from their members as opposed to consulting external sources (e.g., contractors, other NPSOs), which could cause delays. This was an important aspect observed during meetings as the use of internal information sources avoided potential delays caused by waiting for information to become available. The following quotation from collected field notes supports this result:

NPSO4 is constantly delayed in their return-to-play decision given the rampant pandemic restrictions ... The Chair mentions his frustrations with having to wait for the provincial/territorial health authority to provide information, not to mention the sport governing body also providing no guidance at this time. (NPSO4 meeting observation 3)

In general, NPSO Boards relied on a greater number of internal information sources arising from the skills, expertise, and experiences of their individual members or CEO than external information sources (e.g., sport governing body).

Second, having individuals with altruistic motives compared to egoistic motives was identified as an important factor in NPSO Board decision making. One participant explained their altruistic motives:

[It is] mainly about giving back and recognizing in this kind of an organization that it is often difficult to get people to step up and do this kind of work. So [our sport] has been a big part of my life for the last 35 years, and just wanting to give something back.

(NPSO2_BoardMember)

NPSO3's Board member shared a similar sentiment, explaining their "motivation was to serve the federation ... There were issues at the provincial/territorial level and I wanted to go and improve things." Such altruistic motives are important as Board members act as stewards for their organization. This notion is shown in the following quotation: "we're really trying to be the

best stewards for our organization” (NPSO4_BoardMember). The importance of these altruistic motives resides in the Board’s ability to avoid potential pitfalls like conflict of interests or rent-seeking behaviours among members, which could negatively affect decision making.

Observations field notes also demonstrated a willingness for Board members to put their words into action as decisions were made for the organization and its stakeholders rather than attempting to pursue one’s personal agenda. This willingness was further demonstrated by behaviours of individual Board members, such as gathering different perspectives and participating actively in discussions. The following quotations from collected field notes support these results: “NPSO2 Board members are true stewards in action with a strong will to make a difference. They each participate in discussions, presenting valid perspectives and opinions supported by their expertise all to make the organization and their sport better” (NPSO2 meeting observation 5) and “NPSO3 Board are quite engaged with their stakeholders, often inquiring on their needs or issues to inform decisions” (NPSO3 meeting observation 5).

Board Size

Results indicated small (seven or less) and medium Board (ranging from eight to 10; Parent et al., 2021) sizes allowed a greater number of members to be involved in decision making, and a more manageable discussion between members. Notably, smaller and medium sized Boards can engage most of their members in discussions, as NPSO3’s Chair noted: “with a smaller Board, it’s easier to bring people into the discussion. If you have someone who takes longer to agree, it’s easier to have discussions without prolonging the decision.” This contrasts with larger Boards (more than 10 members in the case of NPSO2; cf. Parent et al., 2021), where some individual members may not have the chance to provide their perspective in discussions. For instance, NPSO4’s CEO explained: “When I worked at [another NPSO] I think the Board

was 14 and it took a long time to get through everything and, yeah, decision making was challenging.” Collected documents indicated the Board size of each NPSO (see the Method section above). However, the observed Board meetings demonstrated the value of having a smaller (i.e., NPSO3, NPSO5) or medium (i.e., NPSO1, NPSO4, and NPSO6) sized group than a larger one (i.e., NPSO2) to be more efficient: having fewer individuals in the boardroom led to greater meaningful discussions and engagement among Board members. The following quotations from collected field notes support this result: “NPSO2’s discussions, though in depth and collegial, are prolonged as various individuals voice their expertise and opinions on the matter” (NPSO2 meeting observation 5) and “NPSO3’s Board discussions are very short. This could be linked to their small size given that fewer individuals are present” (NPSO3 meeting observation 4). A similar situation to NPSO3 was also found in NPSO4’s Board meetings.

Chair-CEO Relationship

The importance of a positive Chair-CEO relationship in decision making was attributed to a relationship based on trust and transparency, as well as bilateral communication for information flow. First, the importance of a positive relationship between the Chair and CEO cannot be overestimated as one participant noted: “The relationship between the Chair and the CEO in any organization I’ve been in is critical” (NPSO4_Chair). This (positive) relationship should be based on trust and transparency, as NPSO4’s Chair further explained:

Number one thing between both the Chair and the CEO, there’s got to be trust in that relationship. You have to trust in the relationship because you’re a volunteer in my case, and the CEO has all the information. As Chair, you’re making decisions or you’re conducting your oversight based on the information the CEO is giving you, so you have to trust that person.

Second, trust and transparency fostered bilateral communication between the Chair and CEO, which, in turn, helped the Board make better informed decisions. For instance, NPSO4's Chair mentioned that "I trust the CEO is going to tell me the things I need to know to help the organization and to ensure that the Board is informed of all they need to know," while NPSO1's Chair noted "it's important that myself as Chair and the CEO are both on the same page, that one person is giving the communication directly to the Board and that the backfill information needed to drive decision-making comes from the other."

In practice, the observed meetings demonstrated how a positive relationship and bilateral communication between the Chair and CEO led to making better decisions. This notion was attributed to the Boards' ability to have timely and trustworthy information, thereby allowing them to make an informed decision. The following quotation from collected field notes demonstrates this result:

NPSO2's Chair and CEO appear to have a professional and quite positive working relationships ... These individuals complement one another well, as the CEO provides operational information, while the Chair provides governance-related information ... This information is acquired quickly as both are knowledgeable in their respective areas of the organization. (NPSO2 meeting observation 3)

This ability, in turn, could avoid potential delays in decision making, as the Chair trusts the CEO's information instead of needing to conduct research and assess the validity of information provided if a negative relationship was present.

Boardroom Environment and Meeting Practices

The boardroom environment and meeting practices impacted their decision making according to: (a) the Chair's leadership style, (b) formalized policies and procedures, and (c) a

collegial boardroom. First, the Chair's collective leadership style fostered greater inclusivity and engagement among members during decision making. For instance, NPSO4's Chair mentioned: "So I try to foster an organization and a meeting ... where people feel comfortable making suggestions [and] that their suggestions are accepted and incorporated into our decision-making process." NPSO5's Chair added a similar statement: "I try to be an inclusive leader. That means that sometimes things move a little slower but what I do want is to have intelligent, reasoned discussions and for everyone to be able to relate to that." Individual Board members attested to the importance of the Chair's leadership style, as NPSO2's Board member mentioned: "I think the past Chair and current Chair are both quite collaborative in terms of letting people pair their opinions and actually have meaningful discussion."

Second, one NPSO Board in this study implemented formalized policies and procedures for their meetings (e.g., developed Board papers for decisions, action registry, and detailed agenda with time duration for items). These formalized policies and procedures allowed Board members to feel better informed about the decisions being made, as demonstrated in the following quotation:

Having opportunities to [have] Board papers in advance and inform that reflection beforehand, and knowing that there was going to be a request for a decision, or at least have a conversation about a certain point, I think has provided us with the opportunity to have more productive conversations ... It has really made us more coherent in our conversations. (NPSO2_BoardMember)

One participant also mentioned having Board papers prior to meetings "helped us get a running start on those issues that were addressed" (NPSO2_Chair). Specific to NPSO2, collected

documents – including Board papers, an action registry, and detailed agendas – corroborated the existence and use of formalized policies and procedures in the observed NPSO Board decisions.

Third, decision making was positively impacted by a collegial boardroom meeting environment. This type of meeting environment was seen as vital for members to feel respected and comfortable with sharing (potentially) diverging perspectives during decision making. For instance, one participant explained: “for decision making to be effective, every Board member must be respectful of other opinions. I don’t have a problem with diverse opinions, but everybody has to respect the opinions that are being presented by everyone else (NPSO4_Chair). A collegial boardroom was also important to better manage discussions (e.g., respecting others’ opinions, not being emotional), as NPSO3’s CEO noted:

It’s very collegial in that sense, yes. There are exchanges where everyone has a say and everyone has influence ... Discussions with differences of opinion are good and there are no problems with that. There is still respect between the members.

Technology

Technology’s impact on Board decision making related to having convenient and cost-friendly meetings, as well as the challenge of engaging all members during discussions. First, NPSO Boards were forced to transition their meetings to virtual platforms (i.e., Zoom, Google Meets) because of COVID-19 travel and social restrictions in Canada. Nevertheless, technology allowed Boards to hold virtual meetings conveniently and with fewer costs than traditional in-person meetings. As NPSO2’s Chair noted, “one thing that Zoom meetings has created is the ability to get together more often and for shorter periods of time.” Some participants also stated the amount of money saved from holding virtual meetings. For instance, NPSO4’s CEO explained:

Why would you spend money on a weekend for ten Board members with airfare, food, and hotel ... as a Board a weekend somewhere in Canada is about \$12,000. So why spend \$12,000 when you can do it for about zero via Zoom?

Second, although virtual meetings helped save money, they also limited the ability for engaging discussions to take place. Participants indicated that, “in terms of the process for making a decision, I find technology changes a lot of things” (NPSO3_Chair); “I find that the in-person meetings are more effective. I think there can be more discussion” (NPSO2_BoardMember). NPSO2’s Chair also mentioned they have to “put people more on the spot on Zoom. So, you know, just because otherwise they won’t speak up I actually have to say ‘okay what do you think?’ Rather than letting it come out for the more naturally.” The discussion challenges were attributed in part to difficulties with reading body language or non-verbal cues during virtual meetings: “most of the time, it’s difficult for people who actually like to read the room and pick up on body language” (NPSO1_Chair); “we don’t have the body language and we have less discussion ... It seems that people who are on their computers are not really informed and engaged” (NPSO5_BoardMember). The following field notes quotation further corroborates the above claims and identified issues faced by some Board members:

NPSO6 Board member doesn’t know how to share his screen for a document ... Another Board member appeared to say something, but no sound was produced as they were muted, forcing another individual to mention they are muted and how to properly unmute themselves. (NPSO6 meeting observation 2)

Internal Factors’ Interrelationships

Given this study’s argument for simultaneously considering multiple internal factors’ impact on NPSO Board decision making, results to this effect are presented. Though interview

participants did not explicitly provide statements demonstrating potential interrelationships, the observation field notes do.

Notably, the Chair's collective leadership style appeared to be easily fostered in a smaller (i.e., NPSO3, NPSO5) and medium (i.e., NPSO1, NPSO4, NPSO6) sized Boards. Chairs from these NPSOs operated in an environment where individual members were acquainted, knowing each other's names and personal backgrounds (e.g., expertise, link with the sport). This boardroom environment contributed to the Chairs' ability to call upon individual members who were less engaged in discussions so their perspectives could be provided. This was even the case for some individual Board members, particularly from NPSO3 and NPSO5, who faced issues with being engaged in discussions because of a lack of knowledge on how to operate the virtual platform for meetings. The Chair's collective leadership style, however, is also important for their relationship with their CEO. Specifically, all Chairs in this study valued the perspective and information provided by CEOs during decision making.

Another interrelationship between internal factors is seen in the Board composition and meeting practices implemented to make decisions. Specifically, the implementation of formalized policies and procedures related to decision making, as observed in NPSO2, was the result of one individual Board member's expertise and prior experiences in governance. If not for this individual Board member, these formalized policies and procedures would arguably not have been implemented.

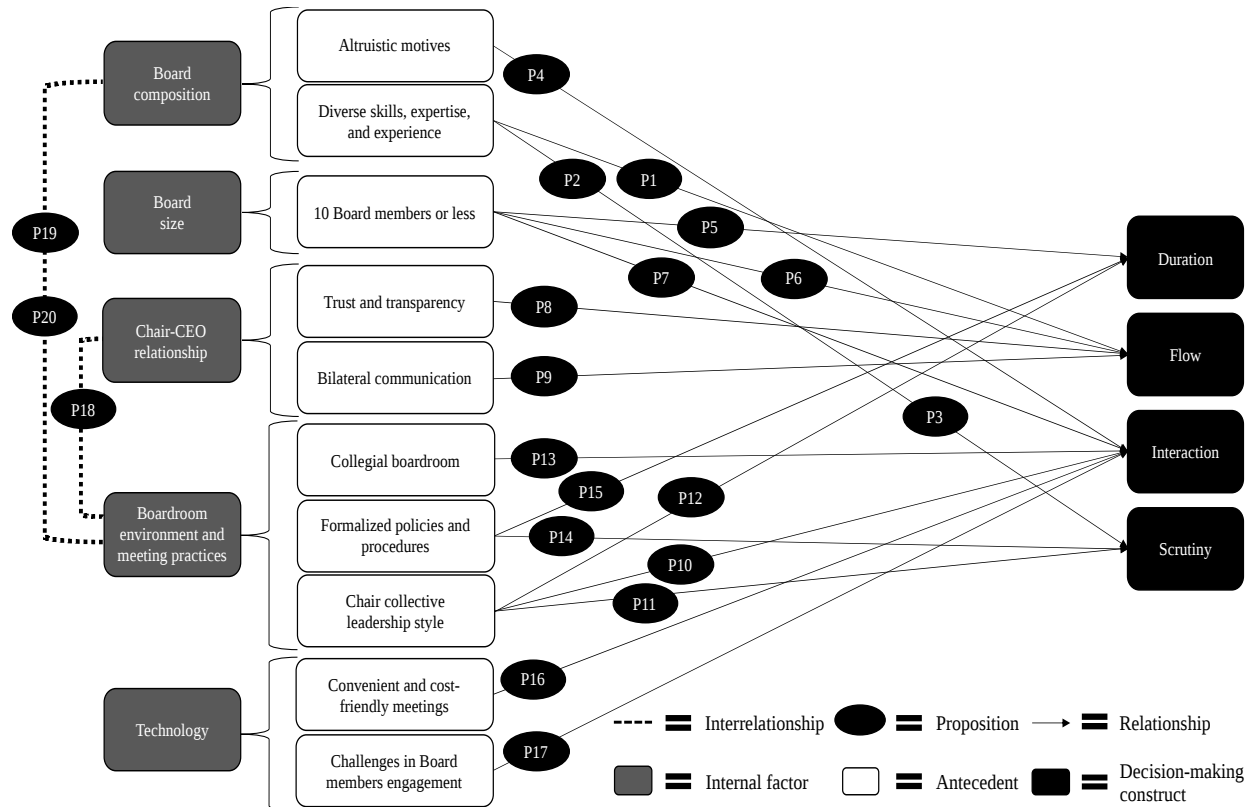
Discussion

Here, results are discussed according to relevant literature. This includes offering propositions (see Figure 3.1) – that is, “relations among constructs, and on a more concrete level” (Bacharach, 1989, p. 500) – according to the applied theoretical framework to elaborate on

the impact of the identified internal factors on NPSO Board decision making. No proposition is offered for the centrality construct of strategic decision-making theory given this study's focus on Boards. Theoretical and practical contributions conclude this section.

Figure 3.1

Internal Factors' Impact on NPSO Board Decision Making



Internal Factors' Impact on NPSO Board Decision Making

Results indicated five internal factors – that is, Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, boardroom environment and meeting practices, and technology – impacted NPSO Board decision making. Notably, results support the posited relationship in the Integrated Board Performance Model of internal factors' impact on Board processes like decision-making (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). More precisely, Board composition, Board size, and Board member motives suggested in the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty) impacted

NPSO Board decision making in this study. Thus, empirical support is provided for these factors as posited in the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty).

Specific to Board composition, a skill-based Board is an important internal factor. Board members' skills, expertise, and experiences offered a credible internal information source instead of needing to find intel elsewhere. This also speaks to the ability for NPSO Boards to acquire information more rapidly and with fewer effort than having to conduct research or consult an external stakeholder, which would present delays as explained in the flow construct (Cray et al., 1988). Although the importance of having qualified members with credible expertise, prior experiences, and various skills has been discussed in the broader management (e.g., Huse, 2018) and sport governance (e.g., Hoye & Doherty, 2011) literatures, these Board characteristics were found to be vital for Boards to make informed decisions and fulfill their roles and responsibilities. These characteristics demonstrate the importance of the scrutiny construct as it relates to relying on individual's expertise and opinions (Cray et al.). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P1: A diverse set of skills, expertise, and experiences among NPSO Board members will decrease delays from waiting for information to become available during decision making (i.e., flow).

P2: A diverse set of skills, expertise, and experiences among NPSO Board members will require fewer effort to acquire information during decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

P3: A NPSO Board with a diverse set of skills, expertise, and experiences will use a greater number of internal information sources arising from individual members during decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

Results also found altruistic Board member motives to be important for decision making. This supports similar claims from other studies where egoistic motives (the opposite of altruistic motives) such as rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b) negatively impacted Board decision making as individuals pursue personal agendas. The present study's altruistic motives led to trust among individual Board members during discussions (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988) as they believed their engagement and information provided were meaningful and in the best interest of the NPSO. Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P4: NPSO Boards composed of individual members with altruistic motives will have greater trust in their engagement and information provided during decision making (i.e., interaction).

Board size has been discussed as an important predictor of Board effectiveness (e.g., Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Results suggested a smaller or medium Board size (i.e., less than 11; Parent et al., 2021) positively impacted NPSO Board decision making because they can have engaging discussions involving all members (i.e., interaction), while efficiently (e.g., fewer delays and time) moving through decision making (i.e., flow, duration; Cray et al., 1988). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P5: Smaller NPSO Boards require fewer time to make decisions compared to larger NPSO Boards (i.e., duration).

P6: Smaller NPSO Boards encounter fewer delays compared to larger NPSO Boards during decision making (i.e., flow).

P7: Smaller NPSO Boards have greater engagement among individual members than larger NPSO Boards during decision making (i.e., interaction).

Results also support the importance of having a positive Chair-CEO relationship for the Board to properly function (Brown, 2014; Hoyer, 2004). The foundation of this positive relationship is trust and transparency (Hoyer), which allows for a more efficient information flow during Board decision making. If the CEO withheld information, it could negatively affect their relationship with the Chair and, in turn, the ability for the Board to make an informed decision. This situation would result in the Board being a “pawn” to the CEO (see Lorsch & Young, 1990) as per agency theory (e.g., Buchholtz et al., 1998). Nevertheless, results advance previous claims regarding the Chair-CEO relationship (e.g., Brown; Hoyer), as a positive relationship and bilateral communication to share information reduces the chance of delays (i.e., flow; Cray et al., 1988) negatively impacting decision making (e.g., the Chair having to conduct research to assess the trustworthiness of information shared by their CEO). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P8: A positive Chair-CEO relationship characterized by trust and transparency will reduce delays in NPSO Board decision making (i.e., flow).

P9: A positive Chair-CEO relationship with bilateral communication will reduce delays in NPSO Board decision making (i.e., flow).

Results further demonstrated the importance of having a Chair collective leadership style to foster greater engagement among individual members during decision making (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). However, NPSO Boards should not shy away from gathering diverse perspectives even if it brings about task-related conflict in the interest of making a more informed decision (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011). The gathering of diverse perspectives is achieved via a collegial boardroom environment where Board members feel comfortable to share different opinions and personal expertise. Nevertheless, the ability for

the Chair to have a collective leadership style leads to greater engagement among individual members (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988). From this increased engagement, a broader and diverse set of perspectives are gathered so an informed decision can be made (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al.). Yet, the increase in engagement and use of diverse information sources may create a situation where decision making is longer (cf. O'Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.), which speaks to the duration construct (Cray et al.). This compares to, for instance, a situation where an autocratic leadership style is used by the Chair whereby engagement among individual members is arguably not as prominent, thereby leading to quicker decisions (cf. O'Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P10: A Chair collective leadership style will lead to greater engagement among individual members during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., interaction).

P11: A Chair collective leadership style will lead to a greater number of internal information sources used during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

P12: A Chair collective leadership style will require greater time to make decisions (i.e., duration).

P13: A collegial boardroom environment will lead to greater engagement among individual members during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., interaction).

Specific to the formalized policies and procedures identified as part of the boardroom environment and meeting practices theme, results demonstrated some NPSO Boards are implementing additional safeguards via documents to present vital information about the decision made. The presence of these policies and procedures by one NPSO, for instance, led to its Board spending fewer time during meetings to discuss the decision as vital information was already provided beforehand via documents (i.e., duration; Cray et al., 1988). The use of these

documents also presents additional information sources used during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al.). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P14: Implementing formalized policies and procedures in NPSO Boards will decrease the time required to make decisions (i.e., duration).

P15: Implementing formalized policies and procedures in NPSO Boards will lead to a greater number of information sources used during decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

Next, results advance previous knowledge by highlighting the impact of technology on Board decision making. Results indicated technology was a convenient and cost-effective means of having a greater number of Board meetings (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988), thereby supporting recent claims (e.g., McLeod et al., 2022). The travel and social restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic forced the transition from in-person to virtual meetings, which offered convenience and cost savings for NPSO Boards (McLeod et al.). However, technology limited the engagement of some Board members (cf. Brown, 2014; McLeod et al.) in the observed decisions (i.e., interaction; Cray et al.). Given the prominence of technology in our “digital age,” groups like Boards will arguably need to enhance their ability to function virtually (Huse, 2018; McLeod et al.). Results indicated the ability to make effective decisions during virtual meetings requires educating individuals about the operations of platforms (e.g., how to mute and unmute). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P16: Technology will lead to a greater number of meetings during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., interaction).

P17: Technology will limit the engagement of individual members during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., interaction).

General Analysis

The identification of multiple internal factors impacting NPSO Board decision making suggests sport governance researchers should move beyond a siloed focus on a single purposefully-selected construct such as leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020), conflict (e.g., Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015), motives (e.g., Inglis & Cleave, 2006), power (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003), or norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004). Results indicated these internal factors are not mutually exclusive inside the boardroom. Instead, these factors operate simultaneously to impact Board decision making positively and/or negatively.

The Chair collective leadership style is related to Board composition because of the importance of individuals with qualities of a collective leader, such as altruistic motives and a willingness to engage others and gather diverse perspectives (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988), to assume to Chair role (O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). These qualities in a Chair, however, reside in NPSOs’ ability to effectively recruit individuals for such roles (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2004). Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P18: A Chair collective leadership style relies on the group’s composition and ability to recruit individual members with relevant qualities to assume this role and promote greater engagement during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., interaction).

The Chair collective leadership style is also worthy of consideration in terms of the Chair’s relationship with their CEO. In fact, a Chair espousing a collective leadership style is arguably more willing to establish a positive relationship with their CEO and incorporate their perspectives (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988) into discussions to make informed decisions. This situation, however, could differ if an alternative leadership style is adopted (e.g., autocratic), thereby creating the potential for a negative relationship with the CEO and inhibiting

their engagement in decision making (cf. Brown, 2014; Hoyer, 2004; O’Boyle et al., 2020). Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P19: A Chair with a collective leadership style and a positive relationship with the CEO will promote greater engagement during NPSO Board decision making (i.e., interaction).

Finally, formalized policies and procedures – as found in the boardroom environment and meeting practice internal factor – are related to Board composition. From the results, Board composition led to the development and implementation of formal policies and procedures for decision making. Though this was found in one case in this study, the presence of an individual Board member with a particular governance skillset and expertise led to an impact on the meeting practices used inside the boardroom. This echoes the importance of individuals’ skills and expertise for Board-related factors like meeting practices (Hoyer & Doherty, 2011). From a NPSO Board decision making standpoint, this interrelationship leads to greater reliance on different internal information sources, thereby inhibiting prolonged delays (e.g., waiting for information to become available in between meetings). Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P20: A NPSO Board comprised of members with governance skills and expertise will establish formalized policies and procedures, thereby promoting the use of a greater number of internal information sources during decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

Theoretical Contributions

First, results highlight five key internal factors impacting Board decision making: Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, boardroom environment and meeting practices, and technology. Though other factors may have been noted by researchers (e.g., rent-seeking, conflict; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; McLeod et al., 2021b), those found in this

study dominated in the selected context, NPSOs at two different levels: national and provincial/territorial. The contextual boundary of the theoretical framework is, therefore, appropriate for researchers wishing to further explore the impact of various internal factors on Board decision making. That the theoretical framework helped derive a set of propositions for multiple factors at the same time also provides support for its use in research to better understand a complex and ambiguous phenomenon like decision making. Thus, our study contributes by examining the types and impacts of multiple factors simultaneously.

Second, the developed propositions contribute to sport governance research by working towards a better understanding of Board decision making. The empirical, qualitative analysis developed propositions (see Figure 3.1) that can now be tested with quantitative methods (e.g., questionnaire) to elucidate predictive relationships between internal factors and Board decision making. These developed propositions are vital to understand decision making in NPSO Boards given the simultaneous impacts of internal factors on aspects of this phenomenon (e.g., duration, delays, engagement, information sources).

Practical Contributions

First, Chairs should adopt a collective leadership style to facilitate greater engagement and different perspectives during decision making from members with diverse skills, expertise, and experiences. This leadership style fosters a positive and inclusive meeting environment where individual members feel comfortable and willing to engage. This differs, for example, from a Chair with an autocratic leadership style where decision making would be limited to a smaller number of individuals with limited discussions or engagement.

Second, NPSO Boards should formalize their decision making through policies and procedures. Such policies and procedures (e.g., Board papers, action registry, and detailed

agendas) are vital for Boards to provide members with a greater number of information sources to make better informed decisions. These policies and procedure should include Board papers, which provide a summary of the decision, an action registry to track on-going decisions, and a meeting agenda that has a duration for each item and begins with matters for decision, followed by those for discussion and noting.

Finally, Boards should be cognizant of technology being a double-edged sword. On one hand, virtual meetings are convenient and more cost-effective compared to in-person meetings. On the other hand, virtual meetings can create delays (e.g., when unmuting or screen sharing documents) as members are forced to learn how to operate platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meets) and engagement is more challenging than during in-person meetings. Thus, it is important for NPSO Boards to provide training and orientation to members prior to their first virtual meeting.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of internal factors on NPSO Boards' decision making. Results demonstrated the impact of five internal factors on NPSO Board decision making: Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, Board meeting practices and environment, and technology. The latter of these internal factors had negative (e.g., delays, limited engagement) and positive (e.g., cost-friendly, convenience) impacts, while the first four factors positively impacted Board decision making. Based on the study's results and propositions, limitations and future research directions are presented.

Although this study included six NPSOs at two different levels of a federated sport model, the limited sample size prevents broader conclusions to be drawn regarding the population of NPSOs in Canada and globally. Thus, additional research is required to determine the transferability of this study's results in Canada and in other countries. Despite the rich

insights gleaned from the qualitative nature of this study, only inferences can be made towards the potential positive or negative impacts of the identified internal factors on Board decision making. Future research should explore the impact of these internal factors through quantitative approaches by using a questionnaire whereby statistical analyses (e.g., multiple linear regressions, structural equation modelling) provide statistically-based conclusions. Such research should focus on the 20 propositions noted above.

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Chapter IV: The Impact of External Factors on Board Decision Making in NPSOs

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of external factors on NPSO Boards' decision making. Using a case study methodology with six NPSOs (two national, four provincial/territorial), data were collected via 36 non-participant overt observations, 18 semi-structured interviews, and over 900 documents. A thematic analysis was conducted via NVivo 12. Results identified two main external factors impacting NPSO Board decision making: the sport system structure and market conditions. Both external factors negatively impacted NPSO Board decision making. Theoretically, results demonstrate the need for NPSO Boards to have positive relationships with stakeholders in their sport network to facilitate timely and trustworthy information so they can make informed decisions. A health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic also suggests NPSO Boards should harness virtual meetings to continue their operations, all the while incorporating risk management analyses to properly assess external threats and potential opportunities.

Keywords: board of directors; decisions; collaboration; covid 19; qualitative

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Introduction

Boards are a recognized group of individuals within an organizational entity with selected roles (i.e., select and monitor the CEO, policy development and planning, manage external relationships, establish and monitor the mission; Hoye & Doherty, 2011) and responsibilities (i.e., duty of care, fiduciary duty; Houle, 1997; Hoye et al., 2020a). A central process for Boards to effectively enact their roles and responsibilities is decision making.

Despite the importance of this process, prior research in the sport governance literature has focused on internal factors to the detriment of understanding the impact of external factors stemming from NPSOs' environment (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). External factors arising from environmental complexities (e.g., government-imposed legislation like the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act; Parent et al., 2018) could potentially inform and explain how and why NPSO Boards make certain decisions. Considering the environmental complexities faced by NPSOs in many Western countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom) with a federated sport model (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020), there is a need to understand how Board decision making is impacted by external factors (Hoye & Doherty).

Hoye and Doherty (2011) posited the direct impact of external factors from the NPSO's environment on Board processes (e.g., decision making). However, at the time of writing, this suggested relationship has yet to be empirically investigated. This gap in research remains despite the presence of "managing external relationships" as a fundamental role for NPSO Boards (Hoye & Doherty, p. 274).

Knowledge on the types of external factors and their respective impacts on Board decision making would advance previous internally-focused studies (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003; Doherty et al., 2004; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; O'Boyle et al.,

2020; Van Bussel & Doherty, 2015). It would also answer research calls to understand external factors' impact on a central process (i.e., decision making) for Boards to effectively enact their roles and responsibilities (e.g., Bradshaw & Toubiana, 2014; Hoye & Doherty, 2011).

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the impact of external factors on NPSO Boards' decision making. The following two research questions were posed: (1) what external factors impact NPSO Board decision making?; and (2) how do external factors impact NPSO Board decision making?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Here, literature on sport governance and Board research is reviewed. This is followed by literature on sport systems structures and NPSOs' environment. Next, the study's theoretical framework is presented.

Sport Governance and Board Research

Most empirical research in sport governance has focused on Boards. This body of knowledge has grown since its inception in the 1990s (e.g., Cuskelly, 1995; Cuskelly et al., 1998; Kikulis et al., 1995; Inglis, 1997) and early 2000s (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Hoye, 2004, 2006). Sport governance research in the 21st century studying Boards continues, as demonstrated by recent empirical inquiries (e.g., McLeod et al., 2020; McLeod et al., 2021a, 2021b; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020).

Research on sport Boards has investigated individual-level, process-level, and outcome-level phenomena (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Individual-level phenomena have included, for example, roles (e.g., McLeod et al., 2020), rent-seeking (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021b), commitment (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001), passion (e.g., Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020), and motivations (e.g., Inglis & Cleave, 2006). Process-level phenomena have included conflict (e.g.,

Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011), cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), norms (e.g., Doherty et al., 2004), collective leadership (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020), authentic leadership (e.g., Takos et al., 2018), power (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a), strategic capability (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012), leader-member exchanges (e.g., Hoye, 2004), and nominations (e.g., Stenling et al., 2020; Stenling et al., 2021). Finally, research has examined outcome-level phenomena according to individual Board member effectiveness (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty; Hoye & Auld, 2001), Board effectiveness (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003b, 2004), and organizational effectiveness (e.g., Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000).

Yet, the impact of factors from NPSOs’ environment (e.g., government-imposed legislation; Parent et al., 2018) on Board processes like decision making have been overlooked (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). This knowledge gap is problematic considering the importance of the environment (e.g., acquire resources from external stakeholders, accountability to funding partners) and complexities (e.g., collaboration between independent organizations and sport governing bodies at different level, capacity differences across organizations in a sport system) for NPSOs operating in a governance system like a federated sport model (e.g., Harvey, 2013; Parent et al.; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020).

Sport System Structures and NPSOs Environment

Two governance systems exist within the sport governance literature: federated and unitary (O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). A federated sport model is “the delegation of power and authority from a central (national) authority to various regions usually within a bounded geographical context” (O’Boyle & Shilbury, p. 94). This type of sport system model is found in countries like Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom (O’Boyle & Shilbury). This structure

is the result of British colonization and federal government legislation (e.g., The Constitution Act; Government of Canada, 1982) whereby regions are recognized as independent and provided powers to govern (O'Boyle & Shilbury).

In contrast, an unitary sport model refers to a single, central government or organization holding the power and control where minimal power is given to different regions or states across the geographical landscape of a country (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). Examples of countries with unitary sport governance systems include Russia, China, Japan, and France (O'Boyle & Shilbury). However, certain sport systems in countries characterized by a federated sport model (i.e., Australia) have some sport organizations operating in an unitary model (see O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2018). Nevertheless, most sport governance research has been conducted in organizations operating in a federated sport model from either Australia (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020) or Canada (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020).

Notably, Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) discussed six influences from the NPSO environment including: evolving relationships between governments and NPSOs, increasing regulatory environment, prioritizing elite sport development in policy, developing and implementing governance guidelines, increasing globalization, and increasing stakeholder expectations for greater transparency and accountability. Scholars have also provided evidence of environmental pressures, like scrutiny from media and the general public as NPSOs (e.g., International Olympic Committee) become more prominent (e.g., Ferkins et al., 2005) or greater professionalization of sport systems through government imposed legislations (e.g., Hoye et al., 2020b; Parent et al., 2018). NPSOs are also subjected to funding and accountability requirements by sport governing bodies, such as good governance principles in Australia (e.g., Australian Sports Commission,

2020) or recently enacted government legislation in Canada (i.e., Not-For-Profit Corporations Act; Parent et al.).

Despite studies discussing the potential for various processes, namely leadership, to impact collaborative governance among organizations in a federated sport model (e.g., O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020), there is a lack of consideration for, and empirical investigations of, the external factors’ impact on Board processes like decision making (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Specific to the sport governance literature, Hoye and Doherty indicated “no studies considered the impact of environmental factors on the board” (p. 280).

At the time of writing, this statement still applies, as researchers have yet to explicitly examine how NPSO Board processes (e.g., decision making) are impacted by external factors. This research is needed as the environment (e.g., institutional pressures) has been posited to influence Board processes (see the Integrated Board Performance Model; Hoye & Doherty, 2011). These pressures could, for instance, negatively impact Board decision making, as they may be forced to make certain decisions to remain accountable to stakeholders. The present study seeks to fill this gap by considering the impact of external factors on NPSO Boards’ most central process, decision making.

Theoretical Framework

The study’s theoretical framework is comprised of strategic decision-making theory and external factors identified in prior research on Boards in the sport governance literature. This theoretical framework, therefore, combines multiple perspectives – that is, strategic decision-making theory and external factors discussed in prior sport governance research – to better understand the complexities and ambiguities of a management phenomenon (Doherty, 2013),

here decision making occurring in the boardroom. The theoretical framework was used to develop interview guide questions and help analyze the observed decisions.

Strategic Decision-Making Theory

Developed from the “Bradford studies” (Hickson et al., 2018), strategic decision-making theory was chosen for its ability to analyze decisions as they occur in an organization. This compares to other theories and models (e.g., rational model, bounded rationality model, structured of unstructured processes; Archer, 1980; Blai, 1986; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Simon, 1945, 1955) that provide a post-hoc or step-by-step approach for decisions to be made (Cray et al., 1988). Further, strategic decision-making theory has been used in sport management to examine decision making (e.g., Hill & Kikulis, 1999; Parent, 2010), thereby demonstrating its applicability.

Strategic decision-making theory suggests five constructs to analyze decisions: centrality, duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (Cray et al., 1988). Centrality focuses on the group or individual responsible for authorizing the decision (Cray et al.). Decision authorization is understood according to the level (i.e., ranging from external organization to lower-level employees; Cray et al.).

In turn, duration refers to the total length of time for the decision to be made (Cray et al., 1988). Duration is represented as the sum of gestation time (i.e., time elapsed from first mention of a problem until first action is taken) and process time (i.e., time elapsed from first action until final decision is made; Cray et al.).

Next, flow is concerned with delays during decision making (Cray et al., 1988). Specifically, it refers to the lengths (i.e., total time understood through disruption) and types of

delays (i.e., reasons for delays understood through impediments) occurring during decision making (Cray et al.).

Interaction focuses on the location of discussions and number of actors involved during decision making (Cray et al., 1988). This includes formal interaction (i.e., discussions occurring in formal organizational settings like meetings), informal interaction (i.e., discussions away from formal organizational settings like informal phone class), and scope of negotiation (i.e., number of actors involved in the discussions; Cray et al.).

The final construct, scrutiny, describes the sources and types of information gathered during the decision (Cray et al., 1988). Effort, as a sub-construct, is concerned with the manner of acquiring information according to these items: conduct research, integrate information from multiple sources, individuals' expertise and opinions, and readily accessible information (Cray et al.). The expertise sub-construct is focused on providing the specific type of information sources used in the decision (e.g., organizational policies, Board member expertise and opinions, CEO expertise and opinions; Cray et al.).

External Factors

From the posited direct impact of the external environment on Board processes (e.g., decision making) in the Integrated Board Performance Model (Hoye & Doherty, 2011), the following factors are included in the theoretical framework: legal requirements (i.e., laws and regulations imposed by governments and/or sport governing bodies); institutional pressures (i.e., influence from governments and/or sport governing bodies); interorganizational relationships (i.e., cooperative relationships between organizations not reliant on market or hierarchical control mechanisms); and market conditions (i.e., availability of funding, participation rates, crises).

As the Integrated Board Performance Model is over ten years old, additional external factors discussed in the sport governance literature since then are also included in the present study, notably: collaboration (i.e., involvement of multiple interrelated NPSOs delivering a purpose supported by policy and funding; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015; Shilbury et al., 2016), federated sport model (see above definition; Harvey, 2013; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020), and stakeholders (i.e., individuals, groups, and organizations influencing or affected by a NPSO's actions; Esteve et al., 2011).

Method

A case study methodology (Yin, 2018) featuring a purposeful and convenience sample was used. Purposefully, Boards from non-profit sport organizations operating in a federated sport model (e.g., Canadian sport system) were included. Federated sport models are more complex and challenging for organizations to operate in than an unitary sport model structure (see O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). Further, prior research demonstrated the importance of the external environment for NPSOs, such as government-imposed legislation forcing changes in Board structure and composition (Parent et al., 2018), thus demonstrating the appropriateness of using NPSOs from a federated sport model as the context for this study. From a convenience point of view, NPSOs from Canada were selected because of the researchers' contextual knowledge.

Recruitment emails were sent by the first author to CEOs and Chairs of NPSO Boards adhering to the above criteria in April and May 2020. Six NPSO Boards accepted to participate and formed the case studies. To respect the institutional ethics certificate, the NPSOs and the sports they represent are not named nor are individual participants. Instead, pseudonyms are used for the NPSOs (e.g., NPSO1) and interview participants (e.g., NPSO1_Chair). The specific

meeting dates of conducted observations are also not provided to preserve anonymity. General details on the sample are provided below.

The six included NPSOs each represent a summer Olympic sport, receive funding from a sport governing body corresponding to their level (i.e., national or provincial/territorial), and operate in the Canadian sport system. NPSO1 operates at the national level with 11 employees, 10 Board members, and 15 committees. Both NPSO3 and NPSO4 operate in NPSO1's sport network at the provincial/territorial level with the former comprised of six employees, seven Board members, and seven committees and the latter with six employees, eight Board members, and no committees. NPSO2 operates at the national level and is comprised of eight employees, 11 Board members, and 10 committees. Both NPSO5 and NPSO6 operate in NPSO2's sport network at the provincial/territorial level. NPSO5 is comprised of six employees, six Board members, and six committees, while NPSO6 has five employees, nine Board members, and two committees. Data collection and analysis methods are detailed next.

Data Collection

Occurring between June 2020 and October 2021, this study collected data from three sources: overt non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents. The first two methods were primary data sources whereas documents acted as a secondary data source. Observations were selected for their ability to examine decision making as it unfolded inside the boardroom of NPSOs, while interviews allowed participants to identify and explain the impact of external factors. In turn, documents corroborated results from the two primary sources (i.e., triangulation; Yin, 2018).

Thirty-six observations (six per case; representing 60 hours in the field) were completed during the NPSOs' Board meetings. Observations were conducted virtually by the first author

(via Zoom and Google Meets) where he collected data in the form of field notes with his microphone and camera turned off. Objective and subjective aspects were observed. Objective aspects included, for example, the meeting location, the virtual platform used, the number of attendees, and the agenda items related to decisions. Subjective aspects included potential external factors and the behaviours of individual Board members. All observations were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Eighteen interviews were conducted via telephone by the first author with three individuals per NPSO: the CEO, Chair, and one individual Board member. The individual Board member was selected due to their knowledge and involvement in the observed decisions. Based on the field notes and theoretical framework, the interview guide was developed. Examples of interview questions included: what external factors from your environment positively impacted your Board's decision making?; and what external factors from your environment negatively impacted your Board's decision making? Completed after the six Board meeting observations in each NPSO, the interviews lasted 48 minutes on average and saturation was reached since participants' claims were corroborated in each case. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Member checking allowed participants to review and confirm the content of their transcript.

Documents (e.g., financial audits, annual reports, strategic plans, and the organizational structures) originated from publicly available information, such as the websites of the NPSOs included in this study, and confidential sources provided to the first author by participants (e.g., emails). A total of 978 documents or 6,856 pages were collected for this study.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was undertaken using NVivo12. Data were analyzed according to a deductive (i.e., constructs from the theoretical framework) and inductive (e.g., factors identified in the dataset) thematic analysis process of six phases: familiarizing yourself with the dataset; coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

For the familiarization phase, the first author read all field notes, observation, and interview transcripts twice, followed by reading all documents once. This was an integral phase to gain a broad understanding of the dataset as it relates to the observed decisions and external factors impacting NPSO Board decision making. The second phase began as the first author attributed “tags” to passages (e.g., monitoring NPSOs, bilateral communication to gather and share information) in the transcripts. Of note, the initial codes were identified from an inductive and deductive standpoint according to novel “tags” from the dataset (e.g., travel and social restrictions) and those found in the applied theoretical framework (e.g., positive relationships with other NPSOs; see Table 4.1 below). These “tags” then allowed the first author to develop the (sub-)themes in the next phase (e.g., sport system relationships, government and sport governing bodies’ pressures). Initial codes and sub-themes were combined into similar categories, thereby demonstrating distinct themes in the data (e.g., the sport system structure). For the fourth phase, theme development was completed as the second author reviewed the conducted analysis. This approach was done to verify that the content of the analysis provided a good interpretation and representation of the data. In addition, collected documents (e.g., Board meeting agenda and minutes items) and observation field notes corroborated the authors’ interpretation of potential external factors whereby triangulation was established in this step

between the data collection methods (Yin, 2018). Next, each theme was named (e.g., the sport system structure) and an account of the results is offered below.

Results

Results are presented according to the two identified themes, each representing an external factor impacting NPSO Board decision making: the sport system structure and market conditions. Each theme is elaborated upon below with quotations from interview participants, field notes information, and documents (when applicable). For a summary of the results, which includes the themes, sub-themes, and initial codes/descriptions, see Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Results Summary: Themes, Sub-Themes, and Initial Codes/Description

Theme	Sub-Themes	Initial Codes/Descriptions
Sport system structure	Sport system relationships	Positive relationships with other NPSOs Bilateral communication to gather and share information
	Government and sport governing bodies' pressures	Monitoring NPSOs Influencing decisions made Governments' political direction
	Complexities of the management of and accountability to multiple stakeholders	Organizational members' influence Stakeholder accountability Stakeholder management Impact of decisions at multiple levels
Market conditions	Technology	Travel and social restrictions forcing the transition to virtual meetings Capitalizing on virtual meetings to continue operations
	Making unplanned decisions	High risk High uncertainty Issues in Boards' usual priorities Changes in information provided Conducting risk analyses

The Sport System Structure

The sport system structure's impact on Board decision making was attributed to: (a) sport system relationships, (b) government and sport governing bodies' pressures, and (c) the complexities of the management of and accountability to multiple stakeholders.

First, a positive relationship between NPSOs at different levels of the sport system (e.g., provincial/territorial-level NPSO and community-level NPSO) included bilateral communication and Boards' ability to gather and share information during their decision making. NPSO3's CEO highlighted the importance of bilateral communications and linked it to clear roles and responsibilities:

The more constructive the exchange, the better. If there is no communication and you just receive a decision, or conversely, if you just make requests without knowing the reason why the decision is taken, it doesn't work ... The relationship with the national federation is fundamental. The more it is clear in terms of who is responsible for what and that it is respected, then it will work well for our decisions.

NPSO2's CEO added: "I think it's better if we're all on the same page and moving in the same direction."

NPSOs' gathering and sharing of information with other sport system levels was also important to inform Board decisions. For instance, NPSO2's Chair noted: "I think as a provincial/territorial-level [NPSO] we definitely look to [our national-level NPSO] for guidance in some areas." Observation field notes corroborated these findings: NPSOs Boards incorporated information from other NPSOs in their sport network when making decisions, such as NPSO3's Board consulting the publicly available documents of its national-level NPSO (i.e., NPSO2) to inform the planning and development of policies. The following field notes quotation supports

this result: “NPSO3’s Chair and CEO mentioned consulting the website of their national-level NPSO. This was done to gather intel on relevant policies’ content to then develop and tailor it at the provincial/territorial level” (NPSO3 meeting observation 3). In the case of NPSO4 and NPSO5, field notes indicated these Boards communicated with other NPSOs in their sport system to gather information, whether via phone or monthly meetings (e.g., President’s Council).

Second, Board decisions were impacted by government and sport governing bodies’ pressures on NPSOs. Participants explained how governments and sport governing bodies played an active role in terms of monitoring NPSOs: “in the particular case of [our province/territory], the fact that the provincial/territorial government has decided to play a much more active role with the sports federations brings a lot of pressure” (NPSO5_Chair); “when you get public money, by definition, there are governmental objectives in it because the general population pays for it or they have to implement political programmes” (NPSO2_CEO). Examples of decisions made based on external pressures include implementing certain policies required to receive government funding, as NPSO4’s CEO described: “So [our provincial/territorial sport governing body] has really specific requirements as to what we need to have. I think there’s 12 policies listed. Essentially, they say ... ‘you must have these policies in our funding agreement’.” NPSO4’s Board Member added, “some decisions or some policy changes that we’ve made in the past related to looking better in the eyes of [our provincial/territorial sport governing body] or other funding partners.” Basing decisions on external pressures was also observed during Board meetings. Specifically, field notes indicated NPSO1 and NPSO2 each developed and implemented an anti-doping policy because of pressures from a national governing body (i.e., CCES). The following quotation supports this result: “NPSO1’s CEO explicitly states to the

Board that the anti-doping policy decision is a direct result of pressure from CCES” (NPSO1 meeting observation 5). Without this external pressure, the decision may not have been made.

Data analysis indicates, however, these external pressures followed the political direction of current governments. The strategic direction or sport governing bodies’ regulations and policies imposed on NPSOs were influenced by the political party in power. This notion is demonstrated in the following quotation:

In Canada, the organization that manages sport is a governmental organization. The Trudeau government is much more active as a government, and that has infiltrated the orientations of Sport Canada, very much so. So, there are very specific expectations in relation to that. And as a federation, we have to respond. (NPSO2_CEO)

Third, the federated structure of the sport system impacted decision making because members (e.g., provincial/territorial NPSOs in the case of a national NPSO) can influence Board composition and, thus, its processes. However, NPSO members’ impact on Boards is juxtaposed against the accountability to funding partners (e.g., governments). As NPSO2’s Chair explained:

95% of our funding comes from Sport Canada, or the COC, or other organizations, four or five percent of our funding comes from the provincial/territorial-level NPSOs. And the provincial/territorial-level NPSOs, they elect the governing body, the Board for the organization. So, someone with five percent of the financial commitment controls how you run the organization, and the people with 95%, control the money.

The sport system structure also presents complexities for NPSO Boards, such as the need to consider the impact of a decision on other NPSOs at different levels. The following quotation highlights this issue:

I wish that we didn't have to consider our provincial/territorial-level NPSOs quite so much in many of our decisions, because we are often influenced by what are they going to think as opposed to what is best for the sport and for our organization. We're concerned about how they will react so it puts a political spin on what should be non-political decisions. (NPSO2_Chair)

Beyond the complexity issues in the previous example, NPSO Boards felt accountable to an array of stakeholders linked to the sport system, which further complicated their ability to make decisions. This accountability issue is demonstrated in the following two quotations: "that complicates things too, right? You have multiple groups organizing: you have CCES, Own the Podium, Sport Canada, and the COC and the Coaching Association of Canada" (NPSO3_CEO); "the sport system in [our province/territory] is very complex. The federations report to the ministry and in other cases many partners like [sport governing bodies]" (NPSO3_BoardMember). Nevertheless, issues with the federated sport model in Canada are commonly discussed in NPSOs as one participant explained: "this is something I've said many times, and [the CEO] and I are in complete agreement on the Canadian sport system because you would never design a system like the one we have now" (NPSO2_Chair).

Market Conditions

Market conditions' impact on Board decision making was related to the COVID-19 pandemic as understood according to two attributes: technology and making unplanned decisions.

First, the travel and social restrictions imposed by governments and health authorities prevented in-person Board meetings, requiring them to transition to virtual platforms and, thus, integrate technology into their operations. For instance, NPSO4's Chair explained: "up until

COVID, we would have two or three in-person Board meetings a year ... Now, we haven't had an in-person meeting ... getting close to two years." The COVID-19 pandemic also led to Boards meeting more often than in past years due to technology's convenience, as NPSO2's CEO highlighted: "we've got our meetings online now. And now that we've realized it's easy, even some of the people who have challenges with new technologies, realize Zoom is actually really easy and we can do a lot with it."

The need to meet more often virtually was also related to constant changes in travel and social gathering regulations due to the pandemic. For instance, as the field notes indicated NPSO4 was forced to hold a Board meeting nearly every two weeks because of the constant changes in their environment. Nevertheless, NPSO Boards met more frequently to make decisions, which might not have occurred if not for virtual meetings. These results are corroborated by the observations, as data were collected virtually, and via documents where dates of Board meetings during the pandemic demonstrated evidence of a higher frequency and need to meet. For example, NPSO4 held six meetings within a span of three months. A similar trend was observed (to a certain degree) for NPSO2 and NPSO5 where two meetings were held in the same month. Participants noted during observations that a typical frequency of meetings during the calendar year was either monthly or bi-monthly.

Second, the pandemic also meant Boards made unplanned decisions due to the unpredictable environment with risk and uncertainty (e.g., duration and impact of COVID-19), as NPSO5's Board member noted: "we had a little bit of decisions to do with COVID. We had something that was unknown, so it wasn't foreseen in our tasks." Examples of unplanned decisions included the cancellation of a competitive league, the development of a strategic plan, and the development of return-to-play protocols. The following quotations highlight these

examples: “we cancelled our [competitive league] because of COVID. So there were obviously some impacts of COVID on the decisions we actually made” (NPSO4_Chair); “it impacted the Board’s decisions on what’s going to be in the strategic plan. Like, as COVID hit, what that’s going to look like now? What’s our focus?” (NPSO2_CEO); “We had to develop a lot of training guides and modify training protocols. So there are a lot of things we had to change or create in the last six months” (NPSO3_BoardMember).

The health crisis created issues in Boards’ priorities, which led to individual members assuming additional roles and responsibilities as well as making unplanned decisions. For instance, one participant explained that: “it messed up the priorities and there are people who have had to take on other roles and we had to make different decisions” (NPSO3_CEO). These unplanned decisions were also observed during NPSO Board meetings. NPSO2’s Board was forced to make an unplanned decision about a competitive league as stated in the following field note quotation: “NPSO2’s CEO and Chair mention the unique nature of cancelling the competitive league as it has never been relevant for the organization or its Board in prior years” (NPSO2 meeting observation 5). Each observed NPSO Board also developed return-to-play policies, further demonstrating the presence of unplanned decisions. For instance, collected documents like NPSO3 and NPSO5’s Board meeting minutes and developed return to play policies corroborated the presence of additional unplanned decisions.

Market conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic’s unpredictability also created issues for the Boards’ decision making. This unpredictable nature created a scenario where Boards had information coming from various sources, yet which constantly changed, as seen in the following quotation:

As for the information we received, it was almost like, from one day to the next, it changed. It required one meeting a week just to give the information and there was some decision to be made there, but it was difficult and ambiguous. (NPSO3_CEO)

The unpredictable nature of the pandemic also increased Boards' decision making complexity, as they had to deal with COVID-19's potential risks. For instance, during the observed meetings, Boards conducted risk management analyses or referred to their risk appetite statements to inform certain decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was present in NPSO2 as collected documents indicated risk management analyses being conducted and comprised in submitted Board papers, which corroborates the above result. Specifically, all submitted Board papers had a comment inserted pertaining to the "risk appetite statement" and implications (e.g., strategy, financial) of the potential decision. The following field notes quotation discusses the use of this risk appetite statement in relation to a decision made:

NPSO2's Board conducted an analysis of potential consequences from cancelling their competitive league, issues around exposure to the virus, and health restrictions on travel and social gatherings. This analysis was based on their risk appetite statement, their strategic plan, and current conditions surrounding the pandemic. (NPSO2 meeting observation 5)

The presence of risk analyses and reflection during decisions also led NPSO Boards to believe these activities will continue in the future, which NPSO2's CEO explained:

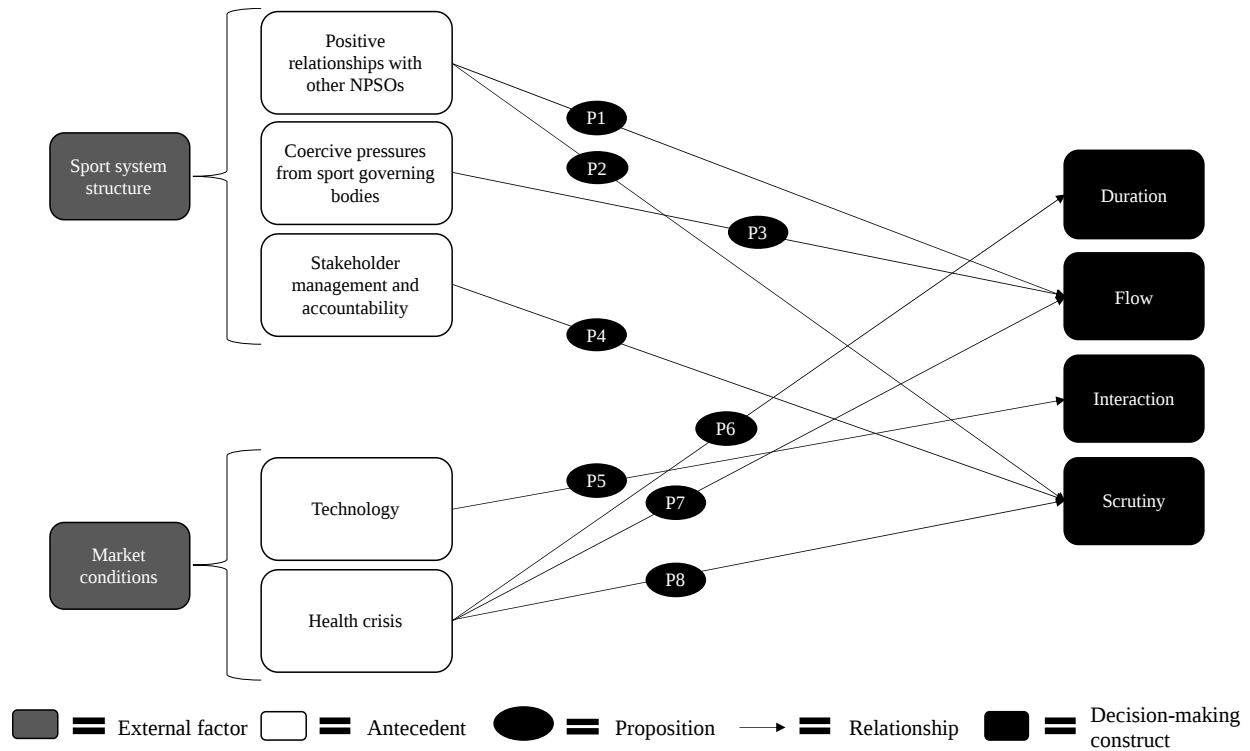
At many levels, the decisions are not made in the same way now, and I don't think they will be made in the same way in the future because there is going to be something of a risk of this pandemic in the background.

Discussion

In this section, results are discussed according to relevant literature and the applied theoretical framework. This discussion leads to the development of propositions (i.e., statements about relations between constructs on an abstract level; Bacharach, 1989), which are each illustrated in Figure 4.1 (see below). However, no propositions are offered for the centrality construct (i.e., decision's level of authorization; Cray et al., 1988) given this study's focus on decision making in Boards. Finally, theoretical contributions and practical implications are offered.

Figure 4.1

External Factors' Impact on NPSO Board Decision Making



External Factors and NPSO Board Decision Making

Two main external factors (i.e., the sport system structure and market conditions) impacted NPSO Board decision making. Results highlighted the need for positive relationships

between NPSOs at different levels of a federated sport model (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2016, 2020). These positive relationships are vital for NPSO Boards at different levels to make coherent and better-informed decisions (Shilbury et al.). These informed decisions are based on NPSO Boards' ability to communicate with each other to share and access important information (e.g., Shilbury et al.) in a timely fashion, thereby limiting potential delays from waiting for information to become available (i.e., flow; Cray et al., 1988). This information sharing, however, depends on a positive relationship built on trust and transparency with bilateral communication (e.g., O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016; Shilbury et al.) between NPSOs. From this positive relationship, NPSO Boards are able to integrate information from external sources (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al.), such as their member associations (e.g., provincial/territorial-level NPSOs). Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P1: NPSO Boards with a positive relationship with other NPSO Boards in their sport system will encounter fewer delays during decision making (i.e., flow).

P2: NPSO Boards with a positive relationship with other NPSO Boards in their sport system will use a greater number of external information sources (i.e., scrutiny).

Coercive pressures (i.e., rules, regulations, standards, and sanctions; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) imposed on the NPSO Boards examined in this study negatively impacted their decision making. This negative impact resides in the need for NPSO Boards to respond to demands imposed by sport governing bodies. For instance, the anti-doping policy development decision was made because of a coercive pressure from a national-level NPSO stakeholder, CCES. Such coercive pressures were also found among provincial/territorial-level NPSO Boards, as funding partners imposed rules, such as the types and numbers of policies developed. These pressures led to NPSO Boards developing certain policies to respond to this

external influence. This response, however, was often delayed as NPSO Boards waited for information to become available (i.e., flow; Cray et al., 1988), such as consulting sport governing bodies for additional guidance or other stakeholders (e.g., member associations), before making a decision. This result suggests coercive pressures like government-imposed legislation go beyond impacting Board composition and structure (Kikulis et al., 1995; Parent et al., 2018), instead creating issues (i.e., delays) for NPSO Boards' decision making. Further, these coercive pressures are consistent with an ideological influence on the part of governments and sport governing bodies to influence NPSO Boards towards certain initiatives, thereby suggesting the political dimension of these organizations' general environment is important to consider (Daft, 2021; Slack & Parent, 2006). Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P3: Coercive pressures from sport governing bodies on NPSOs will result in greater delays during Board decision making (i.e., flow).

The influence of stakeholders on NPSO Board processes has been previously discussed in sport governance research (e.g., Naraine et al., 2020). This study demonstrates NPSO Board stakeholders – that is, their management and accountability – can impact decision making (Parent et al., 2021). Specifically, stakeholders such as member associations and sport governing bodies influenced NPSO Boards' decision making. For instance, the interests and the potential impact on member associations, such as provincial/territorial-level NPSOs in the case of a national-level NPSO, are considered when Boards make decisions. This consideration means NPSO Boards should consult their stakeholders when making certain decisions. The point here is NPSO Boards are more likely to incorporate external information sources (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al., 1988) into their decision making given the need to manage and stay accountable to various stakeholders. This notion supports the importance of stakeholders in the contemporary

governance of NPSOs (e.g., Naraine et al.) given their impact on decision making (Parent et al.). Further, results suggest the presence of normative pressures – that is, increased expectations and norms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) towards NPSO Boards from their stakeholders – influences them to gather information externally. Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P4: Stakeholder management and accountability forces NPSO Boards to incorporate external information sources in their decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

Though some scholars have referred to the COVID-19 pandemic as a once-in-a-lifetime event (e.g., Langley, 2021; Phan, 2021), this external factor (as identified in the results) represents a health crisis within NPSO Boards' market conditions (Hoye & Doherty, 2011; McLeod et al., 2022). This supports the posited relationship in the Integrated Board Performance Model of market conditions impacting NPSO Board decision making (Hoye & Doherty). However, such health crisis-related market conditions are comparable to other notable crises like terrorists attacks (e.g., 9/11), the 2008 economic recession, natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes), or wars (e.g., World War I, World War II) given the presence of high risk and uncertainty in each instance. Nevertheless, beyond the government-imposed restrictions to inhibit the virus's spread, this study found the COVID-19 pandemic (as a health crisis in the organization's market conditions) created an environment ripe with conditions of risk (i.e., cost and benefits of a decision or alternatives are unknown) and uncertainty (i.e., outcomes of a decision or alternatives are unknown; Daft, 2021; Slack & Parent, 2006), which NPSO Boards needed to navigate and make unplanned decisions (cf. Hindman et al., 2021). On one hand, this health crisis presented risks for NPSO Boards, as they were forced to navigate the potential impact of the virus on their organizations, such as exposure, insurance liabilities, and policy development for return-to-play

protocols (Daft; Slack & Parent). On the other hand, this risk caused uncertainty, as the end to the health crisis could not be predicted and information pertaining to its spread and protocols (e.g., social, travel) changed rapidly on a daily basis (Daft; Slack & Parent).

These results relate to organization's general environment (i.e., dimensions in an industry environment that can impact an organization; Daft, 2021; Slack & Parent, 2006). Specific to the general environment, this study contributes to the organization theory, strategic management, and governance literatures by suggesting health be incorporated as a general environment dimension alongside socio-cultural, demographic, economic, technological, ecological, political, legal, and ethical dimensions (cf. Daft; Slack & Parent). Specifically, this health dimension should be understood as local, provincial/territorial, national, and/or international health authorities setting policies and/or restrictions on individuals and organizations.

First, the health crisis forced NPSO Boards to transition their operations to technological platforms like Zoom and Google Meets. This transition was done as a result of social and travel restrictions imposed during the crisis (McLeod et al., 2022), thereby demonstrating the importance of this health dimension given its impact on the technological dimension (e.g., rise in the use of digital technology). The ability to conduct meetings virtually also allowed NPSO Boards to meet more frequently than previously given its convenience (e.g., no travel required) and cost-friendly nature (McLeod et al.). This increased meeting frequency (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988) was done to respond to the demands of the health crisis, namely making unplanned decisions with high risk and uncertainty. Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P5: NPSO Boards' market conditions characterized by a health crisis will lead to a greater number of meetings via technological means (i.e., interaction).

Second, this health crisis created issues for NPSO Boards' decision making. These issues were attributed to delays (i.e., flow) and time (i.e., duration; Cray et al., 1988) required for decisions to be made. For instance, NPSO Boards were delayed from waiting for information to become available from health authorities to inform their policy development for return-to-play protocols. This information was supplemented with additional risk management analyses conducted by certain NPSO Boards, further contributing to delays. Without this information, however, NPSO Boards were unable to proceed in their decision making and make a well-informed decision. These delays ultimately contributed to a longer process to make a decision. Such a lengthy process highlights the importance of the health dimension as it relates to the general environment of organizations given its negative impact on NPSO Board decision making. Thus, the following propositions are offered:

P6: NPSO Boards' market conditions characterized by a health crisis with high risk and uncertainty will lead to longer decision making (i.e., duration).

P7: NPSO Boards' market conditions characterized by a health crisis with high risk and uncertainty will create greater delays during decision making (i.e., flow).

Finally, the health crisis allowed NPSO Boards to establish relationships with other stakeholders like health authorities in their province/territory. Such relationships further demonstrated the importance of the health dimension as information was acquired from these stakeholders to inform NPSO Board decision making. This information was vital for NPSO Boards to supplement other sources (e.g., individual Board members' expertise and opinions) to make an informed decision given the power and authority (i.e., legal dimension) of health authorities in provinces/territories during the crisis (e.g., imposing social and travel restrictions). Nevertheless, the point here resides in the health dimension's importance for NPSO Boards to

acquire a greater number of information (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al., 1988) from these stakeholders (e.g., provincial/territorial health authorities) during a health crisis. Thus, the following proposition is offered:

P8: NPSO Boards' market conditions characterized by a health crisis with high risk and uncertainty will use a greater number of information sources during decision making (i.e., scrutiny).

Beyond a mention of the political dimension for the sport system structure external factor and the technological and legal dimensions for the novel health crisis dimension, the following general environment dimensions were not relevant in this study: socio-cultural, ecological, demographic, and economic (cf. Daft, 2021; Slack & Parent, 2006). The lack of support for the ecological dimension is because this health crisis was not related to the physical surroundings of the organization (cf. Daft; Slack & Parent). In turn, as this study did not purposefully examine the general environment's dimensions, the absence of the socio-cultural, demographic, and economic dimensions in the results can be explained (Daft; Slack & Parent). This limitation, however, suggests the need for future research on the general environment dimensions and their impact on NPSO Board decision making. Nevertheless, the health dimension, as discussed above, requires greater attention in organization theory, strategic management, and governance research (cf. Daft; Slack & Parent) given its ability to impact NPSO Boards' decision making (e.g., duration, delays, information sources; Cray et al., 1988).

Theoretical Contributions

First, this study advances the use of strategic decision-making theory in terms of its temporal boundary (i.e., ability for a theory to understand a phenomenon in a given time period; Bacharach, 1989). Notably, management research has been encouraged to consider how crisis

periods can contribute to existing theory (Phan, 2021). In answering this call, this study's results suggest strategic decision-making theory can be used in health crisis period to understand the process to make decisions.

Second, the propositions developed in this study advance the sport governance literature because they guide additional inquiries into the impact of external factors on NPSO Boards' decision making. Future research should empirically test these propositions through questionnaires and statistical analyses (e.g., multiple linear regressions, structural equation modelling) to determine the extent to which the external factors identified in this study predict (or not) Board decision making according to strategic decision-making theory's (sub-)constructs.

Finally, this study contributes to literature on the general environment of organization's as a new dimension is worthy of consideration: health. The novelty of this dimension resides in its ability to understand how decision making was impacted during a health crisis (e.g., greater information sources, delays, and duration). The potential for additional health crises in the future and fallout of the current pandemic showcases the relevancy of the identified health dimension within an organization's general environment. Without considering this dimension, decision makers (e.g., NPSO Boards) might have a poor understanding of their organization's environment, thereby inhibiting their operations and ability to achieve outcomes (e.g., effectiveness).

Practical Implications

First, NPSO Boards should recognize the importance of external information sources in their decision making. Such external sources, for instance, arose from other NPSOs (e.g., provincial/territorial NPSOs in the case of national NPSOs) where Boards accessed vital information without delays. This demonstrates the importance for NPSO Boards to develop

positive relationship with other NPSOs in their sport system. These positive relationships should be, however, characterized with reciprocity as NPSOs can rely on another for timely and trustworthy information exchanges. It becomes important for NPSOs to establish frequent communication between Boards in their sport system. Such frequent communication can occur formally during (bi-)monthly meetings of NPSO Chairs from different levels or informally via emails or phone calls with individual actors in the sport system at events like championships or the annual general meeting. The importance of these positive relationships resides in the ability for NPSO Boards to avoid issues like external sources of opposition to their decision from stakeholders or waiting for information to be shared.

Second, the Canadian sport system structure perhaps requires a critical revisiting. This critical revisiting is needed as complexities like pressures from sport governing bodies and an increase in stakeholder management and accountability negatively impacted NPSO Board decision making. Such negative impacts are found in delays from waiting for information from a stakeholder (e.g., sport governing body), thereby leading to a longer process to make a decision. Nevertheless, Canadian sport system stakeholders – that is, NPSOs at all levels, funding partners, sport governing bodies (e.g., Sport Canada, COC), governments, and individuals (e.g., athletes, coaches, officials) – should reflect on and critically discuss the impact of a federated sport model's inherent complexities on a central organizational process. Thus, perhaps it is time for a change in the sport system's structure in the interests of improving governance processes and the effectiveness of NPSOs.

Finally, NPSO Boards should recognize the increased workload that is brought on during a health crisis (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), like having to develop policies or manage an uncertain situation with changing information. To manage such situations, NPSO Boards can use

virtual meetings via platforms like Zoom or Google Meets. The use of technology allows NPSO Boards to continue their operations, all the while respecting social and travel restrictions during a health crisis. In addition, NPSO Boards can use other tools like risk management analyses to further refine their understanding of the health crisis (e.g., conditions like the level of risk and uncertainty) within their market and respond accordingly.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of external factors on NPSO Boards' decision making. Results identified two external key factors: the sport system structure and market conditions. Beyond having a positive relationship with other NPSOs in their sport system to facilitate the communication of trustworthy information to make decisions, the external factors identified in this study negatively impacted Board decision making. From these results, limitations and future research directions are presented.

First, the timing of this study's data collection and analysis could explain the inclusion of the market conditions as an identified external factor. Considering this limitation and (hopeful) eventual end to the current health crisis, future research should consider how other health crises in the general environment can impact NPSO Board decision making. Examples of past health crises that could be examined according to the identified health dimension include the zika virus during the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games or the 2009 swine flu pandemic. Such research is vital to determine the results' transferability, that is, whether or not the general environmental health dimension negatively impacts NPSO Board decision making.

Second, this study's results and claims are based on qualitative data. Though the qualitative approach was important to directly observe Boards in action within a small sample of six NPSOs, conclusions drawn from statistical analyses to derive degrees of significance (e.g.,

structural equation modelling) would be important to determine whether or not the external factors identified in this study predict Board decision making. These statistical analyses should be pursued according to the eight stated propositions (see Figure 4.1) to derive hypotheses, thereby testing them via questionnaires completed by NPSO Board members.

Finally, future research should continue to explore the impacts of external factors on Board processes. This research is needed given the current dearth of inquiries considering the environment of NPSOs' and importance for Boards to manage external relationships with stakeholders. Nevertheless, research should consider the general environment dimensions of NPSO Boards to understand the impact of external factors on processes and the newly identified dimension (i.e., health) from this study to assess its transferability.

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Chapter V: NPSO Board Decision Making in a Federated Sport Model: Exploring Similarities and Differences Within and Between Levels

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore similarities and differences in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model. The case study methodology included two national- and four provincial/territorial-level NPSOs from Canada. Data were gathered from 36 non-participant overt observations and more than 900 documents, and analyzed in SPSS (i.e., t-tests, one-way ANOVA). Results demonstrated NPSO Board decision making within the provincial/territorial level were similar, but differed in terms of delays, acquisition of information, and types of sources used. No differences were found in decision making between national-level NPSOs. More differences than similarities were found in Board decision making between system levels in terms of duration, interactions, delays, and information. Contributions include a proposed taxonomy of NPSO Board decision making at different levels of a federated sport model, namely condensed and extended decision making by national and provincial/territorial NPSO Boards, respectively.

Keywords: decision-making process; board of directors; decisions; comparative analysis; Canadian sport system; not-for-profit organizations

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Introduction

Governance – a multi-dimensional phenomenon concerned with the regulation, direction, and control of an organization – continues to garner attention among practitioners and researchers (Bevir, 2011; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). An important group in governance is the Board considering their power and authority to make decisions according to their selected roles (e.g., policy planning and development, appointing and monitoring the CEO, managing external relationships, and establishing and monitoring the organizational mission; Hoye & Doherty, 2011) and responsibilities (e.g., fiduciary duty, duty of care; Hoye et al., 2020a).

It is, therefore, not surprising most research in sport governance has focused on Boards (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020), which parallels trends in the broader management field (Cornforth, 2012). In contrast to the broader management field, however, the sport governance literature has generally focused on NPSO Boards operating in a multi-level governance system known as a federated sport model (i.e., delegating power and authority from the national-level organization to different regions bounded by geographical context; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). For instance, there exists a plethora of Board-related studies conducted in Western, federated sport model countries like Canada (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011) and Australia (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Hoye, 2004; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a, 2003b; O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). Together, these studies demonstrate the challenges faced by NPSO Boards operating in a federated sport model (cf. unitary sport model; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2016), such as changes in structure and composition from government-imposed legislation (i.e., Not-For-Profit Corporations Act in Canada; Parent et al., 2018) or an inability to develop collaborative governance (e.g., Shilbury et al.).

Yet, few NPSO Board studies have examined similarities and differences in processes (e.g., decision making) within or between levels of a federated sport model structure. This knowledge gap remains despite the plethora of studies conducted on NPSO Boards in a federated sport model. These studies did not consider, for example, how the development of Board strategic capability differs in regional (or provincial/territorial) NPSOs compared to their national counterparts (cf. Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015). An additional limitation can be observed in studies claiming to examine phenomena in multiple levels, yet gather data from one level of the sport system (i.e., national; O'Boyle et al., 2020). The result of this prior research is an assumption that Board processes (e.g., decision making) in NPSOs operating in a federated sport model are consistent within (e.g., across NPSOs at the national or provincial/territorial level) and between (e.g., national-level NPSOs versus provincial/territorial-level NPSOs) levels. This assumption remains despite the known environmental complexities of operating in a federated sport model such as government-imposed legislation (Parent et al., 2018), the need for collaboration (Shilbury et al., 2016), and accountability to external stakeholders (Harvey, 2013).

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore similarities and differences in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model. Two research questions were posed: (1) what similarities and differences exist in NPSO Board decision making operating at the same level of a federated sport model?; and (2) what similarities and differences exist in NPSO Board decision making operating at different levels of a federated sport model?

Theory

A brief overview of literature pertaining to NPSO Boards operating in a federated sport model is provided. This is followed by a description of this study's theoretical framework used to guide data collection and analysis.

The Federated Sport Model and Board Research

The federated sport model is theoretically founded upon multi-level governance systems (Harvey, 2013), which are recognized as a “system of continuous negotiations among nested governments at several territorial tiers” (Marks, 1993, p. 392). Although previous Board research in sport has demonstrated the impact of individual-level (e.g., commitment; Cuskelly & Boag, 2001) and process-level (e.g., conflict; Kerwin et al., 2011) constructs on outcomes like the Board's effectiveness (e.g., Hoye, 2004, 2006) and the organization's effectiveness (e.g., Hoye & Doherty, 2011), comparative analyses in a federated sport model are lacking. This is problematic considering Board-related research and knowledge from the broader management field has been conducted in organizations operating in an unitary type of governance system (e.g., Cornforth, 2001; Murphy & McIntyre, 2007) where the distinctiveness of a federated sport model could challenge previous assumptions (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020).

But, results and relationships depicted in models developed from organizations in unitary systems are assumed to apply to complex systems like federated sport models. This assumption means we are left without an understanding of how a more complex governance system (e.g., federated sport model) can positively or negatively impact NPSO Boards' processes (e.g., decision making) operating at the same (e.g., national level) or different levels (e.g., national level versus provincial/territorial level). Considering the noted complexities in a federated sport model, such as the management of stakeholder expectations and accountability (e.g., Esteve et

al., 2011; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007), legal requirements (e.g., Parent et al., 2018), and professionalization (e.g., Hoye et al., 2020a; Hoye et al., 2020b; Parent et al., 2021), sport governance researchers have an opportunity to conduct multiple comparative analyses to advance and criticize previous knowledge and assumptions derived from the broader management field (e.g., for-profit organizations in an unitary system).

Despite this opportunity, few researchers have conducted such analyses. Most Board-related research conducted in countries with a federated sport model like Australia (e.g., Doherty & Hoye, 2011; Hoye, 2004, 2006; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020) and Canada (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003; Doherty et al., 2004; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010) have not provided comparisons within or between levels. For instance, a variety of studies on sport Boards have examined processes like role ambiguity (e.g., Doherty & Hoye), cohesion (e.g., Doherty & Carron), norms (e.g., Doherty et al.), conflict (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty), and leadership (e.g., leader-member exchanges; Hoye) in multiple provincial/territorial-level NPSOs operating in a federated sport model. In turn, another study on Board strategic capability gathered data from national-level and provincial/territorial-level NPSOs (e.g., Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015), but offered no insights on potential comparisons between cases. This cross-level gap remains despite studies having multiple NPSOs included from either a single or multiple levels of the sport system (e.g., Doherty & Hoye; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty; O'Boyle et al.). The point here is the importance of considering multiple perspectives (e.g., similarities and differences between NPSOs within and different levels of a federated sport model) to better understand a phenomenon in a given context (Doherty, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

To provide comparisons within and between levels of NPSO Board decision making, this study applied strategic decision-making theory (Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). This theory, developed from the “Bradford studies,” is appropriate for the present study considering its focus on analyzing decision making as it occurs (cf. post-hoc; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Simon, 1955). Strategic decision-making theory includes five constructs: centrality, duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (Cray et al.). Each construct is based on seminal works (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963; Mintzberg et al.; Simon) and are independent from one another, yet required to provide a comprehensive understanding of decision making (Cray et al.).

First, centrality represents the level of authorization for a decision (Cray et al.). This authorization is attributed to the following levels: external organization; Board; Board committees; CEO, but later ratified by the Board; CEO; manager; and lower-level employee (Cray et al.). Second, the length of the decision is termed duration and is measured in the number of hours, minutes, and seconds for the decision to occur (Cray et al.). The total length of time is the sum of two sub-constructs, namely, gestation time and process time (Cray et al.). Gestation time is measured as the time interval in hours, minutes, and seconds from the first mention of the problem until first action is taken to decide (Cray et al.). Next, process time is the time interval measured in hours, minutes, and seconds from when first action is taken until a final decision is made (Cray et al.). Third, flow refers to the delays during the decision, specifically the lengths (i.e., disruption) and types of delays (i.e., impediments; Cray et al.). Disruption is measured as a time interval in hours, minutes, and seconds from the start of the delay until the delay has subsided (Cray et al.). In turn, impediments are the reasons of the delays: waiting for pertinent information to become available, waiting to conduct research to obtain and analyze information,

internal source of opposition, and external source of opposition (Cray et al.). Fourth, interaction is focused on the actors involved and location of discussions or negotiations during the decision (Cray et al.). The number of actors involved in the decision is understood as the scope of negotiation (Cray et al.). Next, formal interaction is concerned with the number of discussions related to the decision occurring in a formal organizational setting (e.g., meetings; Cray et al.). In contrast, informal interaction refers to the number of discussions about the decision that occur away from a formal organizational setting (e.g., unplanned phone calls after meetings, water cooler talk; Cray et al.). Finally, scrutiny is the information used during the decision; it is concerned with how information is acquired (i.e., effort) and with the type of information (i.e., expertise; Cray et al.). Effort indicates the number of sources by which information is acquired according to: individuals' expertise and opinions, readily accessible information, conduct research to obtain information, and integrate information from multiple sources (Cray et al.). Expertise is the number of different information types used during the decision, such as documents (e.g., organizational policies) or a CEO's expertise and opinions (Cray et al.).

Method

A comparative case study design was undertaken (Yin, 2018) in which Boards were selected according to the following criteria: (1) operating in a national-level or provincial/territorial-level NPSO and (2) located in the Canadian sport system. The first criterion is applied so this study could include multiple NPSO Boards at the national level and provincial/territorial level, thus allowing for comparative analyses to take place. This approach was purposefully done to include NPSO Boards representing the same sport across the two levels (see details below). Second, the Canadian sport system was purposefully selected as it is recognized as a federated sport model that is complex given the multitude of governments, sport

governing bodies, and NPSOs operating at various levels (e.g., national, provincial/territorial, community) and geographical jurisdictions (Harvey, 2013; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). Finally, Canadian NPSO Boards were selected for convenience purposes as the researchers have knowledge of this context.

In April and May 2020, recruitment emails were sent by the first author to CEOs and Chairs of national-level NPSO Boards respecting the selection criteria for this study. Two national-level NPSO Boards accepted to participate in the study. From this acceptance, provincial/territorial-level NPSO Boards from the two national-level NPSO Boards' respective sport network were also recruited to participate. The same recruitment process was followed whereby the first author emailed the CEOs and Chairs of the provincial/territorial-level NPSO Boards. A total of four provincial/territorial-level NPSO Boards (two from each national-level NPSO Board's sport network) accepted to participate in the study. To respect the ethics certificate obtained for this study, NPSOs are not named nor are the sports they represent; instead, they are anonymously labelled from NPSO1 to NPSO6. Specific dates of observed meetings are also not provided. The sample's general details are provided next.

All NPSOs represent summer Olympic sports and are recognized by their respective sport governing body. NPSO1 operates at the national level with 11 employees, 10 Board members, and 15 committees. In NPSO1's sport network, NPSO3 and NPSO4 are found. Operating at the provincial/territorial level, NPSO3 has six employees, seven Board members, and seven committees, while NPSO4 has six employees, eight Board members, and no committees. In contrast, NPSO2 operates at the national level with eight employees, 11 Board members, and 10 committees. In NPSO2's sport network, NPSO5 and NPSO6 are found. Operating at the

provincial/territorial level, NPSO5 is comprised of six employees, six Board members, and six committees compared to five employees, nine Board members, and two committees in NPSO6.

Data Collection

A multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal approach was used in this study. More precisely, data were collected from June 2020 to October 2021 through two methods: overt non-participant observations and documents. Observations represented the primary source of data collection while documents were a secondary source. Observations allowed insights into the boardroom of multiple NPSO Boards to occur where decision making was examined as it unfolded in real time (Gray, 2014). In comparison, the use of documents as a secondary source allowed information from the observations to be corroborated (i.e., triangulation; Yin, 2018).

The first author collected data from an adapted structured observation sheet based on strategic decision-making theory (see Cray et al., 1988). This observation sheet was based on and adapted from each of the five constructs and sub-constructs of the theory and they allowed the first author to analyze the observed decisions in terms of their length, delays, locations of discussions, number of actors, and information sources (see Data Analysis for more details). In addition, the first author collected field notes (i.e., objective and subjective features during Board meetings) in a personal notebook. The field notes included additional information such as the behaviours of individual Board members (i.e., subjective) and the location of the meeting (i.e., objective). Due to COVID-19, observations were conducted virtually (via Zoom and Google Meets) during six Board meetings per NPSO (i.e., 36 in total representing 60 hours in the field) where the first author had this camera and microphone off. All observations were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim (average meeting length: 98 minutes).

Next, documents such as strategic plans, organizational structures, annual reports, financial audits, and newsletters were collected from the NPSOs' websites. In addition, confidential documents were provided by participants to the first author (e.g., emails between Board members, Board meeting agendas, Board meeting minutes). A total of 978 documents representing over 6,500 pages were collected throughout the data collection process.

Data Analysis

Data from the observed decisions were manually inputted by the first author into SPSS for subsequent analysis. This approach is appropriate according to the theoretical framework (see Cray et al., 1988). During the analysis, documents were consulted to corroborate data gathered from the observations, such as locating items on meeting agendas and minutes to determine the start and finish of a decision. Measurement details are provided below.

For the measurement of centrality, the level of authorization for the decision was scored hierarchically. The following variables and scores were comprised in this construct: 7=external organization; 6=Board; 5=Board committee; 4=CEO, but later ratified by the Board; 3=CEO; 2=manager; and 1=lower-level employee. The second construct, duration, was measured as a time interval variable according to the total number of hours, minutes, and seconds for the decision to be made. This total duration is represented as the sum of gestation time and process time, which are both measured as a time interval in hours, minutes, and seconds. Third, the flow construct was measured via disruption and impediments. As disruption is the length of the delays, it was measured as a hierarchical variable consistent with the theoretical framework (e.g., Cray et al., 1988). For disruption, four variables were scored: 0=no delays, 1=intermittent delays, 2=continual delays, and 3=prolonged delays. In contrast, the impediments construct was measured as the sum of the different reasons causing the delays during the decision. The

impediment variable was consistent with those discussed in the theoretical framework (e.g., 1=1 delay caused by internal source of opposition, 2=2 delays caused by internal source of opposition, etc.). The fourth construct, interaction, was measured according to formal interaction, informal interaction, and the scope of negotiation. Formal interaction was an interval variable representing the number of Board meetings held in relation to the decision (e.g., 1=1 Board meeting, 2=2 Board meetings, etc.). Informal interaction – also an interval variable – was the number of discussions about the decision occurring away from formal settings (e.g., 1=1 informal discussion, 2=2 informal discussions, etc.). The scope of negotiation was measured as an interval variable according to the number of individuals involved in discussions (e.g., 1=1 individual, 2=2 individuals, etc.). Scrutiny was measured according to two sub-constructs: (a) effort, a hierarchical variable measured as: 1=individual's expertise and opinions, 2=readily accessible documents, 3=integrate information, 4=external stakeholders, and 5=conduct research; and (b) expertise, an interval variable concerned with the number of information sources used during decision making (e.g., 1=1 time a Board member's expertise and opinions is used).

In SPSS, data were analyzed through two independent-sample t-tests and one one-way ANOVA. For each statistical analysis described below, no outliers were found in the data, as assessed by reviewing boxplots, and data are normally distributed as all skewness and kurtosis values were within a z-value of ($\pm$) 2.58 (George & Mallery, 2019). Independent sample t-tests were conducted because of their ability to compare the mean scores of constructs from two different groups (George & Mallery). One independent sample t-test is conducted for the analysis at the national level (i.e., two national-level NPSOs included in this study). There were 12 Board decisions from NPSO1 and 12 Board decisions from NPSO2. The second independent sample t-test is conducted for the analysis between the national-level and provincial/territorial-level

NPSOs. There were 24 Board decisions from national NPSOs (i.e., NSPO1 and NSPO2) and 42 Board decisions from provincial/territorial NPSOs (i.e., NPSO3, NPSO4, NPSO5, and NPSO6). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to provide a comparative analysis at the provincial/territorial level given the four NPSOs included at this level (George & Mallery). Observed decisions in provincial/territorial NPSOs were classified according to those made in each case: NPSO3 ($n=8$), NPSO4 ($n=11$), NPSO5 ($n=13$), and NPSO6 ($n=10$). For the one-way ANOVA, there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test (i.e., $p > .05$; George & Mallery).

Results

Statistical analysis results are presented in this section, which includes results from the independent t-tests and the one-way ANOVA.

Independent Sample T-Test: National NPSOs

The results of the first conducted independent sample t-test between the two national NPSOs (i.e., NPSO1 and NPSO2) are shown in Table 5.1. No statistically significant differences were identified in any of the examined items between the national-level NPSOs given their p values being greater than .05 for all items (regardless of whether or not the homogeneity of variances was respected or violated according to Levene's test for equality of variances; George & Mallery, 2019). Thus, NPSO Board decision making at the national-level in a federated sport model – according to this study's sample – are more similar than different.

One-Way ANOVA: Provincial/Territorial NPSOs

Results indicated NPSO Board decision making at the provincial/territorial level of a federated sport model – according to this study's sample – appear more similar than different. These similarities are demonstrated by the lack of statistically significant differences found in 41 variables. Notably, these similarities are attributed to the lack of statistical differences in items

Table 5.1*Descriptive and Independent Sample t-Test Statistics of National-Level NPSOs Board Decision Making*

Variables	NPSO1		NPSO2		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Centrality	6.00	0.000	6.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Duration	326:22:00	585:37:00	146:15:00	506:04:00	0.806	0.429	0.329
Gestation time	00:09:25	00:32:18	00:00:08	00:00:05	0.995	0.330	0.406
Process time	326:13:00	585:43:00	146:15:00	506:04:00	0.805	0.429	0.329
Disruption	2.17	5.167	1.67	3.257	0.284	0.779	0.116
No delays	0.67	0.492	0.67	0.492	0.000	1.000	0.000
Intermittent	0.42	0.900	1.17	1.850	-1.263	0.225	-0.515
Continual	0.25	0.866	0.00	0.000	1.000	0.339	0.408
Prolonged	0.33	0.888	0.17	0.577	0.545	0.591	0.223
Impediments	1.67	3.257	2.00	1.859	-0.484	0.633	-0.198
Consulting wrong documents	0.08	0.289	0.00	0.000	1.000	0.339	0.408
External source of opposition	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Family members	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.289	-1.000	0.339	-0.408
Internal source of opposition	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Locating documents to share	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.289	-1.000	0.339	-0.408
Technology	0.17	0.389	1.00	1.537	-1.820	0.093	-0.743
Waiting for information	0.50	1.732	0.17	0.577	0.632	0.534	0.258
Waiting to conduct research	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Interaction	1.58	0.669	1.75	1.215	-0.416	0.681	-0.170
Formal interaction	1.00	0.426	1.17	0.577	-0.804	0.430	-0.328
Informal interaction	0.58	0.515	0.58	1.165	0.000	1.000	0.000
Scope of negotiation	3.50	2.067	6.00	4.533	-1.738	0.096	-0.710
Effort	18.00	18.844	29.08	33.364	-1.002	0.327	-0.409
Individual's expertise and opinions	10.58	14.349	18.67	22.585	-1.046	0.307	-0.427
Readily accessible information	0.83	1.749	1.33	2.270	-0.604	0.552	-0.247

Integrate information	1.92	2.151	2.58	2.843	-0.648	0.524	-0.264
External stakeholders	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Conduct research	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Expertise	15.50	16.093	25.58	29.290	-1.045	0.307	-0.427
External expertise	0.33	0.492	1.08	2.109	-1.200	0.253	-0.490
COC	0.08	0.289	0.00	0.000	1.000	0.339	0.408
CCES	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.289	-1.000	0.339	-0.408
Community sport organizations	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Consultants/Contractors	0.08	0.289	0.17	0.577	-0.447	0.659	-0.183
Health authorities	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
International sport organizations	0.08	0.289	0.00	0.000	1.000	0.339	0.408
Media	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
National sport organizations	0.08	0.289	0.25	0.622	-0.842	0.409	-0.344
Provincial/Territorial governments	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Provincial/Territorial sport governing bodies	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Provincial/Territorial sport organizations	0.00	0.000	0.50	1.446	-1.198	0.256	-0.489
Sport Canada	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.289	-1.000	0.339	-0.408
Internal expertise	15.17	16.010	24.50	28.634	-0.986	0.335	-0.402
Board committee members expertise and opinions	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Board members expertise and opinions	7.75	10.864	18.00	23.300	-1.381	0.181	-0.564
Documents	2.58	2.778	3.17	3.904	-0.422	0.677	-0.172
CEO expertise and opinions	4.67	4.119	3.33	4.207	0.784	0.441	0.320
Staff expertise and opinions	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000

related to, for example, the number of interactions and actors involved in discussions to make decisions along with duration and some information sources used.

According to the one-way ANOVA, however, seven variables attributed to specific length and type of delays, processes in which information is acquired, and types of information sources used resulted in statistically significant differences in Board decision making of provincial/territorial NPSOs (see Table 5.2). These seven significant differences described below suggest potential areas of distinction in the observed decisions between NPSOs operating at the provincial/territorial-level of a federated sport model.

First, intermittent disruption was significantly different between the provincial/territorial NPSOs, with NPSO3 having the most significant difference compared to NPSO6. The prominence of this delay length is explained by the family impedance item for NPSO3 compared to NPSO4, NPSO5, and NPSO6, which represents the second significant statistical difference. The following field notes quotation supports this result: “NPSO3’s CEO causes some distractions during discussions, as their partner appears to make some background noise or pass through behind them. ... A NPSO3 Board member is interrupted mid-sentence because of their young child requiring attention” (NPSO3 meeting observation 4).

Third, NPSO3 differed significantly than the other three provincial/territorial NPSOs in terms of acquiring a greater number of information from external stakeholders. This result is attributed to a seemingly stronger willingness among NPSO3’s Board members to actively consult external stakeholders like its national counterpart to obtain information when making their decisions. Though NPSO4 and NPSO5 had a similar approach at times, NPSO6 did not acquire information in this manner at any point during the observed decisions.

Table 5.2*Descriptive and One-Way ANOVA Statistics for Provincial/Territorial-Level NPSO Board Decision Making*

Variables	NPSO3		NPSO4		NPSO5		NPSO6		<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Centrality	6.00	0.000	6.09	0.302	6.00	0.000	6.00	0.000	0.935
Duration	601:48:00	1190:21:00	178:59:00	433:31:00	959:22:00	1337:29:00	1401:57:00	2318:40:00	1.320
Gestation time	00:00:05	00:00:01	00:00:07	00:00:03	00:00:04	00:00:03	03:51:00	10:28:29	1.447
Process time	601:48:00	1190:21:00	178:59:00	433:32:00	980:08:00	1384:46:00	1398:06:00	2321:12:00	1.301
Disruption	3.88	4.357	2.73	3.901	5.62	6.462	2.70	3.335	0.966
No delays	0.25	0.463	0.45	0.522	0.23	0.439	0.30	0.483	0.501
Intermittent	3.13	3.834	0.82	0.874	1.54	1.941	0.30	0.675	3.154*
Continual	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.277	0.00	0.000	0.729
Prolonged	0.25	0.707	0.64	1.206	1.31	1.494	0.80	1.033	1.411
Impediments	3.63	3.662	1.91	1.221	3.15	3.236	1.60	0.966	1.436
Consulting wrong documents	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.277	0.00	0.000	0.729
External source of opposition	0.00	0.000	0.27	0.905	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.935
Family members	0.50	0.756	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	5.127*
Internal source of opposition	0.25	0.707	0.27	0.467	0.38	1.121	0.00	0.000	0.525
Locating documents to share	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.277	0.00	0.000	0.729
Technology	1.38	1.598	0.36	0.674	0.92	1.320	0.30	0.675	1.903

Waiting for information	0.25	0.707	0.27	0.905	1.23	1.301	0.80	1.033	2.250
Waiting to conduct research	0.00	0.000	0.09	0.302	0.15	0.376	0.00	0.000	0.897
Interaction	2.13	0.991	1.91	1.446	3.46	2.727	1.90	1.449	1.898
Formal interaction	1.38	0.744	1.55	1.293	2.23	1.301	1.40	1.075	1.399
Informal interaction	0.75	0.707	0.36	0.674	1.23	1.739	0.50	0.707	1.365
Scope of negotiation	5.25	2.550	4.64	1.206	5.54	1.761	5.40	2.066	0.504
Effort	50.63	53.112	50.36	64.823	83.85	90.746	58.10	54.358	0.600
Individual's expertise and opinions	35.00	40.338	36.45	53.065	52.46	63.973	16.20	18.896	1.027
Readily accessible information	1.00	1.309	1.45	2.806	0.23	0.439	1.10	1.370	1.116
Integrate information	1.13	1.642	3.18	6.385	10.31	10.896	5.60	12.660	1.971
External stakeholders	2.25	3.412	0.27	0.467	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	4.665*
Conduct research	0.25	0.463	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	7.60	9.395	6.895**
Expertise	52.88	45.970	47.82	62.938	73.23	82.208	23.10	31.540	1.258
External expertise	4.50	5.099	4.27	10.919	2.23	3.811	0.80	2.530	0.718
COC	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000
CCES	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000
Community sport organizations	0.13	0.354	0.45	0.688	0.85	2.075	0.00	0.000	1.067
Consultants/Contractors	0.13	0.354	0.00	0.000	0.69	1.494	0.00	0.000	1.821
Health authorities	0.13	0.354	1.00	3.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	1.073
International sport organizations	0.50	1.414	0.45	1.214	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	1.034
Media	0.00	0.000	0.45	1.508	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.935

National sport organizations	1.75	1.389	0.27	0.647	0.38	1.387	0.30	0.949	3.438*
Provincial /Territorial governments	0.25	0.707	0.36	1.206	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.770
Provincial /Territorial sport governing bodies	1.25	2.375	0.45	1.214	0.08	0.277	0.50	1.581	1.117
Provincial /Territorial sport organizations	0.38	0.744	0.64	1.502	0.15	0.376	0.00	0.000	1.108
Sport Canada	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000
Internal expertise	48.38	41.976	43.55	56.234	71.00	79.718	23.10	28.977	1.318
Board committee members expertise and opinions	7.50	7.071	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	13.184**
Board members expertise and opinions	21.38	25.281	33.91	50.441	49.77	67.962	14.80	16.976	1.153
Documents	1.75	1.909	2.45	2.382	8.54	10.929	2.80	3.360	2.706
CEO expertise and opinions	7.88	8.061	7.18	6.080	12.69	12.744	5.50	9.372	1.209
Staff expertise and opinions	10.50	6.990	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	26.444**

Notes. * Represents a significance level of $p < .05$.

** Represents a significance level of $p < .001$.

Fourth, NPSO6 differed significantly from NPSO3, NPSO4, and NPSO5 as they chose to conduct research between Board meetings to obtain critical information related to the decision being made. Specifically, NPSO6 conducted research via publicly available resources on their national NPSO's websites. This research was also supplemented by collecting and reviewing documents from NPSO6's provincial/territorial sport governing body. This process to acquire information differs from the previously stated significant difference pertaining to external stakeholders because this type of process was specific to a NSPO Board conducting their own research of relevant resources to make an informed decision. Evidence of conducted research is explained in the following field notes quotation: "NPSO6's Chair mentions he will gather information himself by researching relevant documents from their national NPSO and sport governing body. This information will then be summarized at the following Board meeting" (NPSO6 meeting observation 3).

Fifth, NPSO3 differed significantly in regards to using a greater number of information from its national counterpart. NPSO3 would consult organizational policies or relay information from individual's personal opinions at their national NPSO to inform the decision than the other three provincial/territorial NPSOs. The following field notes quotation supports this result: "NPSO3's CEO and Chair both have a strong will and motives to inform their policy development decisions from available documents at the national level" (NPSO3 meeting observation 2).

The sixth and seventh statistically significant differences are related to NPSO3's use of a greater number of information from its (1) Board committee members and (2) staff members. NPSO3 was the only provincial/territorial NPSO to have these types of information source in their decision making, while the other three lacked these information types. This result is

attributed to NPSO3's Board inviting individual members from their Board committees to attend its formal meetings to provide the Board with a better understanding of committee members' opinions about a decision being made. NPSO3 also invited one of their staff members to attend each Board meeting to act as an ex-officio member and to offer operational information beyond what the CEO presented.

Independent Sample T-Test: National versus Provincial/Territorial NPSOs

The results of the second independent sample t-test, which compared means between national and provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making, are shown in Table 5.3. Results demonstrated similarities in the process by which NPSO Boards make decisions, whether it be at the national or provincial/territorial level of the federated sport model. This is evidenced by 27 variables found to not have a statistically significant difference in terms of gestation time; lengths of delays (i.e., intermittent, continual); types of delays (e.g., family members, technology); informal interaction; the scope of negotiation; and some approaches to acquire information (i.e., readily accessible documents, external stakeholders) and the types used to make decisions (e.g., documents, consultants/contractors, health authorities).

Though many similarities were found, results also indicated 21 items had a significant difference between national and provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making, suggesting some areas of distinction in terms of: duration, process time, no delays, prolonged delay, internal source of opposition, interaction, formal interaction, effort, individuals' expertise and opinions, integrating information, conducting research, expertise, external sources of expertise, national-level NPSOs, community-level NPSOs, provincial/territorial sport governance bodies, internal sources of expertise, Board members' expertise and opinions, Board committee members' expertise and opinions, CEO expertise and opinions, and staff members' expertise and opinions.

Table 5.3*Descriptive and Independent Sample t-Test Statistics of National and Provincial/Territorial NPSO Board Decision Making*

Variables	National-Level NPSOs		Provincial/Territorial-Level NPSOs		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Centrality	6.00	0.000	6.02	0.154	-0.753	.454	-0.193
Duration	236:18:00	543:07:00	792:15:00	1482:53:00	-2.187	.033*	-0.452
Gestation time	00:04:47	00:22:50	00:55:04	05:10:50	-0.789	.433	-0.202
Process time	236:14:00	543:09:00	797:46:00	1496:48:00	-2.192	.033*	-0.452
Disruption	1.92	4.232	3.83	4.823	-1.622	.110	-0.415
No delays	0.67	0.482	0.31	0.468	2.952	.004*	0.755
Intermittent	0.79	1.474	1.36	2.207	-1.119	.267	-0.286
Continual	0.13	0.612	0.02	0.154	0.795	.434	0.261
Prolonged	0.25	0.737	0.81	1.215	-2.328	.023*	-0.524
Impediments	1.83	1.659	2.55	2.568	-1.222	.226	-0.313
Consulting wrong documents	0.04	0.204	0.02	0.154	0.401	.689	0.103
External source of opposition	0.00	0.000	0.07	0.463	-0.753	.454	-0.193
Family members	0.04	0.204	0.10	0.370	-0.653	.516	-0.167
Internal source of opposition	0.00	0.000	0.24	0.726	-2.125	.040*	-0.410
Locating documents to share	0.04	0.204	0.02	0.154	0.401	.689	0.103
Technology	0.58	1.176	0.71	1.154	-0.440	.661	-0.113
Waiting for information	0.33	1.274	0.69	1.093	-1.202	.234	-0.308
Waiting to conduct research	0.00	0.000	0.07	0.261	-1.776	.083	-0.342
Interaction	1.67	0.963	2.43	1.952	-2.118	.038*	-0.457
Formal interaction	1.08	0.504	1.69	1.179	-2.906	.005*	-0.613
Informal interaction	0.58	0.881	0.74	1.149	-0.570	.570	-0.146
Scope of negotiation	4.75	3.674	5.21	1.855	-0.578	.567	-0.175
Effort	23.54	27.097	62.62	69.148	-3.251	.002*	-0.677
Individual's expertise and opinions	14.63	18.959	36.31	49.219	-2.544	.014*	-0.529

Readily accessible information	1.08	1.998	0.90	1.708	0.384	.702	0.098
Integrate information	2.25	2.489	5.57	9.635	-2.114	.040*	-0.423
External stakeholders	0.00	0.000	0.50	1.671	-1.939	.059	-0.374
Conduct research	0.00	0.000	1.86	5.475	-2.198	.034*	-0.424
Expertise	20.54	23.679	50.76	62.235	-2.811	.007*	-0.583
External expertise	0.71	1.546	2.86	6.434	-2.063	.044*	-0.411
COC	0.04	0.204	0.00	0.000	1.000	.328	0.341
CCES	0.04	0.204	0.00	0.000	1.000	.328	0.341
Community sport organizations	0.00	0.000	0.40	1.231	-2.131	.039*	-0.411
Consultants/Contractors	0.13	0.448	0.24	0.878	-0.587	.559	-0.150
Health authorities	0.00	0.000	0.29	1.551	-0.900	.372	-0.230
International sport organizations	0.04	0.204	0.21	0.871	-0.954	.344	-0.244
Media	0.00	0.000	0.12	0.772	-0.753	.454	-0.193
National sport organizations	0.17	0.482	0.60	1.231	-2.004	.050*	-0.417
Provincial/Territorial governments	0.00	0.000	0.14	0.683	-1.355	.183	-0.261
Provincial/Territorial sport governing bodies	0.00	0.000	0.50	1.436	-2.257	.029*	-0.435
Provincial/Territorial sport organizations	0.25	1.032	0.29	0.864	-0.150	.881	-0.039
Sport Canada	0.04	0.204	0.00	0.000	1.000	.328	0.341
Internal expertise	19.83	23.183	48.10	58.658	-2.767	.008*	-0.577
Board committee members expertise and opinions	0.00	0.000	1.43	4.174	-2.218	.032*	-0.428
Board members expertise and opinions	12.88	18.534	31.88	48.374	-2.271	.027*	-0.472
Documents	2.88	3.327	4.29	6.919	-0.937	.352	-0.240
CEO expertise and opinions	4.00	4.128	8.62	9.758	-2.677	.010*	-0.564
Staff expertise and opinions	0.00	0.000	2.00	5.075	-2.563	.014*	-0.492

Notes. * Represents a significance level of $p = < .05$.

Collected documents corroborated Boards' use of documents in combination with another information type (e.g., Board member's expertise and opinions) and additional information such as the length of the observed decisions via Board meeting agendas and minutes. The following field notes quotation of a decision made by NPSO2's Board supports this result:

They used a combination of a Board paper developed by an individual member with preliminary information about the decision, organizational competition and event policies, and individuals' expertise and opinions during the discussion. These information sources were used in tandem with one another by the Board. (NPSO2 meeting observation 2)

From these significant differences, it can be concluded NPSO Board decision making at the national level took fewer time, required less than two meetings, was subject to fewer delays, but relied on fewer information sources, usually originating from individual member's expertise and opinions. In turn, provincial/territorial-level NPSO Board decision making took greater time, required more than two meetings, was subject to greater intermittent and prolonged delays, but relied on a greater number of information sources, typically in the form of individual member's expertise and opinions or integrating multiple sources (e.g., external stakeholder documents with a Board member's expertise and opinions).

Discussion

In this section, results are discussed according to the two research questions. Then, theoretical contributions and managerial implications are offered.

Similarities and Differences in NPSO Board Decision Making Within Levels

Board decision making differed more between NPSOs at the provincial/territorial level than those at the national level. The identification of significant differences in the examined

governance process among the provincial/territorial level NPSOs are attributed to the variations in the governance structures and actors involved in sport at this level of the federated sport model, that is, the 13 different provincial/territorial jurisdictions compared to the single national jurisdiction (Harvey, 2013). Although national-level NPSOs are accountable to Sport Canada as the national sport governing body and other national stakeholders (e.g., Own the Podium, COC, CCES, Coaches Association of Canada) and have been subject to increased pressures from external stakeholders (e.g., funding partners) to professionalize and formalize their policies, procedures, and processes (Hoye et al., 2020b; Parent et al., 2018; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020), each Canadian province/territory is governed by its own respective political party and sport governing body (Harvey). From this structure, each government and sport governing body have their own legislations, policies, and procedures to govern sport in a geographical boundary (Harvey). Considering the same sport system structure, the symmetry of stakeholders, and the same pressures faced by national NPSOs, Board decision making was understandably similar between the two cases at this level. The identified similarities within the national NPSOs are also observed, to a certain degree, in the study's provincial/territorial NPSOs, primarily in terms of the duration; number of meetings and individuals involved; length and types of delays (with one exception as discussed below); information sources acquired from individuals' expertise and opinions (i.e., Board members, CEO); conducting research; integrating information; and having readily accessible documents (e.g., strategic plan). These similarities suggest processes (e.g., decision making) in a federated sport model might be similar to those in an unitary sport model (cf. O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2018; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020), especially at the provincial/territorial level. This notion is based on previous claims suggesting a federated sport model is more complex than an unitary sport model, thereby advocating for a greater number of differences

compared to similarities in governance processes (e.g., O’Boyle & Shilbury). Such claims are also found in the broader management literature (e.g., Bradshaw & Toubiana, 2014; Cornforth, 2014). In the case of provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making, the sport system structure did little to provide indications of this assumption. Thus, sport governance researchers should rethink assumptions related to the federated sport model compared to an unitary sport model (cf. O’Boyle & Shilbury; Wicker & Kerwin).

Next, the difference in acquiring information from external stakeholders as observed in one provincial/territorial NPSO can be attributed to the sport governing body in that province/territory emphasizing the need for its NPSOs to have a positive relationship with and similarities in the types of policies and procedures to their national counterpart. Such pressures in this particular province/territory are important to consider as it led the NPSO to acquire a greater number of information externally from its national counterpart to inform decisions (e.g., policy development and planning). This demonstrates how pressures related to policies, procedures, and processes from provincial/territorial sport governing bodies can impact Board decision making at this level, similar to discussions to this effect in the context of national NPSOs (e.g., Hoye et al., 2020b; Parent et al., 2018; Parent et al., 2021; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). This demonstrates the need for sport governance research to consider the impact of sport governing bodies at lower levels of a federated sport model – namely, those operating at the provincial/territorial level – on Board processes like decision making. In addition, the presence of acquiring information from an external stakeholder advances previous conceptualization of the effort sub-constructs from strategic decision-making theory as this was an important distinctive characteristic in one Board’s case (cf. Cray et al., 1988).

The additional differences are explained in large part by the characteristics of one case (i.e., NPSO3). More precisely, this NPSO Board had greater intermittent delays in the form of family members causing a distraction as a member was speaking during a discussion to make a decision. This is explained by some Board members in this case not sitting in a room alone during the meeting, and instead being in their living room or dining room with others present nearby. This result, though specific to one NPSO Board in this study, suggest technology – that is, having virtual meetings via Zoom or Google Meets – created an arguably informal atmosphere. This differs, for instance, than the formal atmosphere found in traditional in-person meetings as individuals travel to a specific location to meet in a private room rather than simply login into a virtual meeting from the comfort of their own home (cf. Bezemer et al., 2018; Leblanc & Gillies, 2005). Though still considered as a formal interaction (Cray et al., 1988), this notion suggests prior Board research conducted in traditional in-person settings might not be directly transferable to virtual meetings (cf. Bezemer et al.; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2012; Kerwin, 2013; Leblanc & Gillies; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011, 2015). This point of distinction resides in the added potential of delays and informal environment (e.g., operating in the comfort of your own home) created in a virtual meeting that is arguably not seen in traditional in-person Board meetings (Hurley, 2021; Karl et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the importance of technology cannot be underestimated as virtual meetings continue to be the “new normal” for NPSO Boards (cf. Hurley; Huse, 2018; Karl et al.). Thus, governance research should consider the role technology plays (Huse) in contemporary Board processes (e.g., decision making) given its distinction from a traditional in-person meeting (Hurley; Karl et al.).

In addition to the above difference, the use of information from ex-officio members – namely, committee members and staff members – suggests integrating boundary spanning

activities to manage uncertainty (i.e., lack of clarity on potential alternatives or outcomes of a decision; Daft, 2021; Slack & Parent, 2006) in decision making. Such boundary spanning activities are demonstrated in the knowledge of the staff member regarding operational matters (in addition to those provided by the CEO) and work committees complete (e.g., Parent et al., 2019, 2020) to further supplement information relating to the Board's decisions (e.g., strategic planning committee providing counsel on policy development and planning like return-to-play protocols during the pandemic). Nevertheless, the above differences found suggests the potential for some provincial/territorial NPSO Boards to use varying types of internal information sources in the interest of making an informed decision, thereby managing potential uncertainties in the process. The use of these internal information sources, however, differs from case to case, which suggests the importance of considering contextual characteristics (e.g., how the Board functions, committee structure and role) to understand decision making at the provincial/territorial level of a federated sport model (cf. Cray et al., 1988; Hoye & Doherty, 2011).

Given the above discussion, NPSO Board decision making within the national and provincial/territorial levels of a federated sport model are more similar than different. This suggests NPSO Board decision making in a federated sport model can be transferred to an unitary sport model when examined at one level (i.e., national or provincial/territorial). However, some identified differences are largely attributed to characteristics of one provincial/territorial NPSO in this study's sample as discussed above.

Similarities and Differences in NPSO Board Decision Making Between Levels

Considering nearly half (21 of 48) of the examined variables were statistically different, Board decision making differed more between levels – here, between national- and provincial/territorial-level NPSOs – of a federated sport model. This means, however, that there

were still more similarities than differences (27 of 48 examined variables) in NPSO Board decision making between levels of the federated sport model. The presence of more similarities than differences suggests governance processes might not differ as much between levels, thereby indicating the federated sport model might not be as distinctive from the unitary sport model as previously argued (cf. O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2018, 2020; Wicker & Kerwin, 2020). Thus, even though a federated governance system is claimed to be “tension-filled, and can vary in their degrees of cohesiveness, autonomy, centralization, and in their shared visions, goals, and interests” (Bradshaw & Toubiana, 2014, p. 231), there might be more symmetry with an unitary governance system than previously assumed.

Both national and provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making were subject to the same intermittent and continual delay lengths, arising from impediments like consulting the wrong documents, family members (e.g., causing interruptions in discussions), locating documents to share, technology (e.g., Board member on mute when speaking), waiting for information to become available, and the need to conduct research. The use of technology can partly explain these results because the virtual meetings caused both national and provincial/territorial NPSO Boards to have similar intermittent delays like waiting for a member to unmute or locating documents to share (Hurley, 2021; Karl et al., 2021). The presence of these delays suggests NPSO Boards at multiple levels of a federated sport model have yet to harness technology’s value in their processes (Hurley; Huse, 2018; Karl et al.). This issue remains while technology’s use continues to rise in organizations, especially in the form of virtual Board meetings (e.g., Hurley; Huse; Karl et al.). Nevertheless, virtual meetings were still important for NPSO Boards at both levels to continue their operations remotely, thereby echoing claims from the broader management literature (e.g., Hurley; Huse; Karl et al.).

For continual delays, such as internal sources of opposition, NPSO Boards at both levels of the federated sport model were involved in situations similar to process-related conflict (i.e., disagreements about how to best address the situation and make a decision; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011). This process-related conflict is problematic as NPSO Boards encounter delays (i.e., flow; Cray et al., 1988) whereby their decision making is less efficient than without impediments. This notion extends prior work to this effect as internal sources of opposition (e.g., process-related conflict) impacted Board decision making, rather than the quality of the decision itself (e.g., Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty; Kerwin et al.).

This study's national and provincial/territorial NPSO Boards acquired information from external stakeholders or readily accessible information (e.g., organizational policies). This result is related to similarities in the types of information sources used, such as other NPSOs in their sport network (e.g., international NPSOs, national NPSOs, provincial/territorial NPSOs) or other stakeholders like sport governing bodies and consultants/contractors. The use of external stakeholders to acquire information further demonstrates the relevance of the governance system type in which federated sport model NPSOs operate because they can acquire information from NPSOs at other levels of the system. This result, arguably, differs from the process by which Boards in organizations operating in an unitary model acquire their information given the more simplistic governance system (Bradshaw & Toubiana, 2014; Cornforth, 2014; Gabrielsson et al., 2019) than a federated sport model (Harvey, 2013; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020). This type of external information source also highlights the importance for NPSO Boards to manage external relationships (Hoye & Doherty, 2011), thereby allowing information to be acquired more quickly and from trustworthy sources to make an informed decision.

Nevertheless, the identified differences (i.e., duration, process time, no delays, prolonged delays, internal sources of opposition, interaction, formal interaction, effort, individual's expertise and opinions, integrate information from multiple sources, conduct research, expertise, external expertise, community sport organizations, national sport organizations, provincial/territorial sport governing bodies, internal expertise, Board members expertise and opinions, Board committee members' expertise and opinions, CEO expertise and opinions, and staff members' expertise and opinions, cf. Cray et al., 1988) are important to consider when defining NPSO Board decision making. To explain this phenomenon, the defining characteristics can be grouped into a novel taxonomy (i.e., categorization of empirically tested variables to understand a phenomenon; Miller, 1996), which goes beyond the three types of decision making proposed in the Bradford studies (i.e., sporadic, fluid, constricted; Cray et al.). A key difference in the proposed taxonomy is the consideration for the type of organization (i.e., NPSOs) and governance system's (i.e., federated) impact on Board decision making. Of course, this taxonomy was empirically derived from a small sample featuring only two NPSOs operating at the national level and four at the provincial/territorial level. Given the identified differences in this study, thereby suggesting NPSO Board decision making differ more between than within levels of a federated sport model (as discussed above and in the previous sub-section), the following taxonomy is proposed (see Table 5.4).

On one hand, national NPSO Board decision making are characterized by fewer duration and process time, fewer impediments (with none at times), fewer interactions in the form of formal meetings, and fewer effort and expertise. This is labelled as the condensed type of decision making. On the other hand, provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making are characterized with longer duration and process time, greater intermittent and prolonged

impediments, greater interactions in the form of formal meetings, and greater effort and expertise. Because of the greater time and interactions, greater information is acquired from different sources, thus this second type of decision making is labelled as extended.

Table 5.4

Taxonomy of NPSO Board Decision Making in a Federated Sport Model

Constructs/Decision Making Characteristics	Condensed Decision Making (National NPSO Board)	Extended Decision Making (Provincial/Territorial NPSO Board)
Centrality	Decision authorized by the Board	Decision authorized by the Board
Duration	Approximately 236 hours	Approximately 792 hours
Flow	Between one and two delays with either an intermittent or prolonged length	Between two and three delays with an intermittent and prolonged length
Interaction	Between one and two formal interactions involving five individuals	Between two and three formal interactions involving at least five individuals
Scrutiny	- Acquire information more from individuals' expertise and opinions, with some use of readily accessible documents and integrating multiple sources - More than 20 information sources used, arising internally with rare instances of incorporating external sources (e.g., fewer than one type).	- Acquire information more from individuals' expertise and opinions or integrating multiple sources, with some use of conducting research, readily accessible information, and external stakeholders - More than 50 information sources are used, typically arising internally with some use of external sources (e.g., between two and three types).

Notes. Table content based on results from the conducted statistical analysis between national and provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making (see Table 5.3).

Provincial/territorial NPSO Boards incorporated a greater number of internal information sources than their national counterparts. This notion suggests provincial/territorial NPSO Boards are arguably more creative in terms of acquiring information externally, that is, via conducting research or integrating multiple information sources to make an informed decision. This

creativity is demonstrated in the varying types of information sources acquired and used. However, the nature of the information source types for which significant differences were found suggests provincial/territorial NPSO Boards use a greater number of expertise and opinions from staff members. This difference suggests provincial/territorial NPSO Boards – which operate as governance Boards – incorporate information from the organization’s operations. This incorporation is done to clarify certain matters when making a decision, thereby demonstrating provincial/territorial NPSO Boards’ use of boundary spanning activities to manage uncertainties (Daft, 2021; Slack & Parent, 2006). This compares, for instance, to national NPSO Boards observed in this study whereby no information was incorporated from staff members beyond the CEO. Thus, the presence of a staff member suggests provincial/territorial NPSO Boards seek to enhance their knowledge on operational matters to make an informed decision, which further supports the above notion regarding their creative use of information sources.

Theoretical Contributions

First, results demonstrate the need for sport governance research interested in Boards to consider potential differences in this group’s processes according to their level of operation in a sport system. Differences in duration, interactions, impediments, effort, and expertise highlight the need for additional comparative-based research in sport governance. However, the identified similarities between and within levels also contribute to the sport governance literature by suggesting processes like decision making in a federated sport model might not differ much from those in an unitary sport model. This research helps refine our understanding of potential nuances and ambiguities in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels a sport system.

Second, the proposed taxonomy advances prior decision making conceptualizations. This contribution lies in the identified and discussed points of distinction in the condensed and extended types (see Table 5.4) by which NPSO Boards make decisions according to their level of operation (i.e., national or provincial/territorial). These points of distinction are important for sport governance research to understand characteristics of decision making in national versus provincial/territorial NPSO Boards. Such characteristics can, for instance, be used in future research to explain their (potential) relationship with outcomes (e.g., Board effectiveness).

Managerial Implications

First, provincial/territorial NPSO Boards should recruit individual members with a diverse skillset and expertise. This practice should be done to move away from a representation-based Board composition to one that is skill-based. For instance, provincial/territorial NPSO Boards should recruit members with expertise in law as several observed decisions included contacting various consultants/contractors with this specialized knowledge to provide counsel, which created delays (e.g., waiting for information to become available or conducting research). In contrast, national NPSO Boards had some individual members who were either lawyers by trade or had basic knowledge to this effect, thus reducing the need to hold additional meetings to make a decision and improve decision making efficiency (e.g., fewer prolonged delays from waiting for information to become available).

Second, NPSO Boards at the national and provincial/territorial levels should create a formal and professional virtual environment for their meetings. This practice is important to limit the negative impact of delays on decision making (cf. Cray et al., 1988; Hickson et al., 2018). For instance, NPSO Boards should educate their individual members on procedures for virtual meetings and functions of their chosen platform, such as how to unmute and mute oneself or

share documents. This education should be done prior to the first virtual meeting held by the Board for the purposes of inhibiting potential delays related to technology, thereby creating more efficient decision making without self-inflicted impediments.

Conclusion

This study explored similarities and differences in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model. Results demonstrated NPSO Board decision making differed more between (i.e., national versus provincial/territorial) than within levels of a federated sport model. However, more similarities than differences are noted overall both within and between levels. Limitations and future research directions are offered below.

First, this study was limited by the small nature of its sample size. Future research should attempt to gather larger sample sizes, thus having the ability to derive meaningful conclusions about decision making in NPSO Boards. Such research can follow the approach and design of this study considering its ability to conduct quantitative analyses derived from qualitative data. However, using this approach beyond six cases across different geographical locations and/or jurisdictions of a sport system will take time (i.e., over a year) to properly collect and analyze the process-related data. Therefore, there is a need for larger research teams to share the workload and have the ability to collect data from more cases in different locations. Nevertheless, larger sample sizes are required to move beyond this study's stated limitation.

Second, this study was limited to NPSO Boards operating in the Canadian sport system. Considering this limitation, future research should explore the generalizability of this study's results to NPSOs in other countries with a federated sport model (e.g., Australia) or unitary sport model (e.g., United States). Such research could provide an important juxtaposition for this study's results to be critiqued and advanced to better understand NPSO Board decision making.

Finally, future research should explore the ability for the proposed taxonomy to understand decision making in NPSO Boards at different levels (i.e., national versus provincial/territorial) of a federated sport model. Such research would be timely considering the multidimensionality of governance (cf. Bevir, 2011) and the ability for this proposed taxonomy to provide points of distinction to better understand decision making in the context of NPSO Boards thereby advancing the Bradford studies' typology (cf. Cray et al., 1988).

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Chapter VI: Discussion and Conclusion

The dissertation's overall purpose was to explore Board decision making in NPSOs operating in a multi-level governance system. To address the purpose, four research objectives were stated: to explore (1) the process by which NPSO Boards make decisions; (2) the types and impacts of internal factors on NPSO Boards' decision making; (3) the types and impacts of external factors on NPSO Boards' decision making; and (4) the similarities and differences in NPSO Boards' decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model. Each of these objectives culminated into four research articles (i.e., article-based format; Dunleavy, 2003), which comprised the dissertation's foundation as it relates to addressing the stated purpose (i.e., Chapter II, Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Chapter V).

In Chapter II, NPSO Board decision making was explored. Results demonstrated NPSO Board decision making is information and engagement based. On average, NPSO Boards (i.e., centrality) made decisions in 590 hours (i.e., duration) over the course of two individual bi-monthly meetings; involved five individuals (i.e., interaction); faced two to three delays (i.e., flow; technology, waiting for information to become available); and considered nearly 40 types of information arising from a variety of sources, typically from an individual member's expertise and opinions or integrating multiple sources of information (i.e., scrutiny). Results suggest a novel decision-making type for NPSO Boards: dispersed.

Next, the impact of internal factors on NPSO Board decision making were explored in Chapter III. Results identified five internal factors impacted NPSO Board decision making: Board composition, Board size, Chair-CEO relationship, Board meeting environment and practices, and technology. Of these internal factors, technology was the single one identified as

having a positive (e.g., convenience, cost-friendly) and negative (e.g., delays, fewer engagement) impact, while the other four positively impacted NPSO Board decision making.

In Chapter IV, the impact of external factors on NPSO Board decision making were explored. Results identified the impact of two external factors: the sport system structure and market conditions. The former negatively impacted NPSO Board decision making because of increased demands from stakeholders and complexities with managing relationships between organizations in a federated sport model. In turn, market conditions brought on by a health crisis (i.e., COVID-19 pandemic) created an environment with high risk and uncertainty where NPSO Boards were forced to implement technology into their operations (i.e., holding meetings virtually) and make unplanned decisions, thereby negatively impacting decision making.

The final research article, comprised in Chapter V, explored similarities and differences in NPSO Board decision making within and between levels of a multi-level governance system (i.e., federated sport model). Results identified no statistically significant differences in NPSO Board decision making at the national level, while seven were found within the provincial/territorial level. The identified differences within the provincial/territorial level were attributed to the length and type of delays (i.e., flow), processes in which information was acquired (i.e., effort), and types of information sources used (i.e., expertise). In contrast, 21 statistically significant differences were identified between national and provincial/territorial NPSO Board decision making. The identified differences between (i.e., national versus provincial/territorial) levels were related to variables comprised in the following constructs: duration (e.g., total time); flow (e.g., length and type of delays); interaction (e.g., number of meetings, actors involved); and scrutiny (e.g., process to acquire information, types of information sources used). Beyond the identified differences, results demonstrated more

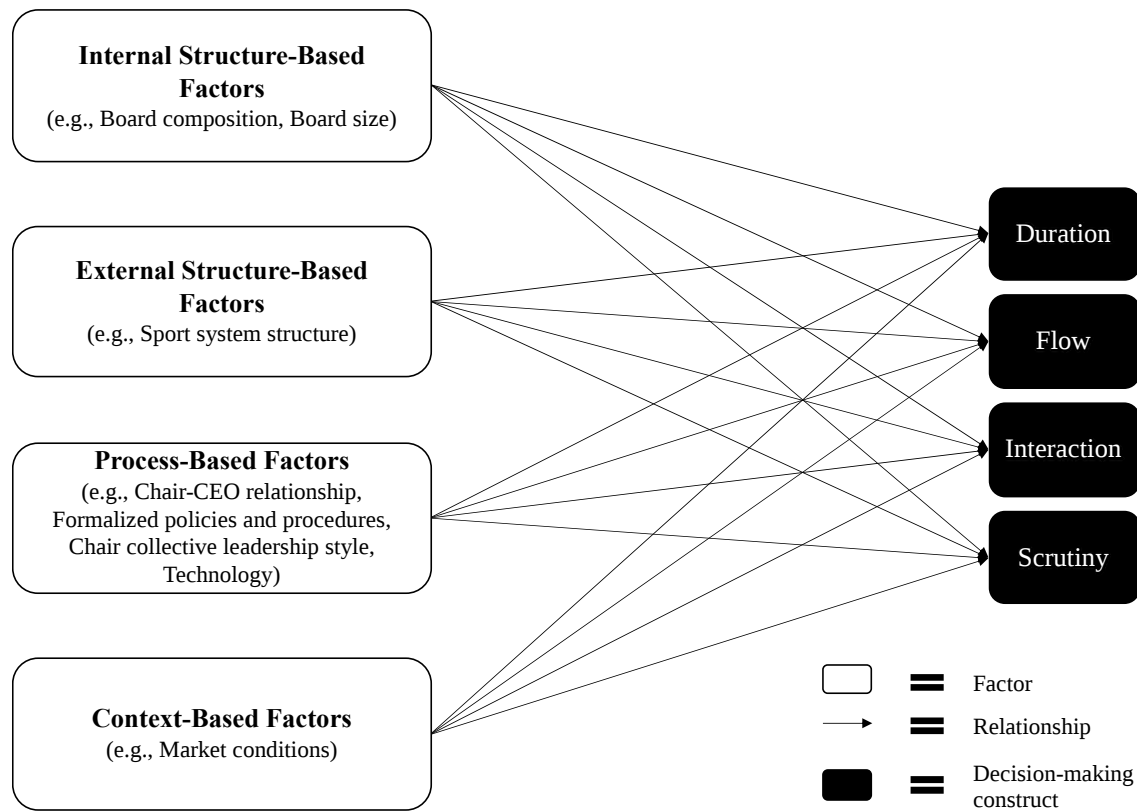
similarities in NPSO Board decision making, especially within the same level of a federated sport model (e.g., provincial/territorial). However, considering the presence of more differences between than within levels, a developed taxonomy provides insights on NPSO Board decision making according to the condensed (i.e., national) and extended types (i.e., provincial/territorial).

The remainder of this chapter discusses the dissertation's results to address the overall purpose. Theoretical contributions and practical implications are then provided, followed by a reflection on the dissertation process and future research directions to conclude the dissertation.

Discussion: The NPSO Board Decision Making Model

Here, a developed model is discussed according to relevant sport governance and broader governance literature. This model, which is based on cumulative results of each research article, is required to address the dissertation's overall purpose.

The NPSO Board Decision Making Model (see Figure 6.1) provides an understanding of decision making within a group operating in a recognized federated governance model and non-profit entity related to sport, thus addressing the dissertation's overall purpose. The model recognizes governance (i.e., how organizations are directed, controlled, and regulated) as a multi-dimensional concept (cf. Bevir, 2011) according to Henry and Lee's (2004) systemic (i.e., focused on the interplay between organizations in a system), organizational (i.e., focused on the behaviours and ethically-informed standards inside organizations), and political perspectives (i.e., steering of organizations on the part of governments and sport governing bodies). Further, decision making is viewed as the process – that is, “a sequence of individual and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding over time in context” (Pettigrew, 1997, p. 338) – to solve problems in organizations (Daft, 2021; Drucker, 1966). However, this understanding is not limited to a description of decision making (see Chapter II). Instead, results identified in

Figure 6.1*The NPSO Board Decision Making Model*

Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Chapter V are illustrated in the model in the form of structure- (i.e., internal and external), process-, and context-based factors. Each of these three factors are posited to directly impact (either positively or negatively) NPSO Board decision making (as understood from four of the five constructs of strategic decision-making theory; Cray et al., 1988). Of note, centrality – the final construct – is not illustrated in the developed model because decisions are discussed as being uniquely made by the Board (cf. Cray et al.).

The appropriateness of these different factors is demonstrated by Thompson et al.'s (2022) use of broader terms – in their case, structure, process, outcome, and context – to categorize phenomenon (i.e., governance principles in sport). Notably, on a higher level, the developed model also considers structure, process, and context factors to understand decision

making. For instance, Board composition is included in the structure factor of the developed model, which is akin to Thompson et al.. Compared to Thompson et al., however, the developed model distinguishes between internal and external structure-based factors and does not consider outcome-based factors such as effectiveness. Nevertheless, the use of these broader terms is important to categorize factors impacting NPSO Board decision making. With these notions in mind, the model is discussed below.

NPSO Board Decision Making

From a descriptive standpoint, the NPSO Board Decision Making Model provides the ability for this phenomenon to be analyzed according key constructs related to strategic decision-making theory (e.g., Cray et al., 1988). For instance, the dissertation's results identified characteristics of NPSO Board decision making like its duration, delays, interactions, and information sources (see Chapter II summary above for averages). These descriptive characteristics are important to consider as it provides sport governance researchers with an explicit examination of decision making, thereby moving beyond previous implicit examinations of this phenomenon (e.g., McLeod et al., 2021; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020; Takos et al., 2018). NPSO Board decision making, however, should (a) have fewer than two formal interactions in the form of Board meetings (i.e., duration, interaction); (b) limit intermittent delays to fewer than three with an absence of prolonged delays (i.e., flow); and (c) gather a diverse set of information sources (i.e., scrutiny). Thus, the above indicators suggest NPSO Board decision making should be efficient in terms of managing the impact of potential delays (e.g., technology, waiting for information), all the while attempting to gather and use a diverse set of information sources to make an informed decision.

Structure-Based Factors

Structure-based factors are posited to directly impact NPSO Board decision making. These structure-based factors are based on results identified in Chapter III and Chapter IV, such as Board composition, Board size, and the sport system structure. Though these aspects speak to structure-based factors, the model recognizes the presence of internal and external factors. More specifically, Board composition and Board size are considered as internal structure-based factors. These two factors are, for instance, internal given they are specific to Boards in organizations (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). In contrast, the sport system structure demonstrates an external structure-based factor. This factor is considered as external given it goes beyond Boards and organizations (cf. Hoye & Doherty), instead focusing on the environment in which it operates in (e.g., federated sport model). This distinction is important as prior governance and sport governance research has suggested the type of system structure to be context-based (cf. Harvey, 2013; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2018, 2020; O’Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020), all the while this aspect is fundamentally linked to the broader governance system (e.g., federated) in which Boards operate in (Bradshaw & Toubiana, 2014). Thus, external structure-related factors are considered in the developed model given the role of Boards to manage external relationships and the environment’s impact on governance processes (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Hoye & Doherty; Hoye et al., 2020; Soares et al., 2010). Internal structure-based factors are discussed below, followed by those considered as external.

Internal Structure-Based Factors

Specific to decision making, Board composition is an important internal structure-based factor to consider (cf. Cray et al., 1988, 1991). For instance, a Board comprised of individual members with different skill sets and areas of expertise will be less likely to face delays (e.g.,

waiting for information, conducting research; Cray et al.) when acquiring information from other sources (e.g., consultants/contractors). Such delays are limited because Boards can access information more quickly to make an informed decision. This compares to a situation in which Boards are delayed in their decision making because they lack expertise in a given area (e.g., law), which requires them to gain additional input to fill the void in knowledge about the decision (cf. Cray et al.). This notion, however, points to the importance of having skilled, qualified, and experienced Board members (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). This importance lies in the ability for NPSO Boards to rely on the expertise of its individual members to make an informed decision. Thus, this demonstrates a practice used by Boards to manage conditions of uncertainty (i.e., lack of knowledge among decision makers regarding the potential alternatives and outcomes of a decision; Astley et al., 1982; Cyert & March, 1963; Daft, 2021; Hickson, 1987; March & Olsen, 1976; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006; Thompson, 1967).

In contrast to composition, Board size is also an important internal structure-based factor to consider in relation to decision making. More specifically, a smaller Board size (i.e., less than 11 Board members; Parent et al., 2021) is suggested to limit potential delays and lead to shorter decision making. This premise is based on literature discussing the relationship between Board size and this group's effectiveness (e.g., Brown, 2005; Cornforth, 2001; Miller-Millesen, 2003; Murphy & McIntyre, 2007; Nicholson & Kiel, 2004a, 2004b; Zahra & Pearce, 1989). However, in the case of the developed model, the impact of Board size goes beyond effectiveness according to fulfilling roles (cf. Brown; Cornforth; Miller-Millesen; Murphy & McIntyre; Nicholson & Kiel; Zahra & Pearce), instead allowing this group to reach consensus more quickly and avoid potential delays (i.e., flow) in the form of internal sources of opposition (cf. Cray et

al., 1988, 1991). This situation compares to, for instance, a larger Board (i.e., more than 11 members; Parent et al.) where the potential for diverging perspectives and involvement of a greater number of individuals in decision making could result in additional delays (i.e., flow) and time (i.e., duration) to make a decision (cf. Cray et al.). To this effect, the ability to have fewer delays and time is demonstrated by more easily managing the discussion in a smaller group and limiting the potential for diverging interests present within an individual Board member or sub-groups (e.g., multiple Board members) to delay decision making (i.e., flow; Cray et al.). This differs from a larger NPSO Board, which might have its discussions dominated by a smaller group of individuals like a coalition with diverging self-interests from those of the group (cf. Cyert & March, 1963) or groupthink is developed (i.e., desire for consensus supersedes finding additional alternatives or having critical discussions; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Raven, 1998).

The above discussion on internal structure-based factors points to the importance of organizational governance to understand decision making (cf. Henry & Lee, 2004). Specifically, characteristics within the individuals of NPSO Boards – namely, the skills and expertise of its members and its size – relate to the behaviours and standards within the governance of organizations (cf. Henry & Lee). Thus, the developed model demonstrates the relevancy of organizational governance (Henry & Lee), such as internal structure-based factors pertaining to the Board's composition (e.g., Thompson et al., 2022), to better understand a vital governance process, decision making.

External Structure-Based Factors

The presence of external structure-based factors is also worthy of discussion considering it is posited to directly impact Board decision making in terms of its duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (cf. Cray et al., 1988, 1991). Specifically, the governance model type – that is,

federated (i.e., delegation of power and authority from the national level to organizations across a system operating in recognized geographical boundaries; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2020) or unitary (i.e., an organization has the concentration of power and authority in a system; Cornforth, 2012) – creates instances where NPSO Boards undertake boundary spanning activities (i.e., situation where decision makers attempt to enhance their perception and information about alternatives and outcomes of a decision; Daft, 2021; Jemison, 1984; Nutt & Wilson, 2010) and face external pressures from governments and sport governing bodies (i.e., systemic and political governance; Henry & Lee, 2004).

Notably, boundary spanning activities among NPSO Boards in a federated sport model included the acquisition and use of information from external stakeholders. This acquisition and use of external information sources demonstrates NPSO Boards will use systemic governance (Henry & Lee, 2004). This use of systemic governance via consulting publicly available information or the opinions of external stakeholders suggests the interplay between organizations in a system are important for decision making (Henry & Lee). For instance, this interplay results in a greater number of individuals involved in decision making (i.e., interaction) as Boards access and use information from external stakeholders (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al., 1988). This interplay between organizations in Board decision making also relates to principles of good governance (i.e., high standards, norms, and ethical behaviour in the governance of organizations; Chappelet, 2018), namely stakeholder participation and accountability (e.g., Alm, 2013, 2019; Australian Sports Commission, 2012, 2015, 2020; Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013, 2019; Geeraert, 2013, 2015; Thompson et al., 2022; UK Sport, 2016; Zintz & Gérard, 2019). To this effect, contemporary NPSOs – especially at the national level – have demonstrated evidence of consulting and engaging with stakeholders to make decisions (Parent et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the importance of systemic governance (Henry & Lee) resides in Boards' abilities to refine uncertainties in their decision making (Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006) by acquiring and using relevant information from stakeholders within their broader governance system (O'Boyle et al., 2020; Parent et al.; Shilbury et al., 2020). However, the acquisition and use of external information sources does present the potential for delays (i.e., flow) and a longer process (i.e., duration) to make a decision (Cray et al.). This premise is based on the time required for NPSO Boards to access information from outside their organization whereby they might be forced to wait for individuals to respond to queries or dedicate time to conducting research to properly locate required intel (cf. Cray et al.).

Governments and sport governing bodies impose coercive (i.e., imposed rules, standards, and regulations on organizations), normative (i.e., increased expectations and norms towards organizations), or mimetic (i.e., mimicking behaviours from another organization; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) pressures on organizations like NPSOs (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Hoye et al., 2020; Parent et al., 2018; Parent et al., 2021). This claim is widely discussed in the sport governance literature according to institutional theory and the seminal works of Slack and colleagues (e.g., Kikulis et al., 1992, 1995a, 1995b; Slack & Hinings, 1992). Considering these pressures, the developed model also recognizes the political governance aspects from the sport system structure (e.g., federated) and their impact on Board decision making (cf. Henry & Lee, 2004). More precisely, though institutional pressures have long been discussed in sport governance research (e.g., Hoye et al.; Kikulis et al.; Parent et al.; Parent et al.; Slack & Hinings), the developed model suggests influences from external structure-based factors create issues in Board decision making, namely in the form of delays (i.e., flow) and time (i.e., duration; Cray et al., 1988, 1991). For instance, Boards encounter a delay in the form of

conducting research (cf. Cray et al.) as they consult relevant policies within their organization or those available from other organizations in their sport system to inform a decision (e.g., policy language and terms, policy objectives, policy standards) imposed by sport governing bodies. An additional type of delay could occur from waiting for information to become available as NPSO Boards consult their respective sport governing bodies to gain intel on the expectations of the developed policy (cf. Cray et al.). Nevertheless, these delays (i.e., flow), which contribute to a longer time to make a decision (i.e., duration; Cray et al.), are the result of environmental pressures whereby Boards must grapple with conforming to the expectations of stakeholders like governments and sport governing bodies (DiMaggio & Powell; Greenwood & Hinings; Henry & Lee; Parent et al.).

Process-Based Factors

Process-based factors are recognized as aspects occurring inside the boardroom during Board meetings (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Within the developed model, process-based factors, as identified from results in Chapter III and Chapter IV (e.g., Chair-CEO relationship, formalized policies and procedures, Chair collective leadership style, and technology), are suggested to directly impact Board decision making. This premise is based on prior research in the broader management field (e.g., Brown, 2005; Cornforth, 2001; Miller-Millesen, 2003; Murphy & McIntyre, 2007; Nicholson & Kiel, 2004a, 2004b; Zahra & Pearce, 1989) and sport governance literature (e.g., Hoye & Doherty; Hamm-Kerwin & Doherty, 2010; Kerwin et al., 2011; Molloy et al., 2020; O'Boyle et al., 2020) suggesting processes inside the boardroom impact phenomenon like Board decision making. Nevertheless, the developed model posits process-based factors will directly impact Board decision making in terms of its length, delays, interactions, and information sources (cf. Cray et al., 1988, 1991). Such impacts, however, speak

to Henry and Lee's (2004) organizational governance perspective considering process-based factors relate to the behaviours and ethically-informed standards within organizations. This also echo's Thompson et al.'s (2022) systematic review findings considering their identification of process-related governance principles in sport specific to Boards (e.g., Board leadership, Board strategic function).

Notably, formalized policies and procedures contributed to an increased use of information sources during decision making (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al., 1988). This increase in information sources resides in a process occurring during meetings whereby Board members present developed papers specific to agenda items and an action registry. This process allows Boards to use readily accessible information (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al.) in the form of developed papers to gain a preliminary understanding of the proposed decision. Formalized policies and procedures also limit the length of time (i.e., duration; Cray et al.) for NPSO Board decision making. More precisely, the provided documents, such as Board papers, creates a more efficient discussion during meetings about the matter for decision. This compares to having an individual Board member verbally present key points about the matter for decision during the meeting. This situation would create the potential, however, for delays as individual Board members request time to reflect or conduct additional research on the matter (i.e., flow; Cray et al.). By way of formalized policies and procedures, NPSO Board members come prepared with the basic information pertaining to matters for decision, thereby streamlining the discussion during the meetings themselves (i.e., duration; Cray et al.). Nevertheless, this process speaks to Boards' ability to incorporate boundary spanning activities to manage uncertainties in decision making to make an informed decision (Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006). This process also demonstrates the presence of behaviours and ethically-informed

standards (i.e., organizational governance; Henry & Lee, 2004) within Board meetings, which relates to principles of good governance like accountability and transparency (e.g., Alm, 2013, 2019; Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013, 2019; European Commission, 2011; Geeraert, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018; Thompson et al., 2022; Zintz & Gérard, 2019). For instance, formalized policies and procedures provide Boards with a detailed record of their operations, which can be shared – either publicly on the organization’s website or privately via a secured database (i.e., transparency) – and used to justify decisions to stakeholders (i.e., accountability). To this effect, sport governing bodies have also discussed the importance of standardized policies and procedures in Board meetings to improve organizational governance (e.g., Australian Sports Commission, 2012, 2020; Sport and Recreation Alliance, 2017).

Prior sport governance research has also suggested the Chair-CEO relationship is important for Board’s to fulfill their roles as it relates to making decisions (e.g., Brown, 2014; Ferkins et al., 2018; Hoye, 2004, 2006; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003). Specifically, a positive Chair-CEO relationship characterized with bilateral communication, trust, and transparency (e.g., Brown; Ferkins et al.; Hoye; Hoye & Cuskelly) could lead to an informed decision. Such importance resides in the ability for Chairs to feel confident in the information provided by the CEO to make an informed decision (e.g., Brown; Hoye). If, for instance, trust and transparency were not present, thereby suggesting a negative Chair-CEO relationship, then the Board’s decision making would be inhibited as the Chair conducts additional research and due diligence to assess the information’s trustworthiness. Bilateral communication in the Chair-CEO relationship is also important to make an informed decision. This informed decision resides in the Chair’s ability to rely on operational-based information provided by the CEO (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al., 1988) to make decisions at the Board level. This premise relates to boundary

spanning activities undertaken to access crucial information that is otherwise unknown by the Board, thereby managing potential uncertainties (Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006). Such boundary spanning activities are important to consider as behaviours of the Chair and CEO (i.e., organizational governance; Henry & Lee, 2004) – that is, their professional working relationship – impact Board decision making (cf. Brown; Ferkins et al.; Hoye). This impact on decision making also speaks to good governance principles like accountability and transparency (e.g., Alm, 2013, 2019; Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013, 2019; European Commission, 2011; Geeraert, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018; Thompson et al., 2022; Zintz & Gérard, 2019). For instance, the CEO can be held accountable for the information shared about operational matters, all the while the Board receives trustworthy accounts and has access to vital intel in the organization (e.g., policies, financials) to make an informed decision.

An additional type of behaviour (i.e., organizational governance; Henry & Lee, 2004) undertaken during meetings is the Chair's leadership style. Notably, recent sport governance research has suggested a Chair collective leadership style benefits decision making as a greater number of perspectives from different individuals are gathered via a democratic approach (Ferkins et al., 2018; O'Boyle et al., 2020; Shilbury et al., 2020). This process is important for decision making as it increases the number of individuals involved (i.e., interaction; Cray et al. 1988). However, this increase in the involvement of different individuals via a democratic approach (Ferkins et al.; O'Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.) could lead to a longer time to make a decision (i.e., duration; Cray et al.). This impact, however, would arguably not be found in another leadership style (e.g., autocratic) in which participation from individual members is less prominent (cf. O'Boyle et al.; Shilbury et al.). Nevertheless, this process-based factor could be related to an additional boundary spanning activity whereby the Chair can incorporate a greater

number of individuals to manage potential uncertainties and make an informed decision as a group (Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006).

Organizational processes are not immune to the impact of technology considering its prevalence in society (Daft, 2021; Huse, 2018). Specific to Boards, technology impacts their decision making undertaken during meetings (Hurley, 2021; Karl et al., 2021). Such impacts reside in Boards attempting to transition from traditional in-person meetings to virtual meetings (McLeod et al., 2022) – that is, the location of the formal interaction (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988) – whereby some members are unfamiliar with functions on platforms (e.g., Zoom) and cannot be actively engaged in discussions (Hurley; Karl et al.). Notwithstanding the convenience and cost-friendly nature of virtual meetings, unfamiliarity with functions and lack of engagement (Hurley; Karl et al.; McLeod et al.) from technology leads to delays, such as waiting for an individual Board member to unmute themselves and speak after they were muted, during decision making (i.e., flow; Cray et al.). Thus, the importance of technology as a process-based factor within the boardroom cannot be overlooked considering virtual meetings are becoming more popular given their convenient and cost-friendly nature (cf. Hurley; Huse; Karl et al.; McLeod et al.). This importance resides in technology's impact on Board members' behaviours (cf. Brown, 2014) during meetings (i.e., organizational governance; Henry & Lee, 2004), as described according to the constructs of interaction and flow (Cray et al.).

Context-Based Factors

Context-based factors are important to consider as they can impact governance phenomena (Hoye & Doherty, 2011; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2018, 2020; Shilbury et al., 2016). In the case of the developed model, context refers to the market conditions (see Chapter IV) within the environment of NPSO Boards (cf. Hoye & Doherty). This differs from prior sport

governance research where context is argued in relation to the type of governance model (e.g., federated versus unitary; Harvey, 2013; O'Boyle & Shilbury) and characteristics of the Board (e.g., composition) and/or organization (e.g., size, age, history; Hoyer & Doherty). This notion is also supported by the identification of more similarities than differences within and between levels of a federated sport model (see Chapter V), thereby contesting claims about its distinction from an unitary governance system (cf. Harvey; O'Boyle & Shilbury). However, the point here is context-based factors are focused on Boards' market conditions (cf. Hoyer & Doherty). These market conditions, which were identified as an external factor in Chapter IV, should be based on the potential presence of a crisis (e.g., health, social, political, economic) and circumstances of high risk and uncertainty in Boards' external environment (cf. Hoyer & Doherty). Here, risk refers to when decision makers understand potential alternatives, but are uncertain about the costs and benefits of each (Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006). In turn, uncertainty is concerned with a situation where decision makers do not have an understanding of potential alternatives nor outcomes of a decision (Daft; Hickson et al.; Nutt & Wilson; Slack & Parent).

Specific to Board decision making, contextual-based factors arising from market conditions can impact constructs of this phenomenon (cf. Hoyer & Doherty, 2011). For instance, such contextual-based factors could lead to longer (i.e., duration) decision making with greater delays (i.e., flow) and formal interactions (i.e., interaction; Cray et al., 1988, 1991). These impacts on decision making could be negative considering the presence of a crisis within the market in which conditions of risk and uncertainty are found, thereby explaining why greater time, delays (e.g., waiting for information to become available, conducting research), and formal interactions via technological means (i.e., virtual meetings) are required to make an informed

decision (cf. Cray et al.). Such risk and uncertainty forces Boards to consider multiple alternatives and gather additional information to refine their understanding about the outcomes of decisions (cf. Cray et al.; Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Mintzberg & Waters, 1990; Mintzberg et al., 1976). To this effect, greater information sources (i.e., scrutiny; Cray et al.) would be used during decision making to manage this risk and uncertainty from market conditions. The use of greater information sources, however, is explained by the length of time, delays, and formal interactions required to make a decision (Cray et al.). The importance of using greater information sources to manage risk and uncertainty demonstrates its ability to provide Boards with a refined understanding of a situation and the potential outcomes of identified alternatives (Daft; Hickson et al.; Nutt & Wilson, 2010; Slack & Parent, 2006). This also suggests NPSO Boards engage in longer decision making to make an informed decision whereby additional information is acquired. This differs, for instance, from a NPSO Board attempting to make a decision as quickly as possible in which issues like satisficing (i.e., decision makers stop searching for additional alternatives to a problem once a solution is first identified; Simon, 1945, 1955) or problemistic searches (i.e., decision makers quickly search for alternatives and identify a single solution to solve a problem; Cyert & March, 1963) could occur. Nevertheless, the acquisition and use of information also occurs from external sources, such as other organizations in a Board's sport system. For instance, a provincial/territorial NPSO Board communicates with their national counterpart to gather intel on the development of return-to-play protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis. This premise relates to Henry and Lee's (2004) systemic governance considering NPSO Boards will gather information from other organizations in their system, thereby attempting to manage risk and uncertainty. However, this premise is also based on conditions of decision making (Slack & Parent), which have long been discussed in the

broader management literature (e.g., Cray et al.; Cyert & March; Daft; Hickson et al.; March & Olsen, 1976; Mintzberg & Waters; Mintzberg et al.; Nutt & Wilson; Simon; Thompson, 1967) and, in some cases, explained in relation to specific situations like the Cuban missile crisis (e.g., Allison & Zelikow, 1971), the 2008 financial crisis (e.g., Nelson & Katzenstein, 2014), or environmental disasters (e.g., Doyle et al., 2014). In the case of the developed model, these decision making conditions are important to consider according to market conditions within the context-based factor, which directly impact constructs of this phenomenon, including duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (cf. Cray et al.).

The above discussion also suggests the following notion: NPSO Boards should recognize the importance of balancing, on one hand, potential tensions arising from making a decision as quickly as possible (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989), and on the other hand, taking enough time to acquire as much information to manage risk and uncertainty (e.g., Cray et al., 1988; Daft, 2021; Hickson et al., 2018; Nutt & Wilson, 2010). This balancing act is problematic for NPSO Boards to manage during decision making as rushing through a particular situation to make a decision without all the appropriate information could result in a negative outcome on the organization (e.g., staff members) and its stakeholders (e.g., members, sport governing bodies). That being said, NPSO Boards should understand certain external factors like market conditions (e.g., health crisis; Hoye & Doherty, 2011) often force the need for a decision to be made rapidly (e.g., need to implement new policies by a specified date). Such pressures are negative in this regard considering it could lead to issues in decision making like satisficing (Simon, 1945, 1955), problemistic searches (Cyert & March, 1963), or groupthink (Nutt & Wilson; Raven, 1998). Though recognizing the need to manage the duration given external pressures (cf. Eisenhardt), this notion points to the importance of the Board's composition whereby individuals with

specific expertise (e.g., law, marketing, governance, health) can provide vital information to better manage potential risks and uncertainties (cf. Cray et al.; Daft). By relying on individual members, NPSO Boards can limit potential delays (e.g., attempting to communicate and consult with an external stakeholder for information) during their decision making (cf. Cray et al.), thereby still selecting an alternative to the problem at hand and making an informed decision as quickly as possible (cf. Eisenhardt).

Conclusion

In this section, theoretical contributions and practical implications are presented. This is followed by a reflection on the dissertation process and future research directions.

Theoretical Contributions

Three theoretical contributions are offered from this dissertation. First, this dissertation contributes to strategic decision-making theory's temporal boundary (i.e., applicability of a theory during a given time period; Bacharach, 1989). From a temporal standpoint, strategic decision-making theory successfully examined decision making over time as it unfolded in an organizational setting (i.e., the boardroom of NPSOs). This differs from seminal studies pertaining to the theory's development and empirical testing considering their reliance on a post-hoc and cross-sectional approach to understand this process-based phenomenon (see Hickson et al., 2018). Beyond this contribution, the dissertation further advances strategic decision-making theory's temporal boundary considering the collection of data during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this dissertation supports the application of strategic decision-making theory during crisis periods (e.g., health) given decision making can be analyzed and understood. This contribution answers calls for more theory-based research (e.g., applying a theory like strategic decision-making theory) in crisis periods (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic) to determine its relevancy

and ability to understand a phenomenon during this time (Langley, 2021; Phan, 2021). In addition, strategic decision-making theory was developed and tested prior to the inception of the world wide web in the 1990s (cf. Butler et al., 1979/1980; Cray et al., 1988, 1991; Hickson et al., 1985; Hickson et al., 1986; Kenny & Wilson, 1984; Mallory et al., 1983; Wilson, 1982; Wilson et al., 1982; Wilson et al., 1986). Considering the increase and prevalence of technology in organizations operating in the so-called “digital age” (Daft, 2021), strategic decision-making theory’s temporal boundary spans beyond pre-technological periods to understand decision making in this current day and age. This contribution is important to advance the temporal boundary of this theory and ability for future research investigating decision making to apply it to better understand this phenomenon within a modern organizational setting or crisis period.

Second, the NPSO Board Decision Making Model contributes to knowledge on decision making in the sport governance literature. This contribution lies in the ability for the theoretical framework (as presented in Chapter I) to be operationalized, thereby providing the ability to develop the model to understand decision making in NPSO Boards according to the impacts of structure- (i.e., internal and external), process-, and context-based factors on duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (cf. Cray et al., 1988, 1991). However, a descriptive understanding of NPSO Board decision making (e.g., how many actors are involved in the process) arguably provides a limited view of this process-based phenomenon. Thus, factors related to structure (internal and external), process, and context are required to provide an explanation of how certain decisions are undertaken by NPSO Boards. This consideration is based on the simultaneous presence of these factors during NPSO Board decision making. Such factors are also relevant to different perspectives on governance, namely systemic, organizational, and political (Henry & Lee, 2004). Notably, this contribution moves towards the “*how*” (i.e.,

relationships between constructs to explain a phenomenon; Whetten, 1989) of NPSO Board decision making as impacts on constructs are provided to further advance our understanding. Specific future research directions pertaining to the developed model are provided later on in this chapter.

Third, the dissertation's research design and approach contributes to sport governance research. Specifically, observations provided a more fruitful account of a process-based phenomenon rather than relying on interviews or questionnaires. This is demonstrated by this dissertation's ability to directly observe NPSO Boards as they made decisions, thus combatting the "black box" issue present in the sport governance literature. This contribution is important to consider as the sole use of interviews or questionnaires continues to dominate the investigation of process-based phenomenon in sport governance. Given process-based phenomenon like decision making is complex and involves multiple individuals and actions, it is important to gather data from multiple methods. This importance resides in, for example, relying on observations to provide rich insight about decision making. However, using this single method approach limits the ability for the researcher's interpretation (as an outsider) of decision making to be supported by participants (e.g., confirming the observed decisions by the researcher were in fact decisions). This demonstrates the value of having interviews to further gather the interpretation and perspectives of participants directly involved in the context. Specific to documents, these are then imperative for the researcher to track the duration of processes (e.g., corroborating an observed decision with interviewee claims and items in the Board meeting minutes document). Nevertheless, the outcome of the dissertation's adopted research design and approach lies in the ability to corroborate findings from multiple sources (i.e., triangulation; Yin, 2018), all the while gaining insights on the ambiguities and complexities occurring inside the

boardroom. Thus, a multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal design can be successfully applied, thereby demonstrating its value and need to be considered by sport governance researchers.

Practical Implications

A central function for management research is to solve problems faced by managers (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Whetten, 1989). In this dissertation, the phenomenon of interest was NPSO Board decision making. Considering the above points, results from this dissertation put forth four practical implications in the form of recommendations aimed at enhancing NPSO Board decision making.

First, NPSO Boards should use both in-person and virtual meetings (e.g., via Zoom). This is because virtual meetings do offer benefits such as a low-cost and convenience for individual Board members to attend. However, in-person meetings arguably cannot – nor should they – be eliminated altogether. NPSO Boards need a balance of both. This balance is required as individual Board members felt impeded to fully participate and be engaged in discussions during virtual meetings. This is in addition to a lack of social connections among Board members in comparison to when meetings were held in person prior to the health crisis. NPSO Boards should educate their individual members on the basic functions of selected platforms for virtual meetings (e.g., how to unmute and mute, screen sharing). However, these virtual meetings should be held over Zoom rather than Google Meets. This is because one specific NPSO in this dissertation's sample used Google Meets in which greater technological delays (e.g., slower and challenging to share documents on the screen) and limitations to engagement were observed (e.g., higher bandwidth required for this platform where some members had to turn their video off to allow the conversation to stop lagging or cutting out). Nevertheless, it remains important

for NPSO Boards to properly educate and select appropriate platforms (i.e., Zoom) for their virtual meetings.

Second, the Chair's role in decision making cannot be overestimated. These individuals are responsible for both leading the meeting and managing discussions around its agenda items where decisions are ultimately made. However, there must be a fine balance of managing a discussion where members are engaged to gather a diverse set of perspectives, thus leading to a better informed decision in comparison to having a single individual (i.e., Chair) dominate the Board's decisions. To accomplish this, NPSO Chairs should call on multiple individual members to participate in discussions whereby a diverse set of perspectives are collected to make an informed decision. A successful strategy for some NPSO Chairs in this dissertation's sample included directly naming and probing individuals (e.g., Ida, we haven't heard from you yet, do you have anything you would like to share in addition to what Jeff, Matt, Richard, and Gisèle said about this matter?) who are less engaged in discussions to have the opportunity to share their perspective and participate. From a Chair standpoint, this strategy is vital for decisions to be made in a democratic fashion and have worthy engagement among individual members during decision making.

Third, NPSO Boards should develop formalized procedures and policies related to their decisions. Specifically, this entails NPSO Boards to have documents containing vital information on the process to make decisions. These documents should include a detailed Board meeting agenda and minutes, Board papers for each individual agenda item, and an action registry. Specific to a detailed meeting agenda and minutes, this differs from the traditional document for which a list of items are found and subsequently brought to action at a Board meeting. This document should contain a list of agenda items divided up into three categories: matters for

decision (i.e., situations requiring action from the Board); matters for discussion (i.e., situations in which action is not yet required, but a discussion is needed by the Board); and matters for noting (i.e., situations in which anecdotes or updates are provided by the Board). Matters for decision should occur at the start (i.e., first agenda items) because individual Board members are energetic and likely to be engaged in discussions as opposed to later in the meeting (e.g., over an hour after the call the order). Next, matters for discussion are placed in the middle portion of the agenda, followed by matters for noting at the end. This structure is done because both the matters for discussion and noting are less important than the matters for decision. That being said, matters for discussion and noting are still worthy of consideration and integration into Board meetings. This consideration resides in the potential for a matter for discussion or noting to evolve into a matter for decision (e.g., a Board member has a matter for noting pertaining to safe sport issues in the sport system, which leads to a future matter for discussion about the topic, and an eventual matter for decision whereby an organizational policy is developed). Each item is also assigned an anticipated duration (in minutes) to ensure the Board meeting is efficient in terms of proceeding through agenda items and respecting a selected time limit. The point here in regards to good governance (i.e., high moral and ethical standards; Chappelet, 2018; Zintz & Gérard, 2019) is the ability for NPSO Boards to have a documented paper trail about their decisions. From this evidence, NPSO Boards can publish the detailed meeting agendas and minutes on their websites, thereby promoting greater transparency and accountability towards external stakeholders (e.g., provincial/territorial NPSOs, sport governing bodies). Next, Board papers are a detailed document for which key points and a brief analysis related to matters for decision, discussion, or noting are undertaken and presented. The importance of this document resides in the ability for the Board to be informed about important points to make a better decision.

Specific to good governance, the Board papers allow for greater accountability and transparency among individual Board members. Finally, the action registry is kept and updated after each Board meeting where details specific to matters for decisions are noted. More precisely, this document will feature information about the decision's topic, current status (e.g., in progress, completed), and remaining action points (if applicable). Similar to the Board papers, this document is important for good governance as NPSO Boards can have a detailed record to outline the process and outcome of their decision making.

Fourth, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an unforeseen health crisis for NPSO Boards to contend with. Despite the challenges of transitioning meetings to virtual platforms and contending with an environment characterized with high risk and uncertainty, NPSO Boards did manage to continue their duties. However, the response to a crisis from the environment was not viewed from a strategic standpoint by the NPSO Boards observed in this study. Notably, the response within the NPSO Boards in this study was particularly reactive rather than proactive. For instance, NPSO Boards were not proactive from a strategic point of view about the potential threats (e.g., suspension of sport activities because of health and social restrictions) or opportunities from this crisis like the ability to capitalize on government funds during the pandemic, relaunch the sport as being safe and more attractive than other offerings to enhance participation rates, or develop new external relationships with stakeholders to receive information more quickly (e.g., health authorities). The point here is for NPSO Boards to think more strategically, thereby moving away from an operational focus on management activities and better serve their strategic roles. Such an operational focus was present during the COVID-19 pandemic as NPSO Boards began to be more involved in daily organizational activities, thus demonstrating their reactive response to the crisis. This compares, for instance, to a situation

where the Board's response is to leave operational matters to managers (e.g., CEO, division managers), thereby focusing more on the long-term impacts (e.g., strategic outcomes) and potential opportunities presented from a crisis in their environment.

Reflection on the Dissertation Process

Here, a reflection on the dissertation process is provided according to two main points. First, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted my dissertation, which was originally proposed as a sequential exploratory mixed-methods research design focused on exploring the relationship between NPSO Board decision making and effectiveness in a multi-level governance system. Considering the breath and impact of COVID-19 on sport organizations and society as a whole, participants mentioned they were overwhelmed by a variety of aspects like an increased workload to develop policies related to the pandemic, high turnover of staff members, cancellation or postponements of events, and uncertainties about the future of the sport system following the health crisis (e.g., financial viability, membership rates). Considering these aspects, when asked about the potential to complete a self-administered questionnaire as part of the anticipated second phase of the originally proposed dissertation, participants quickly dismissed the idea explaining they would unlikely continue their participation because of more important matters. To make matters worse, the frequency of meetings in each of the selected NPSO Boards in this dissertation varied greatly, with one case being observed from August 2020 to September 2021 (i.e., NPSO6) and another from July 2020 to September 2020 (i.e., NPSO4; see Table 1.3 in Chapter I). At the same time, I remember feeling as though I was swimming in mountains of data, so to speak, as over 60 decisions were observed and analyzed, not to mention the workload of conducting over 60 hours of observations and complete the verbatim transcriptions for all observations and interviews. Thus, upon reflecting on the collected data

from the dissertation and consulting with my supervisor, I recognized the ability to, instead, provide an in-depth, exploratory inquiry into the most central governance process, Board decision making. The result of that decision, which was ultimately discussed and confirmed by members of my thesis advisory committee at that time, is the current dissertation with a revised purpose in which four research articles were developed and two additional chapters.

Nevertheless, the point of this reflection is I learned the need and value to adapt one's research design should issues arise. This need and value reside in my ability to have completed this dissertation in a timely manner, albeit during a pandemic.

Second, conducting observations via virtual platforms was an unanticipated benefit during the dissertation as a result of social and travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This benefit allowed me to easily disappear or act as “fly on the wall” during virtual Board meetings. For instance, having the ability to turn my camera and audio off created less potential for participants to feel as though they were being observed or influenced by my presence during the virtual meetings, thereby changing their behaviors or actions (cf. Bezemer et al., 2018; Leblanc & Gillies, 2005). Though in-person observations are still valuable, the benefits of virtual observations was further demonstrated by my ability to gather data without having to travel to different locations to attend Board meetings. This approach was, particularly, vital for my research as I was efficient in my funding, such as having to dedicate less money to travel. On a personal level, having the opportunity to directly observe a phenomenon – that is, decision making – inside NPSOs' boardrooms was a particularly gratifying experience for a young scholar like myself. The unprecedented access gained from conducted observations during virtual Board meetings was crucial to understand the ambiguities and complexities of decision making. As a learning lesson, this experience has shown me the value of incorporating methods

like observations. The above reflection also supports recent claims from McLeod et al. (2022, p. 81-82) who stated:

Online video conferencing, however, provides a far less protruding, and more practical, means of audio- and video-recording meetings. ... We contend that such research would allow sport governance scholars to investigate board processes at closer proximity ... and significantly augment interview- and survey-based research.

Thus, my reflection suggests the potential to collect data virtually is of particular value for future sport governance research as projects can continue, all the while social and/or travel restrictions remain present because of a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic or limits in research funding and time to travel are present.

Future Research Directions

In this section, three future research directions are suggested. First, future research should replicate this study's research design and approach in another country (e.g., Australia, United Kingdom) with a federated sport model. This future research is needed for two reasons. On one hand, it is needed to assess the ability for researchers to adopt the design and approach to investigate decision making via multiple methods, *in situ*, and longitudinally. This need is demonstrated by circumstances of this dissertation, such as being able to collect data via virtual platforms without travelling and a crisis period brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, which could have impacted some of the results. On the other hand, this research stream is needed to assess the transferability of the dissertation's results as a whole. For instance, are the mean scores for constructs to describe NPSO Board decision making the same in another context? If so, why? If not, why not? This research would also be important to further determine the transferability of the identified factors and their impact on NPSO Board decision making.

Second, future research should test the posited direct impacts in the NPSO Board Decision Making Model. This research is needed to determine the validity of the results from this dissertation and the model's claims according to posited relationships (as discussed above and shown in Figure 6.1). From these posited relationships, researchers could use a self-administered questionnaire in combination with observations. The observations would allow decisions to be observed by researchers (e.g., noting the types of decisions, how the Board makes its decisions), followed by having participants complete the questionnaire. This questionnaire, however, should be administered after each observation or at multiple time points during the year (at the very least; e.g., before and after the annual general assembly). Further, the questionnaire items should be based on the constructs related to structure-based factors (i.e., internal and external), process-based factors, context-based factors, and decision making from the dissertation's developed model. Nevertheless, the value of conducting this stream of future research resides in the ability to work towards a theoretical development of NPSO Board decision making. Though this dissertation was an important first step to understand NPSO Board decision making, much remains to be done for sport governance researchers to make empirically founded claims and derive an understanding of this phenomenon. However, through the above approach, sport governance researchers can further refine our theoretical understanding of NPSO Board decision making.

Third, the identified differences in some features of NPSO Board decision making between the national and provincial/territorial levels suggests the need for future research considering the role of the governance model. This research is important as the governance model type (i.e., national versus provincial/territorial NPSO Board operating in a federated sport model) could explain the presence of certain factors found in this dissertation – which arguably

might not be present in an unitary governance model – and their ultimate impacts on constructs related to decision making. For instance, the identification of more similarities than differences in Board decision making within and between levels of a federated sport model suggests the need to critically revisit assumptions about its distinction from an unitary governance model. Such research would be timely to advance this dissertation's results, such as assessing its transferability and claim regarding the impact of external structure-based factors – like the governance model type (i.e., federated) – on NPSO Boards' decision making.

To conclude, this dissertation explored Board decision making in NPSOs operating in a multi-level governance system. Results demonstrated NPSO Board decision making was complex (see Chapter II) and impacted by internal (see Chapter III) and external factors (see Chapter IV). However, NPSO Board decision making appears more similar than different both within and between levels of a federated sport model (see Chapter V). Overall, the novelty of this dissertation lies in the selected approach – that is, a multi-method, *in situ*, and longitudinal research design – whereby insights were provided on a vital governance process that can be understood according to the developed NPSO Board Decision Making Model.

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Appendix A

Letter of Information for Organizations (English)

Dear member of the [ENTER ORGANIZATION NAME],

My name is Erik L. Lachance and I am a doctoral student in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. I am currently conducting a research study for my doctoral thesis in which the purpose is to explore Board decision making in non-profit organizations operating in a multi-level governance system. This study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Sport Canada.

By participating, your organization will enable non-profit (sport) organizations to gain an understanding of the internal workings of Boards. This knowledge will allow for strategies to be developed to enhance Board effectiveness, and, potentially, organizational effectiveness.

To do this, I will conduct six observations during [ENTER ORGANIZATION NAME] Board meetings. I will also complete one interview with the (a) Board Chair, (b) one individual Board member, and (c) the Chief Executive Officer from your organization. This will also be coupled with the collection of key documents (e.g., Board meeting agenda, Board meeting minutes).

I will use a pseudonym to protect the identity of your organization. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed, there is no risk of physical or social harm to your organization. Your involvement is completely voluntary, and no compensation will be offered. The data will be conserved for 5 years post-completion of the project. The study findings will be made available to you, if you so wish.

If your organization would like to participate, please let me know (phone number and email provided at the bottom of this letter).

This study has received ethics approval by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) (H-04-20-5579). If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact the project supervisor, Dr. Milena Parent, or the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at ethics@uottawa.ca.

Sincerely,

Erik L. Lachance

Appendix B

Letter of Information for Organizations (French)

Cher membre de [INSÉRER NOM D'ORGANISATION ICI],

Je m'appelle Erik L. Lachance et je suis un étudiant au doctorat à l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa. Je mène actuellement une étude pour ma thèse auquel le but est d'explorer les processus décisionnels des conseils d'administration (CAs) dans les organisations sportives à but non-lucratif caractérisées par la gouvernance multiniveau. L'étude est supportée financièrement par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada et Sport Canada.

En participant, votre organisation permettra aux organisations (sportives) à but non lucratif de comprendre le fonctionnement interne du CA. Ces connaissances permettront d'élaborer des stratégies visant à améliorer l'efficacité du CA et, éventuellement, l'efficacité organisationnelle.

Pour ce faire, je ferai six observations des réunions de votre CA. Une entrevue avec le (a) président du CA, (b) un membre du CA et (c) le directeur général de votre organisation sera également complétée. L'entrevue sera arrimée à la collecte de documents clés (ordre du jour de la réunion du CA, procès-verbaux des réunions du CA).

J'utiliserai un pseudonyme pour protéger l'identité de votre organisation. Bien que l'anonymat ne puisse être garanti, il n'y a aucun risque au niveau physique ou social si votre organisation participe. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire et aucune compensation ne sera offerte. Les données seront conservées pendant 5 ans après l'achèvement du projet. Les résultats de l'étude seront mis à votre disposition, si vous le souhaitez.

Si votre organisation souhaite participer, faites-le-moi savoir (mon numéro de téléphone et mon adresse courriel sont fournis à la fin de cette lettre).

Cette étude a reçu une approbation éthique par le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CER) de l'Université d'Ottawa (H-04-20-5579). Si vous avez des questions, veuillez communiquer avec la superviseure de projet, Prof. Milena Parent, ou avec le Bureau de l'éthique de la recherche et de l'intégrité à ethics@uottawa.ca.

Cordialement,

Erik L. Lachance

Appendix C

Consent Form for Organizations (English)

Your organization is invited to participate in a research study titled “Opening the “black box”: Exploring board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system.” This study is conducted by Erik L. Lachance from the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, and supervised by Dr. Milena M. Parent. This study has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (File #752-2021-2665) and Sport Canada (#862-2021-0016).

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Erik L. Lachance

RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr. Milena M. Parent

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this project is to explore Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system.

PARTICIPATION

If your organization agrees to participate in the research project, the following data collection methods and approaches will be conducted:

- Observations will be conducted during six Board meetings.
 - Each meeting will be audio-recorded.
- One interview with each of the following individuals:
 - Chair of the Board
 - Individual Board member
 - Chief Executive Officer
- Documents from the organization, which includes strategic plans, annual reports, financial audits, organizational structures, by-laws, Board meeting agendas, and Board meeting minutes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Risk associated with participation in this study will be no greater than what you would experience in your daily life. Your organization will not be penalized should you choose not to participate or if you withdraw from the study at any point. Furthermore, your organization has the option to withdraw from the study at anytime, even after the start of data collection.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

By participating, you will enable us to understand the internal workings of non-profit (sport) organization Boards. This will allow us to develop strategies to help you enhance your Board and organizational effectiveness.

COMPENSATION

Participants will not be compensated for their involvement in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

I assure you that the information shared will remain strictly confidential. The contents will be used only for this study and the organization's confidentiality will be protected as a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of your organization and participants.

FEEDBACK OF THE STUDY RESULTS TO PARTICIPANTS

If you so wish, you may obtain a copy of the study's results by indicating your wish to the principal investigator.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA AND DATA RETENTION

Data from this study will be stored for five years and may be used in subsequent academic studies, publications, and/or presentations. Furthermore, all data will be kept in the principal investigator's locked office and on his password protected computer.

ACCEPTANCE

I, _____, hereby, as [ENTER POSITION OF INDIVIDUAL] of [ENTER ORGANIZATION NAME] consent to participate in the above research study conducted by Erik L. Lachance of the University of Ottawa and supervised by Prof. Milena M. Parent of the same affiliation.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5; Tel.: (613) 562-5387; Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

There are two copies of this form, one of which is yours to keep.

Appendix D

Consent Form for Organizations (French)

Vous êtes invités à participer à une étude intitulée « Ouvrir la « boîte noire »: Explorer les processus décisionnels des conseils d'administration (CAs) d'organisations sportives à but non-lucratif dans un système de gouvernance multiniveau ». Cette étude est menée par Erik L. Lachance de l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa et supervisée par la professeure Milena M. Parent. L'étude est supportée financièrement par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada (dossier no 752-2021-2665) et Sport Canada (dossier no 862-2021-0016).

CHERCHEUR PRINCIPAL: Erik L. Lachance

SUPERVISEUSE DU PROJET DE RECHERCHE: Prof. Milena M. Parent

BUT DE L'ÉTUDE

Le but de ce projet est d'explorer les processus décisionnels des CAs dans les organisations sportives à but non-lucratif caractérisées par la gouvernance multiniveau.

PARTICIPATION

Si vous aimeriez participer dans le projet de recherche, la participation de [INSÉRER NOM D'ORGANISATION ICI] comprendra:

- Des observations seront réalisées pendant six réunions du CA.
 - L'enregistrement audio des réunions serait aussi fait.
- Une entrevue avec les individus suivants :
 - Président du CA
 - Membre individuel du CA
 - Directeur général
- Les documents suivants seraient aussi recueillis, comme les plans stratégiques, rapports annuels, audits financiers, structure organisationnelle, règlements, ordres du jour des réunions du CA et procès-verbaux des réunions du CA.

RISQUES ET INCONVÉNIENTS POTENTIELS

Le risque associé à la participation à cette étude ne sera pas plus grand que dans la vie quotidienne de l'organisation. L'organisation ne serez pas pénalisée si vous choisissez de ne pas participer ou si vous retirez l'organisation de l'étude. De plus, l'organisation peut se retirer de l'étude même après le début de la collecte de données.

BÉNÉFICES POTENTIELS

En participant, vous nous aiderez à comprendre le fonctionnement interne du CA des organisations à but non lucratif (sportives) pour que nous puissions élaborer des stratégies vous aidant à améliorer l'efficacité de votre CA et de votre organisation.

COMPENSATION

L'organisation ne serez pas rémunérée pour sa participation à l'étude.

CONFIDENTIALITÉ ET ANONYMAT

Je vous assure que les informations partagées resteront strictement confidentielles. Le contenu ne sera utilisé que pour cette étude et que la confidentialité sera protégée, car un pseudonyme sera utilisé pour protéger l'identité de l'organisation et les participants.

RÉTROACTION DES RÉSULTATS DE L'ÉTUDE AUX PARTICIPANTS

Si vous le souhaitez, vous pouvez obtenir une copie des résultats de l'étude en indiquant votre souhait au chercheur principal.

UTILISATION ULTÉRIEURE DE DONNÉES ET RÉTENTION DE DONNÉES

Les données de cette étude seront conservées pendant une période de cinq ans et pourront être utilisées dans des études académiques, des publications et/ou des présentations ultérieures. De plus, toutes les données seront conservées dans le bureau fermé du chercheur principal et sur son ordinateur protégé par mot de passe.

ACCEPTATION

Je, _____, comme [INSÉRER POSITION DE L'INDIVIDU] de [INSÉRER NOM D'ORGANISATION ICI], consent à participer à l'étude mentionnée ci-dessus, menée par Erik L. Lachance de l'Université d'Ottawa et supervisée par la professeure Milena M. Parent de la même affiliation.

Si j'ai des questions à propos de l'étude, je peux communiquer avec le chercheur principal ou sa superviseure.

Si j'ai des questions concernant la conduite éthique de cette étude, je peux communiquer avec l'agente de protocole pour l'éthique de la recherche, Université d'Ottawa, Pavillon Tabaret, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5; Tél. : (613) 562-5387; Courriel: ethics@uottawa.ca

Signature du participant

Date

Signature du chercheur principal

Date

Il y a deux copies de ce formulaire, dont une est pour vos dossiers.

Appendix E

Letter of Information for Observations (English)

Dear member of the [ENTER ORGANIZATION NAME],

My name is Erik L. Lachance and I am a doctoral student in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. I am currently conducting a research study for my doctoral thesis in which purpose is to explore Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system. This study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Sport Canada.

By participating, you will enable non-profit (sport) organizations to gain an understanding of the internal workings of Boards. This knowledge will allow me to develop strategies to enhance decision-making processes and Board effectiveness, and, potentially, organizational effectiveness.

To do this, observations during six Board meetings will be conducted. You will not be asked to do anything other than your normal procedures as a Board member. The researcher will note both subjective (e.g., emotions, behaviors) and objective (e.g., meeting environment, routines) factors during the meetings specific to the topic of interest. Further, the observed Board meetings will be audio recorded.

I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed, there is no risk to you of physical or social harm. Your involvement is completely voluntary, and no compensation will be offered. The data will be conserved for 5 years post-completion of the project. The findings of the study will be made available to you, if you so wish.

This study has received ethics approval by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) (H-04-20-5579). If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact the project supervisor, Dr. Milena Parent, or the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at ethics@uottawa.ca.

Sincerely,

Erik L. Lachance

Appendix F

Letter of Information for Observations (French)

Cher membre de [INSÉRER NOM D'ORGANISATION ICI],

Je m'appelle Erik L. Lachance et je suis un étudiant au doctorat à l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa. Je mène actuellement une étude pour ma thèse auquel le but est d'explorer les processus décisionnels des conseils d'administration (CAs) dans les organisations sportives à but non-lucratif caractérisée par la gouvernance multiniveau. L'étude est supportée financièrement par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada et Sport Canada.

En participant, vous permettrez aux organisations (sportives) à but non lucratif de comprendre le fonctionnement interne du CA. Ces connaissances permettront d'élaborer des stratégies visant à améliorer les processus décisionnels et l'efficacité du CA et, éventuellement, l'efficacité organisationnelle.

Pour ce faire, des observations pendant six réunions du CA seront faites. Vous n'allez pas être demandé de faire autre chose que vos procédures normales en tant que membre du CA de votre organisation. Le chercheur notera des facteurs subjectifs (ex. émotions, comportements) et objectifs (ex. environnement de la réunion, routine) reliés au sujet de la thèse des membres du CA. Les réunions du CA seront audio enregistrées.

J'utiliserai un pseudonyme pour protéger votre identité. Bien que l'anonymat ne puisse être garanti, il n'y a aucun risque au niveau physique ou social si vous participez. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire et aucune compensation ne sera offerte. Les données seront conservées pendant 5 ans après l'achèvement du projet. Les résultats de l'étude seront mis à votre disposition, si vous le souhaitez.

Cette étude a reçu une approbation éthique par le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CER) de l'Université d'Ottawa (H-04-20-5579). Si vous avez des questions, veuillez communiquer avec la superviseure de projet, Prof. Milena Parent, ou avec le Bureau de l'éthique de la recherche et de l'intégrité à ethics@uottawa.ca.

Cordialement,

Erik L. Lachance

Appendix G

Consent Form for Observations (English)

Your organization is invited to participate in a research study titled “Opening the “black box”: Exploring board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system.” This study is conducted by Erik L. Lachance from the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, and supervised by Dr. Milena M. Parent. This study has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (File #752-2021-2665) and Sport Canada (#862-2021-0016).

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Erik L. Lachance

RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr. Milena M. Parent

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this project is to explore Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system.

PARTICIPATION

If you volunteer to participate, the following procedures will be used for the observations:

- Observations will be conducted at six Board meetings.
 - The researcher will be seated away from the meeting table, and will note subjective (e.g., emotions, behaviors) and objective (e.g., meeting environment, routines) factors during the observed meetings.
- Observed meetings will be audio-recorded in which the researcher will place an audio-recording device at the centre of the meeting table.
 - The audio-recorded meetings will be transcribed verbatim.
 - Your name will not be included in transcripts, and pseudonyms will be used to remove any additional identifiers.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Risk associated with participation in this study will be no greater than what you would experience in your daily life. You will not be penalized by your organization should you choose not to participate or if you withdraw from the study at any point. Furthermore, you have the option to withdraw from the study at anytime, even after the start of data collection.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

By participating, you will enable us to understand the internal workings of non-profit (sport) organization Boards. This will allow us to develop strategies to help you enhance Board and organizational effectiveness.

COMPENSATION

You will not be compensated for your involvement in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

The information shared during the observations will remain strictly confidential. The contents will be used only for this study and your confidentiality will be protected. However, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed, as certain aspects divulged during observations could lead to the identification of your organization. Nevertheless, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity and the identity of your organization.

FEEDBACK OF THE STUDY RESULTS TO PARTICIPANTS

If you so wish, you may obtain a copy of the study's results by indicating your wish to the principal investigator.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA AND DATA RETENTION

Data from this study will be stored for a minimum period of five years and may be used in subsequent academic studies, publications, and/or presentations. Furthermore, all data will be kept in the principal investigator's locked office and on his password-protected computer.

ACCEPTANCE

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the above research study conducted by Erik L. Lachance of the University of Ottawa and supervised by Prof. Milena M. Parent of the same affiliation.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5; Tel.: (613) 562-5387; Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

There are two copies of this form, one of which is yours to keep.

Appendix H

Consent Form for Observations (French)

Vous êtes invités à participer à une étude intitulée « Ouvrir la « boîte noire »: Explorer les processus décisionnels des conseils d'administration (CAs) d'organisations sportives à but non-lucratif dans un système de gouvernance multiniveau ». Cette étude est menée par Erik L. Lachance de l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa et supervisée par la professeure Milena M. Parent. L'étude est supportée financièrement par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada (dossier no 752-2021-2665) et Sport Canada (dossier no 862-2021-0016).

CHERCHEUR PRINCIPAL: Erik L. Lachance

SUPERVISEUSE DU PROJET DE RECHERCHE: Prof. Milena M. Parent

BUT DE L'ÉTUDE

Le but de ce projet est d'explorer les processus décisionnels des CAs dans les organisations sportives à but non-lucratif caractérisé par la gouvernance multiniveau.

PARTICIPATION

Si vous accepté de participer dans le projet de recherche, les procédures suivantes seront utilisées pour les observations :

- Les observations seront effectuées pendant six réunions du CA.
 - Le chercheur sera assis près de la table de réunion et enregistrera des facteurs subjectifs (ex. émotions, comportements) et objectifs (ex. environnement de la réunion, routine) au cours des réunions observées.
- Les réunions observées seront audio enregistrées dans lesquelles le chercheur placera un appareil d'enregistrement au centre de la table de réunion.
 - Les réunions audio enregistrées seront transcrites.
 - Votre nom ne sera pas inclus dans les transcriptions et des pseudonymes seront utilisés pour éliminer tout élément identifiant supplémentaire.

RISQUES ET INCONVÉNIENTS POTENTIELS

Le risque associé à la participation à cette étude ne sera pas plus grand que dans votre vie quotidienne. Vous ne serez pas pénalisé par votre organisation si vous choisissez de ne pas participer ou si vous vous retirez de l'étude. Vous avez la possibilité de vous retirer de l'étude même après le début de la collecte de données.

BÉNÉFICES POTENTIELS

En participant, vous nous aiderez à comprendre le fonctionnement interne du CA des organisations (sportives) à but non lucratif pour que nous puissions élaborer des stratégies vous aidant à améliorer l'efficacité de votre CA et de votre organisation.

COMPENSATION

Vous ne serez pas rémunéré pour votre participation à l'étude.

CONFIDENTIALITÉ ET ANONYMAT

Les informations partagées lors des observations resteront strictement confidentielles. Le contenu ne sera utilisé que pour cette étude et votre confidentialité sera protégée. Cependant, votre anonymat ne peut être garanti dû à la divulgation potentielle de certains aspects lors des observations, ce qui peut mener à l'identification de votre organisation. Néanmoins, un pseudonyme sera utilisé pour protéger votre identité et celle de votre organisation.

RÉTROACTION DES RÉSULTATS DE L'ÉTUDE AUX PARTICIPANTS

Si vous le souhaitez, vous pouvez obtenir une copie des résultats de l'étude en indiquant votre souhait au chercheur principal.

UTILISATION ULTÉRIEURE DE DONNÉES ET RÉTENTION DE DONNÉES

Les données de cette étude seront conservées pendant une période de cinq ans et pourront être utilisées dans des études académiques, des publications et/ou des présentations ultérieures. De plus, toutes les données seront conservées dans le bureau fermé du chercheur principal et sur son ordinateur protégé par mot de passe.

ACCEPTATION

Je, _____, comme [INSÉRER POSITION DE L'INDIVIDU] de [INSÉRER NOM D'ORGANISATION ICI], consent à participer à l'étude mentionnée ci-dessus, menée par Erik L. Lachance de l'Université d'Ottawa et supervisée par la professeure Milena M. Parent de la même affiliation.

Si j'ai des questions à propos de l'étude, je peux communiquer avec le chercheur principal ou sa superviseuse.

Si j'ai des questions concernant la conduite éthique de cette étude, je peux communiquer avec l'agente de protocole pour l'éthique de la recherche, Université d'Ottawa, Pavillon Tabaret, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5; Tél. : (613) 562-5387; Courriel: ethics@uottawa.ca

Signature du participant

Date

Signature du chercheur principal

Date

Il y a deux copies de ce formulaire, dont une est pour vos dossiers.

Appendix I

Letter of Information for Interviews (English)

Dear member of the [ENTER ORGANIZATION NAME],

My name is Erik L. Lachance and I am a doctoral student in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. I am currently conducting a research study for my doctoral thesis in which the purpose is to explore Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system. The study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Sport Canada.

By participating, you will enable non-profit (sport) organizations to gain an understanding of the internal workings of their Boards. This knowledge will allow strategies to be developed to enhance Board effectiveness, and, potentially, organizational effectiveness.

To do this, you have been selected to participate in an interview as [INSERT Board chair, individual Board member, or Chief Executive Officer]. The interview will be focused on your perspective regarding the decision-making processes of the Board in your organization. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be audio recorded.

I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed, there is no risk to you of physical or social harm. Your involvement is voluntary, and no compensation will be offered. The data will be conserved for 5 years post-completion of the project. The findings of the study will be made available to you, if you so wish.

If you would like to participate, please let me know (phone number and email provided at bottom of letter).

This study has received ethics approval by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) (H-04-20-5579). If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact the project supervisor, Dr. Milena Parent, or the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at ethics@uottawa.ca.

Sincerely,

Erik L. Lachance

Appendix J

Letter of Information for Interviews (French)

Cher membre de [INSÉRER NOM D'ORGANISATION ICI],

Je m'appelle Erik L. Lachance et je suis un étudiant au doctorat à l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa. Je mène actuellement une étude pour ma thèse auquel le but est d'explorer les processus décisionnels des conseils d'administration (CAs) dans les organisations sportives à but non-lucratif caractérisé par la gouvernance multiniveau. Cette étude est supportée financièrement par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada et Sport Canada.

En participant, vous permettrez aux organisations (sportives) à but non lucratif de comprendre le fonctionnement interne du conseil d'administration. Ces connaissances permettront d'élaborer des stratégies visant à améliorer l'efficacité du CA et, éventuellement, l'efficacité organisationnelle.

Pour ce faire, vous avez été choisi pour participer dans une entrevue comme [INSÉRER président du CA, membre individuel du CA ou directeur général]. L'entrevue portera sur votre perspective envers les processus décisionnels dans le CA de votre organisation. L'entrevue a une durée estimée de 60 minutes et sera audio enregistré.

J'utiliserai un pseudonyme pour protéger votre identité. Bien que l'anonymat ne puisse être garanti, il n'y a aucun risque au niveau physique ou social si vous participez. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire et aucune compensation ne sera offerte. Les données seront conservées pendant 5 ans après l'achèvement du projet. Les résultats de l'étude seront mis à votre disposition, si vous le souhaitez.

Si vous souhaitez participer, faites-le moi savoir (mon numéro de téléphone et mon adresse courriel sont fournis à la fin de cette lettre).

Cette étude a reçu une approbation éthique par le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CER) de l'Université d'Ottawa (H-04-20-5579). Si vous avez des questions, veuillez communiquer avec la superviseure de projet, Prof. Milena Parent, ou avec le Bureau de l'éthique de la recherche et de l'intégrité à ethics@uottawa.ca.

Cordialement,

Erik L. Lachance

Appendix K

Consent Form for Interviews (English)

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “Opening the “black box”: Exploring board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system.” This study is conducted by Erik L. Lachance from the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, and supervised by Dr. Milena M. Parent. This study has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (File #752-2021-2665) and Sport Canada (#862-2021-0016).

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Erik L. Lachance

RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr. Milena M. Parent

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this project is to explore Board decision making in non-profit sport organizations operating in a multi-level governance system.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation will include one interview focused on the decision-making processes of the Board.

If you volunteer to participate in the interview process:

- You will be interviewed by the principal investigator one-on-one with no other persons present.
- Your name will not appear anywhere, but anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed.
- The interview will last about 60 minutes.
- You consent to being audio recorded so that the principal investigator can transcribe and analyze information from the session.
- You will have the opportunity to review your interview transcript.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Risk associated with participation in this study will be no greater than what you would experience in your daily life. You will not be penalized by your organization should you choose not to participate or if you withdraw from the study at any point. Furthermore, you have the option to withdraw from the study even after the completion of the interview.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

By participating, you will enable us to understand the internal workings of non-profit (sport) organization Boards. This will allow us to develop strategies to help you enhance Board and organizational effectiveness.

COMPENSATION

You will not be compensated for your involvement in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

The information you share during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. The contents of the interviews will only be used for this study and your confidentiality will be protected. However, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed as some features disclosed may lead to certain high-level employees to be identified. Nevertheless, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

FEEDBACK OF THE STUDY RESULTS TO PARTICIPANTS

If you so wish, you may obtain a copy of the study's results by indicating your wish to the principal investigator.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA AND DATA RETENTION

Data from this study will be stored for a minimum period of five years and may be used in subsequent academic studies, publications, and/or presentations. Furthermore, all data will be kept in the principal investigator's locked office and on his password protected computer.

ACCEPTANCE

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the above research study conducted by Erik L. Lachance of the University of Ottawa and supervised by Prof. Milena M. Parent of the same affiliation.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5; Tel.: (613) 562-5387; Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

There are two copies of this form, one of which is yours to keep.

Appendix L

Consent Form for Interviews (French)

Vous êtes invités à participer à une étude intitulée « Ouvrir la « boîte noire »: Explorer les processus décisionnels des conseils d'administration (CAs) d'organisations sportives à but non-lucratif dans un système de gouvernance multiniveau ». Cette étude est menée par Erik L. Lachance de l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa et supervisée par la professeure Milena M. Parent. L'étude est supportée financièrement par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada (dossier no 752-2021-2665) et Sport Canada (dossier no 862-2021-0016).

CHERCHEUR PRINCIPAL: Erik L. Lachance

SUPERVISEUSE DU PROJET DE RECHERCHE: Prof. Milena M. Parent

BUT DE L'ÉTUDE

Le but de ce projet est d'explorer les processus décisionnels des CAs dans les organisations sportives à but non-lucratif caractérisé par la gouvernance multiniveau.

PARTICIPATION

Votre participation comprendra la complétion d'une entrevue portant sur les processus décisionnels du CA.

Si vous participez au processus d'entrevue :

- Vous serez interviewé par le chercheur principal, sans autres personnes présentes.
- Votre nom n'apparaîtra nulle part, mais l'anonymat ne peut pas être entièrement garanti.
- L'entrevue est prévue pour durer environ 60 minutes.
- Vous consentez à l'enregistrement audio afin que le chercheur principal puisse transcrire et analyser les informations de la session.
- Vous aurez l'occasion d'examiner votre transcription d'entrevue.

RISQUES ET INCONVÉNIENTS POTENTIELS

Le risque associé à la participation à cette étude ne sera pas plus grand que dans votre vie quotidienne. Vous ne serez pas pénalisé par votre organisation si vous choisissez de ne pas participer ou si vous vous retirez de l'étude à tout moment. De plus, vous avez la possibilité de vous retirer de l'étude même après la fin de l'entrevue.

DES BÉNÉFICES POTENTIELS

En participant, vous nous aiderez à comprendre le fonctionnement interne du CA des organisations (sportives) à but non lucratif pour que nous puissions élaborer des stratégies vous aidant à améliorer l'efficacité de votre CA et de votre organisation.

COMPENSATION

Vous ne serez pas rémunéré pour votre participation à l'étude.

CONFIDENTIALITÉ ET ANONYMAT

Les informations que vous partagez au cours des entrevues resteront strictement confidentielles. Le contenu des entrevues sera utilisé que pour cette étude et votre confidentialité sera protégée. Toutefois, votre anonymat ne peut pas être garanti, car certains aspects divulgués pendant les entrevues pourraient lier à l'identité de certains employés de haut niveau de votre organisation. Néanmoins, un pseudonyme sera utilisé pour protéger votre identité.

RÉTROACTION DES RÉSULTATS DE L'ÉTUDE AUX PARTICIPANTS

Si vous le souhaitez, vous pouvez obtenir une copie des résultats de l'étude en indiquant votre souhait au chercheur principal.

UTILISATION ULTÉRIEURE DE DONNÉES ET RÉTENTION DE DONNÉES

Les données de cette étude seront conservées pendant une période de cinq ans et pourront être utilisées dans des études académiques, des publications et / ou des présentations ultérieures. De plus, toutes les données seront conservées dans le bureau fermé du chercheur principal et sur son ordinateur protégé par mot de passe.

ACCEPTATION

Je, _____, consent à participer à l'étude mentionnée ci-dessus, menée par Erik L. Lachance de l'Université d'Ottawa et supervisée par la professeure Milena M. Parent de la même affiliation.

Si j'ai des questions à propos de l'étude, je peux communiquer avec le chercheur principal ou sa superviseuse.

Si j'ai des questions concernant la conduite éthique de cette étude, je peux communiquer avec l'agente de protocole pour l'éthique de la recherche, Université d'Ottawa, Pavillon Tabaret, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5; Tél. : (613) 562-5387; Courriel: ethics@uottawa.ca

Signature du participant

Date

Signature du chercheur principal

Date

Il y a deux copies de ce formulaire, dont une est pour vos dossiers.

Appendix M

CEO Interview Guide (English)

Introduction

1. What organization do you represent?
2. How long have you been the CEO in this organization?
3. How many months or years of experience do you have (including past and current) as a CEO?

Decision making

4. What types of decisions are made by the Board?
5. What is your role in the decision-making process on the Board?
6. Can you describe how decisions are made by the Board? (Probe according to constructs discussed within the three types of strategic decisions)
7. What types of decisions are made in formal settings, such as meetings?
8. Are decisions made in settings outside of the boardroom? If so, what types of decisions are made outside the boardroom? Where do these decisions take place?
9. Are any external information sources used by the Board in the decision-making process?
 - 9.1.1. If not, why not?
 - 9.1.2. If so, what types of sources are used? Where do these sources come from? Why are these sources used?
10. During Board decision-making processes, do Board members have discussions between one another to make a decision?
 - 10.1.1. If not, why not?

10.1.2. If so, can you describe these discussions? Are discussions made with internal and/or external stakeholders during the decision-making process? If yes, with whom and why?

11. Do any events or factors negatively impact the Board's decision-making processes?

11.1.1. If not, why not?

11.1.2. If so, what types of events or factors are present? When do these events or factors occur?

12. How much time does it take for the decision-making process to occur? Can you provide a specific example?

13. Are there any internal factors (e.g., personality types and traits, leadership style, meeting practices, etc.) that impact the decision-making processes of the Board?

13.1. If not, why not?

13.2. If so, what factors? How do these factors impact the decision-making processes?

14. Are there any external factors (e.g., relationships with national- or provincial/territorial-level non-profit sport organizations, legislations, sources of funding, government, etc.) that impact the decision-making processes of the Board?

14.1. If not, why not?

14.2. If so, what factors? How do these factors impact the decision-making processes?

Conclusion

15. Is there anything else you would like to add related to the decision-making processes of the Board?

Appendix N

CEO Interview Guide (French)

Introduction

1. Quelle organisation représentée vous ?
2. Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous le directeur général de cette organisation ?
3. Combien de mois ou d'années d'expérience avez-vous (y compris passés et actuels) en tant que directeur général ?

Processus Décisionnel

4. Quels types de décisions sont prises par le conseil d'administration ?
5. Quel est votre rôle dans le processus décisionnel au sein du conseil d'administration ?
6. Pouvez-vous décrire comment les décisions sont prises par le conseil d'administration ?
(Questions additionnels sont posés selon les trois types de décisions stratégiques)
7. Quels types de décisions sont prises dans des contextes formels, comme les réunions ?
8. Les décisions du conseil d'administration sont-elles prises dans des milieux à l'extérieur des réunions ? Quels types de décisions sont prises à l'extérieur des réunions ? Où ces décisions ont-elles lieu ?
9. Est-ce que des sources d'information externes sont utilisées par le conseil d'administration dans le processus décisionnel ?
 - 9.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
 - 9.2. Quels types de sources sont utilisés ? D'où viennent ces sources ? Pourquoi ces sources sont-elles utilisées ?
10. Des discussions entre les membres du conseil d'administration sont-elles faites dans le processus décisionnel ?

- 10.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
- 10.2. Pouvez-vous décrire ces discussions ? Des discussions sont-elles faites avec des intervenants internes et/ou externes au cours du processus décisionnel ? Si oui, avec qui ?
11. Y a-t-il des événements ou des facteurs qui impact le processus décisionnel du conseil d'administration d'une façon négative ?
 - 11.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
 - 11.2. Quels types d'événements ou facteurs sont présents ? Quand les événements ou facteurs se produisent-ils ?
 - 11.3. Combien de temps faut-il pour que le processus décisionnel ait lieu ? Pouvez-vous fournir un exemple précis ?
12. Y a-t-il des facteurs internes (p. ex., types et traits de personnalité, style de leadership, pratiques de réunion, etc.) qui influent sur les processus décisionnels du conseil d'administration ?
 - 12.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
 - 12.2. Dans l'affirmative, quels facteurs ? Comment ces facteurs influent-ils sur les processus décisionnels ?
13. Y a-t-il des facteurs externes (p. ex., les relations avec les organismes sportifs sans but lucratif nationaux ou provinciaux/territoriaux, les lois, les sources de financement, le gouvernement, etc.) qui ont un impact sur les processus décisionnels du conseil d'administration ?
 - 13.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?

13.2. Quels facteurs ? Comment ces facteurs influent-ils sur les processus décisionnels ?

Conclusion

14. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez ajouter en ce qui concerne les processus décisionnels du conseil d'administration ?

Appendix O

Board Member Interview Guide (English)

Introduction/background

1. What organization do you represent?
2. What is your position on the Board?
3. What are your responsibilities on the Board?
4. How were you nominated to or selected for your current position on the Board?
5. Why did you agree to become a member of this Board?
6. How long have you been in your current position on the Board?
7. How many months or years of experience do you have as a member of a Board (including past and current Boards)?

Decision making

8. What types of decisions are made by the Board?
9. Can you describe how decisions are made by the Board? (Probe according to constructs discussed within the three types of strategic decisions)
10. What types of decisions are made in formal settings, such as meetings?
11. Are decisions made in settings outside of the boardroom? If so, what types of decisions are made outside the boardroom? Where do these decisions take place?
12. Are any external information sources (e.g., consultants, other individuals' experience/knowledge) used by the Board in the decision-making process?
 - 12.1.1. If not, why not?
 - 12.1.2. If so, what types of sources are used? Where do these sources come from? Why are these sources used?

13. During Board decision-making processes, do Board members have discussions between one another to make a decision?
- 13.1.1. If not, why not?
- 13.1.2. If so, can you describe these discussions? Are discussions made with internal and/or external stakeholders during the decision-making process? If yes, with whom and why?
14. Do any events or factors negatively impact the Board's decision-making processes?
- 14.1.1. If not, why not?
- 14.1.2. If so, what types of events or factors are present? When do these events or factors occur?
15. How much time does it take for the decision-making process to occur? Can you provide a specific example?
16. Are there any internal factors (e.g., personality types and traits, leadership style, meeting practices, etc.) that impact the Board's decision-making processes?
- 16.1. If not, why not?
- 16.2. If so, what factors? How do these factors impact the decision-making processes?
17. Are there any external factors (e.g., relationships with national- or provincial/territorial-level non-profit sport organizations, legislations, sources of funding, government, etc.) that impact the Board's decision-making processes?
- 17.1. If not, why not?
- 17.2. If so, what factors? How do these factors impact the decision-making processes?

Conclusion

18. Is there anything else you would like to add related to the decision-making processes of the Board?

Appendix P

Board Member Interview Guide (French)

Introduction

1. Quelle organisation représentez-vous ?
2. Quelle est votre position sur le conseil d'administration ?
3. Quels sont vos responsabilités sur le conseil d'administration ?
4. Comment avez-vous été nommé ou sélectionné pour votre poste actuel sur le conseil d'administration ?
5. Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de devenir un membre du conseil d'administration ?
6. Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous dans votre position actuelle sur le conseil d'administration ?
7. Combien de mois ou d'années d'expérience avez-vous en tant que membre d'un conseil d'administration (y compris les conseils d'administrations passés et présents) ?

Processus Décisionnel

8. Quels types de décisions sont prises par le conseil d'administration ?
9. Pouvez-vous décrire comment les décisions sont prises par le conseil d'administration ?
(Des questions additionnels pourraient être posées selon les concepts discutées dans les trois types de décisions stratégiques)
10. Quels types de décisions sont prises dans des contextes formels, comme les réunions ?
11. Les décisions sont-elles prises dans des milieux à l'extérieur de la salle du conseil ? Quels types de décisions sont prises à l'extérieur de la salle du conseil ? Où ces décisions ont-elles lieu ?

12. Est-ce que des sources d'information externes (p. ex., des consultants, l'expérience ou les connaissances d'autres personnes) sont utilisées par le conseil d'administration dans le processus décisionnel ?
 - 12.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
 - 12.2. Quels types de sources sont utilisés ? D'où viennent ces sources ? Pourquoi ces sources sont-elles utilisées ?
13. Des discussions entre les membres du conseil d'administration sont-elles faites dans le processus décisionnel ?
 - 13.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
 - 13.2. Pouvez-vous décrire ces discussions ? Des discussions sont-elles faites avec des intervenants internes et/ou externes au cours du processus décisionnel ? Si oui, avec qui et pourquoi ?
14. Y a-t-il des événements ou des facteurs qui impact le processus décisionnel du conseil d'administration d'une façon négative ?
 - 14.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?
 - 14.2. Quels types de retards sont présents ? Quand les retards se produisent-ils ?
15. Combien de temps faut-il pour que le processus décisionnel ait lieu ? Pouvez-vous fournir un exemple précis ?
16. Y a-t-il des facteurs internes (p. ex., types et traits de personnalité, style de leadership, pratiques de réunion, etc.) qui ont un impact sur les processus décisionnels du conseil d'administration ?
 - 16.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?

16.2. Quels facteurs ? Comment ces facteurs influent-ils sur les processus décisionnels ?

17. Y a-t-il des facteurs externes (p. ex., les relations avec les organismes sportifs sans but lucratif nationaux ou provinciaux/territoriaux, les lois, les sources de financement, le gouvernement, etc.) qui ont un impact sur les processus décisionnels du conseil d'administration ?

17.1. Si ce n'est pas le cas, pourquoi pas ?

17.2. Quels facteurs ? Comment ces facteurs influent-ils sur les processus décisionnels ?

Conclusion

18. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez ajouter en ce qui concerne les processus décisionnels du conseil d'administration ?

Appendix Q

Structured Observation Sheet

NON PROFIT SPORT ORGANIZATION NAME:			
OBSERVATION DATES (DD/MM/YYYY): 1) 3) 5) 2) 4) 6)			
OBSERVATION START/END TIME (HH:MM/HH:MM): 1) 3) 5) 2) 4) 6)			
LOCATION(S) OF BOARD MEETINGS: 1) 3) 5) 2) 4) 6)			
Constructs:		Constructs Scoring:	Score:
Scrutiny	Expertise: Number and types of sources used by the Board to provide information	▪ Scored non-numerically according to two aspects: ○ Number of information sources used (i.e., researcher counts the number of sources used)	

		○ Types of information sources used (i.e., researcher notes the documents, individuals and/or organizations that are used)	
	Effort: Process to acquire information	▪ Scored numerically according to four aspects: ○ Number of times the Board used information from individuals' personal opinions and/or experiences ○ Number of times the Board used readily accessible documents ○ Number of times the Board conducted research to acquire information ○ Number of times the Board integrates multiple sources of information	
Interaction	Formal interaction: Decision making discussions in a formal setting	▪ Number of times decision making occurs in a formal setting (i.e., around the Boardroom table)	
	Informal interaction: Decision making discussions in an informal settings	▪ Number of times decision making occurs in informal settings (i.e., informal discussions during breaks or discussions between individuals away from the Boardroom table)	
	Scope of negotiation: Number of individuals involved	▪ Number of Board members needed to collect information ○ Scored for each individual decision ○ Range from one individual Board member to an inclusion of the entire Board into the decision	

Flow	Disruption: Number and length of delays	▪ Scored numerically according to two aspects: ○ Number of delays that are presented during the decision ○ Length of delays will be scored based on the amount of time (i.e., days, hours, and minutes) that is lost • Scored from the first mention of the delay until decision making is resumed • Length of delays timed with a stopwatch	
	Impedance: Reasons provided for delays	▪ Scored numerically based on the types of reasons given for the delays ○ No impediments are present ○ Impediments are associated to waiting for pertinent information to become available ○ Impediments are associated with waiting to conduct research to obtain and analyze information ○ Impediments are associated to internal sources of opposition ○ Impediments are associated with external sources of opposition	
Duration	Gestation time: Time between initial mention of problem or issue and start of decision making	▪ Scored numerically based on amount of time between the first mention of the problem or issue and the start of decision making ○ Scored according to the number of days, hours, and minutes required • Researcher used a stopwatch to time this	
		▪ Scored numerically based on amount of time between the start of decision making and the final decision made	

	Process time: Time between the start of the decision and final decision made	○ Scored according to the number of days, hours, and minutes required ● Researcher used a stopwatch to time this	
Centrality	Level: Group or individual authorizing final decision	▪ Scored numerically according to the level in which the final decision was made: ○ Decision was authorized by an individual below the divisional level of the organization ○ Decision was authorized by an individual at the divisional level of the organization ○ Decision was authorized by the Chief Executive Officer ○ Decision was authorized by the Chief Executive Officer, but later ratified by the Board ○ Decision was authorized by the Board ○ Decision was authorized by Board committees, but later ratified by the Board ○ Decision was authorized by an external organization	